THE HISTORY OF THE COMIC STRIP



At last, just as your boots and hot wa-ter are brought in, you fall asleep and have the most delicious dreams,



The first thing in the morning you try another "infallible remedy."



But, instead of des-troying the nerve, you only succeed in bur-ning your fingers.



Having heard of some most wonderful cases of tooth-ache being ef-fectually cured by Steam, you inhale it for half an hour.



But, stupidly pausing to take breath, you are completely overwhelmed by the consequences



You resign yourself boldly to your fate



Once in the hands of the Dentist, the time seems interminable



This is the first quar-ter of an hour!



The second quarter of an hour!!



The third quarter of an hour!!!



The fourth quarter of an hour!!!!



But, AT LAST IT IS OUT!



When you are as-tonished to find that the operation has lasted less than a minute.



You bless the Dentist



And you go home, dine, sleep well, and the next morning are delighted to find that you are none the worse for the Tooth-ache.

David Kunzle

THE HISTORY OF THE COMIC STRIP

The Nineteenth Century

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

BERKELEY · LOS ANGELES · OXFORD

I dedicate this book to
Aline (mother),
Margaret-Veethi (sister),
Vera (godmother),
Marjorie (wife)

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The search for humor should not be regarded . . . simply as an evasion of or escape from the realities of life; it was also a positive attempt to create joy and pleasure around everyday events, as well as a rebellion against the restrictions of morality and prudence. As such, it deserves to have its achievements recorded quite as much as the more long-term efforts of the legislators and educators, whose success was perhaps not as great.

THEODOR ZELDIN, *Taste and Corruption*

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Every book bears the imprint of the age in which it was written. The first volume of this history was completed in the shadow of the U.S. war on Vietnam; the present one was completed in the shadow, ever darkening, of the U.S. war on Central America. The military atrocities depicted in the 17th-century "comic strip" evoke a sinister parallel with our own times. The period 1826–1895 seems a haven from such horrors. Horrors there were in reality, of course, but the (lower) middle classes were spared the worst, just as we are spared the worst of what our governments inflict upon the Third World.

This volume could be fun to read, as the first could not; its humor, its themes are much more accessible and generally easy on the eye. Yet one should not underestimate the anxiety, which could take truly tortured guises, underlying the moral and social battles waged in such comic form. Although we find no "revolutionary" consciousness here, there is an awareness of the injustice as well as the absurdity of the sufferings of the age. Cops and jails abound; this, in embryo, is the police state of the 20th century.

Our strips also prefigure the familiar sense of powerlessness that pervades individuals living in advanced capitalist societies. The predominantly lower-middle-class readers, whether or not they were eligible or motivated to vote in elections, saw themselves as caught helplessly in a political and social web woven by superior and irrational forces—the caprices of cops, the whimsy of fate. The readers are summoned to surrender, in laughter but also in perplexity. The comic strip was a disordering medium appealing to disordered and disoriented social classes; the regularization and institutionalization that set in at the end of the 19th century presage the awful regimentation and mass production of the comic strip in the 20th century.

Since the first volume was finished in the late sixties, historians have become more aware of the role of the poorer classes and have moved from the narrowly political-military-diplomatic to broader social and cultural arenas. Even art history, that most recalcitrant of disciplines, has begun to engage in the "social history of art" and to become tainted with questions of ideology and sociopolitical contexts of production and reception. This volume is intended as a "social history of art," but not of art as defined by our vanguard social art historians, for whom "art" is still painting and sculpture, the media that commanded such bounteous criticism. The comic strip, however (which is certainly a distinct—perhaps distinguished—genre, if not Art), is déclassé; it does not even have the merit of addressing the working classes, no longer strangers to the socially conscious historian. Meanwhile, the lower middle classes, the audience of our strips, remain historiographically underdeveloped.

As a respectable academic I have, I suppose, sought to give the comic strip academic respectability. I doubt that I have succeeded yet. The "scientific literature" of my discipline (art history) has tended to pass by Volume 1, *The Early Comic Strip,* no doubt because of its frivolous title, which has not convinced even the (nonacademic) celebrants of the genre in the 20th century that there is indeed a comic strip worthy of the name before the Americans "invented" it in 1896 or so. I was recently sent a script for an ambitious television series on the (20th century) comic strip, for which funding was being sought and to which I was nominated a "scholarly advisor." The script started with the assertion that the first comic strips appeared in American newspapers at the end of the 19th century. Of course. By now I should have learned that to deny in the face of the U.S. media that the United States invented the comic strip is about as pointless as denying that the United States invented freedom and democracy. So I look once more to academe, which should understand that the *real* title of the present volume is "The Acquisition and Manipulation of New Sites of Comoedic Narrative Discourses and Significations by Volatility-prone Social Sectors." A big book should have a big title anyway.

The lower middle classes, too, had their cultural heroes. Dickens was one. And although Dickens obviously has no artistic peer (Wilhelm Busch in Germany comes closest), I have excavated from the morass of what is loosely termed 19th-century popular culture some other "major figures"—of which art history is ever in quest. In addition to the German hero Busch, we find such talent as Rodolphe Töpffer, who deserves a critical edition of his comic strip oeuvre (publishers please note); Léonce Petit, whose peasants were too vulgar (or vulgarly treated) for our academic journals, three of which turned down Chapter 7 in article form; an irreverent, absurdist, and very young Gustave Doré, before he was smitten with the classics and dreams of grandeur; a youthful Cham, emerging from the shadow of Daumier and master of a genre at which Daumier, coerced, failed; in England, James Sullivan, the first satirist of the working class; and very particularly Marie Duval, a unique woman caricaturist who launched the

ineffable Ally Sloper into fame. (She is a candidate, surely, for the next history of women artists.) And there are many lesser names, and some who left no names at all.

Among the nameless should be included the wood engravers, who were seldom credited for their arduous, painstaking, and ill-rewarded labors. They were the highly skilled proletariat of the art professions, but instead of praise, they often received only abuse from perpetually dissatisfied artists. A character in Champfleury's 1856 novel *Aventures de Mlle Mariette,* for example, calls them "snivelling people . . . swollen with pride . . . [mere] workmen, unworthy of their role as mediocre interpreters of the creators." I would therefore like to honor the many nameless wood engravers who made the comic strips reproducible.

In the same vein, I would like to honor a few of the numerous typists who typed and retyped my drafts, making sense of sketchy marks with patience and skill: most recently, Jane Bitar, Colleen Hill, Caroline Kent, and Grace Wax. I must also thank the large staff, from J. Amor to L. Waterman, of the Book Supply Services of the British Library, headed by Mr. Purvey, who tirelessly brought me all the books I needed; and the staffs of the many other libraries I used, particularly that of the UCLA Interlibrary Loan Service, most recently Patti Caravello, Carol Shoemaker, and Kaarina Tienhaara. UCLA photographer Evgeni Nestorov took great pains over the *Chat Noir* photographs, shot from the disintegrating copy of the magazine in the UCLA library. My thanks also to Dr. Herwig Guratzsch and the staff of the Wilhelm Busch Museum in Hannover, who kindly oriented me through their archives.

I have noted in the proper place help received from professional colleagues in specific instances; here let me add Michel Melot, the late Jean Adhémar (comme toujours), Martin Barker, Irene Bierman, Al Boime, Jim Cuno, Susan Downey, Jo-Ann Morgan, Beth Guynn, Lynn Kirby, Margaret-Veethi, Jacques Droin, Philippe Monnier, Richard Vogler, and, above all, Hillel Schwartz, who went through the entire typescript with a fine-tooth comb and made innumerable helpful suggestions. "Sévère mais juste," he is generous beyond compare.

I find this list remarkably short for such a large project. I have surely forgotten someone, several people maybe. But not many; this has been a lonely endeavor in many ways, just how lonely I can now measure, in retrospect, as I enter the well-established field of 17th century Dutch art. I am tempted to credit chance encounters with people who would be most surprised to find their names here: those, for instance, who over a dinner once listened to me trying to reproduce the plot line of Töpffer's *M. Pencil,* which I had been studying intensively. It proved impossible, which was a revelation to me (I did better on another occasion with the much longer and highly complex plot of *Les Misérables*).

At the University of California Press I also thank Anne Canright for her stringent and meticulous copy-editing, carried through at the later stages by that equally capable and helpful Argus Stephanie Fay; Steve Renick and Rick Chafian for the handsome design of this book, and Ernest Callenbach, Bill McClung, Marilyn Schwartz, and Jeanne Sugiyama for their big-mindedness in encouraging, allowing, and seeing it through the press.

I thank the following libraries for the provision of and permission to reproduce photographs: the British Library, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Fondazione Feltrinelli in Milan, the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin, the Bayerische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Munich, the Stadt- und Landesbibliothek and the Universitätsbibliothek in Vienna, the Biblioteca Nacional and Hemeroteca Nacional in Madrid, the Library of Congress in Washington, the Harvard University Library, and the New York Public Library.

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Translations of the captions are my own from all foreign languages except Russian. I have tried to reproduce exactly and fully the captions of Töpffer, a stylist in all his writing. I have ventured into verse with Busch when there was no Arndt (University of California Press, 1982) version, which when available substitutes for the German original in the reproductions. I thank Walter Arndt and the Press for permission to use this, far and away the best English verse translation of Busch. Where captions were diffuse or of no particular merit in themselves, I have paraphrased or shortened; this is usually indicated by the absence of quotation marks.

INTRODUCTION

The period covered here takes us from 1827, the year Rodolphe Töpffer drafted his first comic strip/picture-story, to the start of a new epoch in 1896, when the first continuing comic characters were created in an American newspaper (*The Yellow Kid*) and in a British children's weekly. Our ending point also coincides with the birth of the cinema—whose form, aims, and to a degree language were foreshadowed by the comic strip—as public entertainment.

In the 19th century, the comic strip—as defined in Volume One, my study of its previous centuries of history—changed in many fundamental respects. The earliest graphic narratives were broadsheets of a directly religious, moral, and politically didactic or propagandistic nature, usually sober in form and often bitter and angry in content. With some notable exceptions, the comic element was overtly lacking until the 18th century, when Hogarth brought it, and the very idea of moral, graphic narrative, to center stage. With the "golden age" of British caricature (ca. 1780–1820), the comic strip, though it never really established itself as a subgenre, took on some of the reckless air of caricature while still maintaining its political purpose.

A profound change gradually asserted itself. In the era under review the comic strip aimed to entertain. It became, almost without exception, comic in form; often it is farcical: in comic or satirical magazines constituted as a distinct journalistic category, it could not be otherwise. We now find no sustained catalogs of political iniquities, none of the "atrocity prints" that characterized the 17th century. There is little or no killing, only painful and embarrassing knocking around. Protagonists no longer descend into depravity, crime, and horrid death; instead they slip or are sucked into undeserved social humiliation and, again and again, with fearful inevitability, into the hands of cops, and jail. Rakes, harlots, and willful sinners are no more; now we find only the bemused victims of incomprehensible fate and social forces. Sexuality, a major theme of the social strip in the 17th and 18th centuries, is taboo for most of the period under review. It resurfaces in the 1870s in Germany with Busch, and in the 1880s in France (*Chat Noir*) and, oddly perhaps, in Spain. In England it is wholly, but holy, absent.

Excluding the broadsheet-style Imagerie d'Epinal and Bilderbogen (see below), we now, in the 1840s, find the comic strip passing from the single broadsheet of old into the periodical press, thereby reaching an enormously expanded audience. Hitherto physically autonomous but wholly dependent on a fluctuating market of newsworthy topics, the comic strip finds security, and eventually stagnates, as part of a larger entity—the weekly (or exceptionally, daily or monthly) journal, ranging from octavo to large folio or newspaper size. In rare circumstances, the comic strip achieved the status of a book: notably, at the beginning of the era under discussion, with Rodolphe Töpffer, all but one of whose albums were initially launched in a small, peripheral luxury market; and, toward the end, with Wilhelm Busch, whose great popularity, first gained through a magazine and its associated broadsheets, enabled him to publish "comic books" of new and old material independently. Another kind of popularity was attained by social types (the "Staatshämorrhoidarius," Ally Sloper, the French peasant, the British worker), whose antics were recorded in books. Sloper and the books and the magazine named after him were a great success, but publishing a book of comic strips was generally a commercially risky venture, and many failed with a public for whom the difference in price between magazine and book was decisive.

I have searched systematically through all available comic illustrated magazines of England, France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Italy, Spain, and Russia—all, except for Russia, where my search was limited to U.S. libraries, in the country of origin. In France there was so much I had to stop looking. I reproduce here some French strips from copies in English magazines, of which I never found the originals, an indication of untapped resources. In the 1880s, French magazines publishing caricature and comic strips were very numerous indeed.

Eight countries (including Switzerland, with Töpffer, but excluding Portugal)[1] are represented here, and six languages (again, excluding an exotic Munich-based magazine in Volapük).[2]

I did not look for independently published albums of comic strips unrelated to magazines or by artists who did not normally illustrate magazines. Regretfully, for lack of time and space I could not take into account the great body of illustrated children's literature, a portion of which is classifiable within the comic strip genre and would surely overlap with the (adult) magazine strip

1. Portugal proved to have a magazine rich in comic strips—but too late for inclusion here, except in the form of an illustration (see Fig. 15.25)—called *O Antonio Maria* (1879–1884), which became *Pontos nos ii* (The Dots on the i's) in May 1885 (the complete run of both, through 1895, is in the Library of Congress). Between 1880 and 1886 it featured regular strips by Raphael Bordallo Pinheiro, but in the late 1880s foreign imports (by Busch and the French) took over. On Pinheiro, see Guimarães 1985.
2. *Cogabled,* Munich 1887. (I saw no. 7 in the National Library, Madrid.)



FIG. I.1. Gustave Doré: "Prophecies for the People of France" (1848–1860s).
"Aubert comic wallpapers will continue to delight children of all ages."

not only in subject and style but also in child readership. And finally, I make little use of "popular imagery"—the Imagerie d'Epinal or Bilderbogen—which continued to be sold in huge quantities in both city and village, to adults as in the past but increasingly, and eventually predominantly, to children. Although often topical, they are seldom comic, and when comic, they are generally lower in quality of drawing and originality than magazine illustration.

Comic Strip: The "Childish Genre"

Many of the comic magazines and most of the albums with comic strip material were intended to include a market that in the 19th century was not developed, as it would be later, but that certainly existed, as it had not earlier. The sales pitch "for children of all ages" (Fig. I.1) points to a new audience of intersecting generations and social classes: the older (ten to sixteen years of age), educated child and the child-in-the-adult. To these we must add the lower social classes, struggling, like children, into maturity. The burgeoning of the market for children's literature is a function of the expansion of a literate industrial popular culture. The "people," like the children they were supposed to resemble, wanted to look and laugh, to be entertained; any comic iconography enjoyed this dual market, of course, and had no doubt done so for centuries. But in the 19th century the market expanded with the phenomenal growth of the industrial working and middle classes—and their families.

The age that virtually created the idea of a literature for and about children also created a literature for the universal child-in-the-adult and, for this literature, various styles of "child"-like drawing. Reading and looking matter that bridged the generations was known as "family literature," suitable to be read aloud or perused communally in the family (Fig. I.2); it was not secluded on the library or bookshelf but was left out, in the drawing room or on the parlor table. The comic magazine, like many other kinds of popular magazine, was a bonding force between generations, sexes, and adjacent classes. It is no accident that the success of the greatest English comic writer of the period, Charles Dickens, whose methods and attitudes subsume the contemporary caricature and comic strip, and who also published periodically, in installments, should have depended so much on cross-class, cross-gender appeal and on the suitability of his work for being read (aloud) in families. Dickens's perception of his vast audience certainly broadened the range of his humor; but it was also restrictive, notably in the realm of sexuality and overt personal political allusion, so much the domain of earlier broadsheets. The family-oriented comic magazines imposed a like self-censorship. No less than the private patron of old, the mass public of the 19th century determined by a continuing series of choices their own literature and culture.

The very gestation of the new comic strip in the hands of Töpffer may be traced back to the idea of the family as producer-reproducer, author-consumer of its own entertainment, with the



FIG. I.2. Family reading; advertisement for Philipon's Papier Peint Comique wallpaper (1860s–1870s).

significant difference that the family in Töpffer's case was the truly extended one of the small boarding school. The relative intellectual sophistication, homogeneity, and all-maleness of the Genevan private school, combined with its youthfulness, made for a particularly heady creative mix. Young teenagers were in some measure active participants in the creation of Töpffer's comic strip stories: their applause encouraged him to continue and eventually to publish, well before Goethe discovered and praised him; indeed, their delight in the bizarre and impossible co-determined the content. That Goethe did not seek to share his enjoyment of Töpffer with his own grandchildren speaks volumes for the distance he maintained from them at the end of his life. Through centuries the orally transmitted tale had been continuously renewed and varied through the interaction of teller and audience. In the case of Lewis Carroll, arguably the greatest of the 19th-century children's storytellers, we know that this interaction was particularly intimate; Edward Lear, too, wrote his nonsense *with* children. The printed word, however, removed the storyteller from the audience, and the mass-circulation magazine increased the separation. The comic strip strove to preserve a degree of intimacy and spontaneity, a sense of taking the reader by the hand (and down the garden path). We know that readers regarded, and frequently wrote to, their favorite magazines with real affection; and they also felt free to voice their criticisms. Alas, the printing of a readers' correspondence column was not the editorial practice with our magazines, and these responses are lost to us. Elite critics maintained an almost complete silence. And so we have a critical vacuum that can never, I daresay, be overcome.

Apart from Töpffer and Busch, we know little of the circumstances in which the comic strips of this era were created. Léonce Petit is said to have composed at a cabaret table, sitting with a bottle and friends. One might suppose that the schoolboy Gustave Doré shared his ideas for caricatures with his fellows before they were published—unless a precocious sense of professionalism prevented him from doing so. We do know that Busch did not test his work out on children, whose company did not appeal to the lifelong bachelor; he pretended moreover, as did his publishers, to aim for an adult audience. Paradoxically (or not), Busch's are the first comic strips *about* children. But although children as well as adults certainly read them, the publisher could not lay open claim to a children's market without jeopardizing the adult market. (In England, however, Busch was copied, pirated, and reformatted specifically for the children's market.) I believe that most comic magazines aimed at the youthful reader. Even when the topics were wholly adult, the comic magazines knew that children identified readily with the "childish genre" of caricature, that indeed children were potential caricaturists themselves. It was a truism that genuine artistic talent expressed itself in the very young, in crude caricatural scribbles and graffiti—that, as Ruskin said, caricature was innate. Willette, in the "preface" to a collection of his comic strips, imagined his most famous creation, his Pierrot, growing organically out of his schoolbook practice letters (Fig. I.3).

It would be tempting to assert that many comic draftsmen were professionally active from a relatively early age, in a profession where academic training was considered unnecessary. George Cruikshank and Gustave Doré were literally children, Richard Doyle and Nadar barely older, and Cham a very young man when they first began to publish. Busch, in contrast, perfected his gifts slowly. Unfortunately, too many of the artists represented here remain biographically obscure, their beginnings as well as their careers undocumented and unexplorable.

The child-in-the-adult was also the people-as-child. The link between the appreciation of caricature and graffiti (the expression

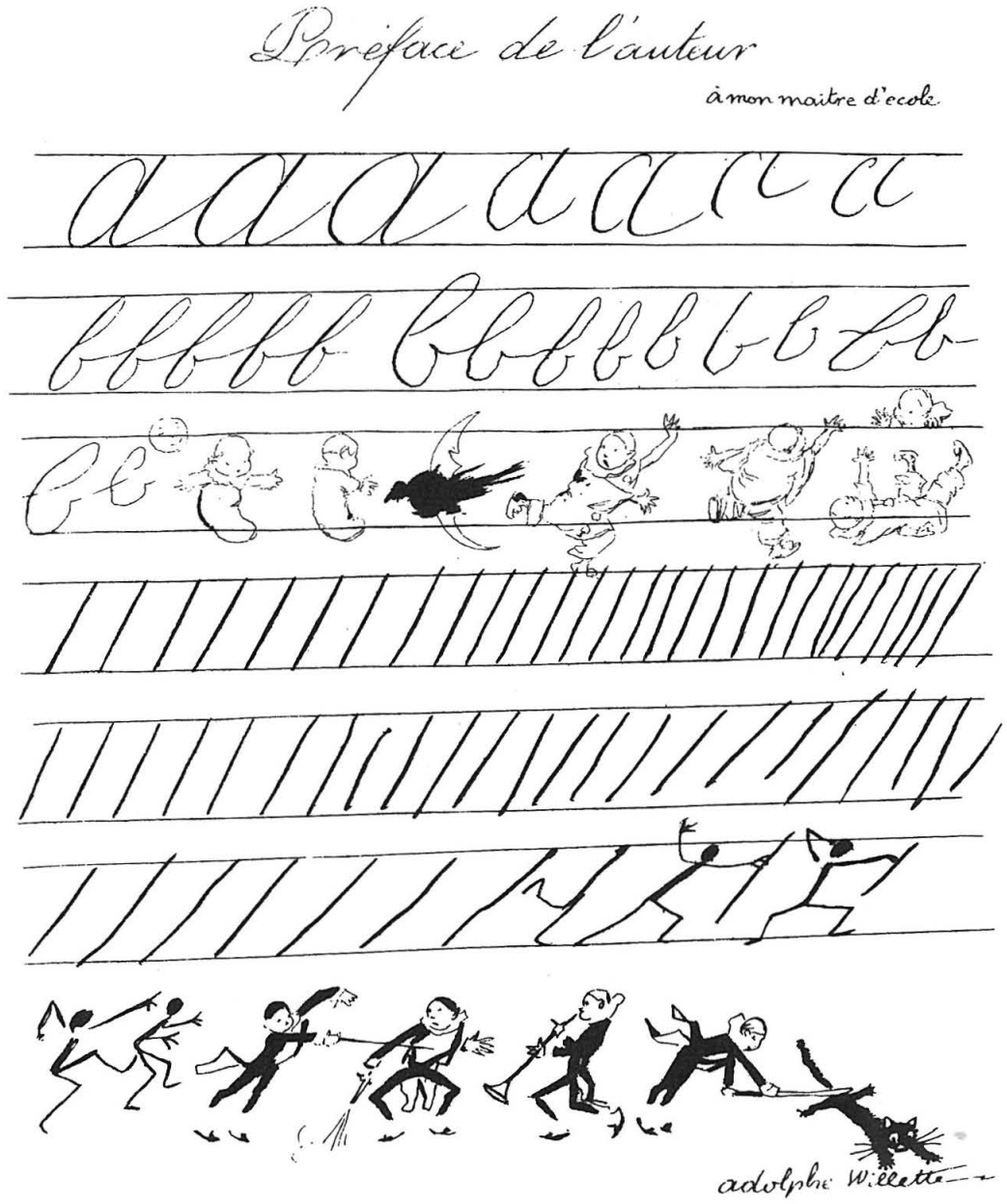


FIG. I.3. Adolphe Willette: Origin of Pierrot (1926).

of the people and the child) on the one hand and the growing taste for the primitive and exotic (the art of "child-peoples") on the other has far-reaching implications. This broadening of aesthetic reference corresponds to an expanding self-image of the European bourgeois as asserting the right to lead and encompass not only the "people" at home but also all those savage tribes and cultures spread over the globe. Töpffer was among the first to openly admire the massive stone idols of Easter Island as possessing a special power found also, not in institutional styles of art, but in the untrained child and folk artist.[3]

The overlap between youth and adult audience, between children's book and comic magazine, is most apparent in Germany, where in the 1860s the weekly *Fliegende Blätter* shared strips with the youth-oriented picture book and *Münchener Bilderbogen* (broadsheet) series of the same publisher. The German Bilderbogen may be regarded as a sort of preindustrial literature that came into its own in our period, blurring the distinction between adult and children's fare.[4] Its equivalent in France was the Image d'Epinal, named after the town identified with such publications. Although some awareness of the German Bilderbogen is necessary to the study of Busch and his colleagues, integration of the Image d'Epinal, or for that matter the numerically immense and extremely varied "imagerie populaire" (broadsheets Epinal-style) of the Netherlands—where the satirical magazines carried no comic strips—would overburden this history.[5] A direct overlap does occur in late-19th-century France, where the Epinal-type imagery published by Quantin featured the work of vanguard caricaturists who also published in magazines. At the same time, at the upper end of the market, the *Chat Noir* offers the only immediate link of the comic strip with a major vanguard literary movement, symbolism. (We discount Cham's one-shot *Misérables* parody.)

The "urban folklore" of the magazine strip shares some of its origins with the rural folklore codified in 19th-century fairy tales, which were the subject matter of much imagerie populaire and the Bilderbogen. The degree to which the magazine strip subverts the morality of the fairy tale,[6] and of children's didactic literature generally, is a rich area that unfortunately cannot be explored here. Suffice to say that our comic strips are indeed urban fairy tales, of a worldly-wise kind addressed as much to the adult-in-the-child as the child-in-the-adult. Unsentimental, irreverent, and arguably immoral, the comic magazines could hardly claim openly the youth audience, which was supposed to be inculcated only with pieties. The comic strips are a flagrant violation of the moral principle, so dear to the (adult) bourgeois order, that good will triumph, obedience will be rewarded. Wilhelm Busch finally buries the Rousseau-esque myth of the naturally virtuous child, hinting that childish rebellion is as natural and inevitable as social rebellion—and that it is provoked by adult hypocrisy. This is a heavy message, and its reverse corollary, that social rebellion is as natural as childish rebellion, even more so. Perhaps only the "childish" medium of the comic strip could get away with it.

3. See Schapiro 1941; Sheon 1976; and Kemp 1979.
4. See Hilscher 1977. The bibliography in this dissertation, with its 2,637 consecutively numbered footnotes, would appear to be exhaustive.
5. The annual turnover for the Netherlands and Belgium has been calculated at 50 to 100 million copies (Hilscher 1977, 85).
6. See Zipes 1983, where the fairy tale is shown to subvert itself.

I originally intended to include the United States in this survey, but the rich material from American magazines of the last third of the century would have rendered an already embarrassingly bulky volume even bigger. I reserve it therefore for Volume Three, where it will constitute an extensive overture to the birth of the American newspaper strip. Let me say here only that the American dominance of the genre in the 20th century was already heralded in the last decades of the 19th, when Europeans borrowed heavily from American sources. The American strip is, to judge by a cursory evaluation of material culled from the pages of *Puck, Judge,* and *Life* magazines, unique, deriving from a specifically American humorous tradition and carrying a distinctive graphic flavor.

The material from Europe has proved so great—at times overwhelming—that it imposed problems of selection and citation that could be waived in Volume One, where it was possible to describe and reproduce all the significant (and some rather insignificant) surviving examples of the genre in toto, from a period over five times as long. I have systematically combed the weekly issues of dozens of magazines, some of them very long lasting, most of them of uneven interest. Fortunately, a comic strip as such is easy enough to spot in skimming; and as during the last decades of the century far too thick and fast they came at last, and more, and more, and more, I began to rely on a sixth sense for novelty among so much that looked drab and repetitive. Where I could detect no novelty at all, I contented myself with numerical tabulations that tracked the ever-increasing popularity of the genre as a whole. Since the dread *Guinness Book of Records* has no category for most pages turned by one person in pursuit of a single scholarly history, and the rewards began to diminish as the finishing post, visible at last, actually seemed to recede, I began to hate the 1880s and '90s. This was mass culture already, and with a vengeance: the constant rehashing of tired formulae in a manner we know too well. The comic strip was becoming institutionalized in cheap magazines, and caricature generally was now the most harmless of distractions. Töpffer, who drew only when he felt like it, seemed a distant model of gentlemanly reticence, his exquisite drawing-room racontage drowned out by cheap, raucous barroom garrulity. The bustling 1870s, the decade of Busch, Petit, and *Ally Sloper,* began to look like a golden age of graphic coherence and satirical consequence.

On the continent of Europe, illustrated journalism in general and caricature in particular derived their initial impetus from the country most admired for its industrial advance and parliamentary constitution: England. Yet although the English press, with its relative political freedom and its technical capacity to produce and distribute comic pictures cheaply, was the overall model, the process of adaptation to local conditions ensured distinctive national characteristics.

From the rich English tradition of didactic and comic imagery going back to Hogarth, but refracted through the turmoil of industrial and political revolutions, there arose in France the first weekly caricature magazine (followed by a daily—which remained a unique phenomenon), and in Geneva the first independent comic strip novels. But Switzerland was not ready for its own illustrated journalism, and Töpffer's invention, morally inspired by Hogarth, was first applied in France and then adapted, without lasting success, in England. Although an enduring tradition, with the participation of many talented artists, soon evolved in France, and soon after in Germany, the English contribution to the history of the 19th-century comic strip is sporadic at best and, in the final analysis, disappointing. A few highlights—oddities from short-lived magazines by obscure artists, and a durable comic type developed by Europe's only female caricaturist, here resurrected from oblivion—throw into relief the complete failure of major comic artists such as Leech, Keene, and Tenniel to engage the genre; and with Cruikshank and Du Maurier it was but a brief flirtation. I have no ready explanation for this. In Victorian England, where much of the best literature was so visual, so graphic, so caricatural, and much of the best painting so literary and moralistic, the comic strip should have thrived. Never mind the old commonplace about Britain's "national" form of expression being literary rather than visual—perhaps the arts generally and graphic art in particular did suffer, vis-à-vis France, from an excess of literature. It is symptomatic that the first attempt to launch a comic strip in an (upper-class) newspaper foundered after two installments and turned into the more viable genre of illustrated novel.[7]

Graphic caricature in England, then, became largely humorous illustration, the passive, static servant of the funny caption or situation. English artists of and following the Pre-Raphaelite generation, with their all-too-rigid adherence to natural appearances, failed to join the French in pursuing the possibilities of rapid, sketchlike execution. Yet the vitality of the comic strip in fact depends on just this sketchlike execution, and even more on sketchlike thinking. England lacked a figure with that peculiar balance of literary and pictorial, comic and narrative gifts that we find in Töpffer, Busch, and to a lesser degree in several French artists. Having seen Cruikshank fail, Thackeray, as well-equipped as Töpffer (whose work he probably knew), was content merely to illustrate his own novels. In England particularly, the comic strip lacked prestige, and the audience it addressed was generally of a lower class than on the Continent.

Töpffer expressed surprise and regret that the politically and socially critical and highly verbal artist Grandville did not try his hand at the genre. Perhaps Grandville was *too* morally engaged, too philosophically serious. *Un Autre Monde,* in which the illustrator of texts by others tries to write his own book,[8] is cast in a fantastic allegorical mode that keeps text and illustrations distinct, complementary, and indeed directly competitive rather than integrating them.

Given its dubious status, the comic strip did not, with a few notable exceptions, inspire in artists ambition or constancy; on occasion it was the publisher who pressed for it, as Philipon pressed Daumier, to his embarrassment. Generally, popular demand outstripped supply. The comic strip was something for the caricaturist to dabble in, much as caricature was something for the artist to dabble in. Many of our strips look as though they were knocked off at odd moments of leisure or distraction, or even in irritation that nothing better was in the offing. At the same time, it was a difficult genre to master. We dignify the comic strip by calling it a "genre"; in reality maybe it was only a subgenre, a deviation, an accident, a hybrid and bastard son of literature and "true" comic art—nothing for the parents to be proud of, much less found a dynasty upon. Over the whole period, only Busch, with perhaps Sullivan and Petit, was primarily committed to the genre for the better part of his career; certainly only Busch achieved real repute for it. He was the only comic strip artist who (barring a few juvenilia) did no other kind of caricature. And still, for all his success and wealth, he wanted to be remembered as a painter or poet. Töpffer, for the 19th century, was always the writer who *also* did funny drawings.

The best French caricaturist, Honoré Daumier, avoided the genre altogether—for aesthetic reasons, as we shall see. Cham, Daumier's chief imitator, made the comic strip a lucrative specialty for his first dozen years in the profession, but thereafter veered toward single or miscellaneous groups of cartoons. Léonce Petit moved in the opposite direction, from single static scenes to

7. Cuthbert Bede, "The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green, an Oxford Freshman," *Illustrated London News,* December 13, 1851, p. 720, and January 17, 1852, p. 64.
8. It is a vexed question how far Grandville is to be considered the author of the text in this work.

long narratives, to which he committed himself primarily for the decade preceding his premature death; but his albums were not commercial successes. Other French artists are remembered more for other work than for their forays into the comic strip: Nadar for photography, Doré (who repudiated his early caricatural work) for literary illustration and painting, and Steinlen for other printwork, illustration, and painting.

Several French artists from the last two decades of the century apparently made the comic strip a specialty, if not an exclusive one. Only Caran d'Ache, however, whose oeuvre is truncated by the chronological limits set on this survey, can claim, along with Busch, some celebrity and professional status as a comic strip specialist, although—unlike Busch—he also did many single cartoons and nonnarrative illustrations.

The Anonymous Upstart

The comic strip in the 19th century, for all its popularity, is without a recognized name. Töpffer called his comic albums either "picture novels" or, deprecatingly, "little follies." In the trade they were called "caricatural albums," or the "série Jabot," after the initiating title. Töpffer himself pretended anonymity, which the pirates all too scrupulously observed. It is as if Jabot, the social upstart, having forced himself and his upstart graphic genre upon the public, was forever to be denied the dignity of a distinct literary or artistic category. The titles of individual strips often contain the word "life," "story," or "adventures," alerting the reader to expect more than a miscellany of cartoons and to anticipate a continuation. Often such literary categories as "picture drama" or "picture poem" are used to describe the strips and their visually self-evident narrative format.

In contrast, the wordless picture-story of the eighties, introduced from Germany into France by artists whose claims were compared and disputed, was often self-consciously designated as such (also as "pantomime"), apparently because it was regarded as a novelty and tour de force.

Not even in the 1880s, when caricature became the topic of major comprehensive histories and the comic strip was fully established in journalism throughout Europe, do critics show a real awareness that a new art form has arrived. The peculiar aesthetic merits and nuances of caricature were already the subject of careful analysis by Baudelaire in mid century, but he is wholly unaware of the comic strip and does not mention Töpffer or Cham;[9] nor does Champfleury in his *Histoire de la caricature moderne* of 1865; and Ruskin, who praises Töpffer for his "perfection of pure linear caricature" and skill in graphic abbreviation, ignores the genre of picture-story as such, which Töpffer reinvented.[10]

In his monumental history of German caricature (1885), John Grand-Carteret brackets Töpffer and Busch in a chapter called "Les Histoire-Charge" (Caricature Stories), correctly identifying Töpffer as the initiator and Busch as the perfecter of the genre "littérature en images," with Léonce Petit as the major (if weaker) French exponent.[11] In his even bigger survey of French caricature (1888), Grand-Carteret shows a vague awareness of the comic strip narrative as a genre carried from Töpffer through Cham and Nadar to Léonce Petit, but he treats it as a question of style (thin, dry, linear contours) rather than a narrative format. In the end he fails to make the crucial distinction between Petit's early depictions of single scenes of village life, examples of which he reproduces, and the later stories, which he neither cites nor reproduces. It is these stories, however, that constitute the real "ensemble" of peasant custom and social predicament, exposed (as we shall see) for the first time in a critical depth made possible only by the narrative format.[12]

The Comic Journal. Form and Content. Politics and Farce

The comic journal is an important constituent of the illustrated press, whose history as a broad European phenomenon has yet to be written. We have a biography of the leading magazines both in England (*Punch*) and in Germany (*Fliegende Blätter*); that for the French *Charivari* is still oddly lacking, although there are useful descriptive accounts of the French satirical illustrated press in general.[13] We know little about the economic functioning of the magazines (my own discoveries are limited largely to the internal evidence) or their political role, except when these came into conflict with the censor.

The magazine, as a miscellany of useful and amusing information, was an invention of the 18th century. In some ways the essential form of that miscellany in the 19th century (as television is in the mid 20th), the illustrated magazine has been called a microcosm of the city, of the urban experience. And the comic strip is the logical expression of that format. Its sequential form is adapted to the anatomy of the magazine miscellany, which it miniaturizes and pictorializes. The comic strip, although usually—mercifully—much shorter, is the graphic equivalent of the serial novel, which was the mainstay of many periodicals (including, in France, daily newspapers). Like the serial novel it could effectively dominate a magazine and, when distributed over several issues, months, or even on occasion a year, establish a thread of continuity in a context predicated on variety and disjointedness. For a long time the comic journals were unwilling to meet the demands for weekly continuity inherent in the longer narrative strip and allowed gaps of varying—and often considerable—length between installments. The comic strip appears as an attractive intruder into a normal rhythm of single cartoons and interwoven series of cartoons predicated upon nonnarrative continuity of types and themes. This "intrusion" is particularly apparent in France, where the tradition of the series, established by Daumier and Gavarni, enjoyed an obvious commercial advantage, not only in inducing regular subscriptions to the magazine, but also in generating sales when later republished as albums. Comic strips should have functioned in a similar way, although republication as albums was a privilege—and risk—granted only to the few.

Heterogeneity of content—short essays and stories, reviews, potted wisdom, aphorisms, jokes, cartoons, puzzles, and advertisements—in the same issue and on the same page is a function

9. Baudelaire 1964.
10. Grand-Carteret 1885, 329.
11. Ruskin 1884, 184.
12. Grand-Carteret 1888, 395–396, 469–470. Alexandre ([1892?], 239–240), ignoring Töpffer and the French contributions, credits Busch and the *Fliegende Blätter* artists for launching the genre, which the author attributed to a peculiarly Germanic capacity for invention, reflectiveness, and slow deliberation.
13. See, for example, Lethève 1961, Roberts-Jones 1960, and James Cuno's 1985 dissertation on Philipon and the beginnings of the *Charivari*.

of the search for a social and intellectual mix of readers who as individuals also represent a mix of interests. This basic fact, which today we take for granted and market surveys seek to put on a scientific basis, presents particular methodological problems. The comic strip is part of a material mix, part of a context and environment; it may not be designed for this context and this mix, but they are to the reader physically inescapable, even more, given the visual proximity, than a painting in a gallery or a piece of sculpture in an architectural setting. Ideally, one would read the whole of the magazine over an extended period, or over selected, comparative periods, in order to determine the relationship of the parts to one another and to the whole, to understand the magazine's complete social identity. Ars longa, alas, vita brevis.

A rule confirms the lower-class orientation of the comic strip: the more serious, the more political, the more sophisticated the magazine, the less likely it was to carry comic strips. *Punch, Kladderadatsch,* the post-1852 *Charivari* have few. In contrast, the more the magazine sought to entertain, the more likely it was to carry them. Politics and farce no longer mixed as in the golden age. The dignified allegorical cartoons of Leech and Tenniel in *Punch* show how completely political criticism had been purified of buffoonery and grossness; and the comic strip shows, for the most part, how completely comedy and farce had been purified of overt politics. Relative to earlier centuries, when the narrative strip, whether comic in form or not, took on the big moral and political issues of the day, the loss of overt political substance is striking; but it is also far from complete, and I attempt here to reveal it when it lies under the surface. Politics and morality tend to become submerged and sublimated under a farcical form, to retreat into the chuckle for fear of rejection.

The response of the comic strip to the great political landmarks—the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, the subsequent struggles (on the Continent) against repression and censorship, the Franco-Prussian war—is often indirect, but nonetheless present. It is present even—or especially—in the journals that pretended to be nonpolitical, nonpartisan. The European-wide retreat of the comic strip from about 1853 to the mid 1860s can be seen as part of a general political quiescence during this period. In England the comic magazines remain always to a degree political, but in a nonmilitant, decorous way; the political and public spheres receive the same treatment as do social and private foibles. Busch tried privately to downplay his aggressively political intervention of the early 1870s; and later criticism went further in promoting him as a political innocent.

The censorship that constrained and destroyed magazines everywhere except in England should not be viewed as directly affecting the comic strip, except where it gives rise to the occasional incident in a narrative. Constraint on free movement of ideas shows up primarily as constraint on the movement of individuals, pictured in the strips at those customs barriers and national frontiers that Töpffer was the first to ridicule. (Busch never forgave the German pre-1871 petty-state structure, with its innumerable customs barriers, for an insulting body search inflicted on his mother.) The comic magazines, many of which regularly crossed national frontiers, were the first to benefit commercially from the relaxation of frontier formalities and customs dues. But the omnipresence in the comic strip of police and jails, absurd accusations and gratuitous arrests, registers the protest of the lower middle classes against the repressive apparatus of the state.

The caricature journals, which seem so stable and conspicuous, did not become fully institutionalized until relatively late in the century. Until 1848 there was little competition; the market could bear only one such journal, which of necessity was relatively expensive, in each of our three major countries, England, France, and Germany. Until the late sixties the mortality rate was high, especially around 1848, when popular journalism benefited, temporarily, from the release of democratic energies. Of the revolutionary crop in Germany, only *Kladderadatsch* survived the repression. In France, a new weekly (not exactly in competition with the old daily *Charivari*) throve by abandoning politics and was successful enough to spawn eight years later a smaller, cheaper, and more completely illustrated offspring. The economics of the whole business remains to be elucidated; it may be that the proliferation of comic magazines starting in the mid to late sixties had to do largely with lower production costs, although in France the liberalization of the press laws certainly helped. Cheaper magazines were aimed at more people with more money and more leisure than ever before, a situation that accelerated in subsequent decades, when more and even cheaper magazines were launched. In England the repeal of the paper duty in 1861, extension of the electoral franchise, and compulsory education acts all contributed to the remarkable efflorescence of cheap comic magazines over the last third of the century.

For the rest of Europe I have provided in the appropriate chapters rudimentary economic, social, and political contexts, insofar as they were readily accessible. In Italy, the satirical magazines all had a common political purpose and must have had restricted circulations; they carried very few strips. In Austria, where the strips are overwhelmingly political; in Spain, where they are all social; and in Russia, the necessary middle-class market for comic magazines did not mature until the 1870s.

The "Lower-Class" Audience

> *That petty bourgeoisie, that enlightened petty bourgeoisie, which provides almost all my customers and which is the heart and head of France. Admirable petty bourgeoisie!*[14]

If the broadsheet of the 15th to 18th century appealed to the rising, largely progressive mercantile middle classes, the comic magazines of the 19th century corresponded to a downward expansion and stratification of those classes. Literacy accelerated: in France in 1801, 90 percent of conscripts were illiterate; by 1901, 6 percent. The number of literate people increased eightfold during the first half of the century, twofold in the second half. In England there were 129 periodicals at the beginning of the 19th century, and 4,819 by the end.[15] The audience for popular magazines embraced unpropertied apprentices and artisans, poor students, and all kinds of people in service occupations, from the better grade of domestic servant and waiter to clerks in the offices of government and business. The term "lower middle classes" seems appropriate here, although I sometimes prefer the term "lower classes," to include the better paid and educated workers and mechanics. Many of the caricaturists came from these classes, especially the clerical: Baric, Draner, Grévin, Monnier, Petit, and Robida all worked as clerks of one kind or another, some continuing in this lowly occupation even after they had made a name in caricature.

This lower middle/upper working class was characterized economically by lack of independence or real property, and psychosocially by insecurity, mobility, and vulnerability. Merging into it from above we have a class defined by its palpable possessions; limited, fragile independence; and small-capitalist ideology—a petty bourgeoisie of big-city and small-town tradesmen,

14. Francisque Sarcey, commenting on the massive reader response to his series on caricaturists in the *Chat Noir* of December 18, 1886.
15. Wolff and Fox 1973, 575.

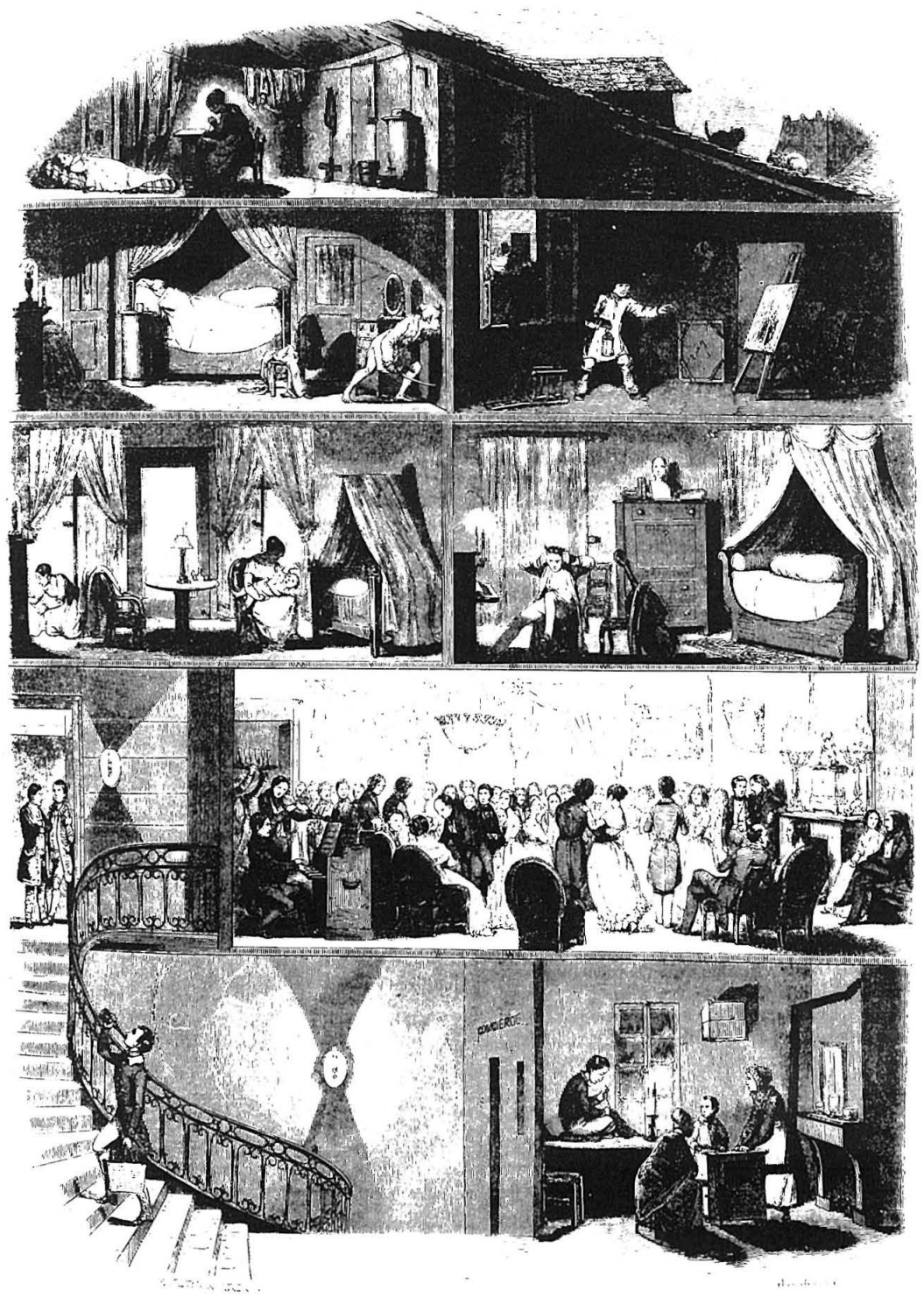


FIG. I.4. Karl Girardet: Social cross-section (1847).

shopkeepers, lesser intellectuals and professionals such as schoolmasters and notaries, and landowning, educated farmers. These were also imbued, often enough, with a strong sense of upward and downward mobility, and they combined conservative, liberal, and radical tendencies. We find this upward-downward movement contrasted in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables,* in the figures of Jean Valjean, who rises within a few years from humble laborer and ex-convict to, as M. Madeleine, mayor and captain of industry, and his enemy Thénardier, who descends from the respectable lower middle class into the vilest criminality. The pattern is repeated throughout 19th-century fiction. The oeuvre of Charles Dickens is stamped with the personal trauma of the author's having been flung as a child from the middle class onto the brink of the proletariat. The political equivocality and volatility of the petty bourgeois were summed up by Karl Marx in 1846:

> In an advanced society, the petty bourgeois necessarily becomes from his very position a Socialist on the one side and an economist on the other; that is to say, he is dazed by the magnificence of the big bourgeoisie and has sympathy for the sufferings of the people. He is at once both bourgeois and man of the people. Deep down in his heart he flatters himself that he is impartial and has found the right equilibrium. . . . A petty bourgeois of this type glorifies *contradiction* because *contradiction* is the essence of his being. He is himself nothing but social contradiction in action. He must justify in theory what he is in practice.[16]

Contradiction, stressed in the original, is the key word here. The petty bourgeoisie is a far-from-homogeneous class; and we should not assume that there was a homogeneous response to the comic strips, much less that all petty bourgeois read and enjoyed them. The comic strip is a unique vehicle, and indeed arena, of that internecine war carried on *within* the petty bourgeoisie as a class, a war also waged sporadically against external enemies (the working and big bourgeois classes). The struggle is also manifested psychically within individual members of the petty bourgeoisie, whose mobility upward and downward represents both a challenge and a nightmare. (The mobility and contradiction are also those of the adolescent, caught between past and future, subservience and independence.) The threat of sinking is conjured up in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848: "The lower strata of the middle class . . . sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which modern industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production."[17] The reversibility of social fortune is summed up in a Gavarni caption to a drawing showing a beggarly female who reproaches an elegant young lady she encounters in the street: "Pamela! Your mother was my chambermaid!"[18]

16. Marx and Engels 1955, 2:451.
17. Marx 1983, 212.
18. Gavarni [ca. 1850], no. 4.



THE DRAWING-ROOM HOGARTH.

FIRST SERIES.—THE IDLE AND INDUSTRIOUS APPRENTICES.

PLATE I.—Herein is shown Mr. GOODCHILD, the Industrious Apprentice, pegging away at his office work, while his fellow-clerk, TOM IDLE, is wasting his Master's time and his own by learning during office-hours a frivolous ballad which he intends to sing in the evening "in society." How much more worthy of commendation is GOODCHILD's conduct than that of his companion! Whatever may be the sequel, let us for the time console ourselves by anticipating a bright future for Mr. GOODCHILD, and that that fellow IDLE will get his deserts. But there is no knowing; this is a wicked, wicked world!

FIG. I.5. Alfred Chasemore: "The Drawing-Room Hogarth—The Idle and Industrious Apprentices" (1871). Scene 1.

The comic strip cuts across tangible social aspirations and apprehensions. These were experienced physically in the new living arrangements, which brought rich and poor together in a single building and in virtual daily confrontation with alternative circumstances to be either envied or dreaded. The new industrial-age apartment block incorporated a vertical social movement, becoming in itself a metaphor for social mobility and hierarchy that reversed the conventional social associations with "rising" and "falling," insofar as the rich lived at the bottom (on the first, though, not the ground floor) and the poor at the top, with corresponding intermediate grades in between—and all shared the same entrance and stairway.

In a popular sociological formula, then (which had its caricatural equivalents),[19] we view, "like so many moving pictures framed under glass" (that is, magic lantern slides), and with a commentary that moralizes and justifies the inevitability of economic hierarchy, a common situation (Fig. I.4): the poor beleaguered concierge-tailor on the ground floor; the rich recklessly partying on the first; the modest family making the best of it on the second, mother and nurse tending the sick, bawling infant, who makes work impossible for the hard-pressed musician-father next door. They are separated by a thin partition (a natural divider for the comic strip narrative), which serves as the all-too-insufficient barrier between families or individuals, and ultimately between social groups forced into unwelcome competition: for privacy, for domestic space, for shrinking social territory. Above, on the third floor, lives the artist who suffers the typical fate of his class—burglary, misguided here because the artist has nothing worth stealing. At the very top of the building (but at the figurative bottom), under the perfectly miserable attic, lives the seamstress, abandoned with her child, most pitiful—but also (we are told) the most brave and morally admirable—of all.

The stereotypical representative of the lower-middle-class small capitalist, so much lampooned in French caricature, was the grocer, the *épicier,* who was assumed to be the natural enemy of real workers and artists. Daumier, however, shows him as a revolutionary hero of 1830, for which he earned not entirely ironic tributes from leading writers: "the alpha and omega of our social state" (Balzac) and "a great thing, a celestial man to be respected, *homo bonae voluntatis*" (Baudelaire).[20] The grocer is also the hero of an album by the Parisian Cham (*M. Lamélasse,* "Mr. Molasses"). In contrast, the typical heroes of Cham's model, the Genevan Töpffer, were the doctor, scientist, and gentleman of leisure—members of the upper bourgeois class and, thanks to the high price of his albums, his clientèle. From 1830s Geneva to 1840s Paris, then, a major social shift occurs.

The "typical" reader of the comic strip in the early period was not the epitome of middle-class complacency but rather restless, critical, dissatisfied—a "fast," raffish man perhaps, as a *Punch* editor put it, distinguishing his audience from that of a rival called the *Man in the Moon,* which effectively launched the comic strip in England. The *Man in the Moon* was designed to appeal particularly to the "fast man about town, to the Stock Exchange Man, the youthful guardsman, and to those interested in theatrical and light literary matters."[21] *Fast,* like the pace of the comic strip itself. And *youthful.*

In Germany, the stereotypical petty bourgeois figure, equivalent to the French grocer, is the tailor or schoolteacher, who, along with baker and farmer, appear in cameo characterization in the world-renowned *Max und Moritz* of Wilhelm Busch. This is the small-town petty bourgeoisie from which Busch himself sprang (his father was a grocer), and in whom the rebellion of 1848 became inverted and punished. These and figures of comparable status (haberdashers, confectioners, pharmacists of small and medium means) are the protagonists, mock heroes, anti-heroes, victims—and readers—of our comic strips. Unlike popular fiction with its cast of upper-class heroes, adventurers, and social outcasts, the comic strip offers true occupational and class identification. These petty-bourgeois types suffer from economic misfortune, deserved and undeserved; in their world, policemen always arrest the innocent, and thieves always get away with it. The concern for small items of personal property is very much the lower-middle-class trait.

By the 1880s, the Busch hero is the humble clerk of the office who would exchange his paralyzing security for a precarious independence as a poet. He is, as an English magazine punned, a railway clerk with ideas above his station. He dreams not so much of rising in his given career as of breaking away from it. His chances of making any significant advance, however, are small. The Victorian "industrious apprentice," now an office clerk instead of the

19. See, for instance, *L'Illustration,* January 11, 1845, p. 293.
20. Farwell 1982, 21–22.
21. Burnand 1903, 255.

textile worker of his Hogarthian prototype (Fig. I.5), will be cruelly cheated of his rewards rather than rise to become Lord Mayor of London as in Hogarth.

The railways, an ever-beckoning siren, mock the clerk's illusions of mobility. Immobilized in his job but mobilized by the railways and a sense of the future offered by his small investments, all he had to fear was some fatal crash. *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday,* the best-selling penny-weekly of its day, gave away insurance premiums against real crashes; in fact, the magazine itself doubled as a free premium, with £150 guaranteed if a copy of the paper were found on the victim of a fatal railway accident. This was one of a number of sensational giveaway schemes, dressed up as philanthropy but designed, of course, to promote the magazine, which proudly pointed to the nine payments made by 1895. At this time in Britain, promotional schemes ruthlessly exploited reader identification and participation, playing on lower-class impecuniousness and dreams of the "lucky break." In connection with these schemes we get our only approach to a statistical breakdown of the readership.[22] To benefit from the largesse of Ally Sloper, the champion bestower of Ally Sloper watches, a reader had only to send in name, address, age, and occupation and indicate how long he or she had subscribed to the paper. The first twenty applications opened each week got a watch, and their data were printed in the paper.

Ally Sloper's short-lived defector, *Charles Ross's Variety Paper,* imitated the stunt with a character called Choodle, created to rival Ally. Because Choodle, unlike Ally, had no other function than to serve as "champion cheque fiend," he comes off as a parody of bourgeois charity, a cornucopia of generosity: part benevolent uncle, part trickster; part fun, part fraud; a laughing fantasy figure who dispensed five shillings' worth of monetary relief (as the magazine dispensed psychological relief) to each week's first forty applicants. In addition to name, address, and profession or trade, readers were asked to state why they wanted the check. From the credible reasons given (many were predictably humorous, others merely flattering to Choodle) emerges a leitmotif of hardship, sense of failure, bad luck, indebtedness, and even indigence. The eliciting and printing of personal data were also intended to persuade readers that the offers were genuine—skepticism over which is another common reason for people's wanting the check.

The *Ross* sample gives us a readership that is overwhelmingly urban and London-based, presumably because the paper had not had time to penetrate the country as a whole (as had *Ally Sloper*), where the distribution is more proportionate.

The age breakdown (available only for *Ally Sloper* and based on a sample of the first 505 winners) shows a decided concentration among the more youthful population: 75 percent in the 15–35 age bracket (17 percent 15–18, and 29 percent each 19–25 and 26–35); 10 percent 14 years and under (including four readers 9 and under); 11 percent 36–45 years of age; and less than 4 percent older than 46.

In the professional breakdown for *Charles Ross's Variety Paper* (based on a sample of 1,075 winners, virtually the totality), by far the largest category was clerks (defining themselves as such, but also for the present purposes including many workers in communications, railways, and the post office as well as commercial travelers), at 21 percent. The second largest group comprised skilled artisans, technicians, foremen, and the like, at 12 percent. Then came lower professionals (including many in entertainment), at 11 percent; tradesmen, at 10 percent; services (especially food and drink retailing), at 7.5 percent; and the armed forces and police, at 4.5 percent. Teachers (including governesses and a few nurses) made up only 2.5 percent of the readership, and there were surprisingly few lower domestic servants (maids), at 1.5 percent. Unskilled laborers (porters, road workers, etc.) constituted a mere 3 percent of the *Ross* audience. Hardly any winners were identifiable as urban proletariat (unskilled industrial workers, many of whom must have been literate). Very few indeed had specifically rural occupations. Schoolchildren and the higher professions (managerial staff, as well as a few dentists and surveyors) each made up close to 3 percent. The clergy, a numerous class at this time, are conspicuously absent, with only three individuals represented. Perhaps most clergymen would have been nervous at the idea of being publicly identified as a reader of a "low" paper of doubtful morality.

The *Ally Sloper* sample, comprising only the first 581 winners (the competition ran seventy-three weeks), revealed significant differences, explicable, I believe, by the more completely nationwide distribution of *Ally Sloper,* as opposed to *Ross*'s London and big-city focus. The proportion of clerks is down to 8 percent; skilled artisans have moved up to 18 percent, armed services to 6 percent, and teachers to 4 percent. Trades and services remain about the same. Rural pursuits (blacksmiths, farmers) constitute an identifiable group at 3.4 percent, as do "ladies" and "gentlemen," presumably leisured, at 6 percent. The higher professions increase slightly, to 5 percent. Identifiable females in both our samples amounted to approximately 12.5 percent of the total readership.

Because our data base, by its very nature weighted toward those actually in need of free checks and watches, would tend to eliminate wealthier readers, the number of "higher professionals" among the readership was probably substantially higher. But the lack of the true working class, the urban proletariat, is striking, if not surprising. The distance from, and responsibility toward, the poor that *Ally Sloper* editors—and presumably readers—felt is evidenced in a "special gratis supplement"[23] that excerpts George Simms's dramatically written and illustrated *How the Poor Live;* this was run in conjunction with a campaign for a Poor Relief Fund and at the same time as the watch-giveaway stunt.

Locales and Reading Habits. Means of Distribution. Circulation. Bar, Salon, and Railway. Fragmentation. Time

Modes of reading changed radically in the 19th century. Magazines and novels at a few pennies an installment—as compared with the earlier thirty-shilling three-decker novel à la Walter Scott—presuppose a different frame of mind, a different availability of time for reading and of money for spending. The readers are no longer primarily men and women of leisure but busy people able to devote limited and decreasing amounts of continuous attention to intellectual recreations.

The format of the caricature album and magazine was perfectly adapted to insertion in the interstices of the hectic middle-class life. Quickly absorbed and often discarded when read rather than mulled over and carefully preserved like the relatively complicated colored broadsheet caricature, the cheaper magazines and penny-novel installments were truly consumed, in the modern sense of the word. As a result, some of them—the shorter-lived and the cheaper-priced ones—have virtually disappeared or sur-

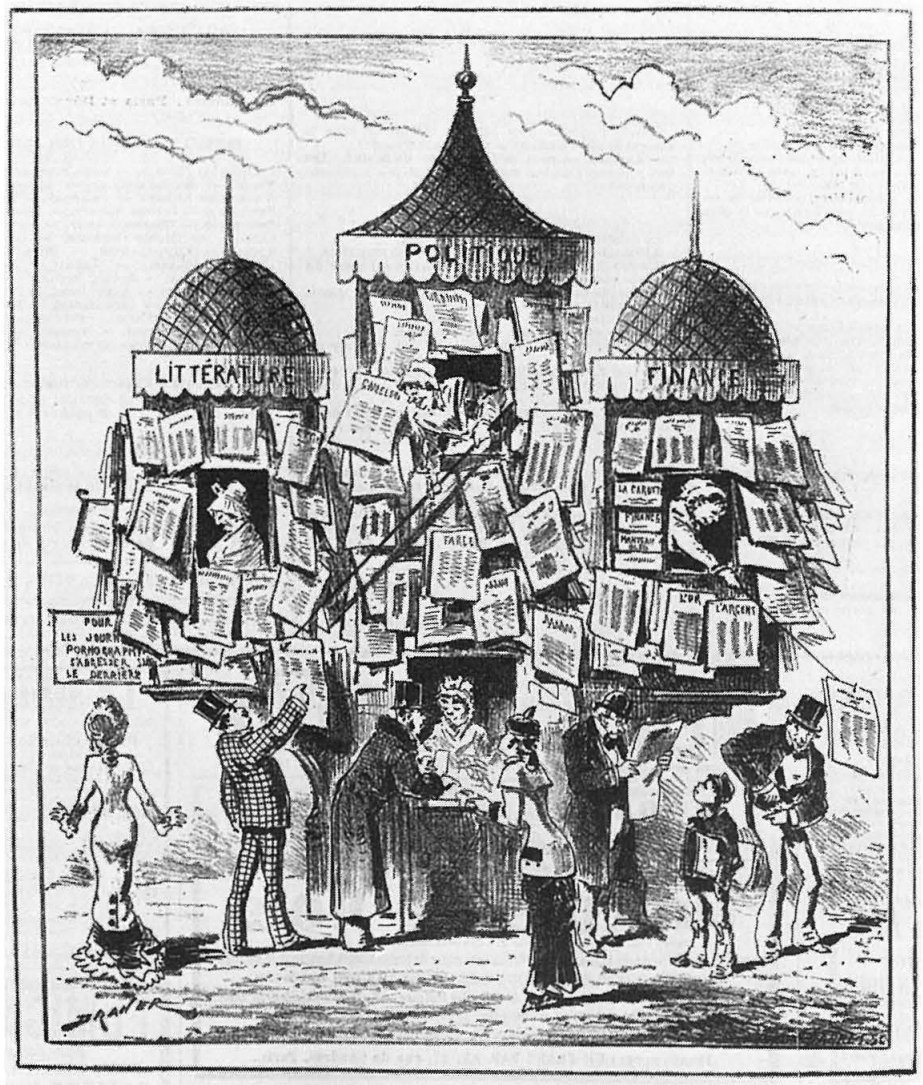
22. See Bailey 1983, 9. My analysis here, conducted independently of Bailey's and according to somewhat different criteria, allows for slightly different conclusions with the same thrust.

23. *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday,* November 19, 1887. The *Ross* check winners are listed September 21, 1887–February 29, 1888; the *Sloper* watch winners are listed August 14, 1887–February 5, 1888.



(Le Marchand de Crimes.)

FIG. I.6. Edmond Forest (?): "The Crime Vendor" (1844).



CONSEQUENCES DE L'ABOLITION DU CAUTIONNEMENT.

Les futurs kiosques des marchandes de journaux.

FIG. I.7. Draner: "Consequences of the Abolition of the Deposit—Future Kiosks for Magazine Vendors" (1881).

vive in incomplete or mutilated runs. Some of the most important vehicles of comic strips survive only in the national library of their country of origin. Physically fragile, many are available only on microfilm, like precious incunabula. The cheaper paper of the late-19th century, with its high acid content, brought the magazine to the millions at the time but denied it to the future. The rule seems to be: the easier to get then, the harder to get today.

The magazines were sold by subscription, at bookstores, from kiosks in the streets and railway stations, and, especially in the smaller towns and villages, by itinerant hawkers. The relative importance of these means of distribution is hard to determine. There was certainly an important historical shift from street hawking to subscription and home delivery. The hawker was associated in the bourgeois mind with crime; in times of ferment, he purveyed political subversion, and legislation tried to set controls upon his activities. Contrast his wild, antisocial air (Fig. I.6), appropriate to one who profited from and in a sense promoted antisocial behavior, with the benign lady in her kiosk (Fig. I.7), lost amid the multiplicity of magazines (here, of course, futuristically exaggerated): it is the passage from the individual selling (as) an individual act to an institutionalization that overwhelms the consumer with sheer quantity, employing comically "mechanical" means of distribution.

The itinerant vendors were gradually displaced by the kiosks, which became progressively more solid and permanent and also, with the cheaper papers as the century advanced, increasingly took over the role of subscription; one reserved, if one reserved at all, from the newsagent rather than the publisher, who no longer offered home delivery. This meant that without subscription renewals—the annual or biannual reaffirmation of allegiance—the magazines had to compete issue for issue at the kiosks, which put a premium on graphically varied content and visually appealing, aggressive, erotic, and eventually colored covers. In the early years (up to the 1850s), when we may assume home delivery by subscription was dominant, readers read more slowly and tended to preserve the magazines, which (in France at least) were also available as reprints, in runs of several years of back issues.[24] The lithographs of the *Charivari* were easily detachable, intended for preservation; special editions on deluxe paper were made as well. After 1848, however, the striking full lithographic page of the *Charivari,* detachable and readily preservable, was displaced in popularity by a cheaper layout combining woodcut and text, which was less attractive for preservation and framing.

At the beginning there was a strong sense that along with the new illustrated news magazines, the comic papers represented not only instant amusement but also a historical record of a kind. This sense gradually dissipated. Casual buying at kiosks, which grew proportionately with the number of railway stations, meant that some magazines adopted the (for the historian) quite reprehensible practice of not dating issues—in order not to become dated—so as to prolong their "shelf life." The single most important magazines of England and Germany, *Punch* and the *Fliegende Blätter,* bore no dates at their inception in the 1840s, only issue or biannual volume numbers, with continuous pagination. *Punch,* in a gesture of self-confidence, started dating in 1855; the *Fliegende* never did. The *Petit Journal pour Rire,* the first really cheap comic paper to survive anywhere, is also undated, as are its cheaper-still competitors of the 1870s and '80s (fortunately, in the Bibliothèque Nationale they are bound in one- and two-year volumes dated on the spine). The lack of topicality characteristic of these strictly nonpolitical magazines means that there is no means of secure internal dating, leaving us with ahistorical mush.

24. The *Journal pour Rire* frequently advertised reprints. As late as 1885 one could get a *Collection complète du Journal Amusant* 1856–1883, twenty-eight volumes for a thousand francs, or seventy centimes an issue (in 1863, an issue cost forty-five centimes).

Apart from home delivery, the magazines were subscribed to by certain public and circulating libraries, reading rooms,[25] and literary, social, and political clubs, where they would be widely shared. They were a decided attraction of restaurants and cafés (which by 1900 totaled 27,000 in Paris, 413,000 in France as a whole),[26] to a degree we cannot conceive today. They were also available, like their modern counterparts, in the waiting rooms of public-service professionals like doctors and dentists. The estimate of ten reader contacts per magazine issue (today the most popular magazines claim five) should be regarded as fair.[27]

Circulation figures are given by the magazines only for particular reasons; I cite them where available. The upward trend is clear. The *Charivari* in its artistic heyday in the 1830s and '40s sold 2,000–3,000 copies, a figure not much larger than that for a popular Hogarth or Gillray print. By 1848–1849, the *Journal pour Rire* could command sales in the tens of thousands. Sales in Britain for all kinds of popular, entertainment literature were the highest in Europe: *Punch* in the 1860s had a circulation of around 50,000; the English penny-papers of the last decades of the century claimed circulations in six figures, and thus a readership in the millions. Sales figures for the equivalent French papers are unknown but would certainly be less; the elite *Chat Noir,* for instance, claimed 20,000 in the 1880s. The *Fliegende Blätter* was selling 20,000 in 1850, a figure that by 1889 had reached 81,000 and, by 1903, 95,500, of which 10,000 went to the United States.[28]

The use of the comic magazine to pass a few vacant, lonely, anxious, or impatient minutes in a bar or barber shop is easy to understand. Its uses in the home are more complex, involving several stages. Newly arrived, it was read alone or among family members and friends, including women and children (see Fig. I.2). Publishers advertised the comic albums and magazines as particularly suited for New Year's gifts for nephews and nieces. With their markedly nondidactic, frequently quite silly, and occasionally slightly risqué character, they were the ideal avuncular gift for young people—in that uncles and aunts might permit themselves certain liberties that parents might not. The albums and papers were then placed on a drawing room table to amuse a guest left momentarily to his or her own devices or to help pass a rainy day in the country.

By a social extension (which publishers stressed), the comic magazines could act as a social lubricant in larger, mixed, gatherings, easing the passage of the shy person or the stranger, who might flip idly through the pages to avoid feeling or appearing abandoned or use them as a pretext for engaging in conversation. "How often, in a salon where all is buzz and chatter, where the question cannot wait for the reply, where nobody likes anybody else, where few know each other, in this pointless hubbub of ambition, calumny and slander, amid these painted women and beribboned knights, the unoccupied man who doesn't know what to say or think, sits himself down in a corner by a table piled with images, albums, broadsheets!"[29] The better albums were even imagined to constitute rivals to the organized musical or literary entertainment going on nearby.

And finally, caricature moved from the tables to the walls, not only to bookshelves in bound volumes but also as colored wallpaper for smaller and informal rooms (though whether actually in bedrooms, as in Doré's humorous advertisement [see Fig. I.1], one may doubt). Printed from the original page layouts in long rolls, they were advertised as suited to a range of living spaces, from billiard rooms to corridors to toilets, and especially to country houses. This lucrative idea was devised by Philipon, son of a wallpaper manufacturer, who thereby expanded on a function of the earlier caricature broadsheet, which was commonly pasted on screens as well as into albums (see Figs. I.2 and 1.3). The folio sheets of multiple small woodcut designs from the *Journal pour Rire,* which specialized in the comic strip and cartoon miscellany, were particularly suited to this purpose, to which the generally larger handprinted lithograph was neither aesthetically nor technically adapted. Should one regard such use as a degradation or an affectionate domestication of the art of caricature, like the printing of cartoon figures on wallpaper, posters, bedsheets, and T-shirts today? For the middle classes of the 19th century, "wallpaper was a real invention: It gave if not the equivalent of luxury, at least the mirage of it."[30]

Whether in the bar, on the salon table, or as wallpaper, caricature became a conversation piece—part of an ongoing social conversation, part of a chain of jokes, witticisms, and bons mots that passed from mouth to paper and paper to mouth ad infinitum. Laughter became, as Bergson noted, a social act that was amplified when shared.

The Artist and Conditions of Work

The heroes of the comic strips took the buffeting of characters socially awash, the buffeting of the artists themselves, who worked in a critical vacuum and on a social and professional margin. Although the better comic magazines, such as Philipon's, were regarded as commercial successes, no contemporary attempted a critical evaluation of them. Daumier personally attracted much praise, and Cham a little—but not for his youthful pioneering work in the comic strip. The silence, to a really dedicated comic strip artist like Léonce Petit, may have seemed deafening; it may well have paralyzed others. If only some elitist critic had attacked the comic strip as immoral or degrading, as they would in the 20th century! Sainte-Beuve on Töpffer gives us a glimmering of negative criticism that is very valuable, possibly typical of elite literary attitudes, and all too scarce.

For all his wider audience, the cartoonist enjoyed no commensurate social power or prestige. Like the journalist's, his was a low-status profession. As a mere draftsman, illustrator, or engraver, he was not admitted to full membership in academies; nor was his work exhibited, except in a peripheral and subordinate way, for his engravings and comic sketches were not considered real art like painting.

The caricaturist did receive some recognition after our period draws to a close. The French government, in a show of democratic inclination under the Third Republic, began to decorate leading caricaturists, such as Willette, who in 1906 was awarded the Légion d'Honneur, although not, oddly, Caran d'Ache, despite his strident chauvinism—and much to his chagrin. Earlier, at the end of the Second Empire, Daumier had quietly refused an award from a government he despised. By the late 1880s, with frequent monographs, collections, criticism, and the first exhibitions, car-

25. In Paris in 1845 there were at least 198 "cabinets de lecture"; by 1883, only 118. London had proportionately far more (Zeldin 1980, 7).
26. Zeldin 1980, 351.
27. Claimed by the publisher of the *Illustrirte Zeitung* in 1844 (Kirchner 1962, 141–142).
28. Dangl 1938, 10; 1889 figure comes from Hollweck 1973, 86.
29. Jules Janin, preface to Gavarni 1859, 11–12. English caricature in the early 19th century had a similar function: as an "unfailing resource for the entertainment of guests in large country houses. . . . Those unfortunates who cannot be got to talk or are nervously reserved, are usually set by the hostesses to find entertainment and become social over a portfolio of ludicrous scenes" (cited in Patten 1983, 334).
30. Zeldin 1980, 75.

icature and comic strip were institutionalized.[31] The *Charivari* could be referred to as the "official" humor magazine;[32] indeed, it went so far as to propose that the national budget could be reduced by limiting national library acquisitions to a subscription to the *Charivari,* which "will cheer up readers, and, since laughter disarms, the government will have only friends."[33] Satire was now thoroughly domesticated, disarming—and disarmed.

Until the very end of the century, however, even the most successful caricaturist could not amass the same wealth and prestige that even a middling painter commanded, not to speak of those who lived like princes. Caricaturists with the requisite training dreamed of becoming painters, and many continued to practice painting as a hobby. Doré, who did succeed in exhibiting regularly, came to despise his early success as a caricaturist, which seemed to taint his aspirations as a painter.

For most of our period, then, caricaturists represented their art as a sign of professional failure, not much better than the painting of signboards and shutters. John Leech, the leading spirit of *Punch,* said he "would rather be the painter of a really good picture than the producer of any number of the 'kind of things'" he did.[34]

Daumier received a thousand francs for an oil-sketch allegory of the Second Republic, commissioned but not used; he got fifty for a lithograph that reached tens of thousands of people and may have taken the same amount of time to execute. When a painting by a fashionable artist could fetch thousands of francs, and by a middling artist (even an impressionist!) hundreds, the basic rate of fifty francs for a full-page comic drawing seems paltry. In caricature and illustration, economic success depended on speed of conception and execution. This was especially true for comic strip artists, who had to come up with a whole page of different designs for the same sum. Indeed, many artists may have avoided the genre for this reason alone. Yet by selling a few of these fifty-franc drawings (or series of drawings) a week an artist could make four to five thousand francs per year—enough, in the early 1850s, to enjoy a decent middle-class life-style.[35] Compare these earnings, from drawings that took perhaps a few hours to produce (Daumier, after much procrastination, could knock off eight designs in a night), with the two to four francs an industrial worker or semi-skilled artisan in the 1840s earned in a ten-hour day. By the 1860s and '70s, however, this same worker, now earning five or six francs a day, could afford to buy a ten-centime (one-penny) illustrated comic magazine that before would have cost much more.

Artists known for their facility occasionally received lucrative offers, if they would surrender themselves to a single project: Gavarni was offered an annual salary of Fr 24,000 in exchange for a drawing a day (or Fr 66 a drawing) in the daily *Paris* (1852). As long as the paper lasted (one year), this was no apparent burden for the artist, who could do twenty-seven plates in a single week.[36] Cham declined a fantastic Fr 40,000 a year from an Englishman who wanted to start a rival to *Punch.* By the end of the century Forain, exceptionally, for a single drawing in the *Figaro* could command Fr 300, which was the monthly salary of Henriot in 1879 when he replaced Cham at the *Charivari* with an allotment of a dozen or so drawings a month. Certainly the comic magazines paid much better than the manufacturers of popular imagery: in 1852 the head of the Pellerin workshop, which employed dozens of workers, was paid Fr 60 a month, and the principal artist for twenty years, François Georgin, received only Fr 5 a day[37]—although presumably there were perks.

With only ten drawings a month, Daumier or Cham (who did more than Daumier) could earn as much as a successful journalist like Henri Rochefort, who was paid Fr 500 a month at the *Figaro* in 1865, or Zola, who earned the same at *L'Evénement* in 1866.[38] Neither journalist nor caricaturist, however, approached the earnings of the popular novelist—Dumas, for example, who garnered the exceptional rate of one and a half francs a line, or Balzac, at the normal rate of fifty centimes a line.

Before the invention of photomechanical processes, the cost of publishing graphic art resided more in the engraving than in the drawing, especially in the case of the comic strip. A full page of small designs could cost Fr 400 to engrave in wood, nearly ten times the artist's fee. This despite the fact that the wood engravers were poorly paid for long hours and severe deadlines.[39] Lithographs, which required that the artist draw directly on the stone, were incompatible with typography and so not suited to large runs. The *Charivari* could not have aimed for a broader audience without abandoning the more "artistic" medium of lithography for the type-compatible wood engraving.

It is evident from the content of the strips that artists, even if economically secure, suffered psychologically from a loss of independence, which itself had financial repercussions. No matter how large the readership, no matter how well received their work, no matter how many republications there were, the pay remained the same. (Artists and writers for Disney today have the same complaint.) Compare this situation with that of Töpffer who, like Hogarth, was able to write, engrave, and publish his albums himself; costing one franc apiece to print, they sold for ten, making, as he noted, a tidy profit of nine francs. His novels, which sold for much more, earned him only one franc royalty per volume. Although never numerous or printed in runs of more than a few hundred copies, Töpffer's lithographic comic strip albums made for a "nice little haul"—more than from all his writings, which cost him so much more time and effort, combined. Later Doré, attempting the same but in different market circumstances, failed, economically speaking. It was to escape his thralldom to magazine and owner that Wilhelm Busch took to publishing his work in separate books, which earned him handsome royalties. Only in Germany, it seems, was it possible for the genre to meet with this kind of success (or, alternatively, only Germany could produce a Busch).

We should note, however, that the magazines themselves were small businesses, employing few people and making limited profits. Even the most successful owners, such as Philipon, cannot be compared with the mighty Girardin, the true ancestor of the modern press baron, and not least because he rose from low origins. In short, the petty-bourgeois mentality that informs the strips was that of the magazine owner as much as of the artist and audience.

Self-deprecation comes easily to professional deprecators, and to no one more than the ambitious twenty-year-old Gustave Doré, champing, so to speak, at the bit of caricature. The ironically titled, semiautobiographical *Vocation heureuse* (1852) is a tale of successive humiliations and failures. The mistake, says Doré in his "Moral," is to confuse mere natural childish gifts, or dispositions, with true talent and to let them run amok instead of cultivating them in a quest for the "absolute." Thus the same gifts that cause a "revolution" among the caricaturist's classmates and amusement among fellow soldiers cause neglect of real studies and offense to teachers, officers, and other pillars of society, who are not even fun to draw any more. He descends via military jail, lawsuits, and fines to sketching scenes of low life, which become his own life; he ends in debtor's prison (where Gavarni landed in his youth), once more venting his feelings of impotence in the face of the authorities, only this time on a cell wall (Fig. I.8).

31. The first exhibition of caricature, in conjunction with "peinture de mœurs," was held at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1888.
32. In a review by Armand Dayot, the organizer of the first caricature exhibition, in *L'Illustration,* May 5, 1888.
33. *Charivari,* November 6, 1884.
34. Frith 1891, 5.
35. Figure cited in 1852; see below, p. 145.
36. Goncourt and Goncourt [1870] 1925, 185.
37. Hilscher 1977, 71.
38. Bellet 1967, 144.
39. A partner in a large wood-engraving firm could make, "with moderate application," £300 (or Fr. 7,200) per annum (Fox 1980, 7).



Tout enfant je dessinais des images que mes petits camarades s'arrachaient, et qui mettaient la classe en révolution.



Au collége, je me fis remarquer par ma facilité à faire la charge des professeurs.

FIG. I.8. Gustave Doré: "A Fortunate Vocation" (1852).
First and last drawings: "As a mere kid I drew pictures that caused a revolution in class. In high school, I was noted for my facility in caricaturing the teachers / . . . / I drew scenes of popular life, which were deemed disgraceful and nobody bought them. Today I draw at Clichy [debtors prison]."

Emigration was no solution either. Opportunity beckoned from foreign lands, but these had their own brand of terrors. In another strip (see Fig. 13.15) the genial, eccentric sultan requires his court artist, the French narrator, to observe an actual beheading, specially performed on a slave, so that the artist may improve the naturalism of his rendering of the decapitation of Saint John. Back in France, having fled this and other topoi of oriental barbarism, the artist suffers further tribulations, in a continuing nightmare of the rejection of genius. On "awakening" from his artistic illusions after falling three days and three nights through a pit, he turns to a safer and more lucrative trade, as a manufacturer of safety matches. The wise course was not to persist but rather to renounce art in all its forms and become a respectable and useful citizen—a grocer like Petit's Zéphyrin, a tapster like Busch's Maler Klecksel—or remain a humble clerk like Busch's Balduin Bählamm.

The consolation of the caricaturist was to act out fantasies of revenge. These offer insight into some of the social problems and aspirations of artists in general. As a satirical weapon, caricature could no longer inflict serious political wounds: government, self-censorship, and a kind of narcissistic invulnerability on the part of the target blunted its effectiveness.[40] Indeed, following the example of Louis Philippe, much-satirized figures such as Bismarck and Thiers actually collected caricatures of themselves. But caricaturists could take pleasure in puncturing (or imagining they were puncturing) vanity to death by a thousand pinpricks—the vanity of art and artists included. Salon parodies, so popular as a caricatural genre, constituted one means of consolation and revenge; others lay in cartoons and comic strips about artists at work.

The dream of childlike, apparently effortless spontaneity of expression, which caricature labored to convey, was finally realized by impressionist painting—and denounced forthwith by critics and public as an insult to craftsmanship and aesthetic tradition, especially with regard to lack of finish. A new chapter could be added to an otherwise overwritten era in the history of painting by exploring the numerous cartoons and comic strips that lampooned impressionism. The styles and techniques of impressionism appealed to caricaturists not only because, as targets, they were primed in advance by public prejudice, but also—and conversely—because caricaturists identified so closely with these very techniques and styles; thus, their satire is directed partly against themselves.

As in all mythologies of how art began, the caricaturists sought for impressionism a natural origin. By a fortuitous intervention of nature, a happy accident, an unsaleable painting is instantly transformed into a valuable article: a cow licks a landscape in progress, a dog turns a commonplace portrait into a ten-thousand-franc impressionist landscape.[41] Techniques for applying paint and developing designs that started as jokes in the minds of 19th-century caricaturists and wits—such as hurling paint from a trowel, bucket, or syringe, or using hand and whole-body prints[42]—have been applied in all seriousness by 20th-century artists. The market had so alienated the painter from his product, James Sullivan said, that the loose style, or as he called it, "The Vague School," had won a distinct commercial advantage. Acting on the advice of a succession of friends and patrons, the artist could quickly rework what started out as a landscape into a battle scene, which is exhibited as a shipwreck and bought as a masterly portrait.[43]

Portraiture, one of the most lucrative and prestigious branches of painting, was closed to caricaturists (except, apparently, in Vienna). The comic strip, taking as its premise the conduciveness of professional portrait painting to social ascent, liked to depict the frustration of such ambitions. The painter was shown to aspire to marriage or a liaison with the female sitter, or if the sitter was male, with his daughter or wife. This naturally led to conflicts. Physical violence between patron and painter turned the studio into a battleground where the antagonism of social classes, of the individual and society, was fought out: Art, Ambition, the Ideal were pitted against the sordid bourgeois marketplace. The artist usually lost (see Fig. I.9).

40. In James Sullivan's "Satirist's Victim" (*British Tradesman,* p. 26), the caricaturist commits suicide after finding out that his target was merely (and vastly) amused at his attack.
41. See "A Lucky 'Impression,'" *Puck* (New York), September 30, 1891, p. 91; and "Azor paysagiste," *La Caricature,* no. 374 (1890).
42. *Fliegende Blätter* 85 (1886): 156–157; 7 (1848): 142.
43. *The British Tradesman,* p. 16.



Je fis des scènes popula·res, on trouva ce monde ignoble et personne n'acheta mes dessins.



Je dessine aujourd'hui à Clichy.



FIG. I.9. B. Moloch: "Striking Portrait" (1885).

The successful portrait painter had to be able to balance fidelity to appearances with a sense of the ideal. The bourgeoisie preferred the latter, however, whereas the artistic elite became increasingly committed to the former: thus was created that great cleavage in taste that informs the whole art history of the period. The refusal of society to accept the unpleasant fact of its own visage is emblematized by the breaking of the simply truthful canvas over the artist's head (Fig. I.9). Because the sitter is characteristically (or caricaturally) ugly, the motif also asserts the essential, and indeed superior, truthfulness of caricature in capturing the essential ugliness of the sitter.

The caricatural portraits of artists at work and in society tend to be concentrated in the last two decades of the century, when the market for comic magazines and caricature expanded and the arts in general became more self-reflective. Greater demand sharpened both competition and the caricaturists' sense of professional identity. They began to see themselves partly as low-grade professionals and partly as workers in an economic system that was increasingly becoming the object of fierce and organized socialist criticism.

The habit of "borrowing" from abroad, characteristic of the cheap magazines of this era, may be likened to the hiring of foreign, "scab," labor; it caused much resentment at the time and no doubt led to depressed rates of pay. In Figure I.10 we see the old contrast of starving artist/wealthy patron applied to the caricaturist vis-à-vis his publisher and reader, who profit from his product in blithe ignorance or insouciance of the conditions under which it was created. In another view, Figure I.11 shows the publisher as factory boss, imposing an impossible rhythm of production and wringing the worker dry, yet separated from direct contact by a chain of command that imitates an elaborate courtly-bureaucratic protocol. When publisher Rodolphe Salis's various grades of functionaries fail in turn to extract the required drawing, the tyrant himself arrives in his princely garb to punish, like a schoolboy, the exhausted delinquent artist.

Magazines bound to a weekly publishing schedule needed, increasingly, to bind artists and writers to a regular output. As preparation and printing were mechanized, rationalized, and speeded up, tardiness on the part of the individual artist became less tolerable. Daumier professed horror for the contract system, the "weary



FIG. I.10. Albert Guillaume: "The Unfortunate Caricaturist" (1891).

cart" of twice- or thrice-weekly lithographs to which he was harnessed for so many years. Magazines were just another commodity on the market; they had to appear on schedule, and so the artist was treated as a caricature-producing machine. As such, he himself became a caricature of the production of art generally, where success depended so much on compliance with the "mechanically" rigorous laws of the market. In the process of commodification of art, a drawing became a material rather than a spiritual product, and the artist an ordinary worker, expected to produce drawings as dependably as a baker loaves of bread.

Experience showed that the processing of the raw material of art (reality into idea into drawing) required unpredictable expenditures of time and effort. Increased demand and competition forced artists to raise their productivity just when raw material was growing scarcer. A widespread creativity crisis found artists struggling to think up new ideas, as if past production and consumption had impoverished limited resources. The surface lodes of precious ideas were becoming exhausted, and artists had to dig deeper and expend more effort to come up with the necessary inspiration. (As a cultural phenomenon, this crisis led from realism to symbolism and abstract art.) The creation of series on the same topic (like Sullivan's *British Working Man*) and continuing comic types (like Ally Sloper) alleviated the problem.

The prolific and self-aware James Sullivan, author for over twenty years of a weekly strip that was often devoted to the worker in relation to his product and raw materials, liked to reflect on the scarcity-of-ideas theme. It simply wouldn't do to keep recycling familiar material from the past, to rely on chestnuts or useless tips from friends: the new idea or joke (which became personified as a character in itself in some of Sullivan's comic strips) was pursued like a rare butterfly; it was lionized to extinction. Like any consumer commodity, wit wore out with use as it passed from one user (or teller) to another, from journal to novel to burlesque—by which time it was more apt to provoke tears than laughter.[44] The market dictated novelty. Thus painters, also under pressure to come up with new subjects, resorted to public advertisement.

The *Fliegende Blätter* relied heavily on readers' suggestions for jokes, which were paid for if used. Sullivan, who did not depend on the witty punchline and whose material was grounded in topics of the day, had to fend off the well-meaning friend who would pester him at every opportunity with an idea for a strip about his "adventure with a mouse (or a pig, or something)—capital subject for you."[45]

The caricaturists' occasional revelations of the conditions and problems of their work were designed to distance them from the humdrum world of artisanal (or factory) labor and to teach the public that their products, however cheap and profuse, should be regarded as Art. At the same time, they sought to dispel any notion that being at the production end of the fun business was simply fun and involved no mental sweat. Busch had to remind readers that his easy-flowing line (graphic and verbal both) was not the product of an easy, childish spontaneity, but rather involved much labor of head and hand. The caricaturist suffered more than most artists from the philistine assumption that in his profession he did no more than capitalize on a natural gift. The ignorant public, says Sullivan in a strip that may express a very real bitterness (Fig. I.12), imagines that being funny is just a matter of knowing—and keeping well hidden—a secret. The obtuse admirer, who would in the last resort callously vivisect the exasperated artist to "inspect his Joke-Works," is a metaphor of public incomprehension of both the jester and the special process of humorous artistic production.

44. "The Very Essence of Fun," *British Working Man,* p. 72; see also p. 96.
45. "A Cry of Distress," *British Working Man,* p. 75.

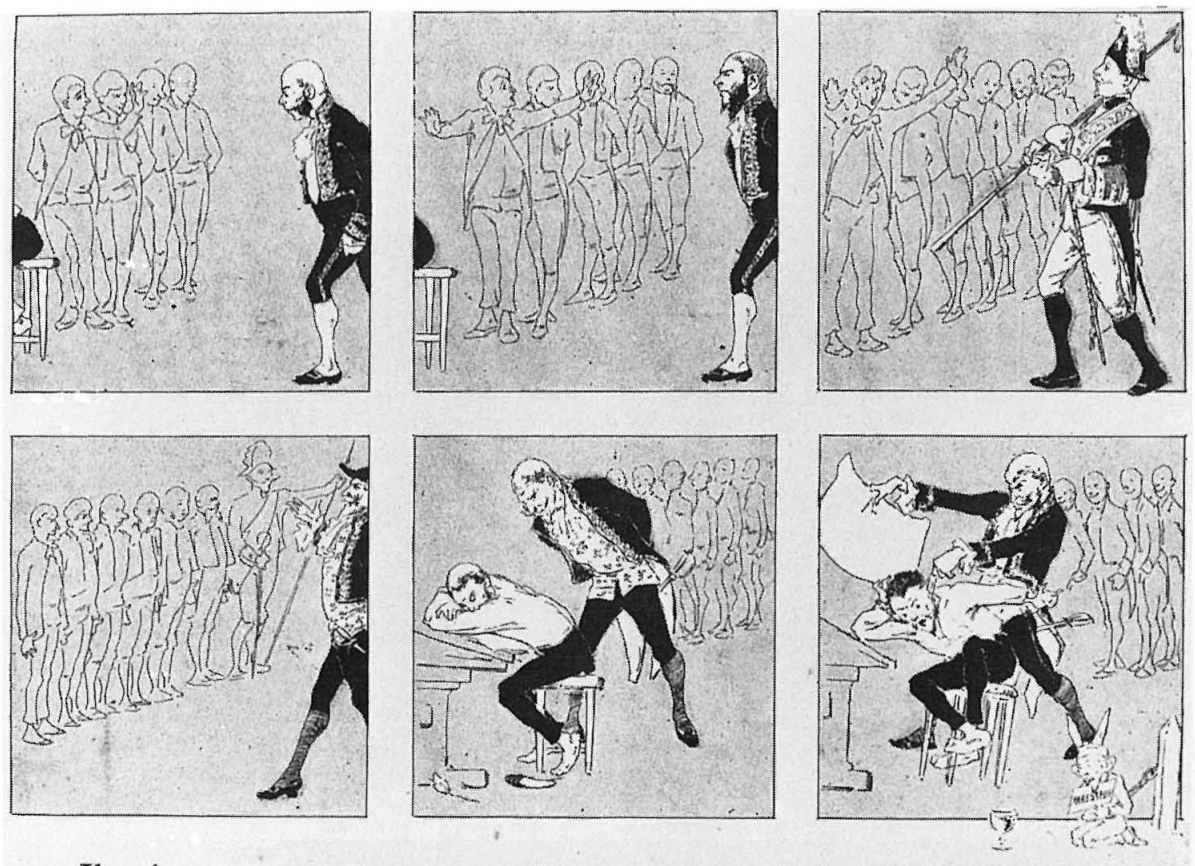


FIG. I.11. T.-A. Steinlen: "There's No Drawing Again This Week" (1885).

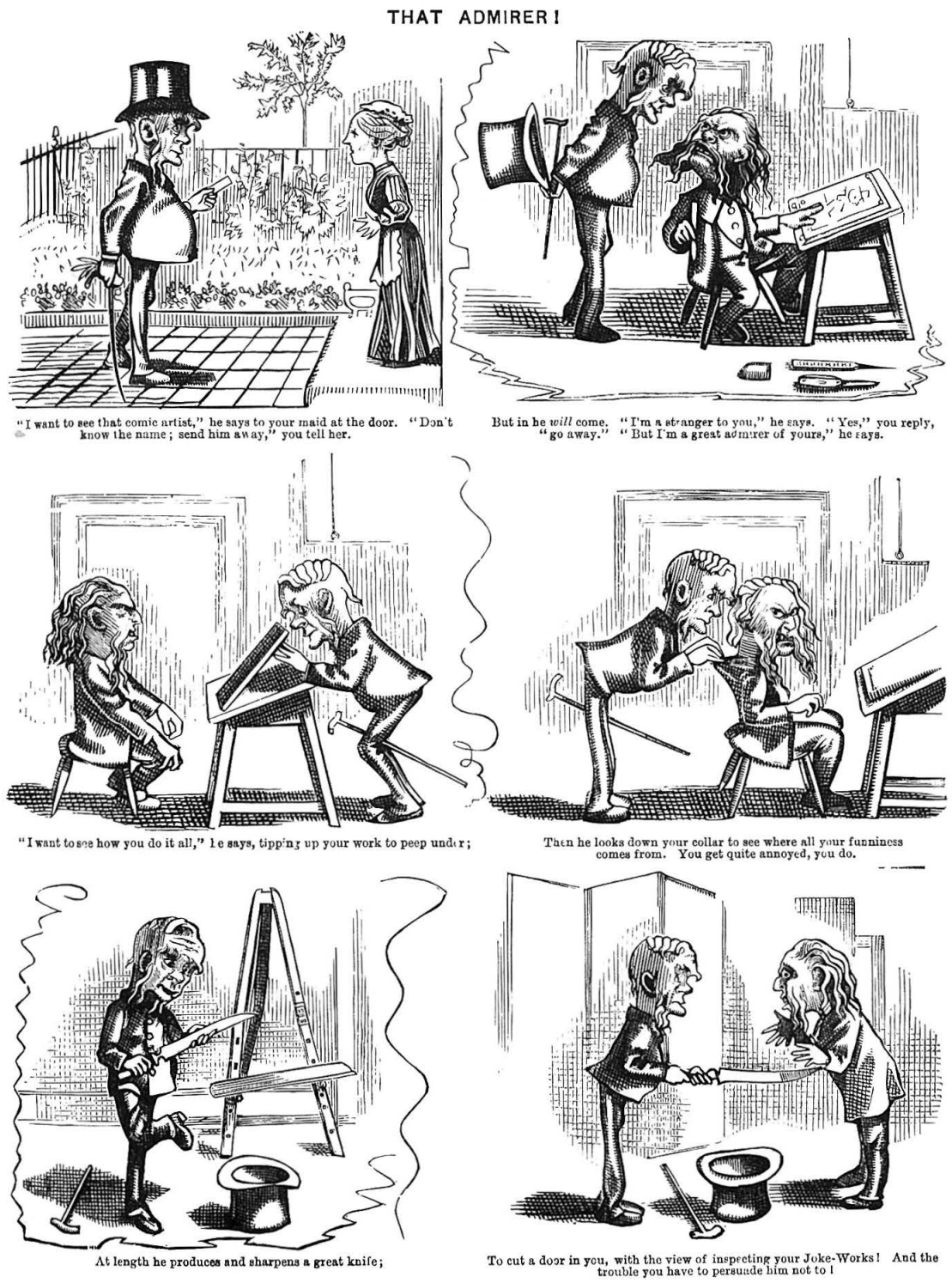


FIG. I.12. James Sullivan: "That Admirer!" (1879).

CHAPTER 1

VICTORIAN ENGLAND: FORMATS OLD AND NEW

Dr. Syntax. Tom and Jerry. *Cruikshank, Seymour. Crude Newspaper Cuts and Safe Illustrated Magazines*

The Golden Age of British broadsheet caricature (c. 1780–1820) was followed by a fumbling for new formats and a striving for cheapness and periodicity. The incorporation of caricature engraving into the monthly magazine goes back to the 1790s, when the short-lived *Comic Magazine* ran small copies of Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness* (1796). *Tegg's Caricature Magazine,* despite its title and claim to be a weekly, was a collection, published at irregular intervals (1807–1811), of five hundred plates, mostly cheap reissues at one shilling colored. Tegg's enterprise, which testifies to the broadening popularity of caricature at this time, "is in the mainstream of caricature at an important period, with the doubtful merit of attempting something as near mass production as the hand-colored etching could achieve."[1] Two monthlies pioneered the inclusion of new, political, caricatures: the *Satirist* (1808–1814), which had a venomous text but poor illustrations, and the *Scourge* (1811–1815), which did better with its huge folding colored plates "crammed with personalities, innuendo and bad taste."[2] In both of these magazines, especially the latter, the young George Cruikshank (born in 1792) was active.

With Hogarth, caricature had already engendered copious literary commentary. The power of caricature to reverse the traditional relationship by which illustration was subsequent and ancillary to a popular text is signaled by *Dr. Syntax,* whose eponymous hero also commands our attention as perhaps the first continuing caricatural figure, even if he was not (surprisingly) transposed to purely comic strip form (Fig. 1.1). Thomas Rowlandson—together with Gillray, the best caricaturist of the age—depended on an outside supply of subjects. At a moment when his "inventive faculty" had become "sluggish" and his reputation was waning, he discovered in Dr. Syntax an easily renewable humorous target; in addition, the doctor's rural tour was a ready vehicle for parodying the fashionable genre of poetic travel writing, as practiced, for instance, by William Gilpin, an authority on the picturesque. As with Töpffer later, the old trope of comic accidents befalling a traveler came to the artist while he was on a tour himself. An actor friend offered suggestions for farcical incidents and the characterization of the traveler as "a skin-and-bone hero, a pedantic old prig [minister, schoolmaster] in a shovel-hat with a pony, sketching tools and rattle-traps,"[3] making Syntax a precursor to Töpffer's *Dr. Festus*. The popular journalist William Combe then "wrote up" verses to accompany Rowlandson's designs, pinning up the sketch in his rooms in the debtor's prison and quickly scribbling his quota of doggerel. The designs, however, always came first, and there was no personal communication between artist and writer.

First appearing in Ackermann's new monthly *Poetical Magazine* (1809–1811) as the *Schoolmaster's Tour,* the collection was published in 1812 as *The Tour of Dr. Syntax; In Search of the Picturesque*. It was a wild success, with nine editions by 1819, French, German, Danish, and American versions, imitations galore, and sequels by the original authors (*Second* and *Third Tours*, 1820 and 1821). At the apogee of this popularity (which has not endured—the Syntax comedy today seems hackneyed and strained, Rowlandson under par), a sports journalist named Pierce Egan launched in monthly installments his *Life in London,* in which he "wrote up to" the designs of Robert and George Cruikshank, but with much more influence on the choice of subject. In particular, he overrode George's demand that the heroes come to a bad end—premature death as opposed to marriage. *Life in London; or, The Day and Night Scenes of Jerry Hawthorne Esq. and His Elegant Friend Corinthian Tom, Accompanied by Bob Logic, the Oxonian, in Their Rambles and Sprees Through the Metropolis* (Fig. 1.2), with its contrast of high and low life and its emphasis on urban vice, as opposed to the more innocent, essentially rural adventures of the schoolmaster Syntax, connects Hogarth and the early Dickens. Thackeray remembered the work gratefully as "the schoolboy's delight." Syntax hats, wigs, and coats now gave way to Tom and Jerry pottery, tea trays, snuffboxes. Of course, song and the theater were soon full of them, and visual piracies appeared everywhere. Egan's text today seems both relatively esoteric and pedestrian; the real appeal, then as now, lies in the thirty-six etchings.

1. George 1935–1952, 8:xli–xlii.
2. Jones 1978, 14.
3. Falk 1949, 155.

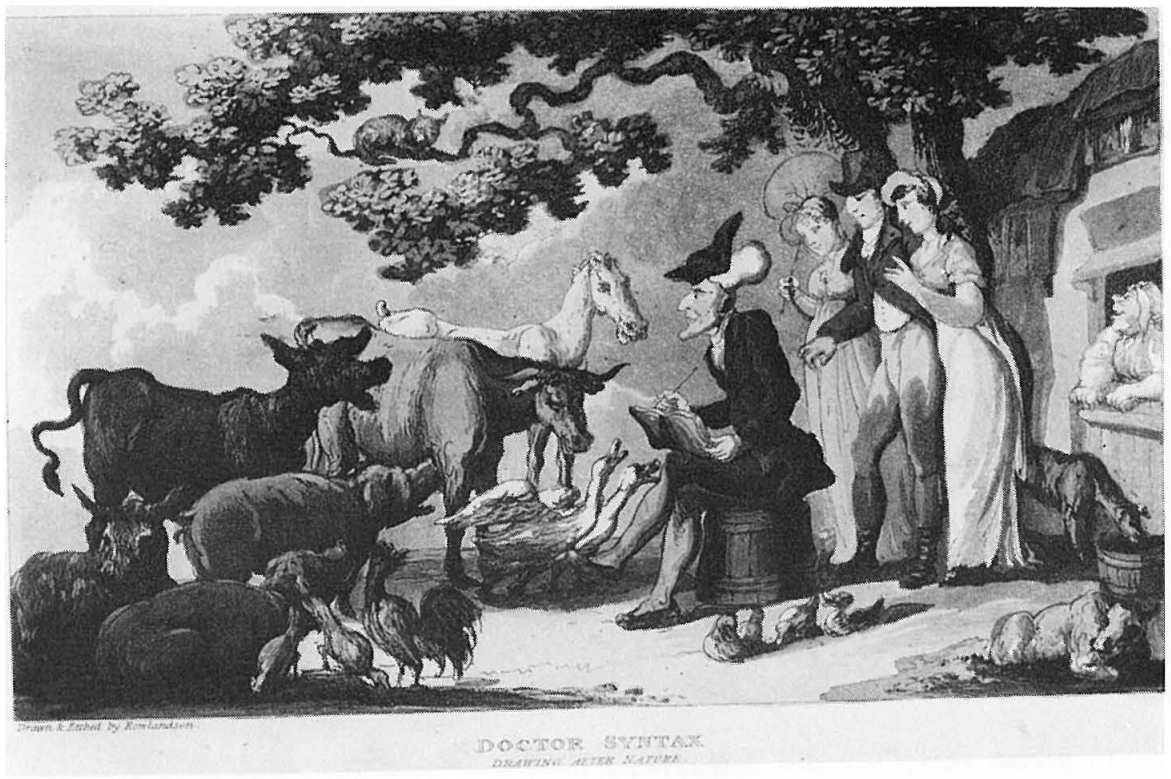


FIG. 1.1. Thomas Rowlandson: "Doctor Syntax Drawing After Nature" and "Doctor Syntax with the Dairy Maid" (1812).





FIG. 1.2. Robert and George Cruikshank: "Tom and Jerry 'Masquerading It' among the Cadgers in the 'Back Slums' in the Holy Land" (1821).

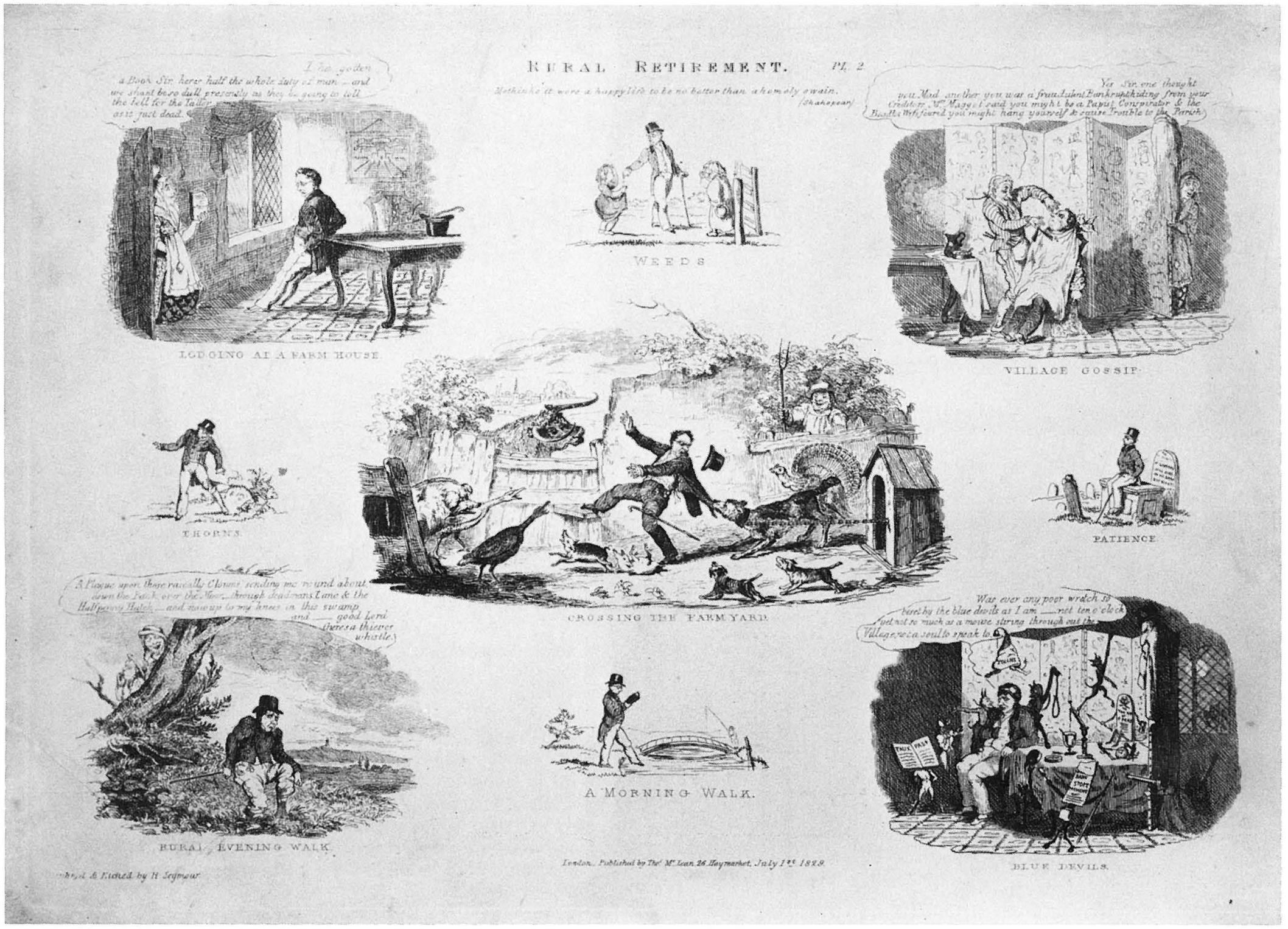


FIG. 1.3. Robert Seymour: "Rural Retirement" (1829).

George Cruikshank told a biographer in 1834 that the idea for *Life in London* "originated entirely" with him; he also claimed he had "intended to paint a series of pictures on the subject, after the manner of Hogarth, and to be called Life in London is Death."[4] The obstacles to the project were, first, that the etcher would have had to learn to paint in oils, and second, that a market be found for his paintings. Expensive moral works, however, were no longer in demand. James Northcote had been unable to sell the paintings of his large Hogarthian sequence *Diligence and Dissipation* of 1796;[5] and in the 1820s Edward Burney did not even attempt to market his (admittedly) extremely elaborate and allusive, hyper-Hogarthian satirical watercolor drawings.[6] The trend was toward the smaller, the cheaper, the commonplace.

Transcending his earlier political caricatures and the agitation that peaked in 1821, George Cruikshank moved into the calmer seas of humorous, fairy tale, and novel illustration, scattering his whimsies widely. The scale of his work suddenly shrank, corresponding to the new 1820s format for caricature, the Scrap Book—a miscellany of small vignettes, more or less loosely bound to a single theme, often casually arranged on a single page like an artist's sketchbook, and sold in a set: *Phrenological Illustrations* (1826), *Illustrations of Time* (1827), *Scraps and Sketches* (1828–1832), *My Sketch Book* (1833). These "Cruikshankiana"—miscellanies of graphic facetiae, illustrated puns, mini-cartoons, caprices of all kinds—were imitated by other artists of the period and constitute one of the series of small mutations that transformed caricature and helped bring into being a new kind of comic strip. The change was toward a free-wheeling comedy in which the fancy of the artist took over, but it also represented a satirical hiatus, the social impasse of a larger, less well educated audience that sought diversion rather than enlightenment, leaving the caricaturist free to say anything—or nothing in particular. This "liberation" from the large full-composition broadsheet led to a hodgepodge of inchoate miscellanies and whimsical ephemera; thus the audience was prepared for the frivolous, disjointed comic strip, composed also of small designs and flowing in no foreseeable direction. The graphic bric-a-brac effect is that of a metropolitan culture sprawling and spewing itself abroad—into the countryside, like the bricks and mortar in one of Cruikshank's more memorable plates from *Scraps and Sketches,* "London Going Out of Town."[7] The quickening pace of industrialization seemed to fracture and collapse time itself, much as an almanac scrambles together great events and week-long wonders.

The format of the miscellany, suitable for cutting up and pasting into scrapbooks or onto screens, was already common in popular imagery on the Continent. The French had a special word for it: the *macédoine* ("mixture" or "salad"). It corresponded to a

4. Jerrold 1882, 1:120ff.
5. See Kunzle 1973, 347.
6. Crown 1977, 1980.
7. Vogler 1979, pl. 95.

new demand on the part of an expanding middle- and lower-middle-class public, some of which was newly literate, for a new kind of reading and looking material—something geared to casual, momentary amusement, a few seconds' chuckle at the fireside or in a stagecoach or, later, a railway carriage; harmless fun suited also (and this is very important) to children. The scatter of such small, low-level stimuli on an increasingly fragmented consciousness contrasts sharply with the relatively prolonged attention demanded by a Hogarth plate or caricature broadsheet of old.

Robert Seymour, whose reputation was second only to George Cruikshank's, tried to combine the new miscellany format with Hogarthian narrative. The story of Peter Pickle[8] runs over six plates, each composed of some eight miniaturized designs surrounding a larger one, all unframed and mainly oval in shape, recounting stereotypical incidents. Although the name and appearance of the hero, together with his nuptial entrapment (after various misadventures he ends up marrying a supposedly rich widow whose only dowry proves to be five ugly brats), may suggest a youthful Pickwick, little else here would justify Seymour's conviction that he himself was the originator of Dickens's celebrated creation. Pickle, a former clerk, is now an upwardly mobile heir who learns the fashionable vices, pastimes, and arts; he goes into rustic retirement, where his boredom is enlivened by a hostile natural (both animal and human) environment. The plate reproduced here (Fig. 1.3) forbodes the leitmotifs of peasant-bourgeois hostility of later French and German caricature and comic strips: in this case, the peasant as smug voyeur of bourgeois discomfiture by nature, specifically, the desecration of that great bourgeois status symbol, the coattails.[9]

By the time this unpromising and rare format appeared, comic art had found an entirely new vehicle—the popular weekly newspaper, hitherto illustrated editorially only with the occasional royal event or sensational murder. During the 1820s the working-class movement had experienced precipitous development; workers were organizing, agitating, and, through such educational enterprises as the Mechanics' Institutes, becoming more literate. They soon developed their own cheap, unstamped, and often clandestine press, sharing with richer people the new Sunday sporting press, in which the cheap comic cut first established itself.[10]

In 1824 Pierce Egan exploited the success of his *Tom and Jerry* with a raffish newspaper called *Pierce Egan's Life in London and Sporting Guide,* a Sunday paper priced at 8½*d*. The paper remained basically unillustrated until 1826, when a number of cuts by George Cruikshank were introduced as headers to regular features. Then suddenly, in a radical break from tradition, on August 26, 1827, the now somewhat smaller and less expensive paper was filled with vignettes unconnected with any great news event. Circulation soared, and Egan sold the paper very profitably to Robert Bell, who had purloined Egan's title and Cruikshank's cuts for his *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* (1822–1886). Bell then launched his own novel pictorial program, a page headed "Gallery of Comicalities," which borrowed heavily (to the artist's chagrin) from George Cruikshank. A crude little woodcut, stuck like a postage stamp in the top right-hand corner of the front page each week, had a magical effect on sales: circulation rose in the first months of the Gallery at the rate of several hundred a week, reaching 22,000 by the end of the year. On June 22, 1828, that week's news was displaced by a gathering of all the previously published front-page cuts, including a nine-scene "Gambler's Progress," as well as Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress,* reduced to a record two by three inches. Thus Hogarth, the virtual creator of pictorial narrative in England, also provided the first newspaper comic strip.

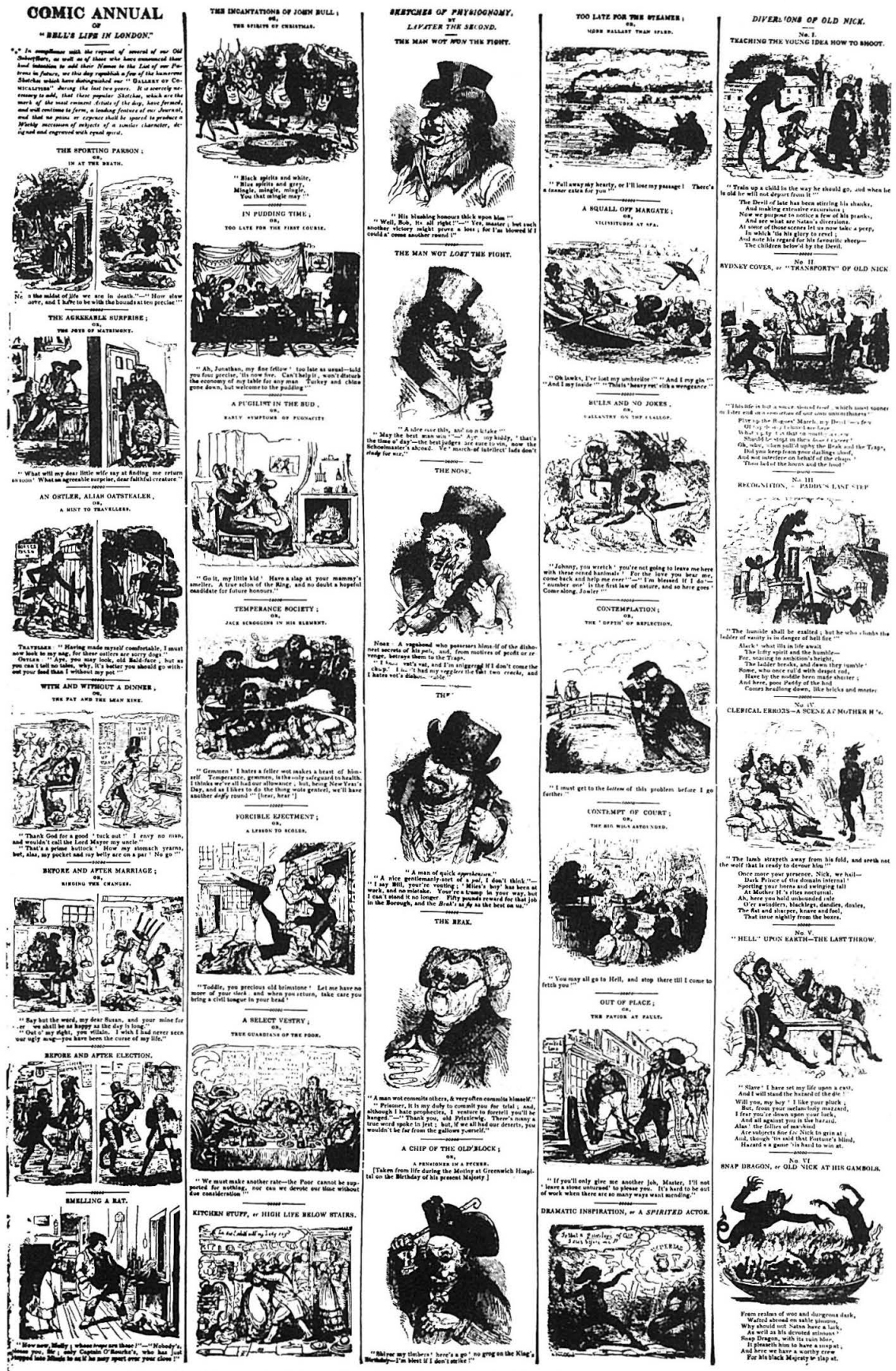


FIG. 1.4. Comic Annual, *Bell's Life in London* (1831).

The collections, or "recapitulations," of the Gallery of Comicalities filled the front page of *Bell's* biannually. They were also sold, avowedly to recoup the great expense of their original production (at five guineas a block), in separate four-page broadsheets at threepence each (Fig. 1.4), and these too enjoyed massive sales: 135,000 by January 1833, one and a half million by January 1839. Five hundred cuts, albeit very small, for one shilling and sixpence—or less than one good broadsheet caricature of old or a single restored plate of Hogarth (as published from 1836 in installments by Baldwin and Craddock)—was indeed good value. The publisher promoted them as suitable for dismemberment into scrapbooks and portfolios, for the enlivenment of coffeehouses, reading rooms, barbershops, sporting houses, and the homes of country cousins, and for wholesale export. This kind of dissemination is, of course, comparable to that earlier in the century of British caricature in its heyday, but now the price is much lower and the sales much higher.

The cuts, though usually unsigned, are occasionally initialed or otherwise identifiable as the designs of the best caricaturists of

8. See George 1935–1952, 11:xlviii, 244. The British Museum Print Room set (Satires 15983–15988) has no overall title, although each plate has its own.
9. Davies ([1928], 11) describes what sounds like a female counterpart to Pickle, which I have not seen: a "pictorial novel" called *The Heiress,* six plates by Seymour with four to five scenes each, "the concatenation of incidents and events which conduct a young woman from a state of dependence to a Gretna Green alliance with a gallant captain."
10. For a fuller account of what follows here, see Kunzle 1983, 339–346.

the age, including Robert Cruikshank, Robert Seymour, the newcomer Kenny Meadows, and the very young, and as yet quite unknown, John Leech (born in 1817). Most are grouped into series, and many into a form of narrative, as their Hogarthian titles testify: "The Gambler's Progress" in twelve steps, depicting the raffish behavior of Tom-and-Jerry types in the guise of monkeys, or "The Drunkard's Progress" in twelve steps and "The Pugilist's Progress" in nine, both by Robert Seymour. The miniaturized cartoon (joke with caption) was joined by a relatively new genre: the bust-length "Sketches of Physiognomy by Lavater the Second." Uniting close observation of social types and peculiarities of facial expression, these sketches reflect parallel developments in France and England in the democratic wake of the July 1830 revolution and the Reform Bill of 1832, with new emphasis on lower-class and street types and even some radical (antirich) critique. As in early Dickens, reformist sentiment mingles with slapstick, and the titles of the series summon up a Dickensian range of vehicles for social comedy, types, and concerns: "Medical Sketches," "Craniology," "Toasts and Sentiments," "London Particulars," "Corporation Worthies," "Parish Worthies," "Boys Own Series," "Critical Situations," "Amateurs," "Awkward Situations," and (in 1839) "Features of Insolvent Life" and "Workings of the New Police Act."

The Gallery of Comicalities was not, however, as stable or successful as it appeared, perhaps because of the difficulty of finding or financing suitable material, and occasionally it would lapse. Sometimes it was replaced by hard-news illustration; from 1837 Dickens came to the rescue, in text (as a kind of substitute reality, when two vignettes from his *Sketches by Boz* were printed in the place usually reserved for the news leaders), and in image (in the form of portraits of the principal characters from *Pickwick* and *Oliver Twist,* in "Twistiana," 1837–1838). A rival publisher, the Chartist John Cleave, also used Dickens in this way.

Swamped by the social comedy of Dickens and the new caricature, political radicalism survived in papers that by not technically carrying news could avoid the heavy stamp duty and sell for only a penny. *Figaro in London,* typical in its slight quarto-sized format, was the true precursor to *Punch.* (In fact, its owner and editor, Gilbert Abbot à Beckett, later joined *Punch* at its inception.) *Figaro*'s high sales depended on a weekly political cut by Robert Seymour, which was popular enough to be republished in large single broadsheet collections (like *Bell's*) called *Figaro's Caricature Gallery.* But *Figaro in London,* born of the Reform Bill, tragically lost Seymour in 1836, and it died itself three years later. When *Bell's* and its imitators gave up illustration in the early 1840s, the future of caricature—as of news illustration, its rival for space—lay with specialist magazines: *Punch, or the London Charivari* (founded 1841) and the *Illustrated London News* (1842). Both integrated the woodcut, large and small, fully and numerously, into the pages of text, in contrast to the French *Charivari* (1832), which preserved its original format of a full lithographic page that supplemented the letterpress. Besides *L'Illustration,* founded in 1843 on the model of the *Illustrated London News* and, in the first decade, including regular pages of caricature, no French magazine tried to incorporate comic wood engravings, à la *Punch,* until 1848.

Although Cruikshank found *Punch*'s satire too personal and refused to join the publication, it was the very restraint and decency of the magazine's political critique that guaranteed its success among the middle classes; likewise, Dickens's popularity, especially among families, depended on his chastening of theme and language. Except on rare occasions (notably the ascent of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte), political personalities no longer engender comic strips, as they did during the Golden Age; certain "indecent" social types, such as harlots (still conspicuous with *Tom and Jerry*; see Fig. 1.2), also fade away. Typically, the hero, instead of cavorting in a brothel, now gets involved in legitimate courtship, which may either be comically frustrated or end in marriage. The political and moral sanitization of popular culture, enacted in literature by Dickens, is embodied in illustration in the sedate, supposedly nonpartisan, middle-class *Illustrated London News* and in the lower-class-oriented *Penny Magazine.* Promoted by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, the *Penny Magazine* was started in 1832 within a few months of *Figaro in London,* with a contrary, Whiggish policy of social pacification. (Copying and commenting on Hogarth in monthly supplements [1834–1835], it excluded the *Harlot's Progress* as indecent.) Its purpose was to divert popular attention from the "contraband" offered by the "cheap and offensive" newspapers (such as *Figaro in London*), which were "dangerous in principle and coarse in language." The "vicious appetite" of the populace for murder, whether of real people or ministerial reputations, was to be channeled into "calmer, and it may be purer, . . . agreeable and innocent trains of thought."[11] The hunger for pictures, for pictorial knowledge and fun, was to be socially stilled. The *Penny Magazine* sounded the manifesto of the Victorian bourgeois illustrated magazine as it overwhelmed the anarchic, radical aftermath of Georgian caricature. Segregated from the news, cartoons ceased to be inspired primarily by politics and major social issues. Even *Punch* reinforced this separation by restricting graphic political commentary to the "big cut" (one full page, later a double page, per issue) and making the little cuts interspersed in the text socially trivial.

Cruikshank. Mr. Lambkin. The Bottle. The Tooth-Ache

Punch, at threepence aiming at a median market (the *Illustrated London News* cost sixpence), and not yet the pillar of upper-middle-class respectability it would become in the high Victorian era, stabilized the previous decade's efforts to give regular periodicity as well as a broader social base to caricature. Another reason for Cruikshank's refusal to join *Punch* was surely that he feared yet another form of domination by literary men. His attempts to extricate himself from a cultural marketplace defined, following Dickens, increasingly in literary terms, however, ran counter to an irreversible historical trend. His desire to have his own magazine, to be his own author or dictate to other authors—in short, to be independent like Hogarth—led him into some instructive difficulties and failures.

The magazine named after him, *George Cruikshank's Omnibus,* with its miscellaneous etchings on inserted plates, survived only nine monthly issues (1841–1842), unable to withstand the competition of *Punch.* Earlier attempts by the enterprising William McClean to exploit on a regular basis the fame of individual artists—William Heath in the *Looking Glass* (1830–1839) and Robert Seymour in *McClean's Monthly*—had relied on textless, scrapbooklike plates of caricature. Unfortunately for Cruikshank, his literary gifts did not match his graphic skills. He was no storyteller. His early *Progresses*[12] had been dictated to him and were unremarkable. In 1823, already the most reputed caricaturist in England (Gillray had died in 1815, and Rowlandson, by now very old, was retired), he was hailed as a "true genius" and summoned to raise his sights by engaging in historical or epic painting and, by developing his literary gifts, to assume the mantle of Hogarth.[13]

As he shifted to book illustration, George Cruikshank found himself "in the thralldom of the booksellers" and caught in a new subservience to self-assured novelists like Ainsworth and Dickens

11. Preface to the *Penny Magazine,* vol. 1; see Kunzle 1983, 345.
12. Of 1819–1820; see Kunzle 1973, 386–387.
13. Layard 1823; cf. Thackeray [1840] 1884.

who, unlike Egan, did not take lightly to suggestions of "any little alteration [of the text] to suit the pencil." Although the young Dickens found such a demand on Cruikshank's part preposterous, his regard for the older man was such that he suggested the title "Sketches by Boz and Cuts by Cruikshank" for his early series on London life, in recognition of the superior selling power of the artist's name. Later, however, Dickens's difficulties with Seymour over the illustrations to *Pickwick Papers,* for which Seymour, famed as a sporting artist, expected Dickens to "write up" to his plates—and over which the artist committed suicide—strengthened the writer's resolve to establish full control over Cruikshank's illustrations to *Oliver Twist*.

We do not need to repeat the well-worn story of Cruikshank's later misguided and ill-fated claims to have been the "author" of *Oliver Twist,* or at least to have suggested placing the boy among thieves.[14] It is enough to note here that George Cruikshank had indeed planned, as early as 1819 and "without a single line of letterpress," a "Life of the Thief," for which drawings survive.[15] Later the artist recklessly made new claims of authorship over two Ainsworth novels he had illustrated. By the early 1840s, then, Cruikshank was feeling keenly the diminution of his star vis-à-vis not only the new popular novelists but also the younger generation of caricaturists such as Meadows, Phiz (H. K. Browne), and Leech.

Meanwhile William Makepeace Thackeray, to whom Cruikshank had taught etching, returned from Paris full of enthusiasm for the new French caricature, which he presented as a model for the English.[16] Thackeray may have picked up copies of Töpffer's picture-stories in Paris, probably in the pirated version of Aubert, though they would also have been available from Aubert's authorized London agent, Delaporte, in the Burlington Arcade. English editions of two of these albums were issued by Cruikshank's publisher, Tilt and Bogue, for which George and Robert Cruikshank seem to have designed frontispieces;[17] one was even reviewed in the respectable *Gentleman's Magazine*.[18] Töpffer's narrative style was perhaps a bit bizarre for George Cruikshank, as it was for the *Gentleman's Magazine,* but the Genevan's little albums may have revived in Cruikshank the idea of independent narrative. There were also French models of a more serious, moralizing, kind, notably by Henri Monnier, an old friend of Cruikshank's whom Thackeray cited approvingly in his article. The Monnier project, which, although it came to naught, was announced portentously by Balzac as destined to establish Monnier's fame as a satirist, involved a kind of dandified rake's progress in twenty-four scenes—with a happy ending.[19]

Cruikshank's response, *The Bachelor's Own Book. Being the Progress of Mr. Lambkin, (Gent.) in the Pursuit of Pleasure and Amusement. And Also in Search of Health and Happiness,* "designed, etched and published [that is, financed] by George Cruikshank" (1844), resembles Töpffer's albums generically in the oblong format (although Cruikshank's twenty-four almost-square scenes are arranged two to a page) and specifically in the appearance (short, squat, big-nosed) and character of Jabot, Töpffer's first hero. Both Lambkin and Jabot represent the same social type placed in the same basic story line: the social climber whose aspirations are variously frustrated up until the very end, when he achieves a happy marriage. Beyond this simple traditional framework, however, the differences are far greater than the similarities. Jabot's social foray is merely the pretext for some extraordinary flights of fantasy on

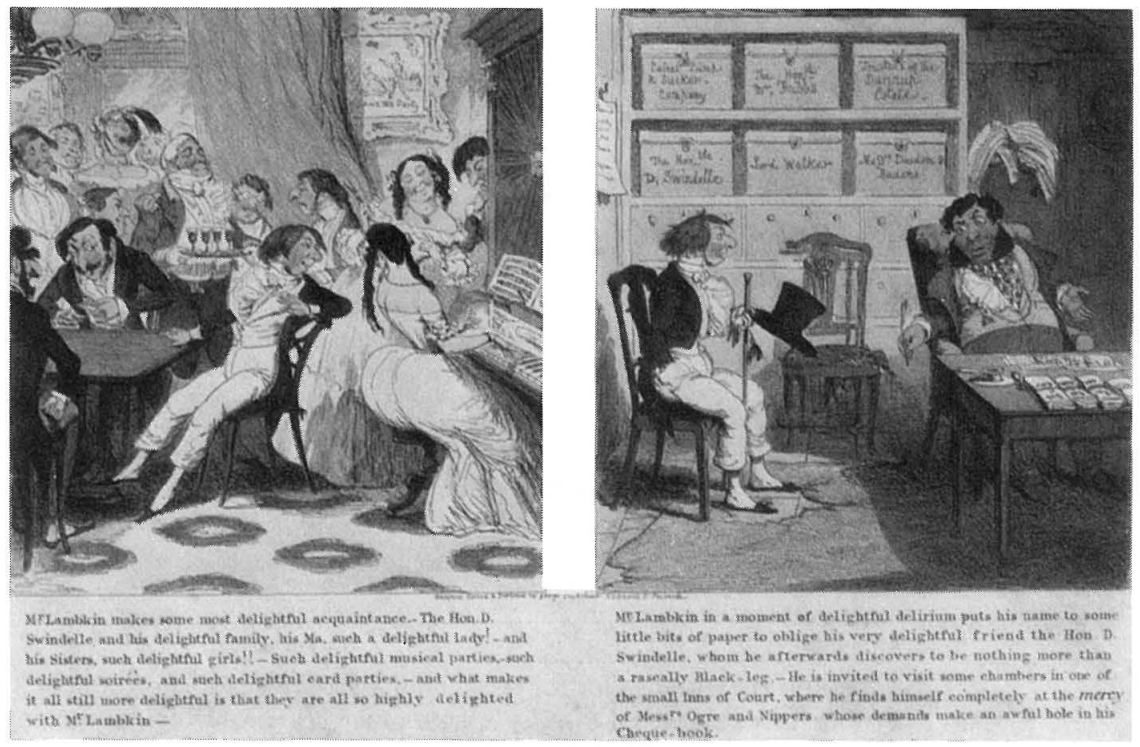


FIG. 1.5. George Cruikshank: *The Bachelor's Own Book* (1844). Mr. Lambkin meets the Swindelles and Messrs. Ogre and Nippers / Mr. Lambkin drinking "New Milk from the Cow" and resolving to reform.

the part of Töpffer, whereas Lambkin moves entirely within the tradition, following Tom and Jerry and so many 17th- and 18th-century rakes in the same raffish activities in the same picturesque locales—as before, there is courtship (now decent, for there are no harlots), gastronomic excess, gambling, indebtedness, the fight with the police, sickness, and cures (Fig. 1.5). Lambkin's happy marriage at the end, however, is less traditional and signals a new, optimistic, and, under the circumstances, quite illogical moral position, much like the obligatory "happy ending" in Dickens.

Lambkin is an anachronism, an unsatisfactory hybrid, with Cruikshankian comic types populating relatively full, Hogarthian settings of the kind Töpffer and his successors tended to reduce, disperse, or eliminate. Ironically, the decor is perhaps the best part, in a narrative that plods episodically along to flat and excessive captions. In the end, Cruikshank's strike for independence was not a commercial success; there were no reviews, and plans for a female counterpart to Mr. Lambkin did not materialize.

Within a few years, however, Cruikshank found for the great Hogarthian narrative that had always eluded him a moral and social issue that aroused him personally and was of passionate concern to his age: drunkenness. This had already been the subject of a perfectly (and blandly) serious ten-plate sequence by Seymour, published posthumously and, it seems, ignored, then and ever

14. See Cohen 1969.
15. Vogler 1974, esp. 87; and Jerrold 1882, 1:216.
16. Thackeray 1839, 282–305. He does not, however, mention Töpffer in this essay.
17. Cf. Kunzle 1974, 179n.15; and private communication from Richard Vogler.
18. *The Comical Adventures of Beau Ogleby* (i.e., Töpffer's *Vieux Bois*), of which there was also a U.S. edition. The London edition was reviewed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* 17 (January 1842): 73.
19. The scenario, to be executed in the elegant manner of Eugène Lami, is given by Champfleury 1889, 348–352. Cf. Balzac 1912–1940, 39:144–145.





FIG. 1.6. George Cruikshank: *The Bottle* (1847). Plates 1 and 6. "The Bottle is Brought Out for the First Time: The Husband Induces His Wife 'Just to Take a Drop,' / Fearful Quarrels, and Brutal Violence, Are the Natural Consequences of the Frequent Use of the Bottle."

since.[20] Cruikshank's *The Bottle* was published in 1847, at a time of renewed Chartist agitation for reform of working-class conditions, in a cheap, rough electrotype process called glyphography, which allowed the eight large plates to be sold (by Bogue) for as little as one shilling a set (and later, half-sized, for sixpence). *The Bottle* sold one hundred thousand copies in a few days, and it was exported massively. In November and December 1847 the new German illustrated news magazine, the *Illustrirte Zeitung* of Leipzig, copied the sequence over its back pages, timed, it would seem, as a grim warning to its middle-class readers against excessive self-indulgence during the Christmas–New Year festivities.[21] In London, *The Bottle* was not only dramatized in eight different theaters at once but also disseminated in lantern slides, china, waxwork, a penny-novel, and an ode by Matthew Arnold.

Cruikshank, eschewing all comic effect and, above all, the facile happy ending of *Lambkin* gives us the classic victorianization of Hogarth. Spicing *The Bottle* with deft references to Hogarth and a few touches of the grotesque, he creates compositions of classical dignity enlivened by a discreet amount of significant detail, thus achieving effects both tragic and melodramatic. In a decent, lower-middle-class cum superior-artisan household, the husband merrily induces his wife "just to take a drop" (Fig. 1.6, Plate 1) and then passes rapidly into physical and moral degeneration, bankruptcy, beggary, destitution, violence, murder, and madness (Fig. 1.6, Plate 6). In contrast to Hogarth, most of the scenes are situated in the home, reflecting the overriding Victorian concern for that social institution. Moreover, vice grows within; it does not (as in Hogarth) enter from without. Here, it is limited to the one individual; its effects, to the single family unit: the murdered wife and deprived children. The sense of all-pervading social corruption present in Hogarth is missing. Cruikshank takes the view of a harsh, individualist, bourgeois morality, which displaces guilt onto the individual will—or the momentary but fatal failure of that will—and away from the social and physical environment. Such a reduction of a burning social and moral issue offended the sharper critics of the time. Cruikshank's old friend Dickens pointed out that drunkenness as a social phenomenon did not typically start with the casual sip but rather with poverty and deprivation, the "remediable evils" at which moralist and reformer alike should strike.

Cruikshank's audience for *The Bottle,* huge as it was, cannot have included the working class; not only was drink one of the primary solaces of this class, but also the Sabbatarian, temperance, and other social philosophies that opposed as evil any sensuous diversion from work were deeply resented by the lower classes. The core of viewers and buyers, then, was surely to be found among the middle-class temperance fanatics—who would even manage to have all liquor banned from the Great Exhibition of 1851. Cruikshank, hitherto a hard boozer (and converted, perhaps, by the success of his own propaganda), committed himself personally to the temperance campaign, much to the detriment of his art over the remaining thirty years of his long life. His first biographer, Blanchard Jerrold, siding with the artist against Dickens, confirms that *The Bottle* reached (or, according to Jerrold, was aimed at) not the working classes but the (lower) middle classes: "clerks holding positions of honor and trust," the "humble but happy households of Arnold's poem, 'men to middle fortune born.'"[22] But by making no reference to the drunkard's occupation, by not specifying his social status beyond that of decent comfort (unlike his predecessor, Seymour, whose drunkard was the son of a cobbler), Cruikshank surely hoped to include both the middle and the working classes—the dual target of the temperance movement.

The Drunkard's Children (1848), an eight-plate sequel, could not repeat the commercial success of *The Bottle,* and indeed the writer and connoisseur of Hogarth George Augustus Sala found it "slightly ludicrous."[23] To judge by their decent attire in the final plate of *The Bottle,* the children were left somehow the richer for a life of "vice and the streets." Yet, rejecting numerous suggestions for a happy ending, Cruikshank depicts the pair failing to learn from and ultimately repeating the lesson of their father's fate. In compositions of considerable documentary and some comic value, the pair are shown drawn into the low-life pleasures of gin palace, gambling den, and dance hall (Fig. 1.7, Plate 3). The sexual debauchery flaunted in Hogarth has here to be inferred; we see rowdiness and disorder and people who must function as procuress, pimp, and prostitute, but there is no embracing, and not even a hint of exposed female flesh. The arrest of the boy for robbery, his trial, deportation, and early death are all, by contrast,

20. *The Drunkard's Progress,* published by Seymour's widow and W. Spooner, July 1, 1839 (Vogler Collection; very rare: not in British Museum). The protagonist starts as an infant, with his parents force-feeding him gin. As in Cruikshank, but more decorously and nonviolently, he descends into dissolute living, bankruptcy, and an early end.
21. *The Bottle. Die Flasche,* in acht Bildern von George Cruikshank, geschnitten von E. Kretschmar, November 20–December 11, 1847. A Dutch edition, "De gevolgen van de flesch," eight scenes on one plate, was published by Gebr. Koster in Amsterdam (Waller Collection of Popular Imagery, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, A.6, "46th" [!] edition).
22. Jerrold 1882, 2:91.
23. Jones 1978, 93.





FIG. 1.7. George Cruikshank: *The Drunkard's Children* (1848). Plates 3 and 8.
"From the Gin Shop to the Dancing Rooms, from the Dancing Rooms to the Gin Shop, the Poor Girl is Driven on in That Course Which Ends in Misery. / The Maniac Father and the Convict Brother Are Gone. —The Poor Girl, Homeless, Friendless, Deserted, Destitute, and Gin Mad, Commits Self Murder."

very serious and relatively quiet. These scenes evince a respect for the church, and especially the law, that is wholly foreign to Hogarth, as it is to the 19th-century comic strip proper; they have the somber, documentary air of *Illustrated London News* illustrations. The final plate of the girl's suicide, in contrast, has always seemed remarkable: here, the restraint of decor has monumentalized terror and despair (Fig. 1.7, Plate 8).

George Cruikshank's *The Bottle* and *The Drunkard's Children* of 1847–1848 were conceived in missionary zeal, couched in as dignified a style as the artist could muster, and spread over plates "Hogarthian" in size and number. *The Tooth-Ache* of 1849 by the same artist is a "roller-picture" (in the current term), or series of little woodcuts glued together and folded like a concertina (the whole comprises forty-four designs and measures about 5 by 82 inches). Cruikshank's drawings, to a scenario by Horace Mayhew, are in his early, "classic," caricatural style, grotesque, outré, and farcical. No greater apparent disparity could be imagined between works by the same artist so close in date; but *The Tooth-Ache,* which was copied in France by Nadar and thence in a German illustrated magazine, can, I believe, be read like other strips on this subject, far beyond the artist's conscious intention, as a metaphor of the social struggle (as I show in a recent article). The dentist represents power and authority and the patient the helpless "people," or lower-middle classes, seeing themselves as suffering, as so often in this volume, a cruel and painful fate. The tangibility of the pain and subsequent relief in Cruikshank-Mayhew's *Tooth-Ache* and the rich coloration of the ritual in this emblematic human experience justify our giving citations from it a place of honor as our color frontispiece. It stands here as central to a group of dozens of "tales from the dentist's chair" which we cannot illustrate but which testify to a unique (and untapped) body of feeling on the subject. Our figures 15.65 and 15.66 are macabre residual fantasies from century's end, where terror has been placed under the anesthetic of graphic play.

Toothache and tooth extraction, while less firmly rooted in the concepts of sin and expiation underlying the earlier iconography, were still capable in a largely pre-anesthetic age of engendering a special kind of terror. Tooth extraction was an encounter with death and with an "executioner"-dentist (Heinrich Heine actually called him the *Zahnhenker,* or tooth-executioner) whom caricaturists demonized (cf. Fig. 3.4). In the Cruikshank, however, the dentist is not treated thus; indeed, he is positively idealized, and it is the pain of the toothache that is demonized, in the oppressive, nightmarish figure with a face bloated like the sufferer's own who, armed with a corkscrew, takes over the sufferer's persona as his own. The dentist triumphs, after a dramatic physical struggle (discreetly viewed from the back); the patient is left totally prostrate but recovers immediately to embrace, to "bless" one whom the French version calls his "savior" and to observe himself happily restored to health.

In the 19th-century political cartoon, the dentist figures frequently to allegorize political mastery or tyranny, the teeth he pulls representing political opposition. The British polity survived the European-wide revolutions of 1848 relatively unscathed. The middle classes, who both feared and desired the surgery of reform, were left largely satisfied and built the myth of class reconciliation (embrace of dentist) in the interests of the larger goal, global hegemony, symbolized in the Great Exhibition of 1851. They may have had to sacrifice a tooth or two of power, but they recovered the health of general stability threatened by previous decades of radical "ache."

The "240 Infallible cures" (to quote a Cruikshank caption), the innumerable traditional (folk) remedies have all failed to bring relief, even at the most heroic level, when the sufferer, kneeling, raises to his mouth a red-hot poker, like the sword of noble suicide in ancient sculpture. Finally, fearful and hesitant as he is, he must throw himself upon the resources of bourgeois science, technology, power. The emphasis on the failure of folk remedies recurs in a Bilderbogen by Wilhelm Busch, *Der hohle Zahn* (*The Rotten Tooth,* 1862), where the patient, a mere peasant, is—as almost invariably in the pre-19th-century iconography—visibly of a lower social class than the dentist. Busch shows how the bourgeois triumphs over the peasant, as of course he historically did. In other dentist strips, a representative of a more powerful bourgeois class triumphs over a lower-middle-class type, and in some instances he does so in a terrifying, tyrannical, and downright criminal manner: good teeth, all the teeth, are extracted "in error" and replaced with dentures, the new dental technology so profitable to dentists. This happens in a Cham picture story of 1840 (Fig. 3.4), where the technology of extraction is both highly sophisticated and demonic, like the operator. In contrast, a French strip of the "pre-revolutionary" years 1869–1870 shows how the extraction of a good tooth is revenged by the patient, who murders the dentist. Such revenge is exceptional; usually the dentist (that is, Authority) triumphs, and malevolently.

Very few attempts were made to renew the idea of a painted and engraved moral narrative sequence. As early as 1836, a reviewer of Lichtenberg's *Commentaries on Hogarth,* complaining that these essays were unknown in England, observed that Hogarth, despite his continued popularity, had not been imitated as, for instance, Walter Scott had been.[24] A major inhibiting factor here was that any publicly exhibited painting was subject to aesthetic criteria and critical severities to which caricature and popular illustration were immune; in the Victorian age, a painting for public exhibition, for all its narrative and moral exuberance, simply did not overlap with the cartoon. Furthermore, the very exclusiveness of the identification of moral sequences with one towering figure, Hogarth, must have inhibited imitation—for who (besides Dickens) could now seek to emulate, and suffer comparison with, one whose satirical audacity belonged to an age that now seemed so distant and different? Much painting strove to be moral and anecdotal, but these qualities were not enough to sustain a narrative sequence. Economic considerations, too, tended to preclude imitation. Trying to sell a set of paintings was obviously riskier than trying to sell only one, especially given the labor-intensiveness of a Hogarthian composition. The subsequent engraving was one solution, and many successful painters sought to reach the wider public and thus recoup their expenses as Hogarth, indeed, had perforce done. But even a painting that had proven its popularity on the walls of the exhibition hall could fail in the reproduction market, as Frith discovered.

It may also be that the status of Hogarth himself among the middle classes became progressively that of the classic to be revered and cautiously admired rather than actively used. True, his *Progresses* continued to serve occasionally as the basis for parody in the comic journals;[25] but he must have been banished from the walls of many a middle-class home (though not Dickens's) and confined to albums and portfolios, for so much in his oeuvre was now considered unfit for family viewing. Few new editions of Hogarth's works appeared after the 1830s, and there was very little commentary or important criticism, after that of Lamb and Hazlitt, until Austin Dobson's biography of 1879.[26] *Industry and Idleness,* as one would expect, proved the most serviceable among individual sequences.[27] The only truly Hogarthian figure remained Dickens, into whose body, in a well-known phrase, the soul of Hogarth had migrated.[28]

By the 1870s the comic journals no longer believed in the simpleminded "Hogarthian" morality that had appealed to an earlier age, by which virtue is rewarded and vice punished. (Hogarth did not wholly believe this either, but that is another argument.) In a "Drawing Room Hogarth" series—large compositions of serious, nondescript realism—the Idle Apprentice gets to marry a rich and beautiful widow and be happy, while the Industrious Apprentice Goodchild, after ten years' faithful service, is arbitrarily fired and rendered destitute (see Fig. I.5). "Marriage not at all à la mode," in a different kind of cynical reversal, has a compassionate mother give her daughter to the poor but beloved suitor and drive out the rich one. The couple's life together is presented as perfect, boring, and impossible.[29]

We need not linger with Augustus Egg's *Past and Present* (1858), a darkly melodramatic tale of a wife's infidelity, which results in her children's destitution; not engraved, and being in only three parts, it scarcely qualifies. The only well-known artist to have grappled seriously with the Hogarthian sequence was William Powell Frith, a pioneer in the representation of the Victorian social panorama. Frith scored popular successes in midcentury with *Ramsgate Sands* (1854), *Derby Day* (1858), and *The Railway Station* (1862), paintings jam-packed with detail and incident of a lightly humorous and moralistic rather than directly satirical kind. He did not take up the challenge of the moral sequence of Hogarth—whom he described as a "continual feast to any true artist"—until the late 1870s, when he painted the five-scene *Road to Ruin.* "For a long time I had the desire to paint a story in a series of pictures. . . . Without any pretension to do my work on Hogarthian lines, I thought I could show some of the evils of gambling; my idea being a kind of gambler's progress, avoiding the satirical vein of Hogarth, for which I knew myself to be unfitted."[30]

The Road to Ruin took Frith a year to prepare and paint, gaining in actuality from the baccarat scandal involving the Prince of Wales. Frith follows the gambler from college, to Ascot, to arrest in his home (where, lying on the floor, is a copy of *Bell's Life in London,* which as we remember once ran its own "Gambler's Progress"), and finally to his suicide—at this time, a not uncommon end for the financially ruined.

As had happened in the past with Frith's works, the paintings, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1878, were mobbed by the public, requiring a special rail and police protection. The artist summed up the mixed critical reaction (his attempts to rival Hogarth were deemed "ill-advised"), to which he was also accustomed, with a laconic "I received many complaints, and no doubt much abuse."[31] The etchings, executed at great expense in France, were much delayed and in the end sold no better than the photogravure reproductions of Frith's next Hogarthian venture, on an allied and equally topical subject: the fraudulent financier and promoter of bubble companies.

The Race for Wealth, successfully exhibited in 1879, has wider social scope than the previous series, for it shows the ruin of the speculator's innocent victims (the "spider's flies"), notably a poor clergyman and his family. The scene of the trial of the financier at the Old Bailey, taken in situ in the courtroom, is considered a model of documentation, but in an un-Hogarthian, morally passive sense. (Where Hogarth would have satirized the law, Frith, like Cruikshank, shows it with decorous solemnity.) Sexual vice, so much emphasized in the earlier era, is now entirely supplanted by pecuniary greed. Gambling (on the stock market or in private

24. "Lichtenberg" (rev.), 1836. The reviewer could cite only painters named Collins (the writer William Collins? see Kunzle 1973, 454, no. 11-3) and Penny (presumably the genre painter Edward) as having "many years ago" produced one or two sequences of "very namby-pamby subjects." Martin Meisel, in his 1983 book on the translation of narrative pictures to the stage, comments on the surprising lack of Hogarthian sequences in Victorian art.
25. *Punch* liked to use single scenes for political cartoons, but the only important political transformation of an entire Hogarth sequence appears to be Tom Merry's (1884) colored lithographic parody of the *Rake's Progress,* where Gladstone is cast as the Rake, and the whores in the Orgy scene are identified as Britain's national and political enemies (Ireland, Egypt, anarchy, communism, sedition, etc.).
26. Two decades of relative silence was broken by George Augustus Sala's biography of 1866. The standard mid-Victorian "family" edition would be Hannay's *Complete Works* of 1865, which contains, interestingly, a freely popular-fictionalized rendering of the images, with much direct dialogue between the characters. This must have been relatively expensive compared with a German work for which there is no English equivalent: Franz Kottenkamp's edition of Lichtenberg's commentaries (*Wilhelm Hogarth's Zeichnungen nach den Originalen in Stahl gestochen* [Stuttgart, 1840]), which has small but very effective and legible contour-stressed reproductions.
27. Note particularly Henry Heath's totally humorless *Industry and Idleness Contrasted* (12 pls., 1851), where the accent is on the effects the bad boy's folly has on his family, parents, and children (in Hogarth, Tom Idle has no children of his own). See George 1935–1952, 2:xlix.
28. See Patten 1983, 338.
29. Apprentices: *Judy,* February–March 1871; Marriage: *Judy,* May–June 1871. Similar series of 1870 are "The Business of Marriage" and "The Young Ladies Progress," scarcely humorous homilies on materialism, with dim echoes of Hogarth. All are by Alfred Chasemore.
30. Frith 1888, 1:346.
31. Ibid., 1:352. The "ill-advised attempts to rival Hogarth" are cited by Noakes (1978, 120). The engravings, by L. Flameng, were sponsored by the Art Union, who purchased the copyright, dated 1878; the prints were not, however, issued until 1882.

clubs) promised gain without responsibility and, as with illicit sex, threatened dire retribution.[32]

The final scene, called "Retribution," showing the former millionaire stockbroker in the yard of Millbank Prison, offered an ending more moral than realistic, for few of his kind went to jail. This lapse in what purported to be total realism was admitted as such by the artist, however, in his wry comment on the parody of his story by his friend, the "admirable" caricaturist James Sullivan (whom we shall meet in Chapter 13). Sullivan, Frith acknowledged, offered the more truthful ending: he "laid hold of my puppets and made them play a different game. . . . He declined to punish the swindler who rolls along a street in his carriage, accompanied by his vulgar wife, without the least display of sympathy for the poor parson, who is reduced to sweeping a crossing over which the carriage has just passed."[33]

At this time, the social disease of poverty was painted with tragic dignity for the Royal Academy walls by Luke Fildes (*The Casual Ward*) and drawn with picturesque melodrama for a large luxury album by Gustave Doré (*London, a Pilgrimage*). Yet neither Frith nor, for that matter, Sullivan, who covered so many social topics in his published strips, dared to touch this great wen of guilt.

32. Pointed out by Meisel 1983, 391.

33. Frith 1888, 1:362; Meisel 1983, 373. Sullivan's parody: *Fun* n.s. 31 (June 23, 1880): 250. Sullivan also published his own version of *The Road to Ruin* called "The Road to Reformation (with apologies to Mr. Frith R.A.)," which suggests, contrary to Frith, that financial chicanery (here, outright theft by a cashier?) prospers the perpetrator. The primary purpose of the strip, however, is to mock the very idea of the public preaching of moral lessons, à la Frith, as a pecuniary speculation and hypocritical (Sullivan, *The British Tradesman,* p. 36). The paintings of the two Frith series are reproduced in Wood 1976, pls. 26–30, 36–40.

CHAPTER 2

TÖPFFER

Goethe and Caricature

In 1820s Restoration Europe, caricature—indeed, critical freedom generally—was everywhere in recession. Even in England it had, since Gillray's death in 1815, lost its satirical edge and was moving toward the relatively innocent social comedy of Cruikshank. Only when revolution erupted in France in July 1830 did caricature once again emerge as a political force, with the founding of Charles Philipon's famous journals, the weekly *Caricature* (1830) and the daily *Charivari* (1832). To these, the first to feature frequent and regular caricature, he attracted a galaxy of artists, including Grandville, Daumier, and Gavarni. The new caricature, which typically took the form of large, elaborate, often allegorical lithographs supplementary to the newsprint text, attacked the government of Louis Philippe and suffered from constant censorship.

At the same time, however (and even before 1830), another novel caricatural genre was brewing in an unexpected place, a French-speaking town considered by Parisians—and the world—as of relatively little political importance: Geneva. In 1815 this small town became part of restored and enlarged Switzerland following sixteen years under the rule of Napoleonic France; though still responsive to Paris, it had a relatively stable and popular, if conservative, government, which was left intact by the 1830 revolution in Paris. It had also enjoyed a long independent cultural and intellectual tradition, especially in the sciences, with much influence from England. Geneva, then, was the birthplace of the new comic strip, which was liberated indirectly by the aftershock of the 1830 revolution and directly with the help of Goethe and his circle in Weimar.

Superficially, Goethe might seem the last person to have assisted at the birth of a new kind of caricature. In his Sturm und Drang youth he had collaborated on Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1775–1779), but, classicized by his trip to Italy (1787–1788) and fearful of the effects of the French Revolution, he came to repudiate the romantic effusions and the caricatural physiognomic excesses of Lavater's work, especially the faces drawn after Hogarth. Goethe accused Lavater of pandering to a depraved public taste for the ugly and formless, of conjuring up the "vicious" power of the lower classes, who were themselves "foolish caricatures of the demos."[1]

Goethe, however, was swimming against a German tide of appreciation for Hogarth. In Volume One I discussed how eagerly critics and public looked for a "German Hogarth" in Chodowiecki and, later, in Ramberg and how the vogue for Hogarth crested with the brilliant and excursive commentaries of G. C. Lichtenberg in 1794–1799.[2] The great popular success of these men prompted Goethe to complain again of the debased appeal of the English satirist, to "neither knowledge of art nor any higher sense, but only bad will and contempt for mankind."[3]

The social and aesthetic foundations of Goethe's distaste for caricature are laid out in his magazine *Propyläen* (1798–1800). The purpose of art, for Goethe, was to be quietly edifying and socially unifying and harmonizing; "satirical caricatures," on the contrary, were the "greatest destroyers of art, taste and morals."[4] He continued his attack on caricature in a makeshift piece written for that otherwise despised genre, the ladies' almanac, apropos of a series of twelve little genre-like (not really caricatural) illustrations by Ramberg of typical feminine vices; Goethe felt moved to counteract these by means of a hodgepodge of anecdotes about virtuous women, together with a conversation about the evils of caricature in general.[5]

Goethe's hostility to caricature was only sharpened by the wave of graphic satire, emanating first from England and later from all over Europe, directed against his "demi-god" (as he called him), Napoleon Bonaparte. Just when he launched his *Propyläen,* a former friend and fellow citizen of Weimar, F. J. J. Bertuch, began publication of a magazine with very different cultural politics, *London und Paris* (with eight issues a year). This original venture was designed to propagate English political and cultural principles, especially English freedom as against French tyranny and censorship. Moreover, *London und Paris* was in effect the first true caricature magazine, for it carried regular copies after Gillray and

1. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Paralipomena zu den Annalen" (1801), in Goethe 1902, 30:396. See Kunzle 1985 for a fuller treatment of this section.
2. Kunzle 1973, 395ff.
3. "Annalen" for 1795, Goethe 1902, 30:43.
4. Goethe 1902, 33:197–198.
5. "Cotta's *Taschenbuch für Damen auf das Jahr 1801,*" in Goethe 1902, 16:liii.

other English caricaturists, with extensive commentaries that repeatedly refer to the authority of Lichtenberg and Hogarth. The publication of copies of anti-French and anti-Napoleonic caricatures in *London und Paris* did not survive past 1806, however, when the French conquest of Germany silenced all opposition, stocks of English caricatures on German soil were burned, and a bookseller by the name of Palm was executed.

In 1812–1813, with Napoleon's defeat in Russia and Germany, native German anti-Napoleon caricature began timidly to emerge. Yet political satire and freedom of the press generally were suppressed in Germany under the Restoration, and censorship was codified in the strictest sense by the Carlsbad decrees of 1819. Goethe defended censorship and "despotism of the press"—that is, a press solely in the service of despots—helping locally to enforce political tests for employment and even to censor productions of his own work. He applauded the Napoleonic conquest of Germany and, later, lamented the defeat of Napoleon, whom he continued to worship to the end of his life. In 1821, when a collection of Napoleon caricatures was offered to his view, he couldn't bear to look at them. He showed an altogether remarkable indifference to the terrible slaughters, atrocities, and suffering Napoleon had caused, even when they affected Weimar itself.

Goethe and Töpffer

Goethe's role as a patron had always been important. Literature, like Napoleon's army, was a "career open to talents." The Napoleon of European arts and letters cherished, and was cherished for, his capacity to promote the humble from the ranks. Shortly before his death he was hailed as a "giant spirit [which] strides forcefully among the peoples, now causing closed blossoms to unfold; now setting limits to the overhasty spirit, empowering the timid talent in its mighty flight to the sun."[6] But, overburdened with requests for opinions, recommendations, and interviews, Goethe inevitably became less accessible, and it required the concerted and sustained efforts of the two men closest to him at the end of his life, Johann Peter Eckermann and Frédéric Soret, to bring Töpffer to Goethe's attention.

Eckermann was Goethe's editor and literary factotum. He recorded for posterity the conversations that, as *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens* (Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life), became perhaps the most popular book by and about Goethe, giving us the most complete picture of the last decade of his life. Soret, a former schoolmate of Töpffer's in Geneva and a fellow student in Paris, was engaged in Weimar as tutor to the duke's children. His scientific capacities were well regarded, which led Goethe to employ him to translate his *Metamorphosis of Plants* into French. After the death of his only son, August, Goethe came to regard Soret in a filial light.

In April 1830, Goethe sent Eckermann as "bear-leader" of his difficult son on a tour of Italy. Relieved of this painful duty midway, Eckermann began the homeward journey alone. After so many years engulfed by Goethe, he was restive; he went looking for new employment and for undiscovered talent that he might himself sponsor—with Goethe's help—as a distraction from his own planned desertion (which never materialized). In Geneva he found, no doubt through Soret, Rodolphe Töpffer, who seemed for various reasons a likely figure to "bring out,"[7] and he wrote to Goethe of his discovery.

At the time, Töpffer was thirty-one years old; he was known locally as the principal of a local boys' boarding school—for which Switzerland, and especially Geneva, was famous—and as the author of privately circulated, witty diary descriptions of the alpine tours he made every summer with his pupils, which he called simply *Voyages*. Although his early ambitions to follow in the footsteps of his father, Wolfgang-Adam, a painter of some local reputation, had been frustrated by poor eyesight, Rodolphe's artistic gifts found expression in these travel diaries, through decorative little figure and landscape drawings, and in manuscript albums of comic picture-stories, which were eagerly devoured by the children of his school and his inner circle of friends.

Eckermann did not, however, take the albums to Weimar; that task was undertaken a little later by Soret, who was in Geneva also, visiting his ailing father. Both Soret and Eckermann calculated that something light and humorous was just the thing to brighten Goethe's long winter evenings. The octogenarian had long since ceased to travel, and he was particularly lonely in the absence of these two friends; he was also depressed by the revolution in France and its repercussions in nearby Jena. Töpffer might, they thought, serve to deflect the real world from invading the great mental sanctuary and distracting from the current literary labors of the three Weimarians.

Soret fell ill immediately after his return to Weimar, but he sent over the Töpffer albums. The response was immediate and favorable: "*Cryptogame* arrived at the moment when Eckermann was with the old Patriarch," Soret wrote to Töpffer at the end of January 1831. "M. de Goethe found your nature-lover very amusing, and what seemed to strike him most, apart from the originality of the drawings, was your talent for exhausting a subject, for getting the most out of it, for example, when all the inhabitants of the vessel down to the furniture follow the rotatory movements of Cryptogame, when everything freezes and unfreezes as if it were in the spirit of imitation etc" (see Fig. 2.3).[8]

Festus, which Soret presented personally on December 27, was also a great success (see Figs. 2.1 and 2.6). "We looked at Töpffer's drawings together, his *Adventures of Dr. Festus,* which gave his Excellency extraordinary pleasure. 'That is really too crazy,' he kept repeating, 'but he really sparkles with talent and wit; much of it is quite perfect; it shows just how much the artist could yet achieve, if he dealt with modern [less frivolous][9] material and went to work with less haste, and more reflection. If Töpffer did not have such an insignificant text [i.e., scenario] before him, he would invent things which would surpass all our expectations.'"[10]

After looking at and commenting on Töpffer's *Festus,* Goethe referred for the first time in words to the death of his son; his return to Töpffer with "fresh joy and attention" was evidently in relief from this painful subject. Eckermann and Soret took the opportunity to describe Töpffer's character and circumstances in terms they knew would be attractive to Goethe: his youth; his eye ailment, which prevented him from becoming a painter (Goethe's only physical weakness was periodic inflammation of the eyes); his dedication to the humble tasks of schoolmastering and amusing children, both as amateur artist and amateur playwright-actor-director—miniaturized versions of roles Goethe had also faithfully fulfilled in a much larger domain, as minister of education and theater director of the duchy of Weimar. Soret no doubt also praised what later critics liked to stress: the personal and professional modesty of the young Genevan, so unlike the new wave in Paris (notably Victor Hugo and Balzac), whom Goethe found arrogant, overproductive, demagogic, and repellent. Töpffer's modesty was real; even after Goethe's initial approbation had been transmitted to him, he did not dare to approach the great man directly for a year, only doing so, finally, when it was too late.

6. Müller 1832, 2.
7. The phrase is Soret's, in a letter of September 17, 1830 (Houben 1929, 465).
8. Houben 1929, 507; cf. Gallati 1976, 141ff. The transcription of the letter by Blondel (1886, 109) mistakes the year.
9. The words "less frivolous" were substituted by Eckermann in his printed report of the conversation.
10. Houben 1929, 489; cf. Goethe 1925, 400.

Goethe kept the two albums a few days, "looking at only ten pages or so at a time, resting afterwards, because, he said, he risked getting an indigestion of ideas." In the written (dictated) judgment Goethe was then pressed to render, he praised the artist warmly as "the most fertile inventor of combinations," for being able to "draw multiple motifs out of a few figures," and for his "innate, gay and ever-ready talent."[11] From the context it is evident that Goethe was more interested in Töpffer's caricatures than in his various prose pieces. Moreover, Goethe promised to cast on paper some ideas that the caricature albums suggested to him, as soon as he was free of his most pressing obligations. Nothing came of the promise.

Soret also showed the albums successfully at the ducal court and to his pupil the young prince, then about thirteen years old, who "spent whole hours making faces à la Cryptogame." (It is indeed odd that Goethe does not seem to have tried to share his enjoyment of Töpffer with his two older grandchildren, who were about the same age as the prince.)

Soret reported to Goethe in June that his approval had delighted the Genevan and inspired him to complete two new albums, which he offered to send. But he was apparently unsure about these (there were some political jibes in them that, we surmise, Töpffer feared might cause offense) and wondered whether he should not send some more serious works instead. Finally, *Jabot* and two *Voyages* arrived, with their full complement of illustrations, the day after Christmas and in time for the New Year festivities. Prodded by Soret to pay particular attention to and pass some favorable judgment on the landscape drawings as well (or primarily), Goethe preferred *Jabot,* even showing signs of wanting to keep it for himself, somewhat to Soret's alarm. It was upon the "strange" and "witty" *Jabot,* the "little baroque novel," that Goethe chose to expatiate, admiring the hero as a "spook" (*Gespenst*) capable of "always producing his impossible personality anew in the most varied forms."[12] Goethe has characterized for us the essential lower-middle-class comic strip hero: phantasmic and chameleonic. To Goethe's reaction, duly transmitted to Töpffer in Geneva, Soret added some detailed observations of his own, praising particularly the scene of Jabot's public fart (which Töpffer cut from the published version).

Meanwhile, Töpffer had made his first public hit back home, with a whimsical, Sternean reverie called *La Bibliothèque de mon oncle,* a copy of which he sent to Goethe together with drawings made especially for him. The package arrived, alas, too late: six days before, on March 22, Goethe had died. Goethe's pronouncements on Töpffer were, however, incorporated into a long article compiled by Eckermann and Soret for the last, posthumous, issue of *Kunst und Alterthum,* the journal Goethe edited and co-wrote. The article is true to Goethe's own preference in that, although entitled generically "On the Pen-Drawings of Rodolphe Töpfer [*sic*]," it deals almost exclusively with the caricatures.[13] It is prefaced by a tribute to Goethe's protean capacity to conjure up instant reputation, even—or perhaps especially—among obscure non-Germans. It also stresses the innocence of origin of the caricature albums, which originally had no other purpose than to indulge the extended family of his school in a spontaneous and imaginative recreation where all participated. A convivial game, it had some of the social function of true art as Goethe had defined it in the *Propyläen,* and certainly it was quite the opposite of the socially and politically hostile English caricature.

Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe,* intended as the official Goethe portrait and as part of the Goethe canon, would eventually be the more important repository of the great man's imprimatur of Töpffer. It was delayed, however, by the editor's illness and his work on the fifteen volumes of Goethe's *Nachlaß* (literary estate), among other Goethean tasks. When *Conversations* finally appeared in May 1836, Töpffer must have been surprised, even shocked, to find himself missing altogether. What had happened? There is only one explanation, and it is a telling one in the context of the history of caricature and comic strip, shaped as it is by the constant struggle against social and critical prejudice. Eckermann had become the overzealous protector of Goethe's reputation, which, although colossal, was vulnerable to attack on grounds of paganism, amorality (if not immorality), social aloofness, and—a particularly sensitive matter in the wake of 1830—lack of German patriotism. The editor set out consciously to combine beauty with truth. His was an idealized court portrait, crafted to flow euphoniously with Great Names and Great Thoughts, into which the unknown Töpffer, with his "childish" caricatures, simply did not fit. Eckermann concentrated particularly on preserving the appearance of free, energetic thinking at the very end of Goethe's life, when his once impeccable oratory became diffuse, sporadic, repetitive, and even downright boring. He succeeded: Carlyle recognized in Eckermann's portrait the "great, healthy, true Goethe."[14]

It may also be that Eckermann conceived it as his duty to protect the reputation of Töpffer as well. In 1836 the Genevan was not yet an established literary figure, and to reinforce his existing, dubious identity as the "author of M. Jabot" when he had just been appointed a full professor at the Genevan Académie (later, University) and a member of the Genevan Grand Conseil (city government) might have been to do him a disservice. If only Goethe had praised his more serious work, as landscape artist or writer on art and of fiction, as he did the caricatures!

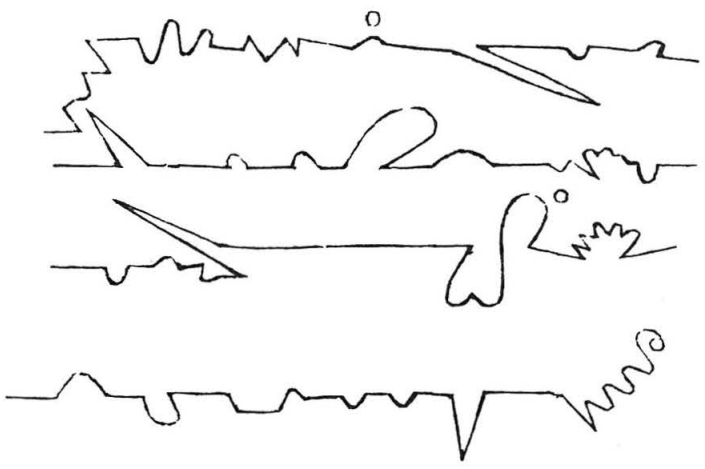
Goethe's thoughts on Töpffer did finally appear in 1848, after Töpffer's death, in the peculiarly fated third volume of *Conversations*. It was delayed by Eckermann's continuing overwhelming work on the *Nachlaß,* more illness, trouble in getting Soret's own much-needed manuscript of Goethe conversations, and, not least, a wretched lawsuit with the publisher. The third volume, admitted by the editor to be composed of bits and pieces left over from the first two, with addenda including conversations with Soret, was the proper receptacle for Goethe's offhand, late-night opinions about a man who had meanwhile acquired the status of a minor celebrity.

A New Kind of Caricature

What was it in Töpffer's comic "picture-novels" that caught Goethe's fancy and caused him to reverse a lifelong prejudice? His was indeed a new kind of caricature, innocent compared to Gillray's, yet with something of the impish and whimsical air of Cruikshank's. Cruikshank himself was much admired in Germany as the illustrator of Walter Scott's demonology and German fairy tales.[15] In an age of increasing specialization Töpffer bridged the arts, as Goethe himself had done much more imperially. The rapid, sketchy, casual lithographic stroke bespoke sincerity and reckless spontaneity, which informed the story line as well; and Goethe, with reference to Delacroix's lithographic illustrations to his *Faust,* had found such freedom to be the hallmark of creative genius.

11. Blondel 1886, 110. The original German figures in *Kunst und Alterthum* 6 (1832): 570 (cf. below), with Goethe's remarks mistakenly dated January 10, 1830 (for 1831).
12. Houben 1929, 620; Gallati 1976, 91–92.
13. *Kunst und Alterthum* 6 (1832): 552–573.
14. Goethe 1925, 642.
15. See, for example, an appreciation of Cruikshank in "Caricatur der Engländer," *Museum: Blätter für bildende Kunst* (Berlin) (1833), no. 14: 111–112, and no. 15: 119–120.

For his use of comic hyperbole, Töpffer was occasionally compared to Rabelais. The better comparison, however, was with Laurence Sterne, whom Goethe knew well and admired very much,[16] and who was to be regularly adduced as a progenitor of Töpffer's prose style. But the flow of free associations, the zigzagging narrative replete with parentheses (the "indigestion of ideas," as Goethe put it), the mockery of romantic effusions, and the flashes of social satire—all this came over with much greater pristine force in Töpffer's comic strip albums than in his more solemn, and always moralistic, prose. And it is certainly the narrative line of the former rather than the latter that is conveyed in Sterne's whimsical graph of his own crazy method, as it appears in *Tristram Shandy:*



The need for external order in Goethe's life, which increased as he grew older, had a complement in the indulgence of a new inner disorder, as manifested in *Faust II,* completed in July 1831. Odd as any comparison between *Faust II* and Töpffer's wholly different, parodic, *Festus* may seem, Goethe may have sensed a certain affinity of form, not to mention name and point of departure (the quest for knowledge). In both *Faust II* and *Festus,* the human spirit is at the mercy of uncontrollable forces; both heroes, with a similarity of name that cannot be accidental, are wanderers, men cast adrift. Further, neither work follows a simple linear narrative form: structurally both lack unity, and philosophically they deliberately veer toward incomprehensibility. There is also a certain kinship between the mysticism of *Faust II* and the absurdism of *Festus*. Like Töpffer, Goethe followed an instinct rather than a plan, and, also like Töpffer, he was reluctant to publish for fear of misunderstanding, lest his "strange" structure be shipwrecked on hostile critical opinion.[17]

Specific satirical components in Töpffer's albums must also have struck a chord with Goethe. Although he criticized these aspects as being too frivolous and insufficiently "modern," they nevertheless evoked some of Goethe's own concerns about science and scientific vanity, individual ambition, and social disorder. Himself a brilliant scientific amateur who in the 1790s had propagated controversial concepts in the natural sciences, to which he returned at the end of his life, Goethe had had to contend with the vanity, obstinacy, and ignorance of just such professionals as Töpffer ridicules.

For Goethe, the "real revolution" of July 1830 was the great public debate between Georges Cuvier and Geoffroy de St. Hilaire; the triumph of the latter, who supported Goethe's own botanical theories, promised to be Goethe's own. As precursors of Darwin (who in fact paid tribute to their work on the origin of species),[18] St. Hilaire and Goethe were links in the chain of a theory that was to have a decisive effect on the development of the picture-story in the second half of the century. It is almost as if the fledgling Goethe–St. Hilaire theory of evolution were refracted, crazy-quilt-like, through Töpffer's visual narratives, for these seem to grow according to environmental circumstances and accidents, developing, spiraling, metamorphosing in so complex an interrelation as to lie beyond the fathoming of rational investigation.

At the very moment when he encountered *Festus,* Goethe had been occupied with preparations for the observation of Halley's comet,[19] as well as with the great Cuvier–St. Hilaire debate. Töpffer's mockery in *Festus* of the astronomers' furious internecine struggle and the flailing of rival hypotheses—which he ironically treated as a scientific phenomenon in themselves (Fig. 2.1)—echoes Goethe's own attitude, as revealed in several pronouncements of his later years about the egoism of scientists. The astronomers in *Festus* fight for their hypotheses as for their very existence—literally, for when they are defeated, they die.

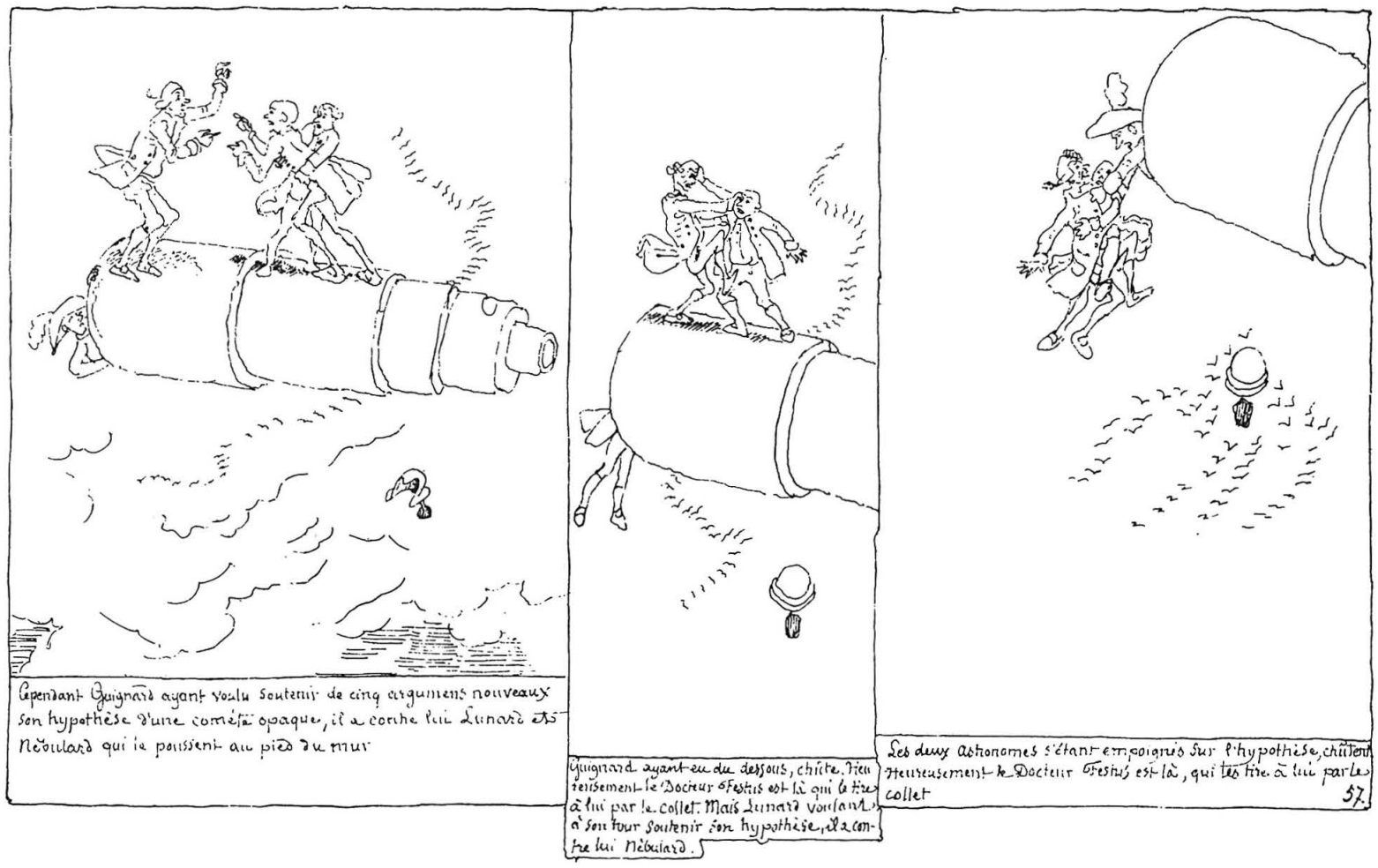
Goethe's experience with the vulnerable ego of scientists had been revealing but painful. "The questions of science are often questions of existence. A simple discovery can make a man famous and establish his career. Which is why in science too there reigns this great bitterness and this tenacity and jealousy over the discovery of others." Scientists were capable of idolizing error, once their existence was identified with it; they became blind and deaf through excess of erudition and hypothesizing.[20] This is indeed the character and fate of Töpffer's astronomers.

The Keeper of the Natural History Museum in *Festus* represents another sort of scientific stupidity, as shown in the scene where he buys, from the peasants who fished them up, three sodden astronomers' wigs for a thousand francs apiece, classifying them as "the most magnificent crustaceans."[21] Science is conducted like a common trade, and it is as fraught with ignorant error, willful deception, and commercial greed. *Festus* is a sustained satire on the social dimensions of scientific controversy and the vanity of scientists, and Goethe had every reason to enjoy it.

Goethe the botanist must have personally known the likes of Monsieur Cryptogame, whose passion for botanical science is such that the sight of a tulip sends him off, abandoning all, to America.[22] The scientific passion, however, is obstructed by a greater one, that of his lover, Elvire, to escape whom he suffers all manner of adventures. These succeed each other in a breathless concatenation of cause and effect, which, bizarre as it is, obeys a certain logic of its own. By a perverted law of physics, motion is contagious, like a disease; one episode infects the next, and frenzy is transmitted from person to person, and person to object, in an ever-descending hierarchy. The most spectacular examples of this process are the sequence in which Cryptogame leaps overboard, to be followed in turn by Elvire, captain, crew, animals, and finally rats (Fig. 2.2), and that involving the pursuit around the ship's deck (Fig. 2.3). Both episodes were cited at admiring length by Eckermann and Soret in their *Kunst und Alterthum* review, and noted by Goethe.

The idea of "rotatory movements" following each other "in the spirit of imitation" is certainly applicable to Goethe's theory of morphology. Would it be too fanciful to relate the whole narrative method of Töpffer, which is not linear but, so to speak, spiral, to Goethe's controversial theory of the spiral tendency of plants, which so preoccupied him in his last years—a theory extended (by Goethe himself or his followers), metaphorically, to encompass historical evolution in the broadest sense? Perhaps. But the language used by Goethe the botanical theorist (and by his editor and translator, Soret) suggests that he was intrigued by the way Töpffer allowed incidents to unfold layer upon layer like the petals of a flower, "draw[ing] multiple motifs out of a few figures" in the most "fertile combinations," leading to an "exhaustive" kind of self-fulfillment.

16. Conversation of March 11, 1828, in Goethe 1925, 533.
17. See P. Fischer 1931, 42–44.
18. Darwin 1968, 55n.
19. P. Fischer 1931, 110.
20. Goethe 1925, 424–425 (December 30, 1823), 130 (October 15, 1825), and 439 (May 18, 1824).
21. *Dr. Festus,* 1829 version, scenes 131–132. The 1840, published version (pp. 76–77) extends this episode considerably—and hilariously.
22. In the 1845, published version, the botanist has become a butterfly hunter, and a satirical barb against the French Institute is eliminated.



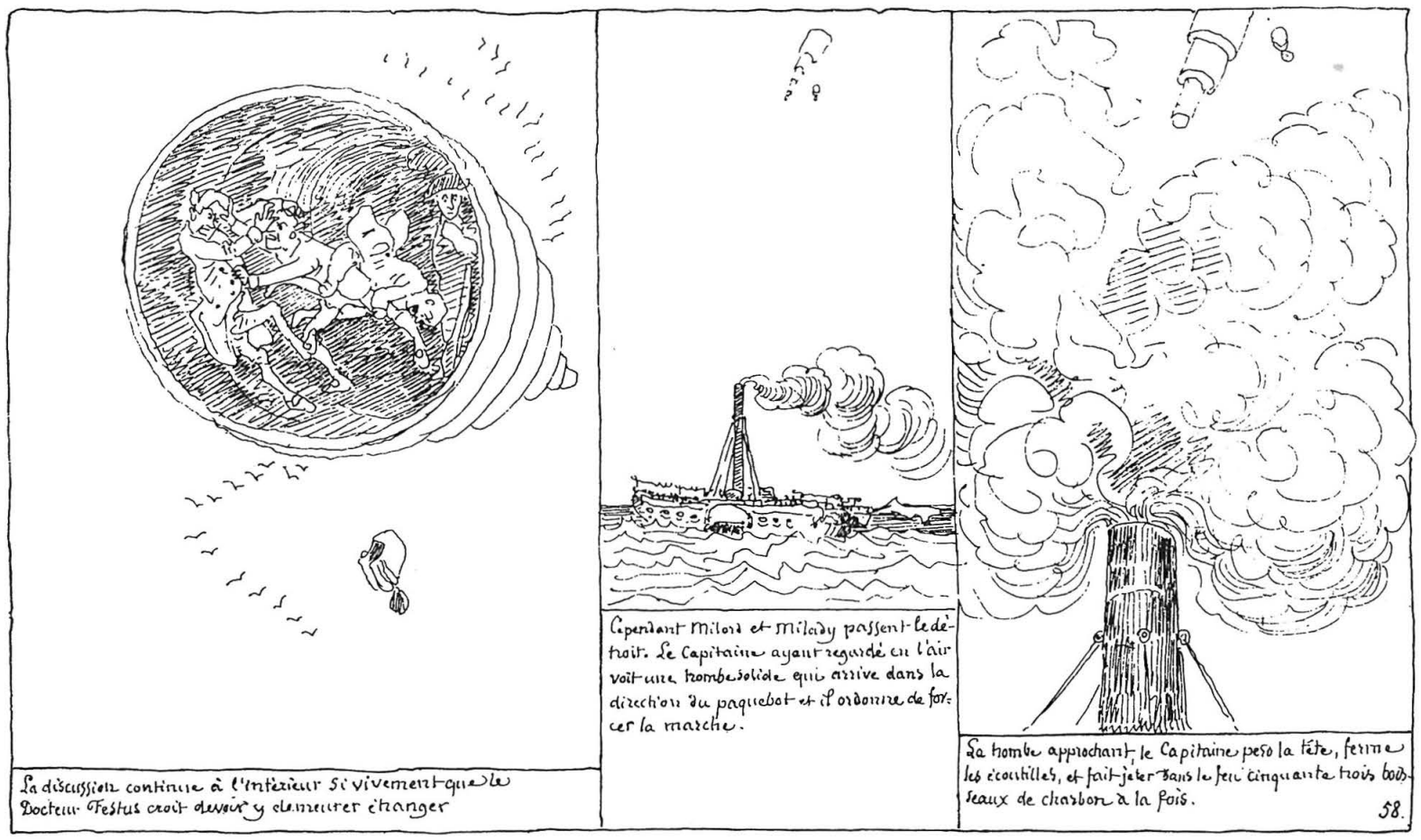


FIG. 2.1. *Dr. Festus* (1840).
"[57] Having tried to sustain his hypothesis of an opaque comet with five new arguments, Guignard is opposed by Lunard and Nebulard, who corner him. / Losing out, Guignard falls. Fortunately, Doctor Festus is there to pull him up by the collar. But Lunard, trying in turn to sustain *his* hypothesis, is opposed by Nebulard. / Having grabbed each other by the hypothesis, the two astronomers fall. Fortunately, Doctor Festus is there to pull them up by the collar. [58] The discussion continues inside in so lively a manner that Doctor Festus thinks he should not be a party to it. / Meanwhile, Milord and Milady pass through the channel. Looking up, the Captain sees a solid tornado headed toward the steamer, and he orders full speed. / As the tornado approaches, the Captain loses his head, closes the hatches, and has fifty-three bushels of coal thrown onto the fire all at once."

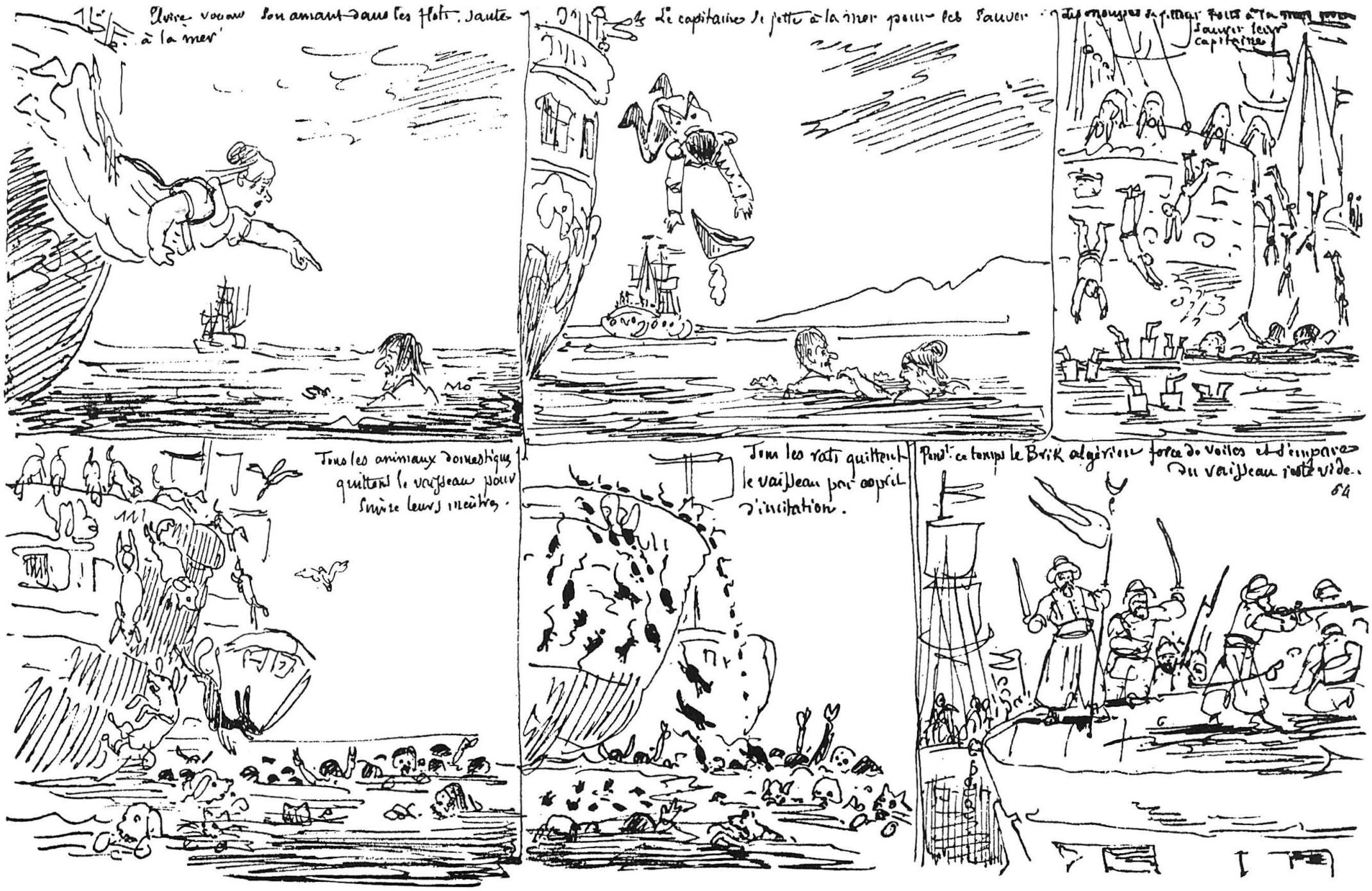


FIG. 2.2. *The Story of M. Cryptogame* (MS 1830).
"[49] Seeing her lover in the waves, Elvire jumps into the sea. [50] The captain throws himself into the sea to save them. [51] The cabin boys all throw themselves into the sea to save their captain. [52] All the domestic animals leave the ship to follow their masters. [53] All the rats leave the ship in imitation. [54] Meanwhile, the Algerian brig makes full speed and seizes the empty vessel."

As the chase in *Cryptogame* referred to above seems to parody and transpose the physical laws of energy transmission to the social realm, so another chase in that story—in which the Abbé, fleeing with a beam tied to his leg, causes a forest fire, which causes a stampede, and so on (Fig. 2.4)—seems to do with laws about chain reaction and the cumulative effect of friction. Desperately fleeing an equally desperate attack, Cryptogame poses the old conundrum about what happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object (Fig. 2.5).[23] This is to extrapolate somewhat, but for Goethe, as for skeptics and antiromantics anywhere, the absurd spectacle of the sexes reacting upon each other like opposite poles of a magnet stood as a necessary corrective to the romantic cliché of perfect fusion.

If scientists were a special category of social climber, Jabot was the prototypical one. The familiarity of the target endeared him to Goethe, as to the public generally, even if Goethe found the character of Jabot rather exaggerated, for subjective reasons noted by Soret. Goethe, the great patron, had encountered more than his share of ambitious artists and writers cutting poses before him. Töpffer even identified himself as something of a Jabot, strutting around with the *Kunst und Alterthum* article in his pocket, ready to impress the impressionable.[24]

But social posing and climbing constitute only the first part of *Jabot*. The second part moves into a truly Töpfferian chain of surrealistic, impossible accidents, which culminate in Jabot's accidentally-on-purpose achieving his goal: marrying an aristocrat. Goethe would have enjoyed the absurd courtship, which makes a hilarious mockery of a tired romantic scenario.

Given the differences in political outlook between the liberal-republican Töpffer of the early 1830s (only later did he become an active counterrevolutionary) and the conservative-aristrocratic Goethe, we may assume a certain gap between Töpffer's satirical intentions and Goethe's understanding of them. The albums Töpffer sent to Weimar contain some criticisms of political repression and petty-bourgeois conservatism that reflect Töpffer's political sympathies. But his leanings are more potently and directly expressed in albums Töpffer chose *not* to send to Weimar, notably the antimilitarist *Monsieur Pencil*. This, with its proposition that the accidental waggling, by a little dog, of a telegraph could escalate into economic chaos, strikes, widespread social agitation, and murderous repression by vicious soldiers (all referable, of course, to the real revolutionary agitation of and since July 1830), could have appeared downright frightening to Goethe, troubled as he

23. Not in the 1830 version, which Goethe saw; added 1844.
24. In a tongue-in-cheek, "anonymous" review of *Jabot* in the *Bibliothèque universelle de Genève,* no. 18 (June 1837): 334–337.

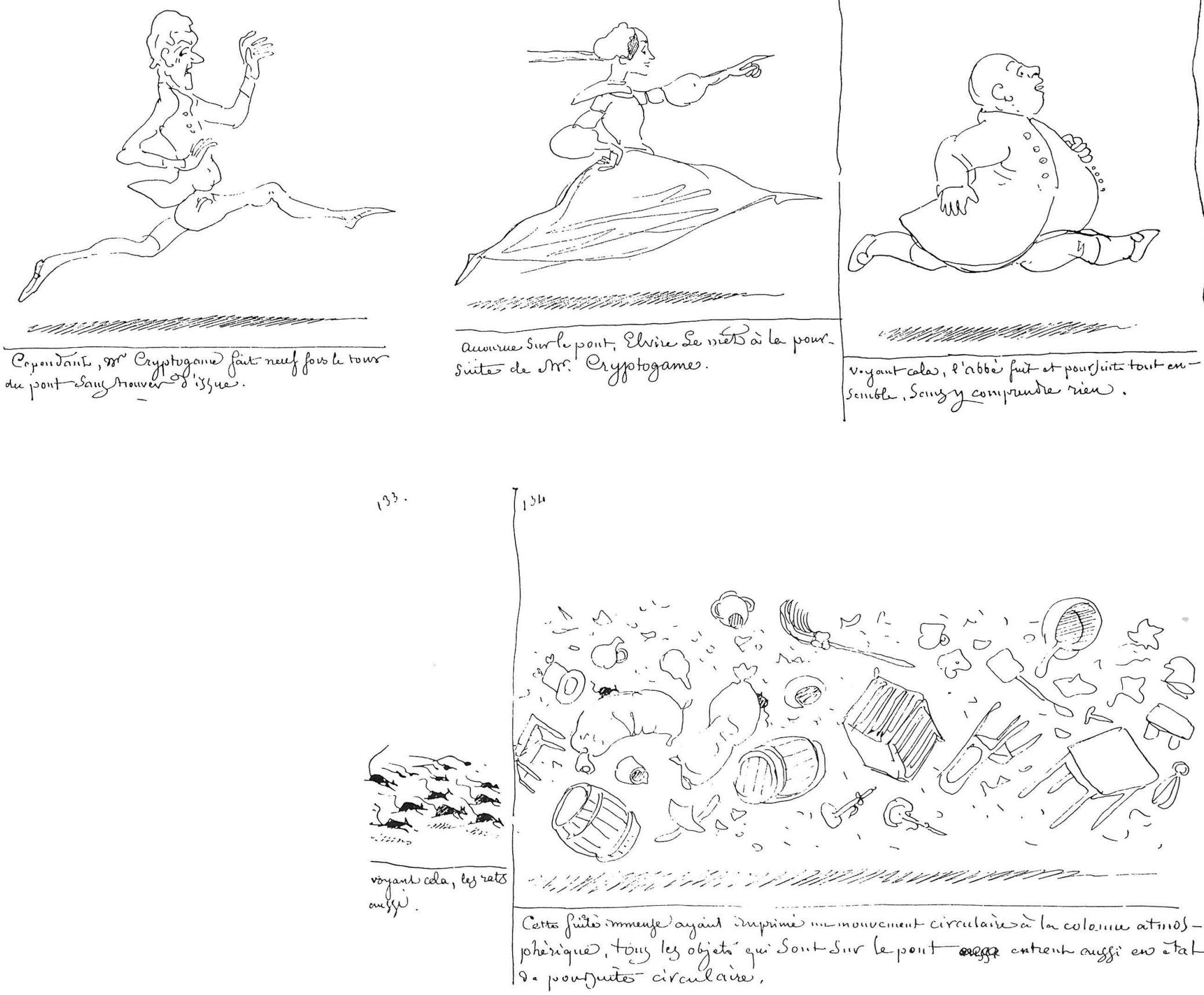
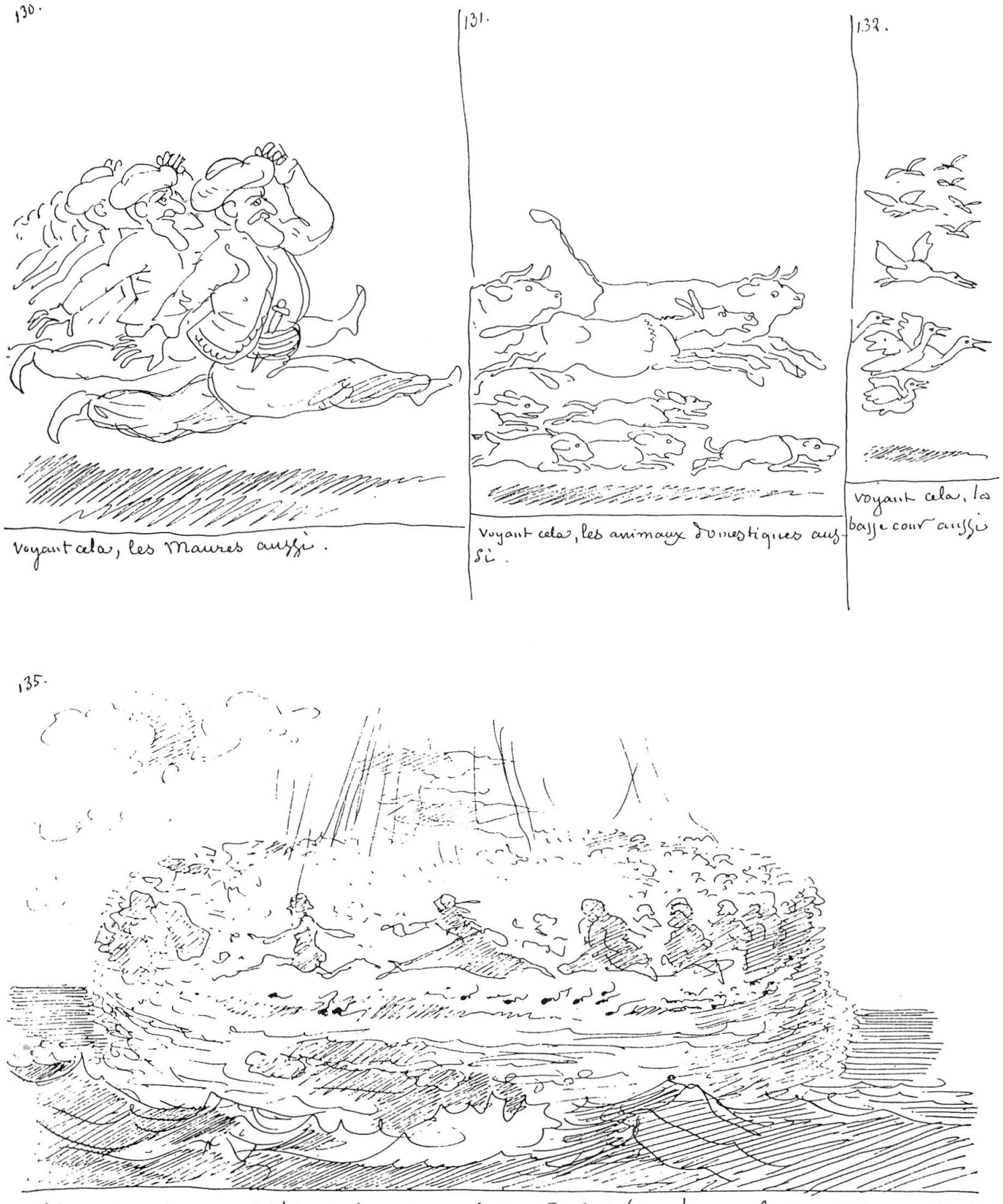


FIG. 2.3. *M. Cryptogame* (MS 1844).
"[127] Meanwhile, M. Cryptogame goes around the deck nine times without finding a way out. [128] Running onto the deck, Elvire pursues M. Cryptogame. [129] Seeing this, the Abbé flees and pursues all at once, understanding nothing. [130] Seeing this, the Moors also. [131] Seeing this, the domestic animals also. [132] Seeing this, the farmyard animals also. [133] Seeing this, the rats also. [134] This immense flight having created a vortex, all the objects on the deck also enter into a state of circular pursuit. [135] And pretty soon the ship itself begins to pirouette at eight revolutions per second."



was by that revolution and its aftermath. The antics of the *force armée* in *Festus* represent mere farcical interludes compared with the sustained threat of European war and social catastrophe depicted in *Pencil*.

For a conservative like Goethe, *Festus* may have contained an element of active reassurance in showing soldiers who are more likely to stick their bayonets into trees than people (Fig. 2.6) and who act like automata (in *Pencil* they act with cruel deliberation), as mindlessly as the whole village populations who in *Festus* are precipitated by some lemminglike instinct into the waters. The self-destruction is so extreme and arbitrary that it loses its threatening aspect. The uncalled-for arrest of the mayor, milord, and milady for not having passports, their condemnation as Carbonari conspirators to perpetual imprisonment (scene 42), and their equally arbitrary (not to say miraculous) escape succeed in defusing the otherwise alarming ideas of secret revolutionary societies and government repression of the innocent.

There were also elements of religious satire in the albums Goethe saw that would have been congenial to him, deriving as they did from a shared Protestant, anti-Catholic heritage: the superstitious, murderous monks in *Festus,* for instance, and the stupid, and ever stupified, abbé whom Cryptogame inveigles into marrying Elvire.

Whatever the admixture of fun and scorn in Töpffer, Goethe and other readers clearly appreciated the lack of real political malice in his satire. Goethe would surely have agreed with the young philosopher of art Friedrich Vischer, who wrote in the preface to the 1846 collected Franco-German (Kessmann) edition of the picture-stories that "the malice, the bitterness associated with caricature is 'volatilized' in the light champagne of humor."

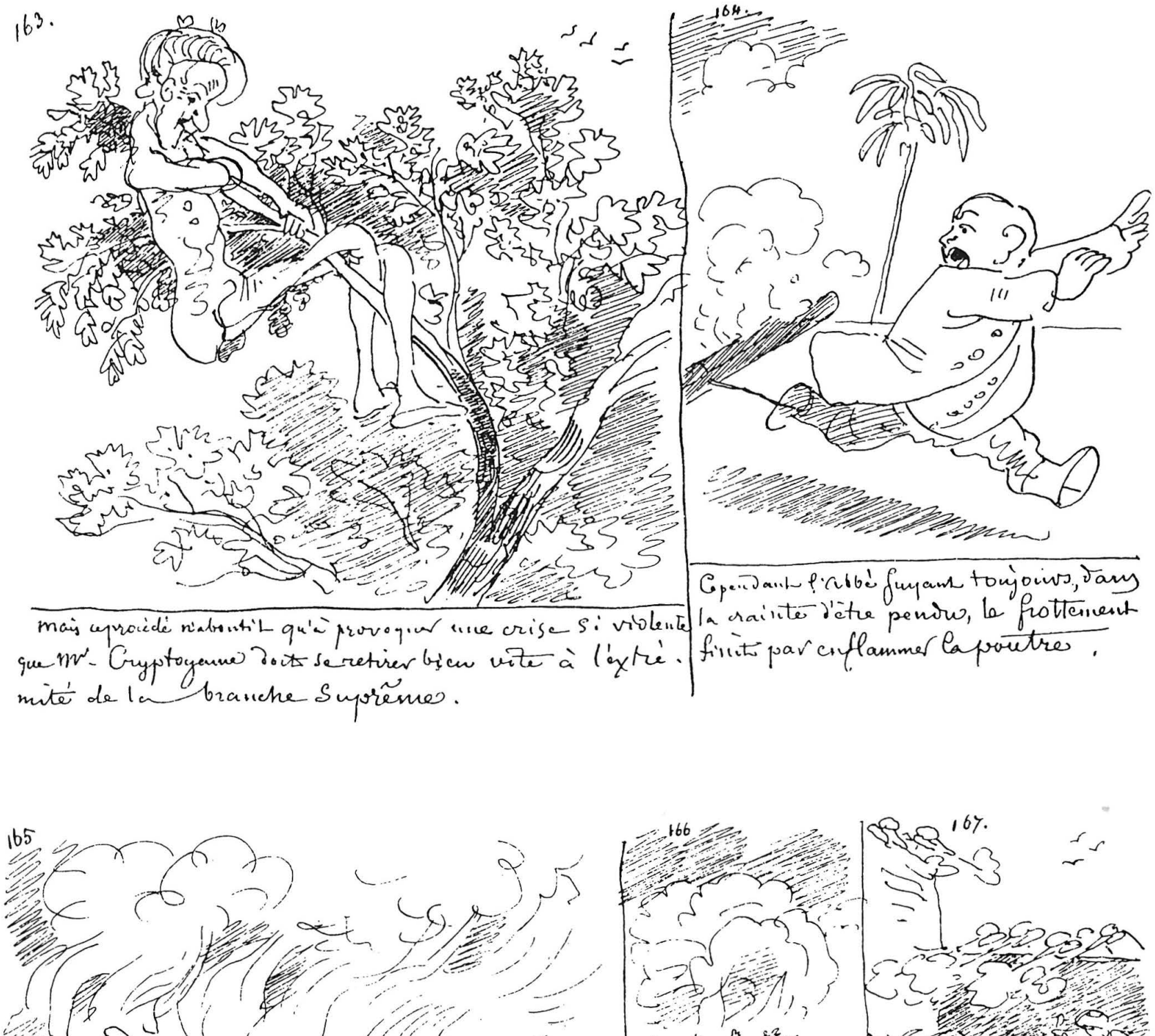


FIG. 2.4. *M. Cryptogame* (MS 1844).
[163] "But this process [of hiding] succeeds only in provoking so violent a crisis [in Elvire] that M. Cryptogame has hurriedly to withdraw to the extremity of the topmost branch. [164] Meanwhile, with the Abbé still fleeing in fear of being hanged, the friction eventually sets the beam on fire. [165] And the fire reaches the grasslands, and the lions leave their dens. [166] And the inhabitants of the countryside flee to Algiers, bearing with them their most important possessions. [167] In Algiers this passes unnoticed because people are busy with the election of a new Dey."

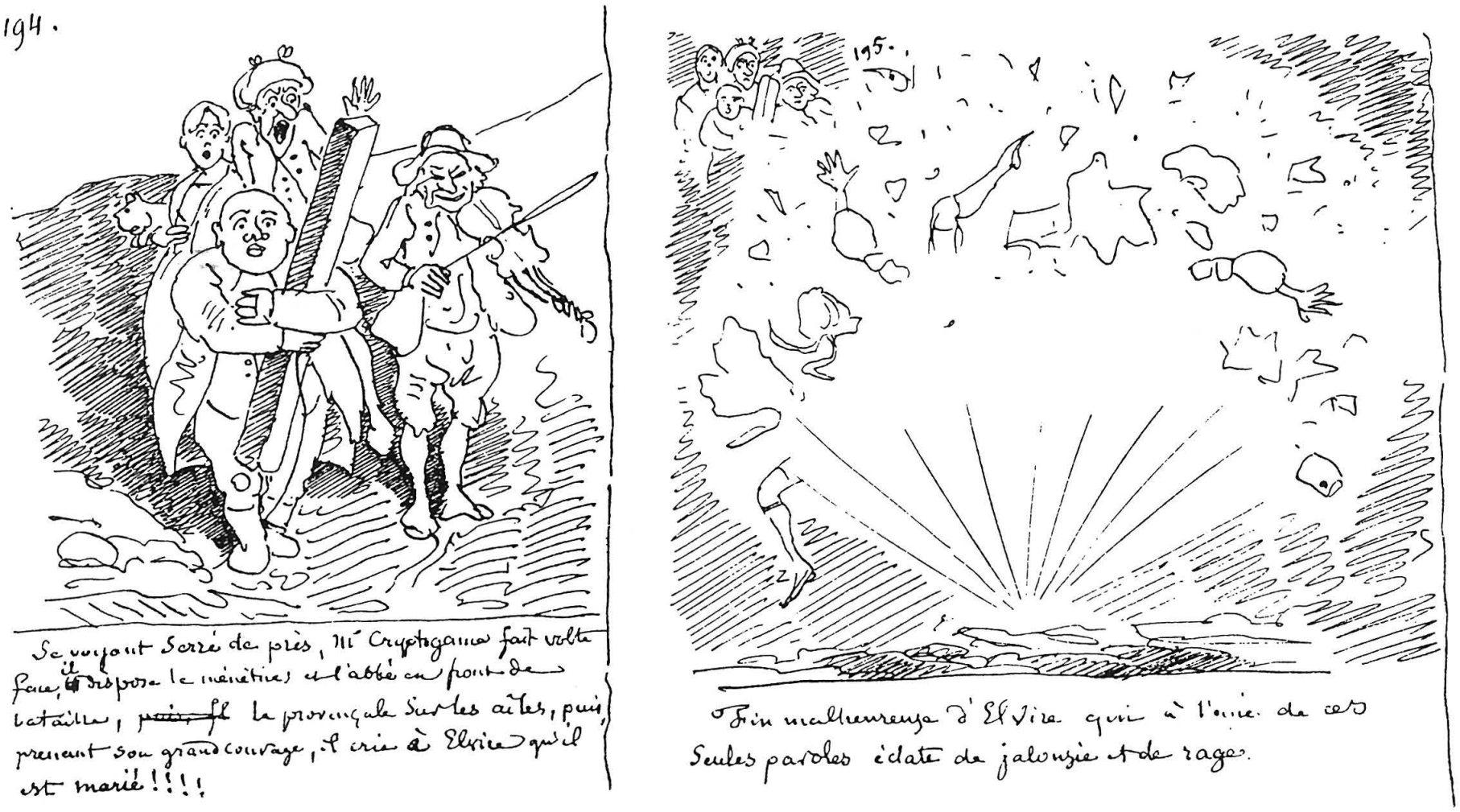


FIG. 2.5. *M. Cryptogame* (MS 1844).
"Seeing himself hard pressed, M. Cryptogame turns around, places the minstrel and the Abbé in the front line of battle, with the woman from Provence on the wing, then, summoning up all his courage, he cries to Elvire that he is married!!!! / Unfortunate end of Elvire who on hearing these words explodes with jealousy and rage."



FIG. 2.6. *Dr. Festus* (1840).
"Seeing a man in his shirtsleeves, the Mayor gives the order to attack with naked bayonet, and confidently awaits the success of his maneuver./ The armed forces get stuck in the tree, and Milord, seizing a knotty stick, executes *his* maneuver."

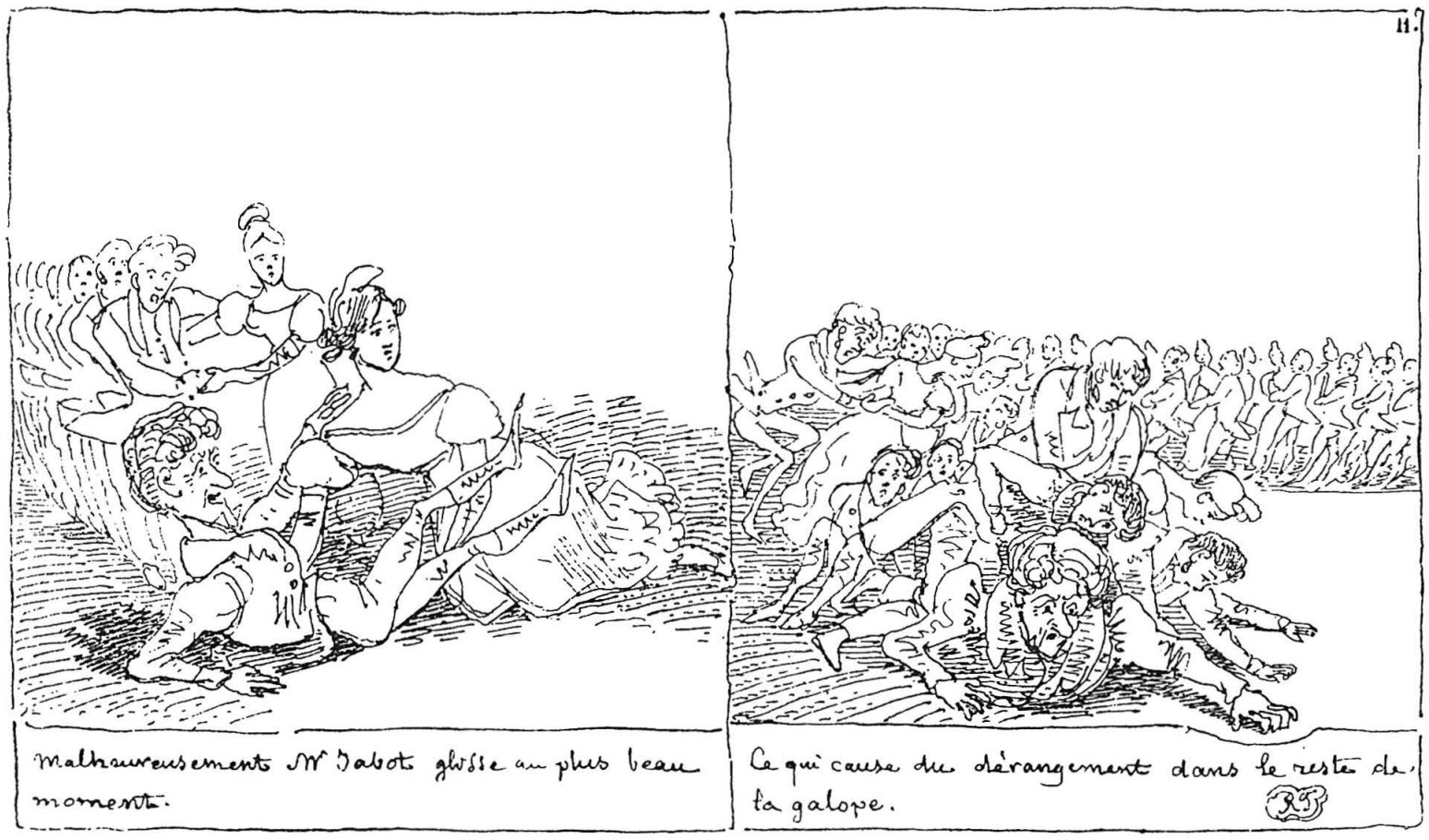


FIG. 2.7. *The Story of M. Jabot* (1835).
"[11] Unfortunately, M. Jabot slips at a critical moment. / Which causes some disturbance in the rest of the galop. [16] The galop arrives, tips over the chair, and M. Jabot is unfortunate enough to be left hanging by a hook. / Mr. Jabot is unhooked by the return of the galop."

Jabot, Crépin, Vieux Bois *(1833–1839)*

Despite Goethe's praise and the long notice in *Kunst und Alterthum* urging Töpffer to publish his comic albums, he hesitated to do so. There was a very real risk attached to becoming identified with a genre of such low or dubious status as caricature, especially for one with ambitions of becoming a serious moral writer. His own father's experience was a caution to him. Although the very personal and political caricatures of his father, Wolfgang-Adam, had been momentarily relevant to the conflictful early days of the Restoration, they had never been engraved, and they hardly redounded to his now-declining reputation as a serious painter of genre and landscape. The man whose work had once been applauded in Paris and London as well as Geneva, who had been art instructor to a French empress and had shown at the Paris Salon, was now beginning to be known as the father of Rodolphe, at whose flourishing school he gave drawing lessons.

For Rodolphe to go public with his caricatures, however innocent, was to jeopardize his reputation as a pedagogue. And he was now to acquire another, grander, title: that of professor at the Genevan Académie, an institution reputed throughout Europe for its scientific and law faculties. When it was decided to improve its offerings in the modern humanities (that is, literature), Töpffer's initial 1832 appointment as *chargé de cours* in "rhétorique et belles-lettres" (the equivalent of assistant professor in the United States) was upgraded in 1835 to titular (or tenured) professor. This promotion did not, however, go through easily, for the candidate did not have demonstrated breadth in French literature; nor was he known for his classical learning. *Jabot* and *Festus* were little less than a handicap, and his opponents derided him as the author of nothing better than caricature albums.[25]

In May 1833 Töpffer had lithographed the whole of *Monsieur Jabot* and printed some copies; these he distributed among friends but withheld from the bookstores,[26] deciding on a more general distribution only two years later, when his professional position was more secure. The book appeared outwardly as anonymous but carried on every page the curiously prominent initials R.T., which any Genevan would have recognized. Jabot was, to a degree, a self-persiflage of the author, who, though of modest petty-bourgeois origins, had married the daughter of one of Geneva's best-known and wealthiest watchmakers and had thus risen into the grande bourgeoisie and indeed, through the Académie, into the ruling elite itself. Töpffer's choice of a Jabot for his public entrée into caricature, however, involved even more the immediate recognizability and safeness of the satirical target. The social upstart was a familiar stereotype of Restoration-era satire, with its theme of revenge against the "career open to [low-class] talent" of Napoleonic times.[27]

Society figures in *Jabot* as a finely regulated and delicately balanced dance, a galop that can be brought down like dominoes through a single faux pas (Fig. 2.7, scene 11). "Society," diffused as a blithely hostile physical environment in which furniture and people are accomplices, takes its revenge, in an impetus both collective and individual, by knocking the interloper about (Fig. 2.7, scene 16)—as will ever be the destiny of petty-bourgeois ambition.

Jabot, the little buffoon from a nether world, is out of place from the start, for he is in the first part of the story the only figure who is caricatured. The women, and to a degree the men also, whose social milieu is that of Töpffer's own readers, are rendered in a pleasant, almost idealized form.

But the familiarity of the satire and farcical development in the first part (we see echoes of Cruikshank's 1818 etching *Inconveniences of a Crowded Drawing Room*) yields in the second part to a chain of incidents that transcends conventional comic situa-

25. See Relave 1886, 40, 116ff.
26. Blondel 1886, 80.
27. See, for example, the discussion of Ramberg's *Life of Strunk the Upstart* in Kunzle 1973, 404–417.



tions, becoming absurd and surreal (Fig. 2.8). Small dogs drag Jabot's bed into the marquise's bedroom and back again; Jabot drinks candle wax and tries to get into the marquise's clothes. A conventional structure of courtship becomes overwhelmed by waves of mistaken identities and purposes and bizarre accidents. Here satirical logic devours itself, rather as the little dogs devour themselves.[28]

Successful as *Jabot* was in and outside Geneva (Töpffer's private distribution network reached as far as England), it was not until two years later that the author lithographed and released his next albums, *Vieux Bois* and *Crépin. The Story of Monsieur Crépin* was an entirely new project with, once again, readily identifiable theme and familiar structure: education systems and theories and, by extension, the quest for novel social systems generally. At the time, Geneva was undergoing a series of educational reforms that tended to deemphasize traditional classical studies in favor of modern subjects. Yet even though Töpffer himself taught the latter, he resisted the reforms; the gentle schoolmaster was becoming politically more conservative and contradictory.

Now a member of the ruling political as well as educational bureaucracy of Geneva, Töpffer saw himself as being ground down by petty academic tasks and disputes, which he did his best to avoid. The idea of systematic reform filled him with dismay. *Crépin* is a vehicle of that acute discomfort, which came to inform his whole aesthetic philosophy (or "antiphilosophy"), with the systemic thinking that lent itself to ossification, manic exaggeration, and intellectual and scientific (or pseudoscientific) intolerance. *Crépin* thus brings the earlier satires on physical scientists into the realm of pedagogic science. Switzerland and Germany abounded in educational theories and practices, some of which seemed very successful and had won international renown. Geneva itself was praised as a pedagogic laboratory.[29] But too many fanatics brought this spirit of experimentation into disrepute, making outrageous claims that their system—and theirs alone—woud save the world.

Töpffer's satire is both general and particular. In *Crépin,* for example, the "Institut Parpaillozzi" conjures up the famous Swiss Heinrich Pestalozzi; and the Farcet Institution's method of "instructing by entertaining" and using toys (scene 75), may be a reference to the experiments of Friedrich Fröbel, who had recently spent five years in Switzerland. But Töpffer's aim is to ridicule certain methods reducible (as Pestalozzi's and Fröbel's were not) to slogans, such as that of the first (unnamed) *Crépin* tutor, whose trick was to "proceed from the general to the particular" (Fig. 2.9). This sloganeering is reminiscent of Joseph Jacotot's Method of Universal Instruction, the publicity for which featured the motto "All Is in All," and which promoted learning by rote and the simple transference of principles, ideas, and facts from one domain to an entirely different one. Thus Töpffer shows the tutor Fadet (meaning "dull") teaching the Crépin children physics using Fénélon's *Adventures of Télémaque,* "à la manière Jacotot" (scene 21).

Crépin was certainly a provocative venture at such a time and in such a place, on the part of a schoolmaster and university professor who relished the prospect of scandalizing colleagues, "that band of hateful pedants,"[30] with his little albums. One such colleague duly scandalized was the famous Swiss educator Philipp Emmanuel Fellenberg,[31] notorious for his vanity and intolerance, "pontiff and missionary of the new pedagogic church,"[32] and lacking all sense of humor. And yet Monsieur Crépin and his wife seemed to justify his dramatic charge that "parents are totally incompetent to educate their own children."[33]

With *Crépin,* Töpffer engaged in an indirect form of self-advertisement, if not for his own school in particular (which seems, from the considerable information we have, to have been attractively nondogmatic, nonsystemic, self-paced, and full of fun—a Summerhill of its age), then for the Swiss type of small private school, which stood in contrast to the archaic system of private tutoring with its encouragement of pedagogic eccentric-

28. This second part was found redundant and incomprehensible in the only review I have found (Töpffer does not seem to have offered *Jabot* for review to the Genevan press), in *Das Kunstblatt,* published by Goethe's publisher J. G. Cotta and edited by Dr. Schorn, no doubt the author of the review. Schorn has, incidentally, no hesitation in identifying the author by name.
29. See Mützenberg 1974, 147. This comprehensive work by a Genevan, which gives full credit in various places to Töpffer's role as an educator in Geneva and reproduces many of his drawings, fails to mention *Crépin* at all, almost as if it was to Töpffer's discredit to have dared to satirize the subject of education.
30. MS Suppl. 1643, f. 61, letter to Auguste de la Rive, Spring 1840 (Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Geneva).
31. According to Gaullieur (1856, 55), Töpffer had sent Fellenberg a copy of *Festus,* for what reason is not known. Fellenberg had already been the butt of a caricature by Rodolphe's father, Wolfgang-Adam Töpffer (1917, pls. 21 and 23).
32. Dollfus 1864, 155.
33. *What De Fellenberg Has Done for Education* (London, 1839), xvi.

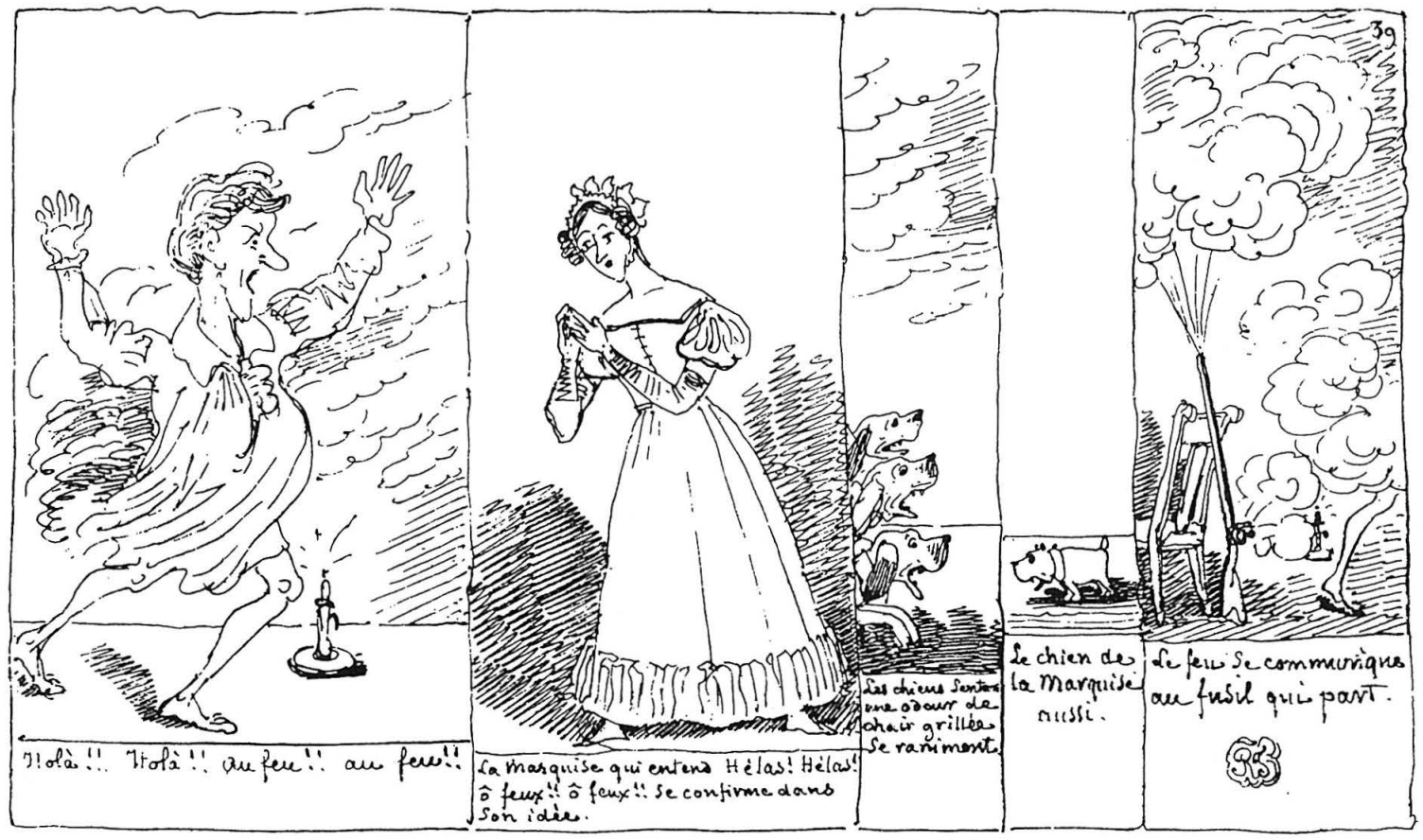


FIG. 2.8. *M. Jabot* (1835).
"[39] 'Help!! Help!! Fire!! Fire!!' / Hearing 'Alas! Alas! Fire!! Fire [of love]!!' the Marquise is confirmed in her idea [that Jabot is in love with her]. / Smelling roast meat, the dogs revive. / The Marquise's dog also. / The fire reaches the gun, which goes off. [40] Persuaded that suicide has been committed on her behalf, the Marquise faints. / Her dog also. / M. Jabot saves his life by changing his linen. / What gives pleasure to M. Jabot is that his legs have not suffered in the least."

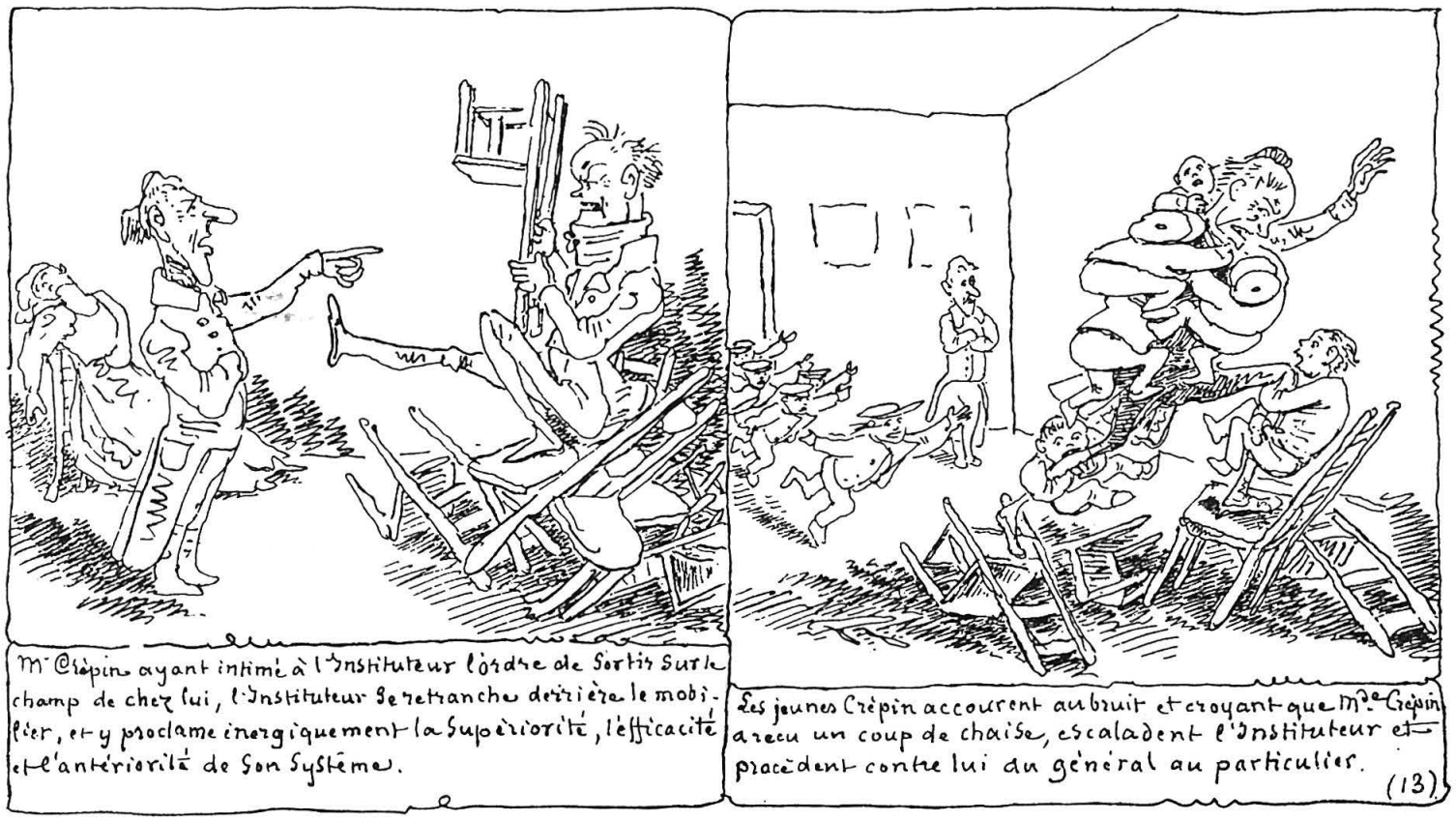


FIG. 2.9. *The Story of M. Crépin* (1837).
"Having received from M. Crépin the order to leave his house immediately, the Teacher takes refuge behind the furniture, and energetically proclaims the superiority, effectiveness, and anteriority of his system. / The noise brings up the young Crépins, who, in the belief that Mme. Crépin has been hit with a chair, take the teacher by storm and proceed against him from the general to the particular."

ity. Fortunately, the private tutors discredit themselves before they can do permanent damage, and Monsieur Crépin finally summons the strength to assert common sense and authority as head of the household (and father of eleven children) against the nervous crises and idiotic enthusiasms of his wife. Indeed, Madame Crépin is a satirical target in herself, embodying some of the characteristics of the ill-educated nouveau riche—for instance, along with her husband, who is perhaps nouveau riche himself, she thinks private tutoring confers social status. Finally, after so much travail, Monsieur Crépin seeks out a small private school and, after rejecting several that are also tainted with fraud, finds that of Monsieur Bonnefoi ("Goodfaith") where, rather than applying any system at all, teacher and students simply do their best.

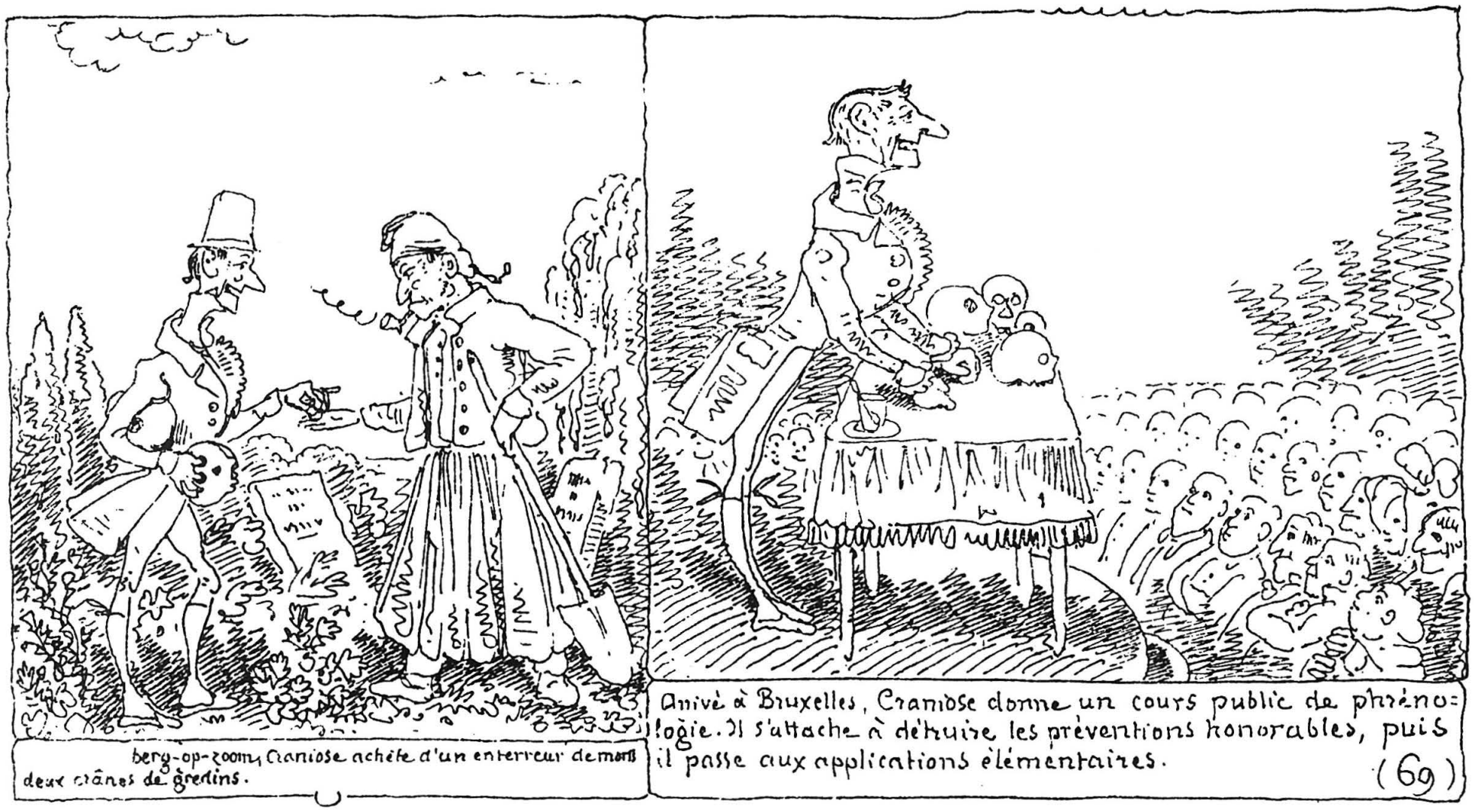
In terms of the ascendant bourgeoisie's demands for the democratization of education, Töpffer's satire flows in two, one might say contrary, directions: it opposes an essentially inefficient, archaic, and aristocratic educational system, that of the private tutor, and at the same time ridicules methods devised for mass public education. The latter constituted a magnet for entrepreneurial charlatans, sensation seekers, and political opportunists (like Daumier and Philipon's Robert Macaire, who uses schools as yet another means of cheating the gullible public).

Crépin, its first half a satire on educational systems, then turns to take issue with a pseudoscientific theory whose potential social effects transcended the domain of education and approached the sacred foundations of religion and philosophy themselves. Phrenology or craniology, or bumpology as it was also vulgarly called, claimed a theory based on the work of Franz Joseph Gall in the early years of the century, which purported to show how fixed character traits might be read from the protuberances of the skull. Overlaid upon, and in a sense superseding, the physiognomic theories of the 18th century, it had gained extraordinary popularity by the 1830s, only to resurface later in the century in the theories of Lombroso. "Le système des bosses est éclos sous la bosse des systèmes," as a Gavarni caption put it.[34] The pretensions of the phrenologists, like those of some pedagogues, reached absurd proportions, and the implications of the theory, especially in the domain of criminology, seemed to threaten the very concept of free will and the divinity of creation. Töpffer shows how the tutor Craniose, after being ejected from the Crépin household, descends to the life of peripatetic lecturer and palpater of skulls among the stupid and vulgar (Fig. 2.10). His doctrines lead to attitudes that could only foster criminality, and in an adroit narrative linkage, the murderer of a tutor who appeared earlier is acquitted by a jury under the influence of Craniose's theory of criminal predestination.

The Loves of M. Vieux Bois (Fig. 2.11), also published in 1837, was based on Töpffer's very first picture-story, sketched a full ten years earlier. Though much less focused as social satire, *Vieux Bois* was topical on two fronts. First, it ridiculed certain aspects of Catholicism, which at the time was resisting the spread of lay education throughout Europe and in Geneva was making inroads against the traditional Calvinist culture. Second, *Vieux Bois* was a timely parody of literary romanticism, targeting the more traditional and archaic features of romanticism—its pastoral follies, heroic emotionalism, and wild incredibility. This was the heritage of Geneva's own Jean-Jacques Rousseau, with whom Töpffer himself had been consumed as a youth.

Töpffer's political and cultural critique is the starting point and a leitmotif of *Vieux Bois,* but in no sense does it determine significance or structure as a whole. Narrative and satirical logic have now dissolved, allowing full development of the real Töpfferian mode: surreal, freewheeling comedy. If there is a structure, it is that of two intercut rhythms: the emotional and the physical, movements

34. "The system of bumps was hatched under the bump of systems" (*Oeuvre célèbre de Gavarni,* 559 compositions, Hetzel, n.d., caption to plate: "Silence du cabinet"). "It [phrenology] is, especially nowadays, a new psychological doctrine which claims nothing less than to renew the fact of science, of society, and virtually of the world, and which, seeming to break all relations with the past, sets itself up as a sort of fiat lux" (Lelut 1836, iii). Phrenology had always been a target of satire; in caricature, we may cite George Cruikshank's *Phrenological Illustrations* (1826) and Dickens's "phrenological" disquisition on doorknockers in "Our Next-Door Neighbour" (*Sketches by Boz* [1836], p. 47). Three Daumier series of these years (*Galerie physiognomique,* Delteil 1904, nos. 326–350; *Croquis d'expression,* D. 466–521; and *Types parisiens,* D. 559–606—dated 1836–1839) testify to a renewed interest in physiognomics.



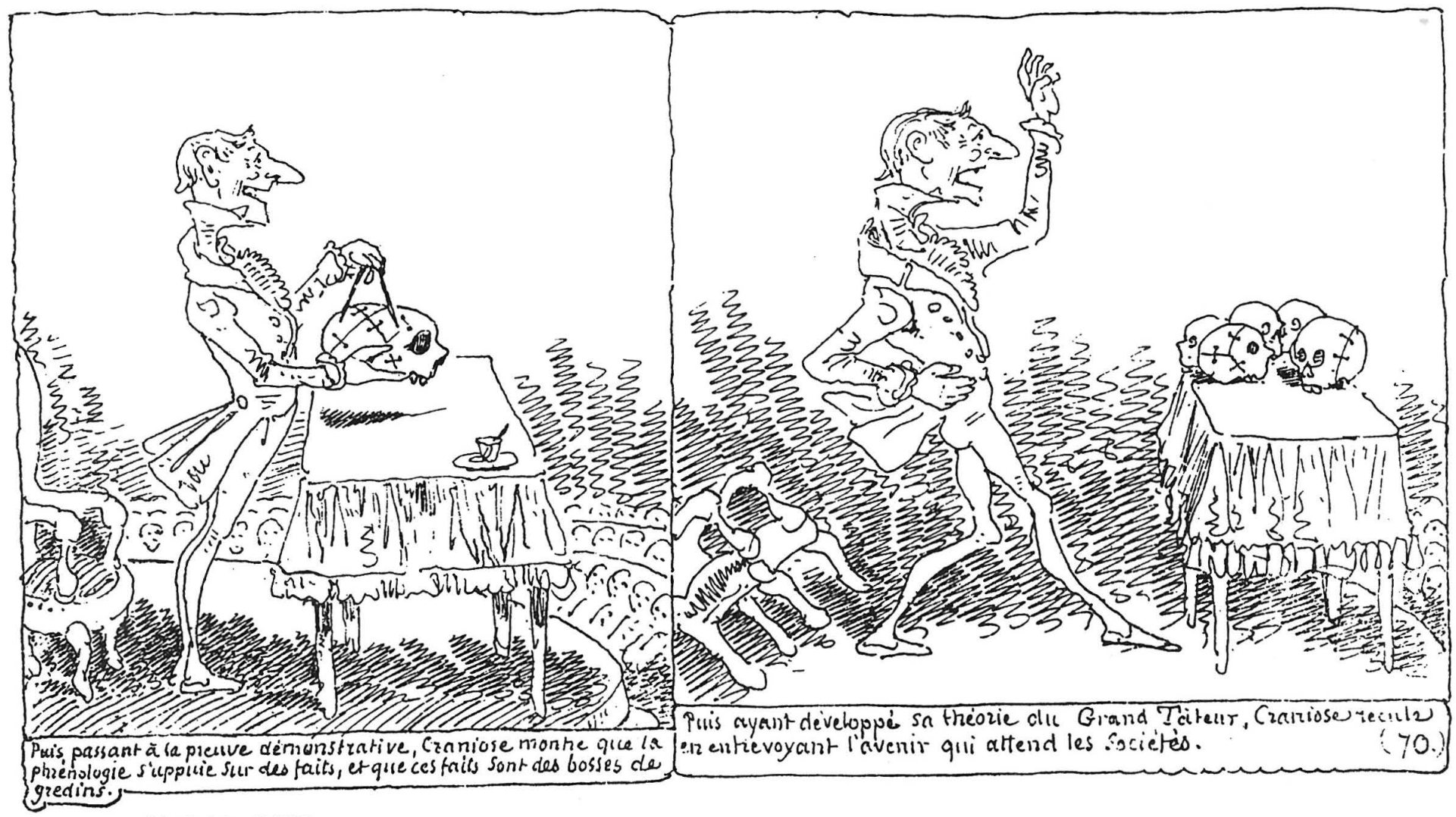


FIG. 2.10. *M. Crépin* (1837).
"[At] Berg-op-Zoom, Craniose buys two criminals' skulls from a gravedigger. / Arriving in Brussels, Craniose gives a public lecture on phrenology. He is at pains to overcome honorable objections, then passes to elementary applications. / Then, passing to demonstrative proof, Craniose shows that phrenology is based on facts, and these facts are the bumps of criminals. / Having developed his theory of the Great Palpater, Craniose steps back as he catches sight of the future that awaits society."



FIG. 2.II. *The Loves of M. Vieux Bois* (1839).
"[77] When the sack becomes fortuitously untied, the Monks return to the charge, and pull out the Beloved Object in person. [78] Recognized, judged, and condemned by the Chapter, M. Vieux Bois and the Beloved Object are led to the stake."

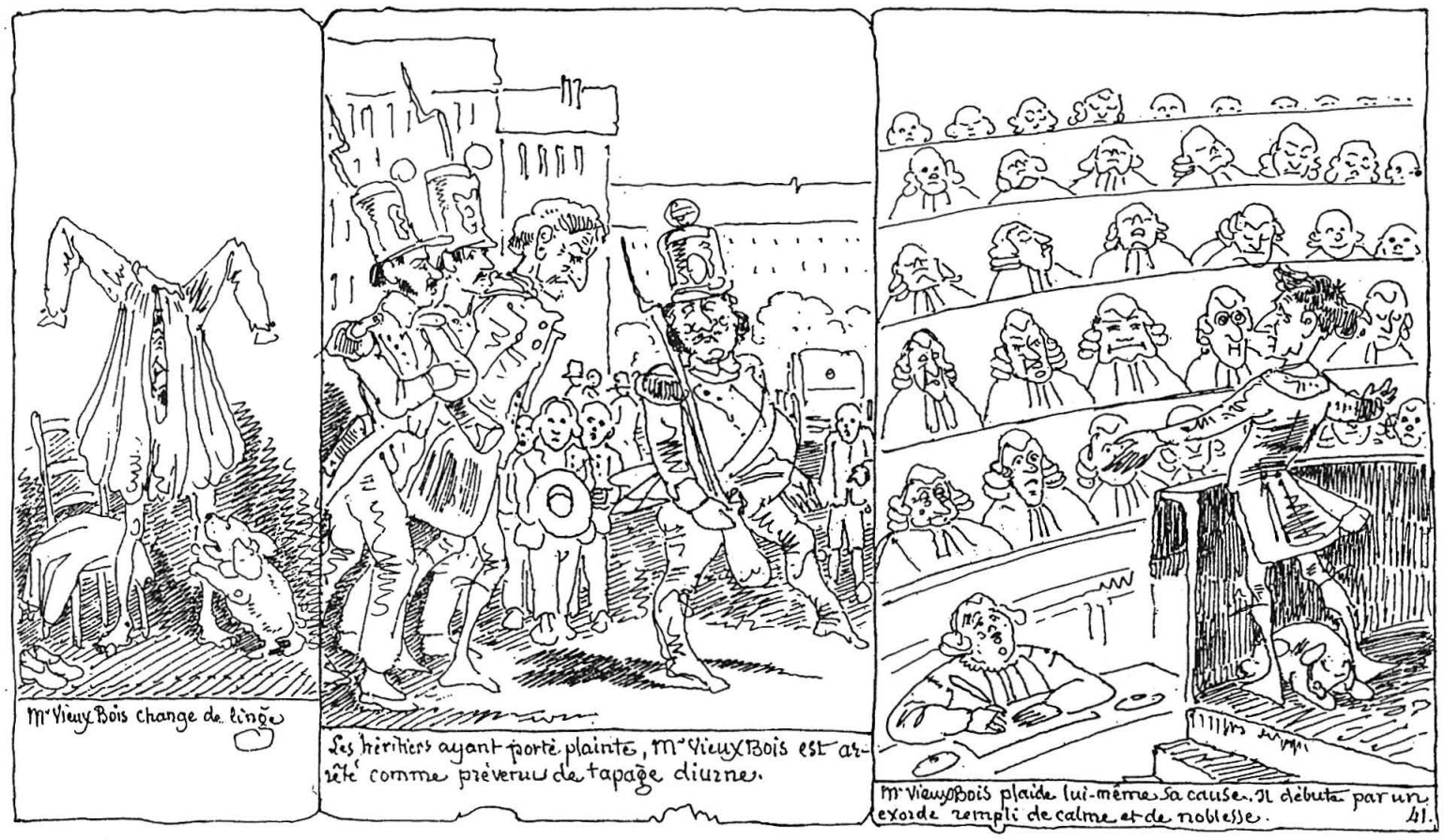




FIG. 2.12. *M. Vieux Bois* (1839). "[41] M. Vieux Bois changes his underlinen. / When the heirs lodge a complaint, M. Vieux Bois is arrested for disturbing the daytime peace. / M. Vieux Bois pleads his cause himself. He begins with an exordium full of calm and nobility. [42] M. Vieux Bois throws some spice into his account. / As he approaches the peroration, M. Vieux Bois gets progressively warmer. / Inflamed in apostrophes. / And finally pulls out all the stops."

of the heart and of the body. The amorous hyperemotionalism of Vieux Bois, parodic in itself, is rendered extra-absurd in that its target, the *Objet aimé* (the Beloved Object, as she is invariably called, a nameless Romantic abstraction), remains totally unresponsive to it and the hectic adventures it provokes. There is of course a Rival, but his role in frustrating and thus inflaming Vieux Bois's passion is less pivotal than that of accident. Rather, chance and capricious coincidence wholly determine the manner of the capture, loss, and recapture of the Beloved Object, as well as of the sequence of Gothic paraphernalia: several elopements and abductions, a duel, four suicide attempts, two attempted murders (not counting the auto-da-fé; see Fig. 2.11), a burial alive and subsequent resuscitation, and two imprisonments (one civil, one monastic), all laced together with a complement of ghosts, murderous monks, and brigands.

Vieux Bois is such razzle-dazzle stuff that it defies summarizing and seems to mock rational analysis. We must therefore content ourselves with noting some improvements Töpffer made in the three versions. Compared with the early manuscript version, the published editions of 1837 and 1839 reinforce the parody of amorous susceptibility through comic emotional kaleidoscopes and refrains. They also emphasize the extent to which individual emotional self-indulgence can lead to violence, as seen in Fig. 2.12, where the hero, pleading his case, goes literally overboard.[35] His jail sentence is correspondingly increased, from one year (1837) to two (1839). The social disorder the hero causes as he drags

35. Töpffer seems to have applied a memory of Daumier's famous Ventre Legislatif of 1834 (Delteil 1904, no. 131); the 1839 version of *Vieux Bois,* by adding rows of jurors (Töpffer now has five, to Daumier's four), increases the resemblance.

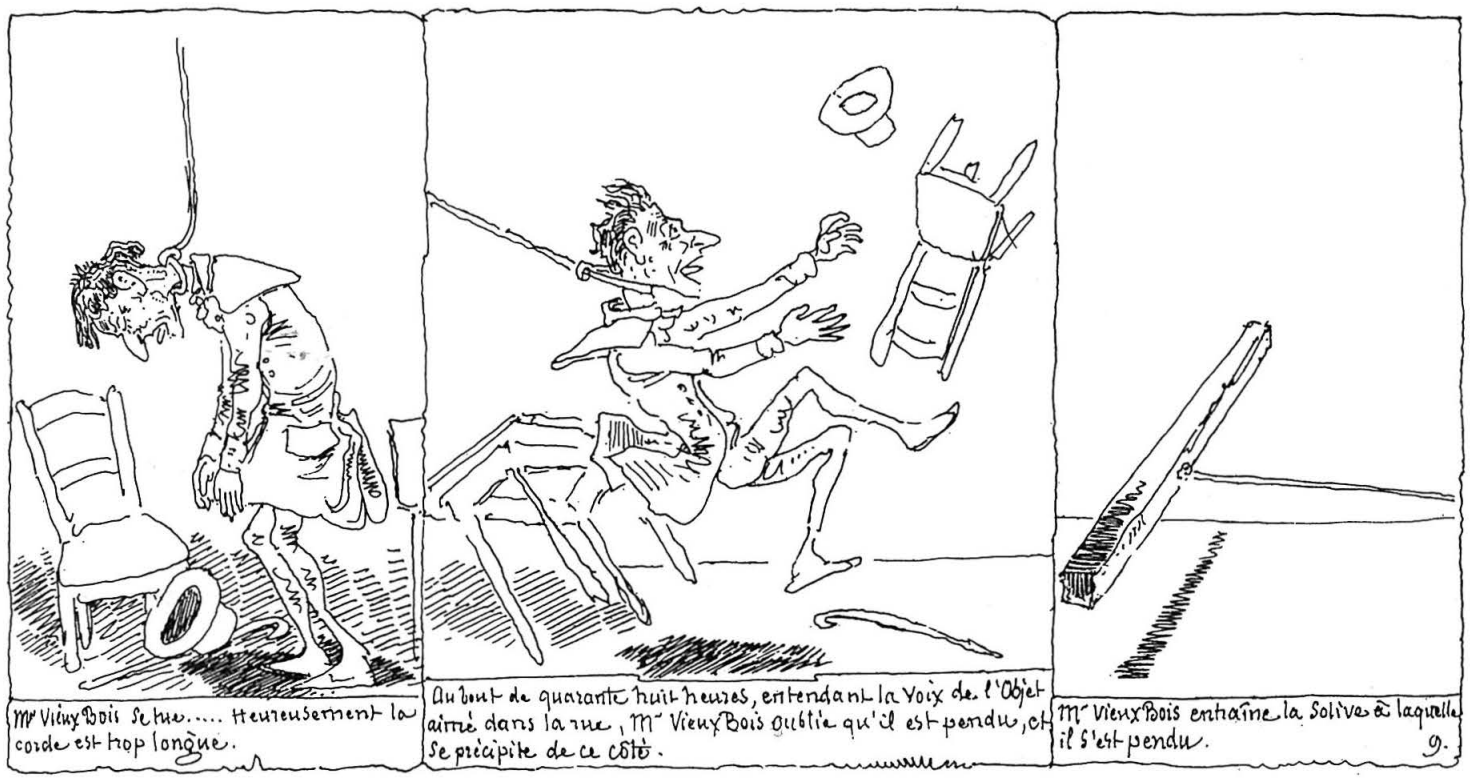
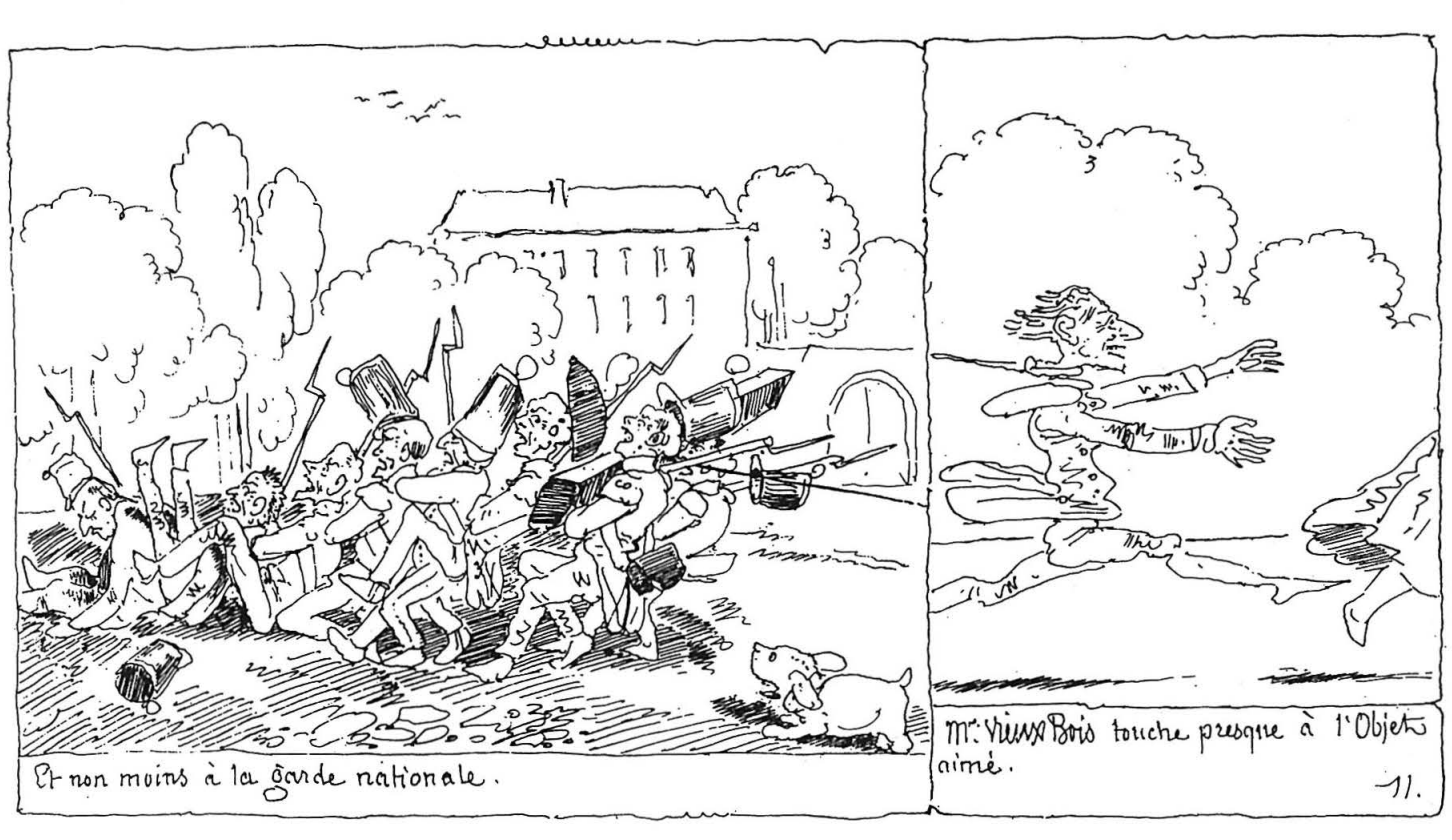




FIG. 2.13. *M. Vieux Bois* (1839).
"[9] M. Vieux Bois kills himself..... Fortunately the rope is too long. / After forty-eight hours, hearing the voice of the Beloved Oject in the street, M. Vieux Bois forgets that he is hanged, and rushes in that direction. / M. Vieux Bois drags along the beam from which he hanged himself. [10] Which causes the bourgeois some discomfort. / And the National Guard no less. [11] M. Vieux Bois almost touches the Beloved Object."



along the beam from which he hanged himself, first introduced in 1837, is much extended in the second edition, reaching the forces of order themselves, the National Guard, who are knocked down like dominoes (Fig. 2.13).

Töpffer also improved upon certain eminently precinematic graphic inventions that he (and his readers) found particularly felicitous and funny, such as the refrain of the Rival being dunked by a waterwheel, intercut with graphically larger scenes of Vieux Bois pursuing his triumphant journey. Added as a quartet of almost identical compositions in 1837, in 1839 this refrain had become a sextet (Fig. 2.14). The counterpoint provided by Vieux Bois's dog has also been enhanced, the ugly little mutt becoming generally more active throughout the story. When he is the unwitting cause of his master's missing his wedding and losing his bride, he shows his feeling about it all by lifting his leg against the church wall. His behavior and expression on the roof, where he runs the gamut of canine pathos—at first horribly emaciated, then grotesquely paunchy—is almost a subplot in itself (scenes 51–53). Abrupt change of shape (which also affects the Beloved Object), an embryonic device of cartoon animation, is the counterpart of the sudden emotional transformations to which the characters in *Vieux Bois* (and Töpffer as a whole) are generally susceptible.

The improvements made in the second edition of *Vieux Bois* testify to the author's increasing self-confidence in the genre and the appeal of its special devices. In 1837 he published an apology for his method, medium, and intentions in the guise of a much-belated review of *Jabot,* signed with his customary initials, in the magazine of which he was contributing editor, the *Bibliothèque universelle de Genève.*[36] The self-promotional motive is sugar-coated with a wittily disparaging tone. The experience of "reality lent to the impossible" that Goethe had admired (here Töpffer refers back to the *Kunst und Alterthum* article) derives from the directness of representation facilitated by the autographic lithographic technique. Drawing lines as freely as one writes words (and without having to worry about reversal), the artist aims for a conciseness of graphic line and verbal formulation in a special admixture or interdependence. This constitutes a new mode, which, as Töpffer emphasizes, inevitably bypasses or transcends the normal criteria of criticism, either literary or artistic: "The drawings, without this text, would have only an obscure meaning; the text, without the drawings, would mean nothing. The whole forms a kind of novel, all the more peculiar in that it no more resembles a novel than anything else." In ironic assertion of an anonymity that fooled no one, he continues: "The author of this little oblong volume has not made himself known. If he is an artist, he draws feebly, but he has some practice in writing; if he is a man of letters, his writing is mediocre, but he does have, as a graphic artist, a pretty amateur talent. If he is a serious man, he has singularly comic ideas; if his genre is comedy, he is not lacking in a sense of the serious."[37]

The whole article wavers between the grave and the tongue-in-cheek and teasingly shifts the grounds of its argument. After citing in full the "anticritical" epigraph that prefaces all of his picture-stories ("Go, little book, and choose your public, for with crazy things, whoever doesn't laugh, yawns; whoever doesn't yield, resists; whoever reasons, is mistaken; and whoever wishes to remain serious, is free to do so"),[38] the author makes a plea for a new kind of comedy that resides less in the character of the concept (which may be quite silly) than in the briskness of the drawing itself—in other words, it is a call for a new graphic aesthetic.

But Töpffer wanted to have it both ways, for while the new mode defies normal critical and aesthetic criteria, it also performs the traditional function of satire: to hold a mirror up to society. It does so, moreover, in a public sphere, for Töpffer's comic albums, the product of a relatively private and restricted social conviviality, had now advanced to the wider world of the Parisian salon, where the identity and personality of the author was unknown. Jabot the prototypical social upstart and *Jabot* the new artistic genre are both social catalysts that are reflected in and reflect upon each other: "All in all, M. Jabot is an amusing book, poorly printed, very expensive, and in its place above all in a salon. For in a salon, all men become more or less Jabots, all, more or less, *think they ought* . . . and it is very entertaining to contemplate them as they laugh, or *think they ought* to laugh at the little story. Like a pleasant fellow who laughs to see his own face in the glass, taking it for someone else's."[39]

36. R.T., "Histoire de M. Jabot," *Bibliothèque universelle de Genève,* no. 18 (June 1837): 334–337.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.

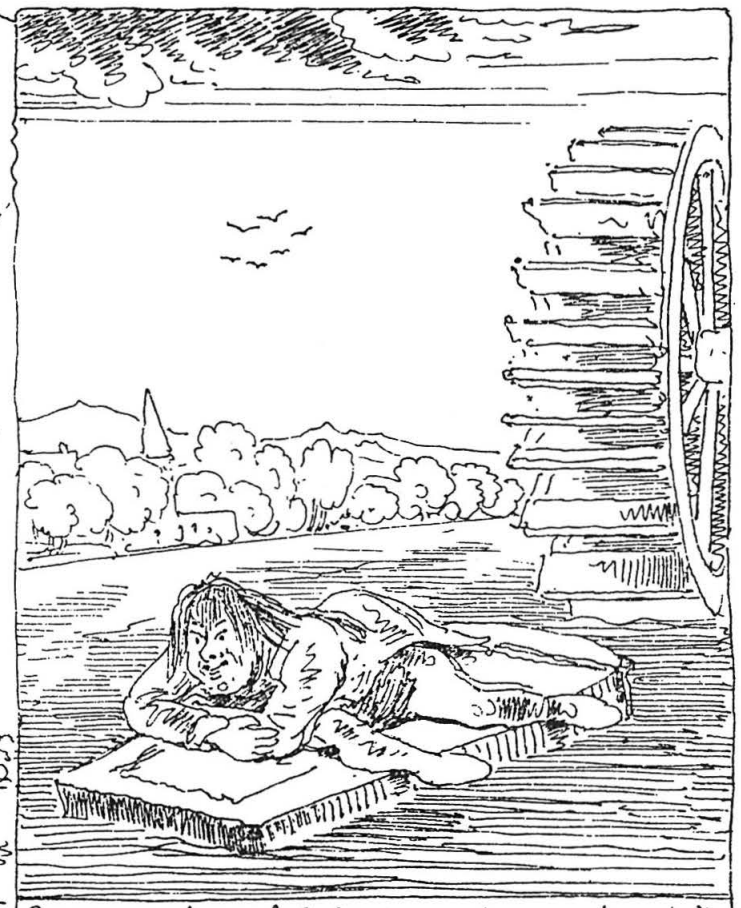
FIG. 2.14. *M. Vieux Bois* (1839).
"[61] Rage of M. Vieux Bois who, reaching the banks of the river, sees his rival floating in possession of the chair. / M. Vieux Bois does not hesitate to throw himself into the river, to swim in pursuit of the Beloved Object. / While the Rival gives himself up to the charms of the [Beloved Object's] description, he is carried off by the river toward the big waterwheel. [62] Caught at the height of the story by the big waterwheel, the Rival is thoroughly soused at every turn. / Having reached the chaise, M. Vieux Bois takes his place, and steers with his hat. / M. Vieux Bois seeks a flower-studded shore suited to disembarkation. [63] Meanwhile, the Rival continues to get thoroughly soused at every turn. / After disembarking on a flowery shore, M. Vieux Bois extracts the Beloved Object, and, by way of a joke, pushes the chaise back into the river, shouting to the Rival that he can take it as a gift. / Because the Beloved Object has become extremely diminished, M. Vieux Bois takes her to drink milk in the mountains. [64] The Rival continues to get thoroughly soused at every turn. / M. Vieux Bois embraces the pastoral life, for the health of the Beloved Object, and takes the provisional name of Tircis. [65] The Rival continues to get thoroughly soused at every turn. / M. Vieux Bois, under the provisional name of Tircis, devotes himself to milking on behalf of the Beloved Object. [66] The Rival continues to get thoroughly soused at every turn. / M. Vieux Bois, under the provisional name of Tircis, entertains the Beloved Object with bucolic dances. / M. Vieux Bois, under the provisional name of Tircis, goes bird's nesting on behalf of the Beloved Object. [67] The Rival continues to get thoroughly soused at every turn. / At the first signs of cold, M. Vieux Bois, under the provisional name of Tircis, leaves the heights, and seeks out warmer zephyrs in the balmy plains. / Meanwhile, the waters have subsided appreciably, so that the chaise, left high and dry, lands not far from the Convent. [68] For the same reason, the great waterwheel stops turning, and the Rival reaches the shore. / And then dries himself in the sun. / Because the pastoral life has fattened the Beloved Object most singularly, M. Vieux Bois begins to experience misgivings."



Rage de Mr VieuxBois, qui, parvenu sur les bords du fleuve, voit flotter le rival en possession de la chaise.



Mr. VieuxBois n'hésite pas à se précipiter dans le fleuve, pour nager à la poursuite de l'Objet aimé.



Pendant que le rival se livre au charme du récit, il est entraîné par le fleuve du côté de la grande roue.

61.



Happé au plus beau moment par la grande roue, le Rival est prodigieusement sauté à chaque tour.

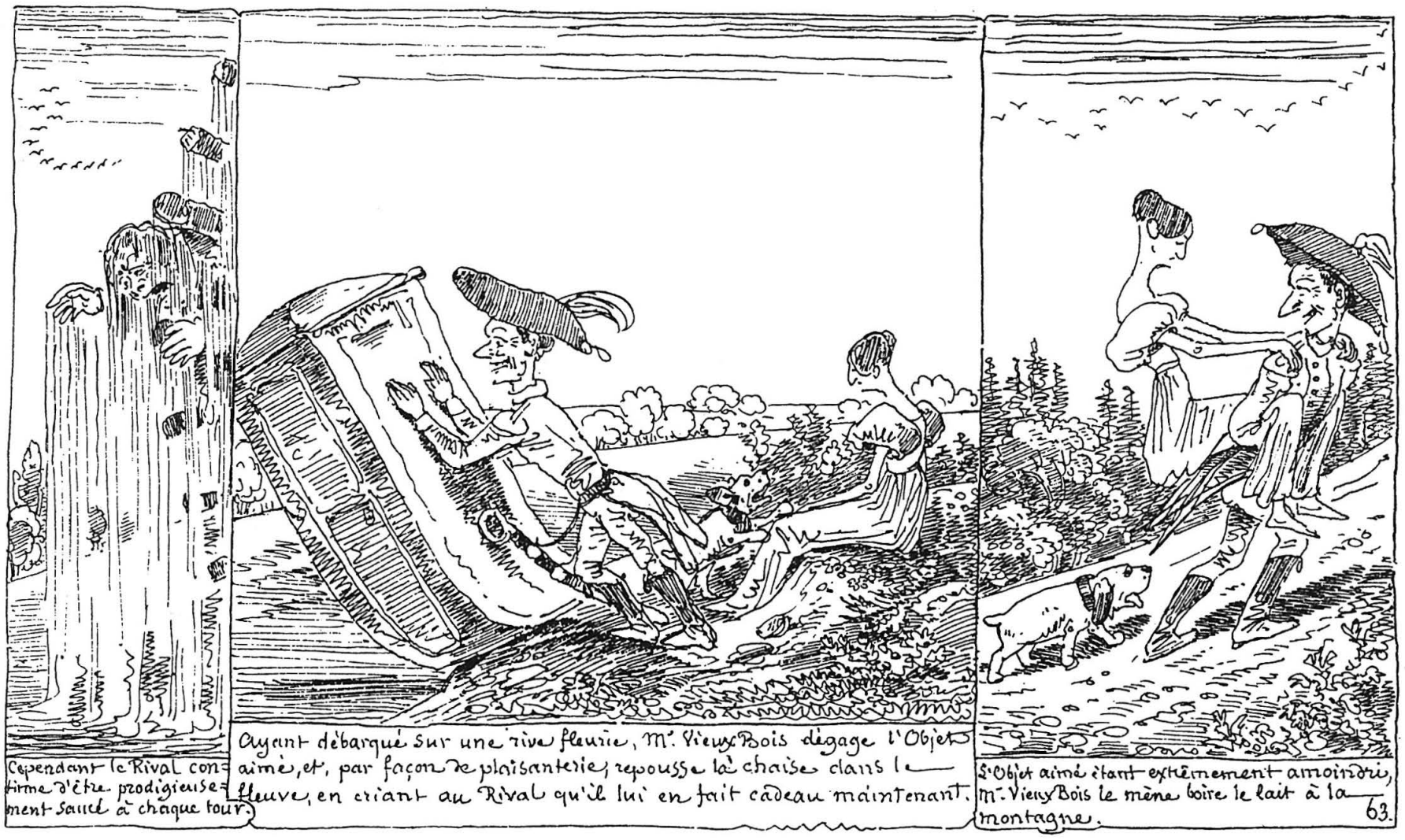


Ayant atteint la chaise, Mr. VieuxBois y prend place, et gouverne avec son chapeau.



Mr VieuxBois cherche, pour y débarquer, une rive émaillée de fleurs.

62.


Cependant le Rival confirme d'être prodigieusement sauvé à chaque tour.
Ayant débarqué sur une rive fleurie, Mr. Vieux Bois dégage l'Objet aimé, et, par façon de plaisanterie, repousse la chaise dans le fleuve, en criant au Rival qu'il lui en fait cadeau maintenant.
L'Objet aimé étant extrêmement amoindri, Mr. Vieux Bois le mène boire le lait à la montagne.
63.

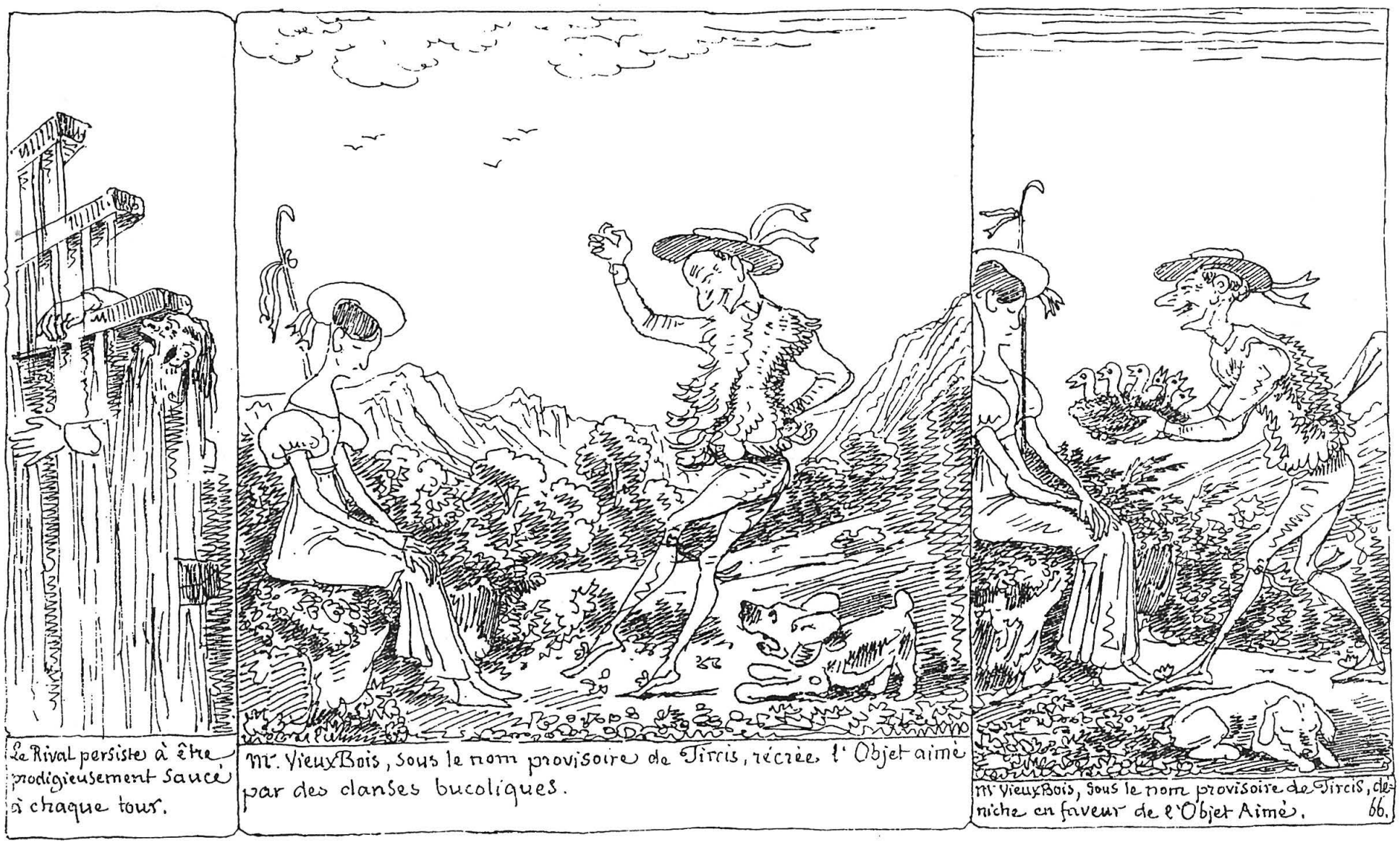

Le Rival persiste à être prodigieusement Sauvé à chaque tour.
Mr Vieux Bois embrasse la vie pastorale, pour la Santé de l'Objet Aimé, et prend le nom provisoire de Tircis.
64.



Le Rival persista à être prodigieusement sauce à chaque tour.

Mr Vieux Bois, sous le nom provisoire de Tircis, s'adonne à traire en faveur de l'Objet aimé

65.



Le Rival persiste à être prodigieusement sauce à chaque tour.

Mr. Vieux Bois, sous le nom provisoire de Tircis, récrée l'Objet aimé par des danses bucoliques.

Mr Vieux Bois, sous le nom provisoire de Tircis, déniche en faveur de l'Objet Aimé. 66.


Le Rival persiste à être prodigieusement sauré à chaque tour.
Aux premières froidures, Mr Vieux Bois, sous le nom provisoire de Tircis, quitte les hauteurs, et vient chercher dans les plaines embaumées de plus tièdes zéphirs.
Cependant les eaux ayant considérablement baissé, la chaise laissée à Sec, échoue non loin du Couvent.
67.


Par la même cause, la grande Roue cesse de tourner, et le Rival prend terre.
Et puis se sèche au Soleil.
La vie pastorale ayant singulièrement engraissé l'Objet aimé, Mr. Vieux-Bois commence à en concevoir de l'inquiétude
68.

The year 1839, that of the second *Vieux Bois* edition and of the Parisian piracies of Töpffer's comic albums, which signaled the wider acceptance of the new genre, was also—and not coincidentally—that of Töpffer's emergence onto the Parisian literary scene. *Le Presbytère,* expanded now into a full-length, two-volume novel, was hailed by the essayist Xavier de Maistre as a "third Héloïse, better than Rousseau's." De Maistre, now an octogenarian living at the Russian court, had loved the stories in prose and picture that Töpffer had anonymously sent him. Sensing in the younger man an affinity of Sternean temperament, he used him as a confidant, adopted him as a literary heir, and recommended the novels to his publisher in Paris, Charpentier. It was from de Maistre, who had been passing through Paris, that Töpffer learned of the most tangible, if damaging, sign of his popularity in Paris: first the copying of *Jabot* in Philipon's *Charivari* (where, however, it was quickly suspended after one issue) and then wholesale piracy of not only *Jabot* but also *Vieux Bois* and *Crépin* by the associated firm of Aubert, the big specialist publisher of caricature. None of these piracies carried any indication of origin.

Thus was launched Aubert's famous and long-lasting "Albums Jabot" series, to which Cham was to make so signal a contribution (see Chapter 3). Aubert's piracy was commonplace and, in the absence of an international copyright law, legal; Töpffer had left himself open to it by not supplying his Parisian distributor with sufficient copies of the original. It is not apparent whether Töpffer was more annoyed or flattered by these copies, or whether he was relieved on seeing their poor quality. He condemned them, of course, but used the opportunity to counter Aubert's *Vieux Bois* with a second, improved, edition of his own.

More important, Töpffer was roused to publish the following year (1840), in redrawn versions, *Le Docteur Festus* and *Monsieur Pencil,* copies of which he did take the sensible precaution of sending to a distributor in Paris, who advertised them in the proper way. Meanwhile, the Charpentier edition of the *Nouvelles genevoises* (short, sentimental stories of traditional Genevese life) was out, soon to be reviewed by Sainte-Beuve in a long and highly laudatory essay in the *Revue des deux mondes.*[40] Töpffer was ecstatic. He had been launched into the Parisian literary world by the biggest critic of the age, as the latest in a most distinguished ten-year-long succession of writers in French: Hugo, Lamartine, Béranger, Musset, Chateaubriand, Balzac, de Staël, de Maistre, Vigny, Nodier, Sue—and now Töpffer. But only Töpffer the writer. Sainte-Beuve distances himself at the outset from the *albums humoristiques,* which he misleadingly implies were barely known or available in Paris. His purpose is to laud the Swiss, by contrast with the "infected" work currently fashionable (Balzac and Sue), as the purest of *littérateurs* imbued with the "sweet and healthy *saveur*" uncorrupted by ambition or literary industrialization.

With respect to the "impure" genre Töpffer had invented, Sainte-Beuve was in a quandary; he designed his essay as biography as well as literary appraisal, and Töpffer had been particularly forthcoming, in the autobiographical sketch he had furnished the critic with in advance, on the subject of the comic albums, their origin, and the role they played in his life and current reputation. Töpffer had freely acknowledged his pride in their authorship and popular success. But Sainte-Beuve was put off by the examples Töpffer had sent him and refused to enter into any discussion of this, to him dubious, aspect of the writer's oeuvre.[41] Rather, using Töpffer's own description ("crazy stories mixed with a touch of the serious"), Sainte-Beuve recounts briefly their origin, character, and favorable reception by Goethe (who, as the critic condescendingly puts it, "did not disdain anything human"), evidently in order to cast his, Sainte-Beuve's, role as patron as the fulfillment of one first assumed by Goethe.

In a deft evasion, the critic claims that the albums are at once indescribable to anyone who has not seen them and beyond criticism—one can only taste them, praise them, and laugh. He skillfully justifies this attitude by means of the critical disclaimer with which Töpffer himself always prefaced his albums: "Whoever reasons [over these tales] is mistaken." The terms in which Sainte-Beuve evaluates the writings became the standard criteria of Töpffer criticism for the next half century down to the major biographies by Blondel and Relave, who did not like the picture-stories either and gave them short critical shrift. Such criteria virtually excluded appreciation of the albums' unique qualities, which did not serve the stereotype of purity and simplicity, of the homegrown virtues of naive, innocent household morality, attached to Töpffer's literary productions.

In 1841 Töpffer began to reach another public, broadly middle class and French, with articles on Geneva and Genevan art in the *Magasin pittoresque,* France's first cheap, general-interest illustrated weekly. One piece, called "Le Marchand d'images," tries to place his own brand of "pictorial literature" in a didactic and popular graphic tradition uncorrupted by market forces in an industrial society.[42] Sainte-Beuve had recognized that Töpffer's comic albums were "dans le genre d'Hogartt [*sic*]," and although the themes they treated were hardly popular in the same sense that Hogarth's were with his middle-class audience, Töpffer fancied his mode of graphic narrative as a new kind of Imagerie d'Epinal, selling on the fairground and appealing to the simple emotions of the illiterate villager. Ironically, the example he gives, a broadsheet entitled "Story of Cécile, daughter of Fitz-Henry, seduced by Arthur, dedicated to tender hearts, in four tableaux: Seduction, Flight, Repentance, Reconciliation," evokes just the kind of popular romanticism he parodied in *Vieux Bois.*

Töpffer also sought, with little more justification, a parallel between his kind of graphic naïveté and that of the truly unschooled and awkward Imagerie d'Epinal, whose "precious lack of skill" bespoke sincerity, like that of the ballad singer, and whose "clarity of expression" and "power of intention" were, implicitly, akin to Töpffer's own. He ends the article with a demand for more moral serial stories conceived at this popular level.

Töpffer seems to be appealing to other artists to stake out some sort of middle ground between, on the one hand, his own highly sophisticated comic fantasies, published in relatively expensive albums and destined for a restricted, rather upper-class audience, and, on the other, crudely moralistic imagery for the uneducated. The history of the comic strip in the 19th century occupies just this middle ground; for never does it again reach so high a level of narrative complexity or (barring perhaps Busch) satirical finesse. Töpffer intuited the future of his invention, and it can be no coincidence that he chose at about the same time (1842) to reveal, in his *Essai d'autographie,* the technical "secret" of his own reproduction procedure, which had so many practical advantages over wood engraving and regular lithography. He may by this time have already been considering his own picture-story work as suspended or even at an end, hindered by what he feared was a rapidly deteriorating eyesight and by an equally rapidly deteriorating political situation in Geneva; he refers to both in his long explanation of the *Essai* in the *Courrier de Genève,*[43] the polemical journal he had helped launch earlier in the year to combat the Genevan radicals.

40. *Revue des deux mondes,* March 15, 1841, pp. 838–865. The long (about fourteen thousand words) essay was preceded by an advance notice on Töpffer in Sainte-Beuve's essay on Xavier de Maistre (ibid., May 1, 1839, pp. 297–315).
41. In the long obituary he wrote for the *Journal des débats* (June 13, 1846), which was reproduced in the *Portraits littéraires* (Sainte-Beuve 1981, 2: 935ff.) and therefore stood as his definitive judgment, he downplayed the albums even further, making no mention of them except generically and in passing. In his obituary of Töpffer in *L'Artiste* (1846, p. 244), he does not mention the albums at all.
42. "Le Marchand d'images," *Magasin pittoresque,* 10, no. 45 (1842): 338, an extract from an article originally published in the *Bibliothèque universelle de Genève,* April 1836.
43. R.T., "Essais d'autographie," *Courrier de Genève,* Feuilleton, July 2, 1842.

The *Essai d'autographie* is composed of twelve plates of landscapes and twelve of "drôleries," that is, caricatures of the type he incorporated into his picture-stories. The combination of the two very different genres demonstrated how versatile and flexible the "autographic" method was, as adapted to the rendition of finely graded and hatched landscapes as to the simplified contour drawing of his caricatures, to which he often added quite evocative landscape effects (see Fig. 2.14).

Töpffer needed, first of all, to justify (to himself) the publication of such a "frivolity" in the midst of the political turmoil around him. He does so in a cantankerous way, pretending that even his innocent artistic invention is subject to the dreadful corruption prevailing. His pleasure at having intuited a "transcendental physiognomics," a sort of "superior phrenology" (a theme he was to develop more systematically in his 1845 *Essai de physiognomonie*), is marred by his concern that perverted reformers would use his "system," as they used other physiognomic and phrenological theories (vide *Crépin*), to antisocial purpose—"to prove that virtue depends on the shape of the nose, and stupidity on the curve of the chin."[44] Töpffer feigns to accuse his little demonstration of all the vices of the age: superficiality, scandalousness, and an "abject materialism" appropriate to a democratized country. The paradox of his self-denigrating stance derives from his flailing simultaneously against enemies who are in no sense comparable: the new social ideas on the one hand; and on the other, critical rejection of his comic albums, the status of which vis-à-vis those new ideas he was unable to clarify. Töpffer knew that his whole modus operandi in the albums served to undermine traditional rationalist and materialist concepts, insofar as the latter were based on order and logic, and that his method of random physiognomic invention, far from justifying determinist phrenology, contradicted it.

After weaving his way through successive contradictions of this sort, Töpffer justifies his comic albums as a necessary "escape from the chains of reality." Angry at being distracted by ugly politics from the pleasures that were his true métier, he offers his graphic fancies as an uncontaminated island where the general public and critics are excluded, where he may unfold a new anti-utilitarian aesthetic philosophy of "pure creativity," of "creation for the pleasure of the creator," that holds notions of glory and public approbation in contempt. And this diversion of energies was timely, because Töpffer now found himself shut off from a public too preoccupied to attend to his literary and artistic endeavors and unappreciative of the political polemics he published in the *Courrier de Genève*. And yet, at the very end, Töpffer honors his graphic self-indulgence with a broad, if undefined, humanitarian purpose: for the discovery it led to is one of those "little nothings as big as others through which, today, the face of the universe and the future of humanity are changed."[45] The tone is still ironical, but Töpffer's "little nothings" have grown into a very big social phenomenon indeed in the 20th century.

Politics and Absurdity: Pencil *(1831 and 1840) and* Trictrac

Of all Töpffer's picture-stories, *Monsieur Pencil* bears the strongest imprint of the July 1830 revolution. The most polarized of his works, playing an extreme absurdism off against emphatic injections of political actuality, it is at the same time balanced, having been tempered and refined by the experience of the decade prior to its publication in 1840. Aesthetically it is, I believe, Töpffer's masterpiece, although it has not proved his most popular story. The first version was executed between March and July 1831 and betrays the disillusionment of one who shared the ideals for which the revolution of the previous year was fought. There is clear sympathy for the workers who manned the barricades and who afterward were forcibly repressed; antipathy for the confusion and disorder of parliamentary debate and the whole "democratic" process under Louis Philippe; and fear of European war, so prevalent in those months when not only France but also Belgium, Poland, and Italy experienced nationalist rebellions.

Switzerland too was affected; in nearby Neuchâtel there were street demonstrations in late 1830 and early 1831, which Töpffer feared would spread to Geneva. For the moment, however, Geneva seemed a haven of peace, and as such, conducive to the production of picture-stories. Writing to a pastor friend in Neuchâtel, Töpffer assures him, "I am *liberal as can be,* but I am fed up, stuffed, indigestified [*indijectionné*] with politics."[46] He goes on to list all the picture-stories he has recently executed and then returns to the subject of Geneva's happy preservation, for the time being, from the crisis, expressing mock pique at the French ("Clumsy people!") for not waiting a few years before making their revolution, so that he could buy his house in peace.

This is the language of extreme ambivalence. The picture-stories had always been Töpffer's escape from realities both near and far, yet they bore the marks of what he was escaping from, which was also what he was attracted to. *Pencil* was conceived at a moment fruitful for caricature in France, one of "movement and resistance, revolutionary stress, status quo–ism, a chain of cabinet crises, street disorders, noisy chambers, press laws, and public trials, in which tribunal became theater"[47]—theater of the absurd, theater of caricature. Much of the disorder, specifically in the tribunals, was due to the government's reneging on that same freedom of the press that had brought it to power in the first place. In the four years between August 1830 and October 1834 there were, in Paris alone, 520 press trials, with 188 condemnations amounting to 106 years in prison and Fr 44,000 in fines.[48]

The Romantic assertion of Freedom was translated by French graphic artists into a political militance and critique conceived on the Golden Age model of English caricature. Although executed under very different conditions, the first draft of *Pencil* was surely an assertion of this Freedom and, just as surely, was inspired by the example of Philipon's *La Caricature,* founded in November 1830, the first weekly newspaper to publish regular cartoons. With this magazine, the history of caricature underwent a mutation as the genre entered the sociopolitical mainstream through journalism, arguably the single most potent force henceforth in the formation of public opinion.

It is unimaginable that Töpffer was not aware of this new paper or that copies of it and allied cartoons did not find their way to Geneva, into the hands of an amateur caricaturist who was also the son of a caricaturist. He must have followed the fortunes of the journal (which conducted its own autobiography—or "autoMartyrography"—as it went along) from the moment in early 1831 that it first fell foul of the law, and certainly from midsummer when the police began a series of raids on the Aubert shop, seizing cartoons and arresting Philipon, who was condemned to six months in jail. The struggle between the weekly *Caricature* (superseded in 1832 by the daily *Charivari*) and the law continued unabated until the draconian press laws of 1835 stifled French political caricature altogether. But caricature, henceforth diverted and broadened into a panorama of social issues including business, law, and industry, was now firmly established in the

44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Gautier 1974, 154 (no. 59, dated March 20, 1831).
47. Balzer 1965, 11.
48. Vincent 1968, 52.

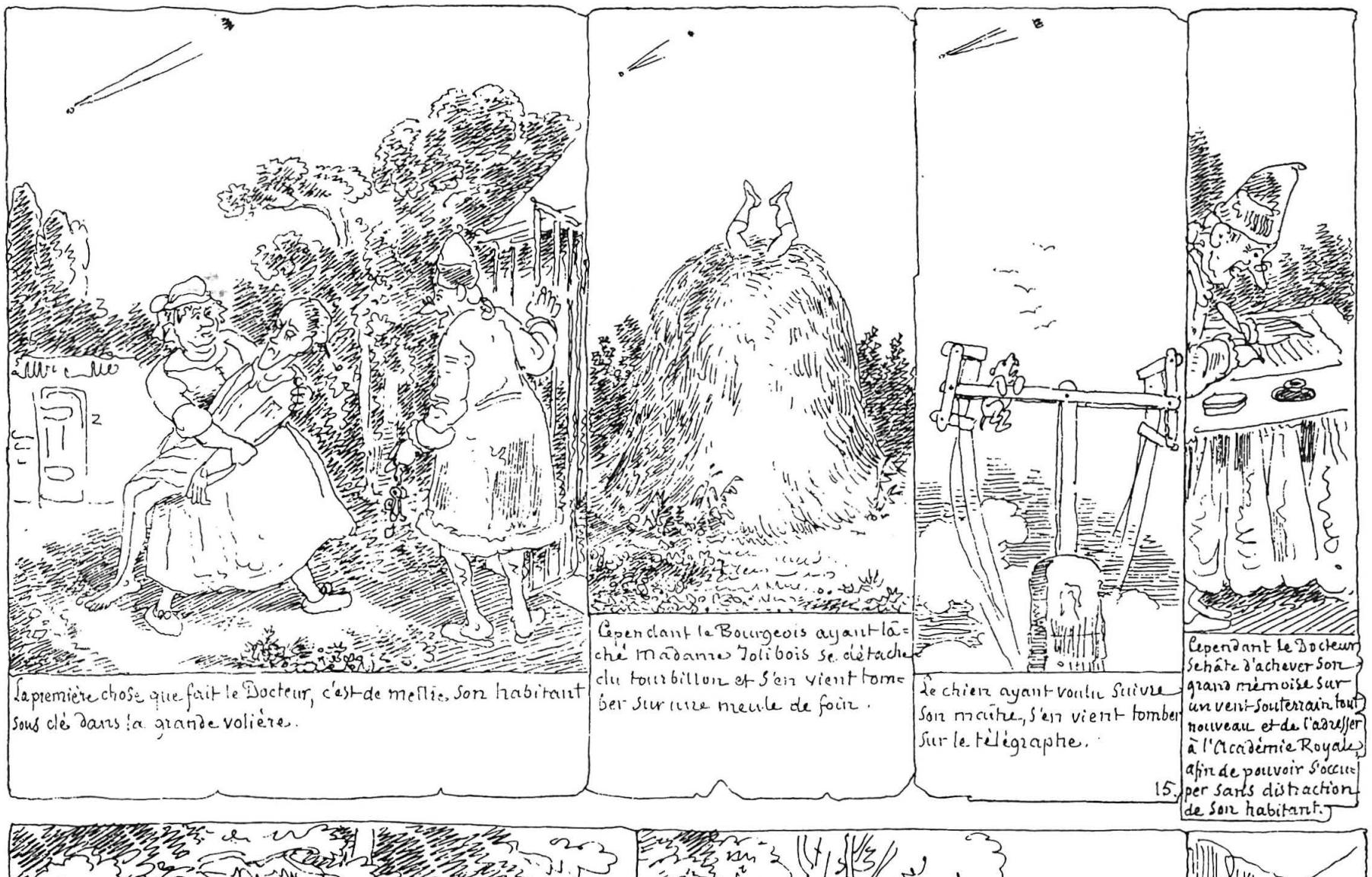
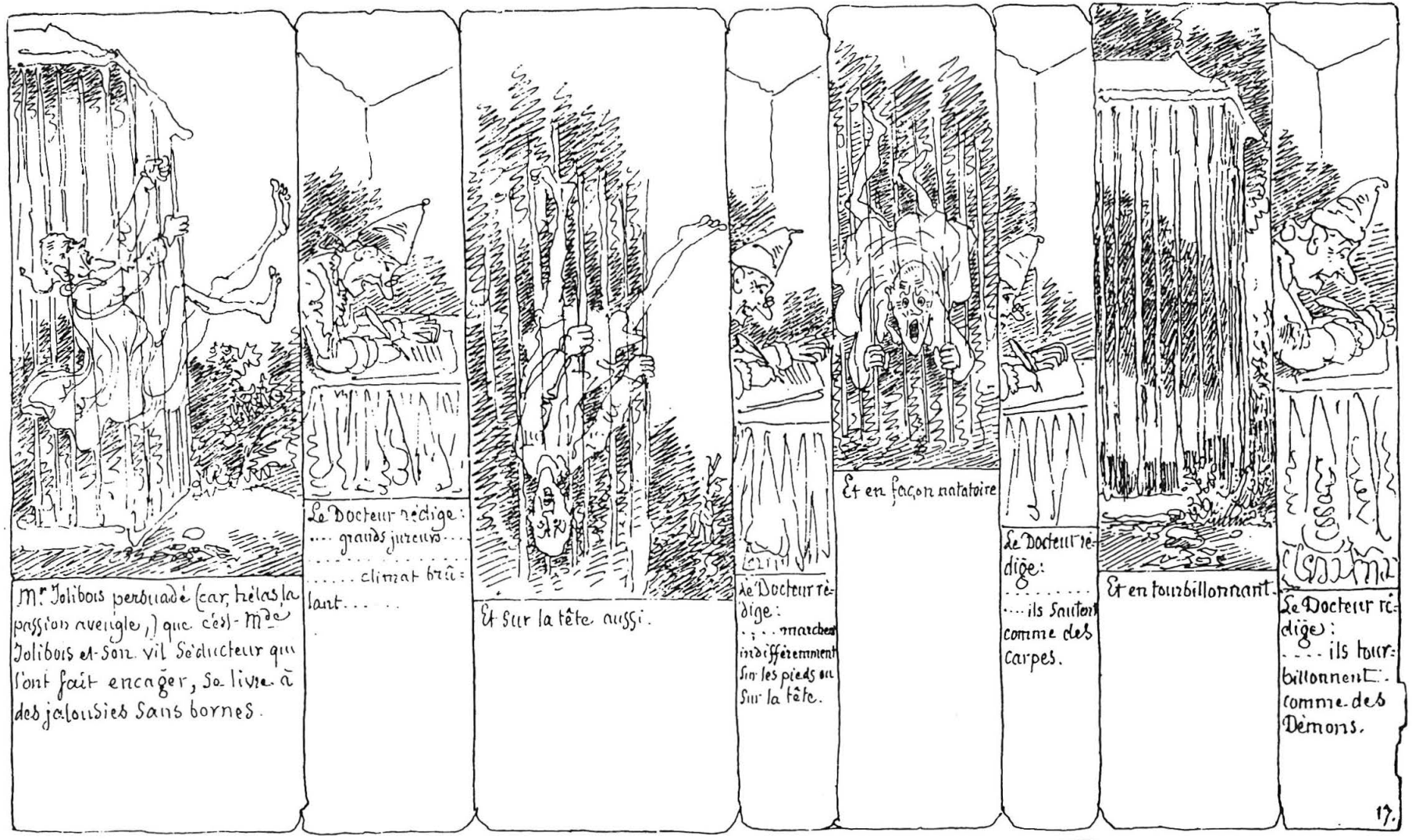


FIG. 2.15. *Monsieur Pencil* (1840).

"[15] The first thing the Professor does is to lock his creature from outer space up in the big bird cage. / Meanwhile, the Burgher has let Madame Jolibois go, frees himself from the whirlwind, and lands in a haystack. / The dog tries to follow his master but falls onto the telegraph. / Meanwhile, the Professor hastily finishes his great article on a brand new subterranean wind and addresses it to the Royal Academy, so as to be able to dedicate himself undisturbed to his creature from outer space. [16] After he has finished and sent off his article, the Professor, in order to start with the internal characteristics, prepares to make a cross-incision on his creature. M. Jolibois has hardly felt the point of the scalpel than, recovering from his daze, and with a single cross-convulsion, he puts the Professor out of action (for passion blinds, alas!). The Professor immediately reports: .....lethargic...also impetuous.....they kick with remarkable skill. [17] Convinced (for passion blinds, alas) that it is Mme. Jolibois and her vile seducer who have had him caged, M. Jolibois gives way to boundless jealousy. / The Professor writes: ....very profane.....scorching climate..... / And upside down as well. / The Professor writes: ....walk on their feet or head alike. / And in a natatory fashion. / The Professor writes: .....they jump about like carps. / And with a whirling motion. / The Professor writes: ....they whirl around like demons. [18] Tiring of burghers and their wives, the little Zephyr backs up to look for the drawing, and Mme. Jolibois begins to drop again. / Seeing which (for passion blinds, alas), M. Jolibois takes the scalpel left in the bird cage, and uses it to cut one of the bars. / And without waiting for his wife to land, he greets her (for passion blinds, alas) with blows from the cage bar."



popular favor, which facilitated the acceptance of Töpffer's own caricature when it was finally published in the late 1830s. Social—but not political—caricature of all kinds was now a broadly accepted cultural phenomenon.

In 1840 Töpffer lithographed both *Festus* and *Pencil* in much amended form. To study the differences, great and small, between the 1831 and 1840 versions of *Pencil* is to gain insight into the inner workings of Töpffer's creative procedure, which, spontaneous as it may have been in the first draft, was later subjected to much thought and many changes of mind, especially with respect to the denouement. As scientific social satire, both *Festus* and *Pencil* gained much in actuality during the intervening decade of rapid industrialization and scientific progress. Töpffer's antipathy to science and material progress as a social panacea had increased. *Pencil,* like *Festus,* targets astronomers specifically. "Star gazing" had long been a vehicle of social satire, and the amateur astronomer an emblem of folly. Yet beyond the realm of caricature, in the popular imagination at large, the professional astronomer, then as now, exercised a magical authority. The name of Europe's most illustrious astronomer, John Herschel, on a telescope in the first *Festus* version could hardly be retained in the new, especially the same year that Herschel published his lay-oriented *Outline of Astronomy*. Astronomers were also engaged in sensational discoveries on earth; the announcement in January 1839 of the daguerrotype, that base mechanical usurpation of the creative process, by the astronomer François Arago to the French Academy of Sciences (whose credulity Töpffer mocks) was another strike against the profession.

The particular political anxieties that surfaced in the crisis of 1830–1831 had, by 1840, receded, and the revisions to *Pencil* re-

flect this change. Aesthetic considerations, too, reinforced the political, especially in mitigating the text-laden satire on French parliamentary antics. Töpffer diminished some of the more exotic verbal and conceptual flourishes in the interests of credibility, and some Rabelaisian scatological farce in the interests of decency. Cutting back, wherever possible, on the captions, the author sought correspondingly to upgrade the graphic effects, not only by filling in backgrounds and providing more accessories in individual scenes, but also by harmonizing and systematizing sequences (montage, in cinematic terminology). There is no more dazzling example of Töpffer's aesthetic of page layout than the rhythm he establishes (Fig. 2.15) by intercutting the Professor writing his memoir in his study with the object of that memoir, the "Psychiot," Jolibois, struggling in his cage. The central portion is exactly doubled from the 1831 version, and the whole effect is akin to that of a musical score.

In the other major graphic enhancement, which is woven into the narrative in three phases, Töpffer ascends the brightest heaven of invention. The Professor, in his scientific obsession, packs up his "psychiot" sample in a crate and sends him off to the Royal Academy to serve as material evidence for his memoir. But the crate is stolen from the postcoach by brigands and eventually falls by the wayside. The idea of animating this unpromising oblong object (influenced possibly by Grandville, whom Töpffer admired) attains in 1840 a hilarious triple development. When Pencil delivers Madame Jolibois from her husband by cutting off her skirt, the human crate is left in vain pursuit and melancholy reflection upon his predicament. He (it) abandons him- (it)self to a characteristically Töpfferian gamut of emotions, from jealousy to despair, all the more impressive for the reduction of the expressive elements to a pair of pathetically gesticulating forearms and eyes that, through the holes in the crate, somehow manage to look lugubrious. Trapped as he is, like other neurotic heroes in Töpffer, Jolibois abandons himself to suicide: perforce by hanging, from one hand, to the branch of a tree; then, sublimely, "he changes hands" (Fig. 2.16).

After further narrative twists, Jolibois, in another 1840 interjection, engages from his crate in a surreal and unequal battle with his persecutors. With the aid of his stick he is able to fend off the cowardly Professor, but the servant, less easy to intimidate, proves too much for him (Fig. 2.17). When the crate gives way during fumigation at the frontier, Jolibois finally succeeds in escaping, only to be recaptured by the ever-courageous and resourceful servant when all others flee him as cholera personified. At this point terror is written on his face, and one wonders whether it is entirely accidental, within a mode that did not admit speech balloons or even direct speech in the captions, that under this frame (Fig. 2.18, final frame) the base line, hitherto of utter sobriety, suddenly breaks into a kind of speech: the letters "a e i o u." Is this just the silly doodling of the schoolmaster during prep time, or an expression of pain emanating from the vowels of Jolibois's tormented soul?

Pencil is balanced between twin determinants of human affairs: fate and the political moment. It is an instrument of fate, of timeless, placeless Nature, a sportive wind whisking away Pencil's drawing (he is an artist, as his name suggests) and depositing a dog on a telegraph pole, that first threatens the social equilibrium; but it is the neurotic selfishness of propertied people at a particular historical moment, consumed by their immediate material concerns and panicking at the garbled news transmitted by the telegraph, that makes the danger real. At the rumor of war, the stock market takes a dive, bankruptcies are declared, workshops close, and ominous groups of workers begin to gather. In the face of these developments, the government calls for a debate on the forest code. The deputies will have none of it; yet although they quite properly put the national crisis at the forefront, their sectarian manner of dealing with it can only make matters worse. A babel of interruptions and eruptions corresponding to a uniquely French political spectrum ensues, and they end in a fistfight. The chair suspends the session, but to little avail: when it reopens, it is only to a repeat of the earlier pattern of complaints, demands, and insults.

These fourteen scenes with long captions, together with a similar interlude later, were cut from the 1840 version. It constitutes a graphic satire on that most satirized of regimes, Louis Philippe's, predating the much better known cartoons of *La Caricature* and the *Charivari* (1832ff.). And the satire is of a very different kind. The famous Daumier designs in the Parisian journals focus on physical appearances, the faces and masks of individual iniquity, and take issue with a government of suffocating proximity. Töpffer, who regarded the oligarchy of his own little republic as superior to any French efforts at democracy, could afford, from his safe vantage point in Geneva, to pour scorn on the very process of parliamentary struggle. And revelation of a corrupt, developing *process,* rather than a fixed *situation,* is the genius of the comic strip as opposed to the single cartoon. At the same time, Töpffer's captions display a keen awareness of the cadences of demagoguery and financial manipulation, with allusions and observations as incisive as those of Philipon in his captions to the later (1836–1838) *Robert Macaire.* For example, we meet in 1831 (scene 116; but not in 1840) a "M. Rotschild [*sic*]," his pockets bulging with banknotes, who cynically calculates the relative profitability of war and peace (the Rothschild family fortune was founded on profit from the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars).

"The workers continuing to go hungry," however, stands forth as the irreducible fact amid the oratorical blather and testifies to Töpffer's continuing sympathy in 1840 for the French (if not Genevan) working class, even in its mobilized state. In 1831, this expression of sympathy presaged the support Philipon's caricaturists were to give the workers of Lyons in the great upheavals of November 1831 and 1834. With "the workers continuing to go hungry" despite the panaceas of the politicians, the government offers its own solution: forcible dispersion ("persuasion") by the naked bayonets of the national guard, who are typified by a portly, bespectacled (that is, socially myopic) figure (scene 31).[49] He is a petty bourgeois, a grocer perhaps, of the type ironically celebrated by Daumier and Grandville in the late 1830s—where Töpffer may indeed have found the type, for he is a conspicuous addition of 1840 (the manuscript having shown the guard as physiognomically indeterminate).

From satire on the volunteer militia, called up ostensibly to counter the (nonexistent) threat of three hundred thousand enemies massed at the frontier, *Pencil* passes to the regular military, picking up a theme familiar from Callot's *Miseries and Misfortunes of War:* the callousness and cruelties of professional soldiers toward defenseless peasants. The 21st Light Cavalry are searching for the three horses which Pencil, the Burgher, and Madame Jolibois have used to effect their escape, and to which they are nearly served as fodder with the hay in which they have hidden. In the finest military tradition, the cavalry wantonly wreck a cornfield, commandeer the peasants' horses, open the locks to flood the land below, and set fire to the woods. As he sympathized with the urban workers, so now Töpffer sides with the peasants in their age-old war against mercenary soldiers. This, however, is a democratic reflex of Töpffer's unrelated to actual conditions at home. The grounds for discontent among Genevan peasants at this time were of a different kind, having to do with the growing imbalance of economic interests and electoral power between the town of Geneva and its rural canton.

For once in the history of the comic strip, the peasant is honest and intelligent. He is, moreover, not caricatured. When Georges Luçon by chance finds the fugitive heroes' three horses, he takes them back to the village to safeguard them. For this virtuous act he is arrested as a thief and sentenced to be shot, but he escapes

49. As a youth of twenty-one, Töpffer had watched with horror as the Parisian police fired on and killed unarmed civilians (see Töpffer 1968, 64). The only major incident known to me which could have served to discredit the *Genevan* militia in the eyes of the ruling elite was the Affaire des Polonais in February 1834, where, far from firing on the crowd, the militia defected to them.



FIG. 2.16. *M. Pencil* (1840).
"[45] M. Jolibois (for passion blinds, alas) attempts to pursue the unfaithful one. / George Luçon, thinking he sees the shade of the coffin of Captain Ricard, flees in horror. [46] Unable to reach his wife, M. Jolibois accuses heaven and man. / After which he gives himself up to the springs of a frantic jealousy. / After which he surrenders himself to suicide by hanging. / And he changes hands. [47] After which he essays the charms of contemplative melancholy."

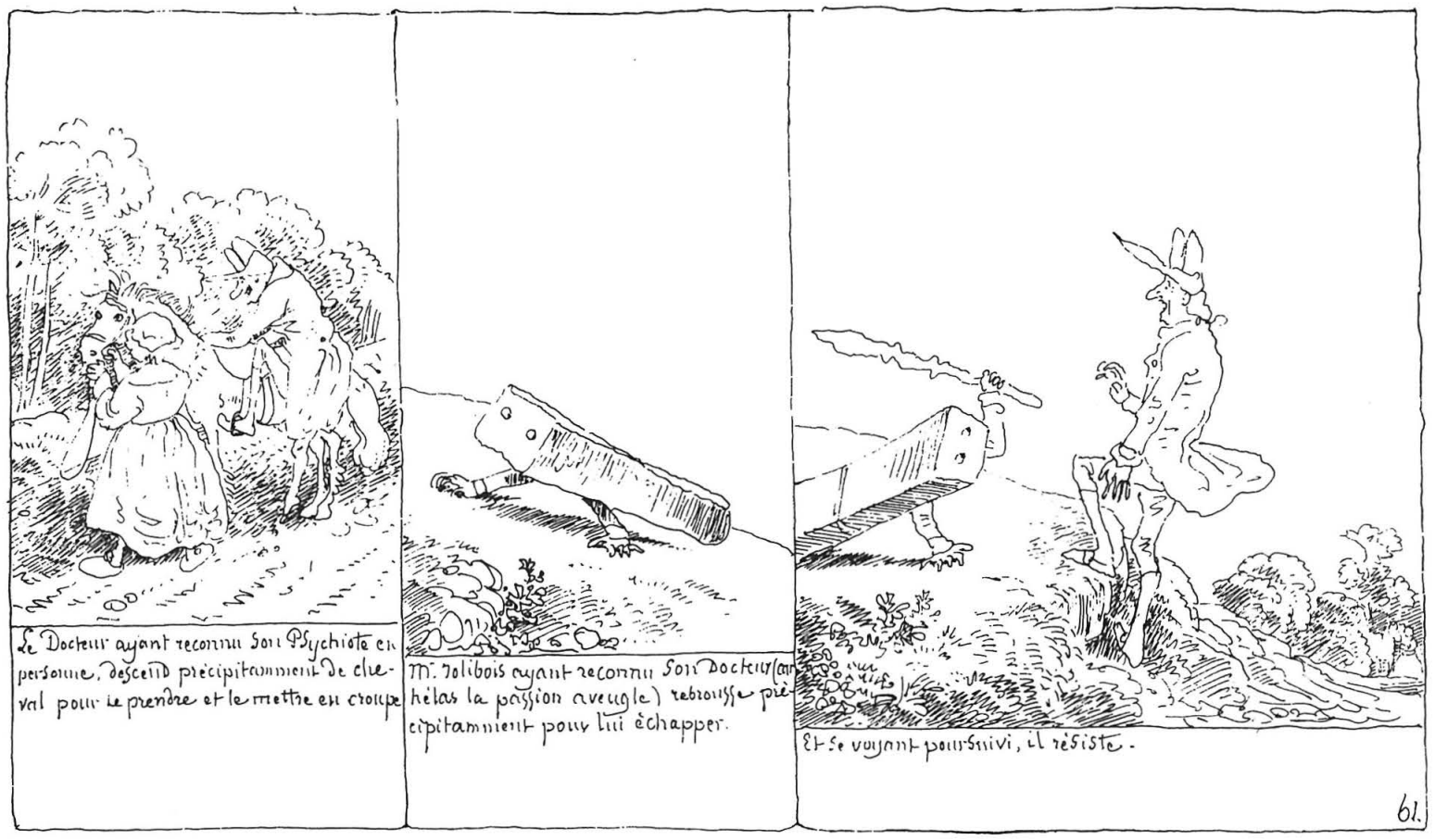
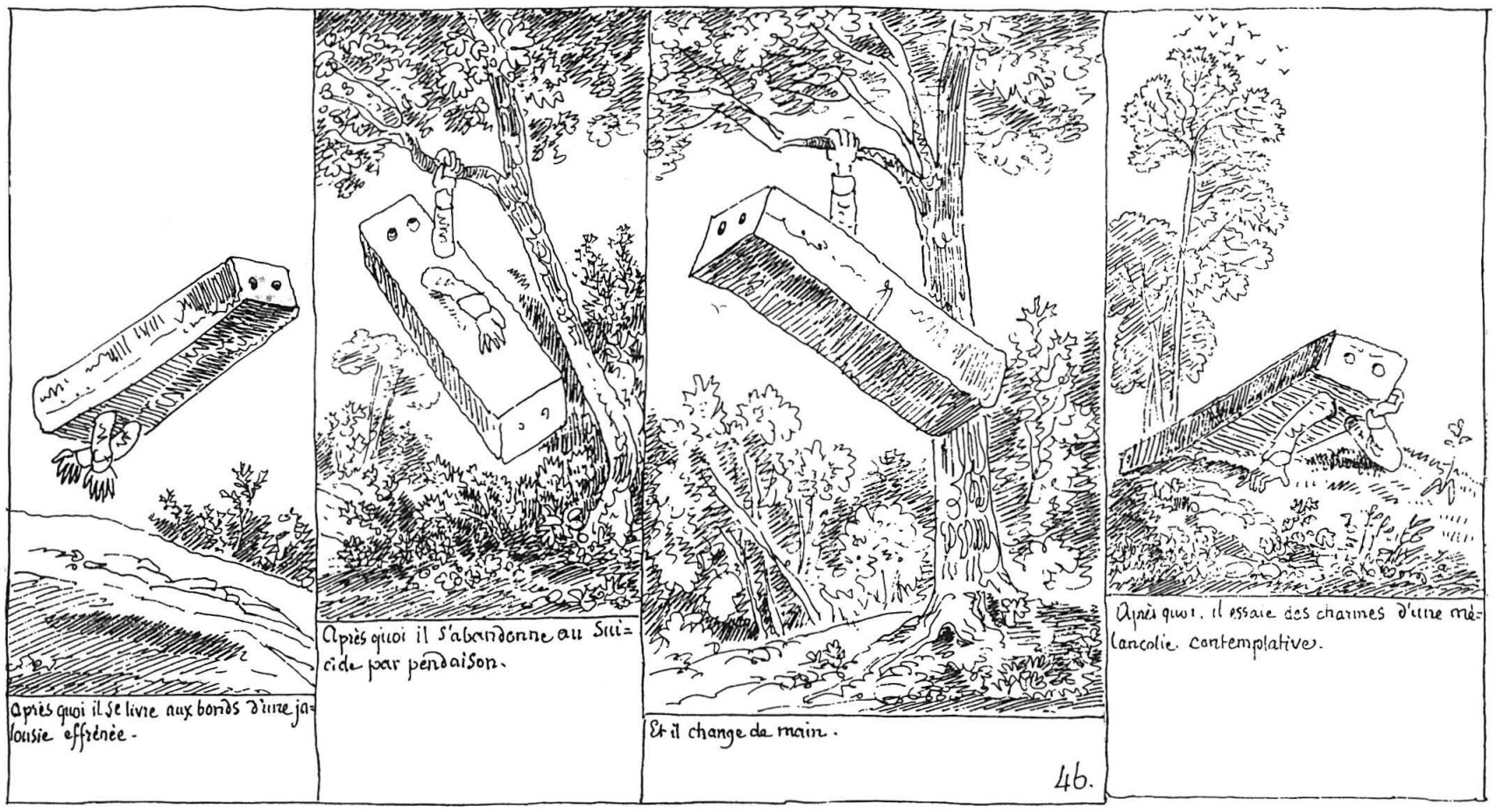


FIG. 2.17. *M. Pencil* (1840).
"[61] Recognizing his Psychiot in person, the Professor hurriedly dismounts in order to put him up behind. / Recognizing his Professor (for passion blinds, alas), M. Jolibois turns back suddenly to escape him. / And seeing that he is pursued, he resists. [62] And seeing that the maid is joining the fray, he scurries off. / Battle is engaged. / And victory declared."


Après quoi il se livre aux bords d'une jalousie effrénée.
Après quoi il s'abandonne au Suicide par pendaison.
Et il change de main.
Après quoi, il essaie des charmes d'une mélancolie contemplative.
46.

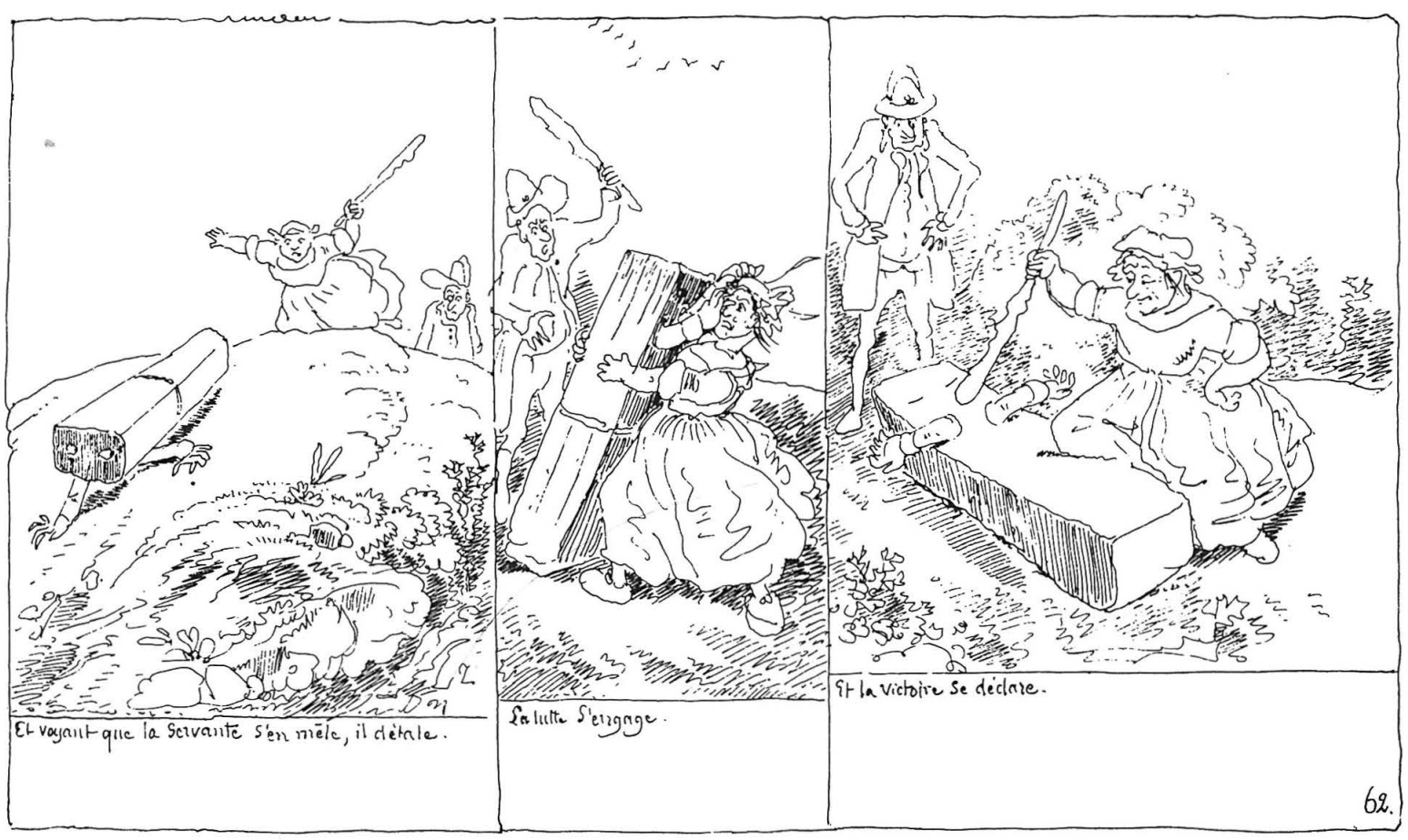

Et voyant que la servante s'en mêle, il détale.
La lutte s'engage.
Et la victoire se déclare.
62.



FIG. 2.18. *M. Pencil* (1840).
"[64] Meanwhile, M. Pencil and Mme. Jolibois reach the same point [on the frontier], and receive the same invitation [to be disinfected, *purgé*]. M. Pencil replies that he has purged himself along the way; and Mme. Jolibois replies that she never purges herself. Which makes the sanitary officer, a man of great wit, laugh. / The Professor's effects are fumigated. M. Jolibois (for passion blinds, alas) sees a thickening of the plot hatched by his wife and the two vile seducers, and he suffocates with jealousy. / The planks of the crate give way, and the two sanitary assistants think only of shouting: The Cholera!...the Cholera!!! [65] At the sight of the Cholera in person, the health officials take the bit between their teeth. / And the male nurses too. / And the female nurses similarly. / Fortunately, the maid realizes that it is her master's Psychiot who has escaped, and she quickly seizes him."

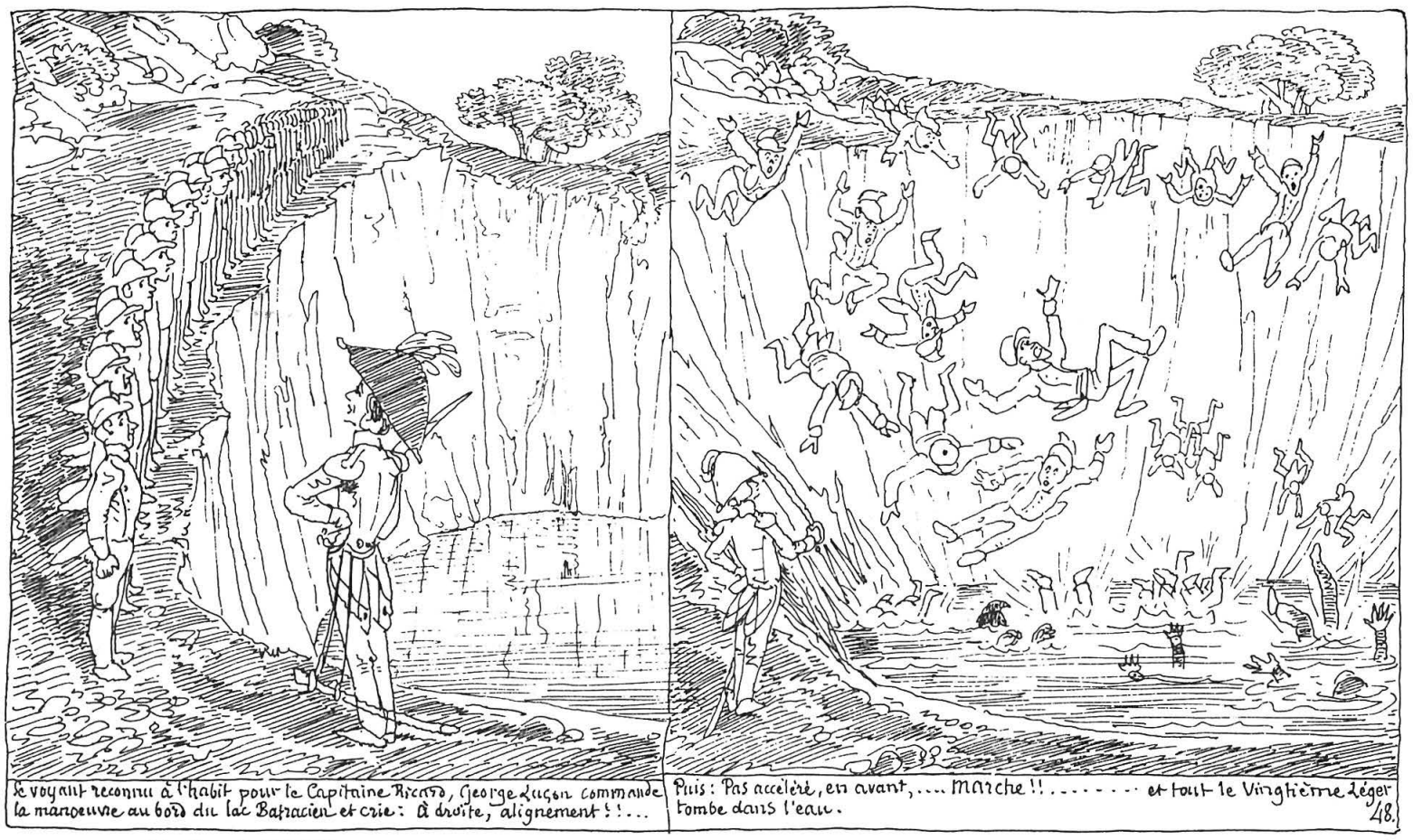


FIG. 2.19. *M. Pencil* (1840).
"Seeing that he is being taken, by his costume, for Captain Ricard, George Luçon drills [the soldiers] at the border of the Batracian lake, and cries: By the right, dress!!... / Then: At the double, forward,.... march!!.....and the entire Twentieth Light falls into the water."

when the drunken firing squad clumsily kill their captain instead. Thus, in a counterinversion of justice, the officer pays for his crimes. But in an important addition of 1840 Töpffer metes out collective punishment as well, and this time, as in Callot, at the hands of the peasant himself. Falling upon the 21st Light Cavalry once more, Luçon, now wearing the captain's uniform, finds that the troops obey him automatically (there is a similar episode in *Festus*); he orders them to march into a lake, where, like military lemmings, they perish (Fig. 2.19).

I have mentioned the sublimely absurd interlude of the trapped Jolibois chasing his wife. This is followed by more play with the telegraph and an escalation of social confusion that, ironically, represents a moment of narrative logic. The logic of transition from episode to episode is otherwise of a crazy, abstract kind, zigzagging back and forth between groups of characters who divide and coalesce in a geography that is both momentarily precise and yet left open—as in a dream. The chaos of apparently random individual interactions attains a truly threatening social and political dimension under the spell of the telegraph, a basic communications technology of the age then undergoing expansion and improvement (particularly in England and the United States, where electrification was being introduced). In Töpffer it is comically set in motion by a little dog and the efforts to free him (Fig. 2.20). In the ensuing economic and political havoc, the Right accuses the Left, the Left assails the government, and the center (represented by a fat and fearful burgher called Truffet) and his family purge and fumigate themselves.

At this point Töpffer effects a brilliant conjunction of the two main satiric strands he has been spinning, the political and the fantastic. The expired scientists, left asphyxiated much earlier by the fumes of the Professor's bottle of newly discovered "subterranean gas" (actually, taken from a latrine and representative of the sewer-gas theory of disease), are diagnosed as having died of cholera. Sanitary measures are instituted at the frontier, in the course of which the chest in which Jolibois is trapped bursts and he escapes. Sanitary and hospital personnel, taking him for cholera personified, flee in panic (see Fig. 2.18).

Asiatic cholera was a disease as yet unknown in Europe; it was therefore all the more dreaded when, during the 1820s, it advanced inexorably from India, reaching Russia and Russian-occupied Poland in early 1831, just when Töpffer was drafting *Pencil*. It first struck Western Europe some months later, sweeping through Germany and then engulfing France and the southern Mediterranean. It continued to terrorize Europe throughout the 1830s (sparing, however, Geneva), so that what started as a popular fear had, by the time *Pencil* was published, become a dread reality. No one knew how the disease was transmitted, and thus, how it could be prevented. It was feared that objects as well as people might carry it; Töpffer's own manuscript albums were threatened with fumigation when they were due to be sent back to Geneva from Weimar. Sanitary measures ultimately came to be used as a means of political control, increasing popular resentment of authority, as the episode in *Pencil* suggests. Töpffer mocks the ignorance of the medical experts who recklessly diagnosed the plague, the superstition and cowardice of health officers who flee before it as from a ghost, and the greed of pharmacists and undertakers who seek to profit from it. All this parallels the reaction to the war scare and plays on a contrived association of the real cholera and the "cholera" of revolution in 1830–1831.

With the chief protagonists, including the Professor's servant, reunited in detention at the frontier hospital, the manuscript version ends—and the denouement in the published version begins. This follows a classic dramatic pattern, a last minicrisis of jealous despair and fury on the part of both Madame and Monsieur Jolibois, who finally are pacified by mutual explanations "so that the light bursts forth in torrents." There is reconciliation and embracing all around (the ever-egotistical Professor happily hugging himself), and the Burgher and his dog are finally rescued from the telegraph, which resumes its customary function. And thus "the cholera ceases and the affairs of Europe are becalmed" (Fig. 2.21).

This solution came to the author only after a struggle, and he left evidence of the various alternatives that might best impose some structural sense on so much nonsensical matter. It emerges

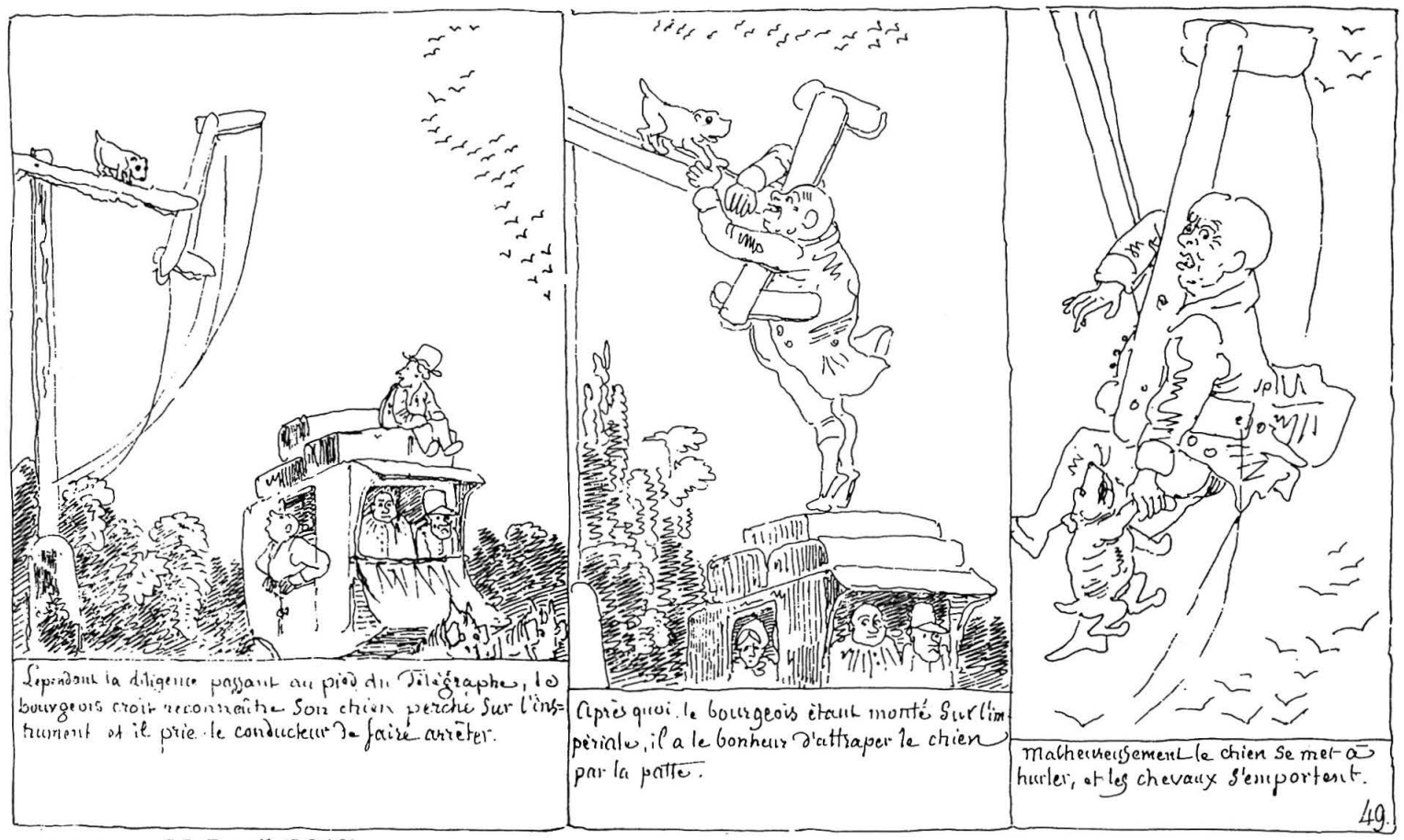
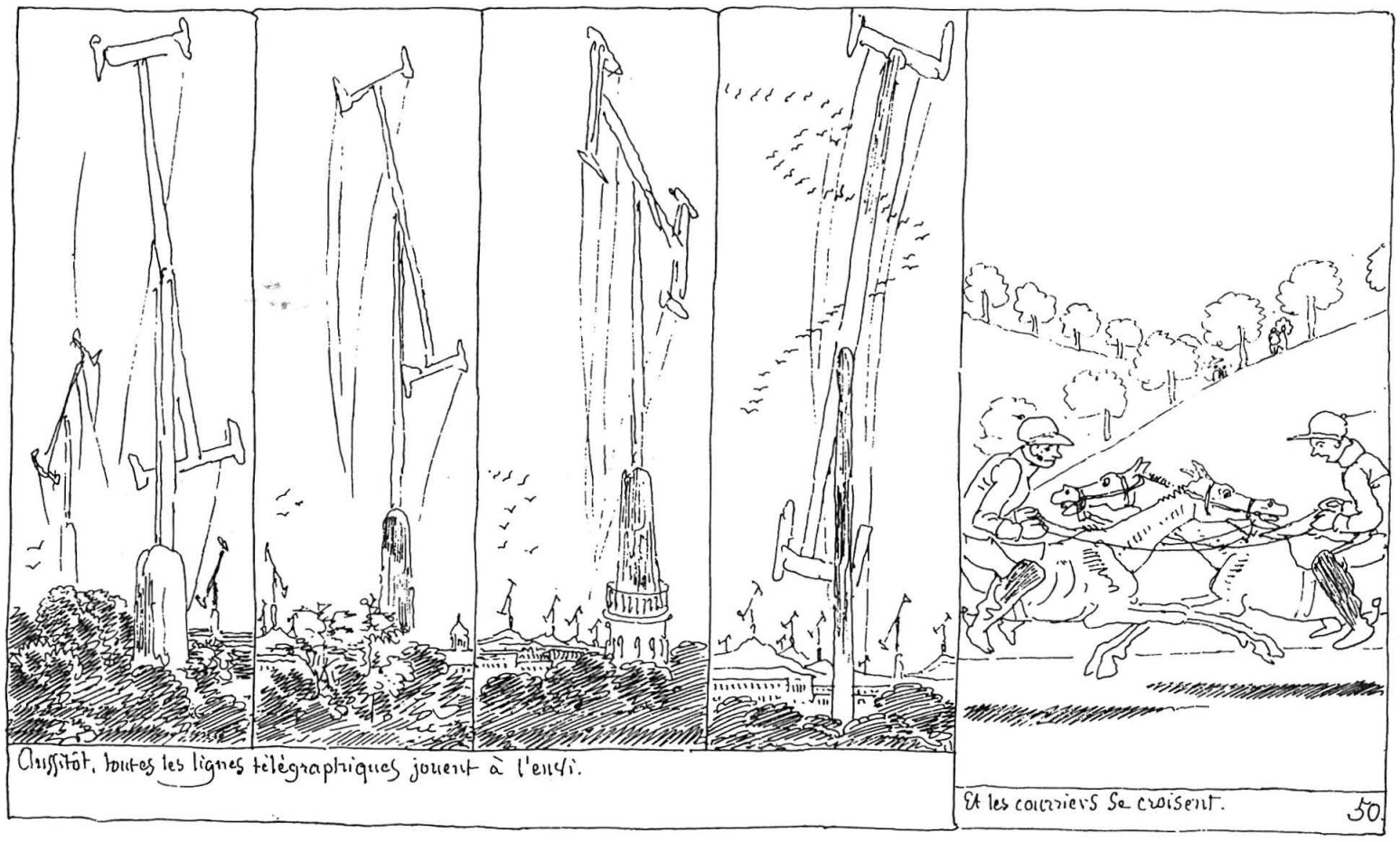
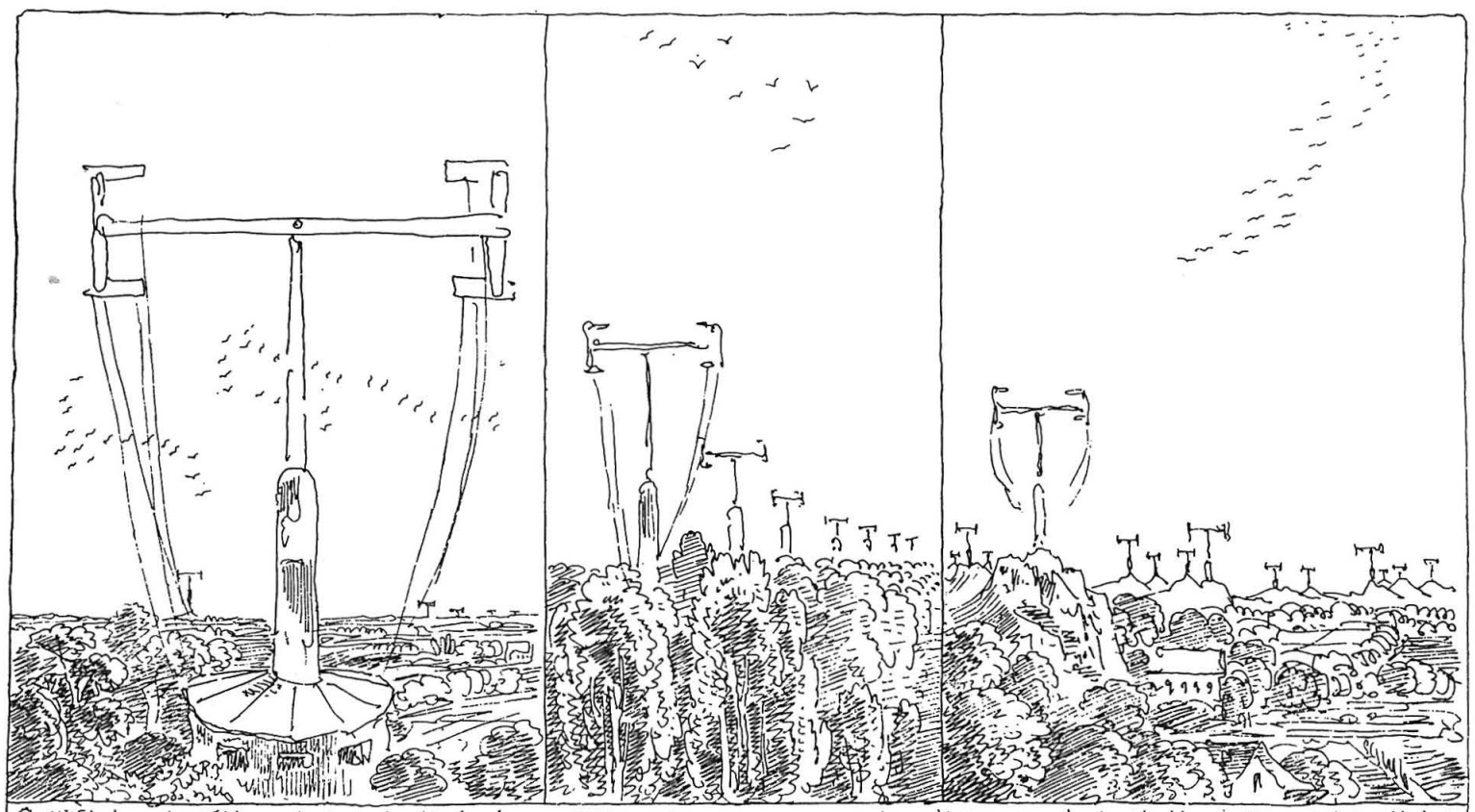


FIG. 2.20. *M. Pencil* (1840).
"[49] Meanwhile, the coach passes beneath the telegraph; the Burgher thinks he recognizes his dog perched on top of the apparatus and begs the driver to stop. / After which, the Burgher climbs on top of the coach, and is lucky enough to seize the dog by the paw. / Unfortunately, the dog begins to howl, and the horses bolt. [50] Immediately, all the telegraph lines imitate the signal. / And the couriers pass by each other."



FIG. 2.21. *M. Pencil* (1840).
"[71] Wholly reborn, M. Jolibois (for passion no longer blinds him, alas) asks that the glass cabinet be opened, and throws himself into the arms of his pure and respected wife. M. Pencil embraces his maid, and the Professor embraces himself. / Having rented a coach in common, together they resume the road home, and pick up in passing the Burgher and his dog, who had remained stuck on the telegraph. [72 and last] Immediately, all the telegraphs of all the telegraph networks return to their normal state, the Cholera stops, and the European situation resumes its wonted calm."


Aussitôt, toutes les lignes télégraphiques jouent à l'envi.
Et les courriers se croisent.
50.


Aussitôt tous les Télégraphes de toutes les lignes télégraphiques reprennent leur état normal, le Choléra cesse, et les affaires de l'Europe se tranquillisent.
autographié, à Genève, par l'auteur. — Lith. de Schmid.
page 72ème et dernière.

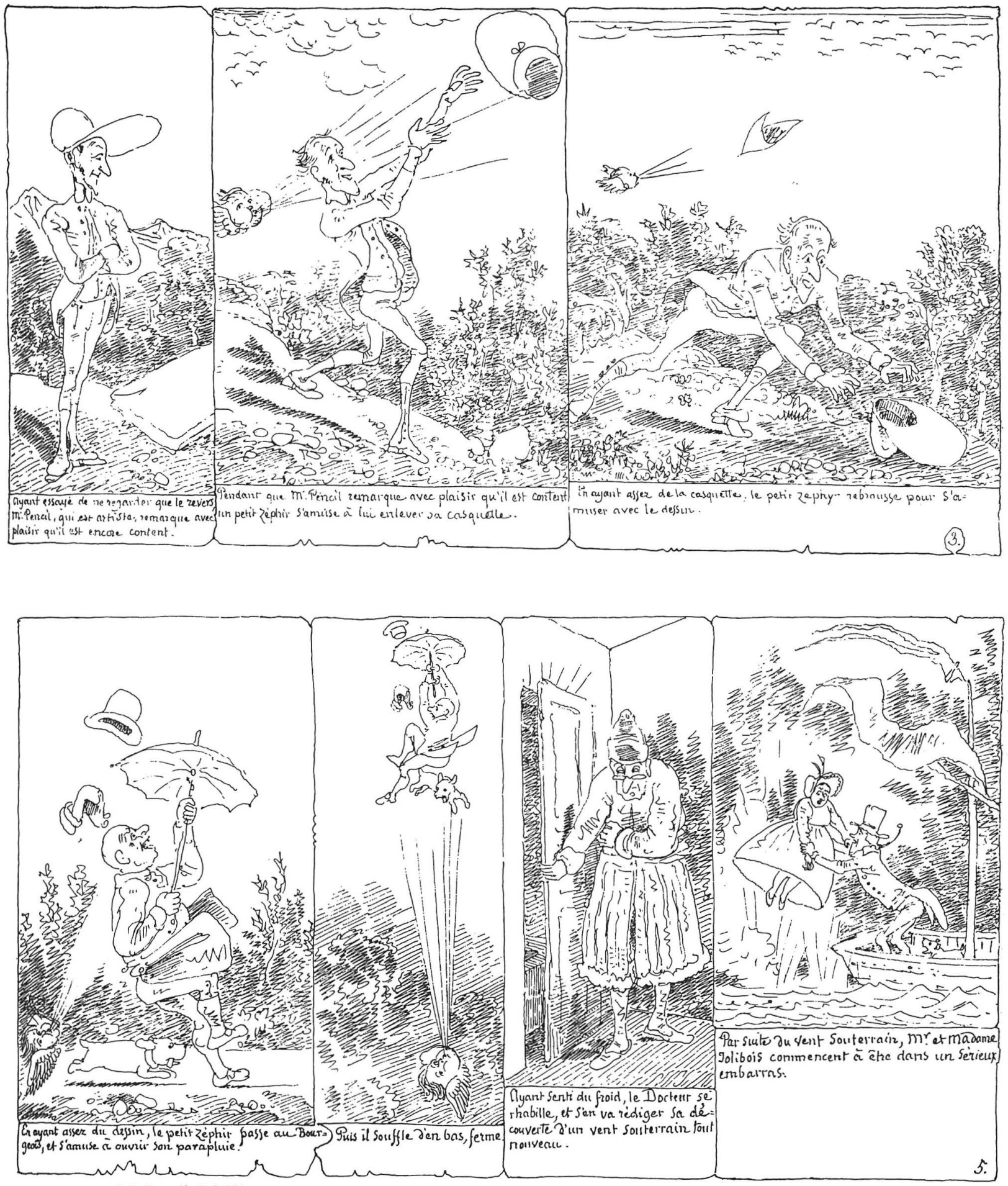


FIG. 2.22. *M. Pencil* (1840).
"[3] Having tried looking at the reverse side only, M. Pencil, who is an artist, notes with pleasure that he is still content. / While M. Pencil is noting with pleasure that he is content, a little Zephyr playfully blows off his cap. / Tiring of the cap, the little Zephyr turns back to play with the drawing. [5] Tiring of the drawing, the little Zephyr passes on to the Burgher, and plays at opening his umbrella. / Then he blows upward, hard. / Feeling the draft, the Professor dresses, and goes off to write up his discovery of an entirely new subterranean wind. / As a consequence of the subterranean wind, M. and Mme. Jolibois begin to find themselves in serious trouble."

that the artist Monsieur Pencil represents Töpffer himself, the author-artist whose capricious imagination (symbolized by the zephyr) and the product of his imagination (symbolized by the sketch), give the first shake to the kaleidoscope of adventure (Fig. 2.22). Although Pencil intervenes "authorially" at the end to straighten out the tangle, he is in fact the progenitor, rather than recorder, much less editor, of a self-propelled fantasy that imbibes sketch paper and human bodies alike, willfully suspending gravity and disbelief before finally letting all down to earth again. The return to the real and wider social world was decided only in the final version, which ends on the telegraph poles, agents of social commotion now become emblems of social peace.

Simultaneously, Töpffer makes a deft transition from the reconciliation of the protagonists to the reconciliation of Europe. Pencil acts in both cases merely to clear away obstacles: the foolish misunderstandings that stimulated blind personal passions and the physical encumbrances on the telegraph that unleashed extreme political fervor. We are left at the end with a page symbolizing universal and permanent tranquillity—a reassurance, perhaps, against signs of nascent restiveness in Geneva, which would break forth the following year.

The (anti-)heroes of Töpffer's picture-tales are, so far, scientist, lover, artist, politician. To this list we must now add thief, the hero of *Monsieur Trictrac.* With his counterpart the cop, the thief is a recurrent incidental figure in the 19th-century comic strip; here, as in so much else, Töpffer sets the example. The thief or petty criminal shadows the respectable citizen as a sinister alter ego. The thief–cop–respectable citizen trio thus involves a network of profound petty-bourgeois fears: that of losing property and discovering that the state is unable or unwilling to protect that property or its owner; and worse, that of arrest and jail by the guardians of the state, who let the real criminal go free. The latter nightmare flows from the generalized anxiety of the petty bourgeois about losing something more than the little property they had: social respect and status.

The scenario whereby the blameless petty bourgeois is "exposed" (accused of a crime, found naked) plays on the shame and confusion surrounding the ethics of getting on—in business, or in the world, where all is appearance anyway. Mistaken identities, involving abrupt and often involuntary switches of costume, endemic in Töpffer, are symptoms of the flux of social roles in the real world, of promises and dangers, of the need to appear as something other than what one is, and of the tendency to be taken for what one is not. The petty-bourgeois fascination with the criminal, who stalks through the 19th-century popular novel, the man from the margin capable of great acts of power, is a fantasy of those who see themselves as poised on the verge of power. To imagine oneself arrested as a petty criminal is thus a deterrent against, or advance punishment for, acting out criminal fantasies. At the same time, manifestly unjust arrest reproduces the immanent sense that society, with its laws, is altogether unjust.

Trictrac is concerned with the confusion and ambiguity inherent in the triangle thief-cop-citizen. The philosophical starting point is the fatalistic one underlying the comic view of law and lawlessness generally: theft is an accident of fate, a kind of natural disaster, rather than a typical manifestation of human depravity as in the rake's progresses of previous centuries. A house suffers burglary as it might a fire; a coach suffers brigands as it might a broken axle. In Töpffer, theft precipitates the *natural* tendency of people and things to get themselves lost and their identities mixed up.

The theft of a trunk and the search for the thieves launches Dr. Festus on his crazy path of adventure. In *Pencil,* the theft of the Professor's crate with Jolibois inside spins off further narrative skeins. When fear of a burglar precipitates the Marquise into her bedroom, Jabot, replete with nuptial ambition, acts the perfect cop by attacking the innocent concierge as the nearest person to hand.

Trictrac, like several other of Töpffer's comic strip albums, was executed in the early 1830s and left unfinished. Ironically, in his letter to Sainte-Beuve of 1840 Töpffer refers to this very story about a thief as having been "momentarily stolen," and, whether or not because he failed to recover it, it remained unpublished until 1937.[50] Yet it is very funny and subtle and ranks with the artist's best.

Trictrac is no more the hero of the tale than Pencil is of the one bearing his name; rather, the thief, together with the assumption of his identity by various other characters, determines the entire plot. The story opens with a burglar, who has climbed down the chimney of Trictrac's house, being politely bidden to take Trictrac's place in bed, while that gentleman, "devoured by science," sets off secretly to discover the source of the Nile. The exchange of identity is complete and reciprocal, for just as the thief is taken for Trictrac, Trictrac is taken for the thief and apprehended on the roof of his own house (scene 30) by the lieutenant of police. It is the World Upside Down: the thief, ever polite and gracious, pardons the police chief (but later has him arrested), then takes his clothes and appeals to the reserve to rescue him from the rooftop. The soldiers, who clumsily tangle themselves up in the ladder (the drillbook does not detail a routine for ladders), cause escalating chaos in the town (Fig. 2.23).

Correctly blaming the police for the chaos, the citizenry seize the man they take to be the police chief—who is in fact the thief in disguise. Thus, when he encounters the real police chief in jail as a thief, the thief-in-police-garb is only too happy to recover his original clothing and sign an official document declaring the other as the "only, true, and indivisible chief of police"—which means that it is the real police chief who faces punishment after all. After a trial that is a travesty of justice, the police chief is saved from hanging, in another ironic twist, by the thief, who, having escaped from jail, agrees to unhang him and exchange clothes once more—under the threat, which seems quite idle under the circumstances, that the police chief will hang *him* if he refuses.

This simplified outline omits several detours in a labyrinth of reversals and counterreversals of identity and roles. No solution seems in sight, although in one respect the wheel appears to have come full circle: the thief saves himself in the end by resuming his impersonation of Trictrac, thus also honoring his original commitment. The story is suspended on the image of the thief riding off as the putative son of Trictrac *père,* the epitome of a bourgeois respectability he has richly earned through his ingenuity. He is still of the species thief (having throughout no other name), but he has stolen nothing except the limelight from the nominal hero, Trictrac *fils,* who has not been seen since the forty-third scene and has gotten no closer to the source of the Nile than the roof of his own house.

Töpffer paused at this point, uncertain how, or perhaps even whether, to reintroduce Trictrac. The denouement cannot have been far off, for the draft was already, with forty-one pages and 125 scenes, approaching the normal length of an album.[51] As an antiauthoritarian satire, *Trictrac* would approximate Töpffer's more liberal-radical stance of the early 1830s. It is a freewheeling mockery of petty civic regulations (in which Geneva was certainly not lacking), stupid police and soldiers, and an arbitrary judiciary that frivolously condemns people to death. It posits the repressive apparatus of the state (and not only of Geneva, but of France or Savoy as well) as the cause of social disorder.

But *Trictrac* also shows another side to authoritarian, capricious government: its dedication, in an emergency, to misguided panaceas. The social crisis unleashed by the militia stuck in

50. This first 1937 edition was put out by Editions du Journal de Genève; it is reproduced in the hard-to-find Skira (1943) edition but omitted in all the subsequent ones, French and German.

51. Indeed, Töpffer described the story as "done" as early as 1831; see Gautier 1974, 155.

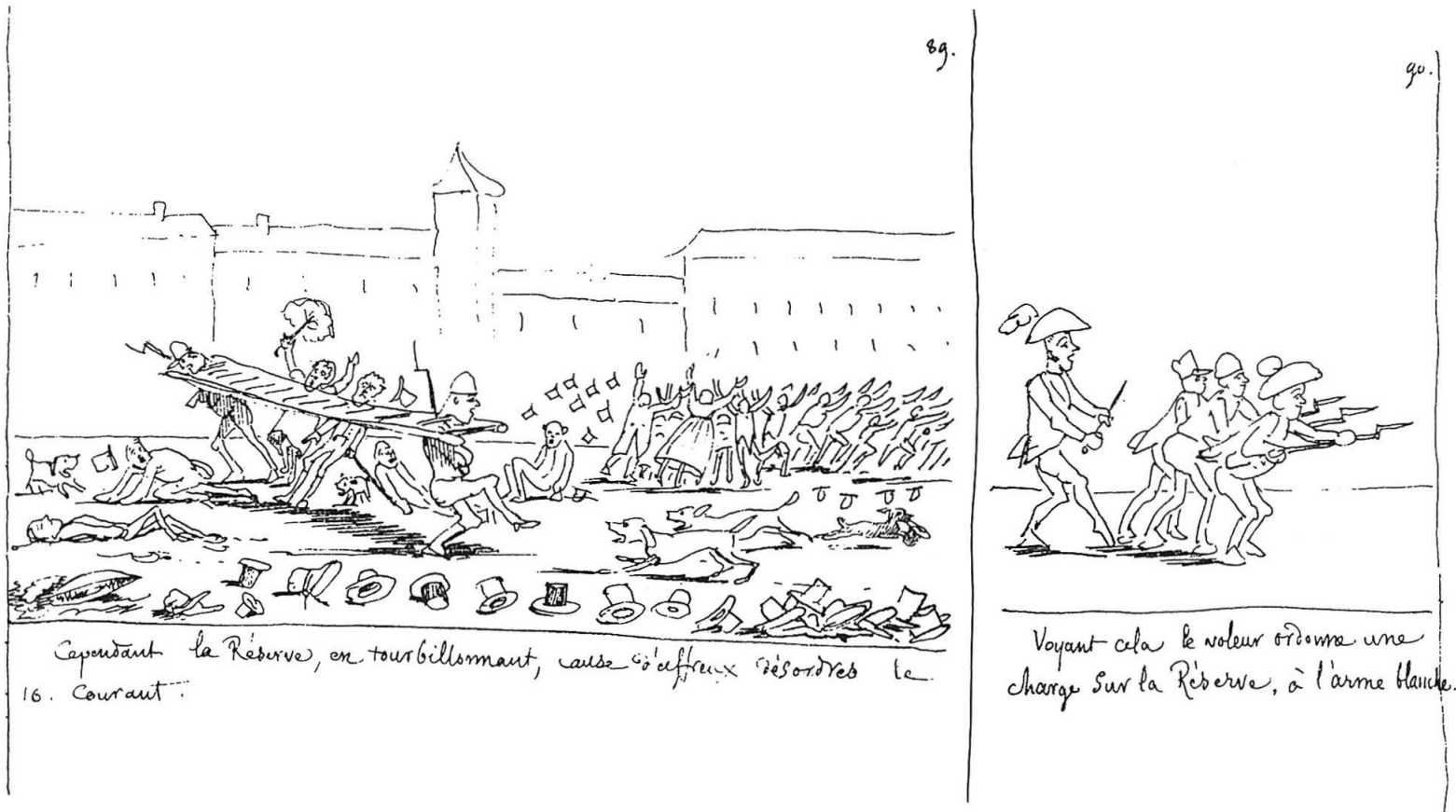


FIG. 2.23. *Monsieur Trictrac* (MS 1830).

"[89] Meanwhile, the Reserve, whirling around, causes terrible disorders on the 16th inst. [of this month]. [90] Seeing which, the thief orders a charge against the Reserve, with naked bayonet. [91] Hearing the command, the Reserve also makes a charge with naked bayonet, as if by instinct. [92] The entire police force gets jammed, having poor aim. The terrible disorders start up again. Most of the population gets bruised and damaged. [93] Meanwhile, the civic authority comes to the aid of the population by establishing caldrons of cheap emollients in each district. These are distributed against a good-conduct certificate."

the ladder is met by the establishment of a "soup kitchen" of emollient plasters (see Fig. 2.23), which universal cure is also offered to the thief, disguised as Trictrac, when his "father" finds him "horribly changed." The distribution of the emollient, which plays a conspicuous role in the narrative and leads to further confusions of social identity (it enables thieves who wear it to pose as decent folk and exercise their vocation to advantage), becomes a symbol of foolish and useless social welfare measures.

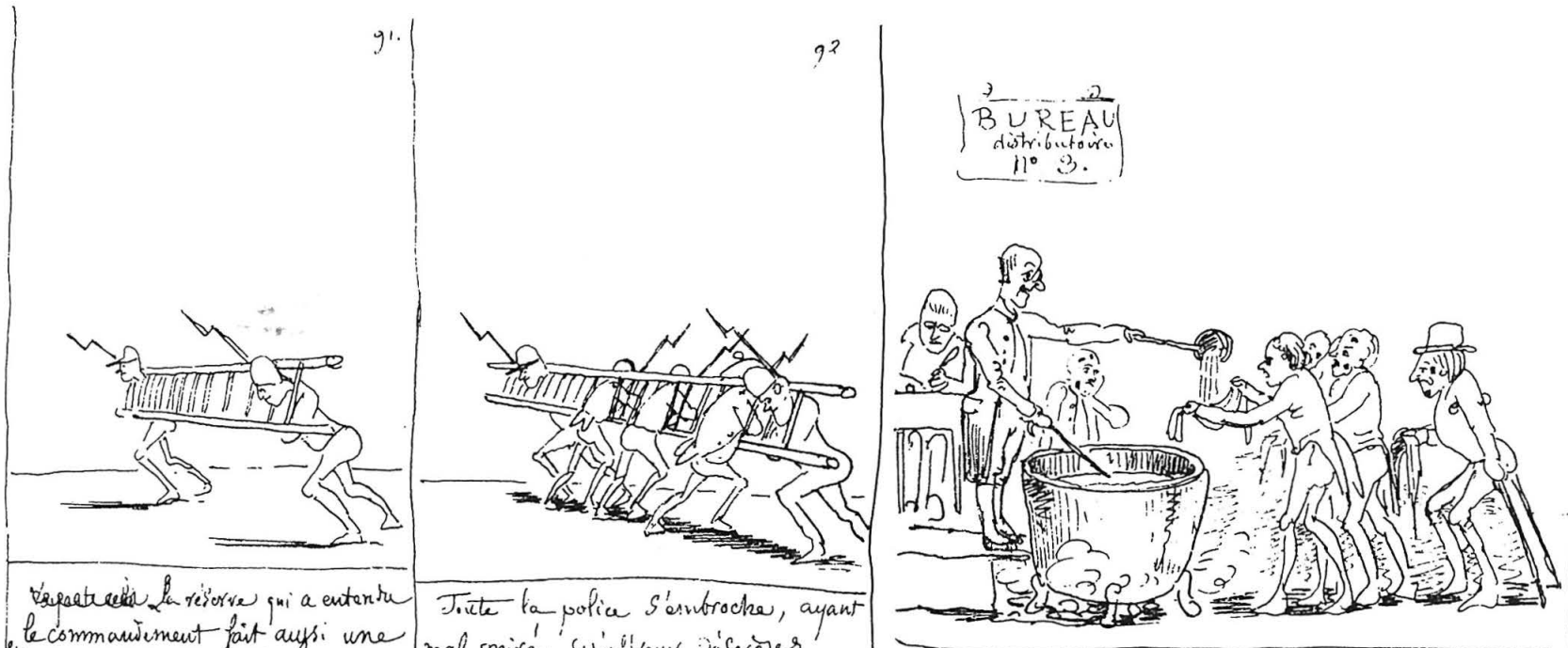
The Last Years: Cryptogame *and* Albert *(1845)*

After 1840 Töpffer neither published nor sketched any new stories for several years, distracted first by his growing literary reputation and then by the internal political situation. From early 1842 the Genevan revolutionary crisis consumed all his energies; he became, as his friends noted with regret, an *englué* (Genevan slang for "fanatic"), one of the chief polemicists on the conservative side. He helped launch and write the twice-weekly *Courrier de Genève,* which was designed to turn back the first revolution of November 22, 1841; it folded, however, in defeat in March 1843. Struggling now against rapidly deteriorating health and eyesight,[52] he finally sought relief in another picture-story, conceived during a political lull toward the end of 1844: *The Story of Albert.*

From 1843 Töpffer was in active negotiations with his Parisian cousin and publisher, Jean-Jacques Dubochet, over editions of his writings *Voyages en zigzag, Nouvelles genevoises,* and, in late 1844, *Rosa et Gertrude,* his latest novel, to be serialized in Dubochet's new illustrated news weekly, *L'Illustration.* Suddenly, though, Töpffer decided that *Rosa et Gertrude* was unsuited to both serialization and the magazine and urged instead a brand new picture-story.[53] *The Story of Albert* was too localized and politically polemical for reproduction in the Parisian weekly, but it had put him in the swing once again of graphic invention, and so he resurrected the last of his unpublished drafts, *Monsieur Cryptogame,* which he had sent to Goethe in 1830. He described it in a letter to his cousin as "very funny in its extravagance, and briskly paced, inventive enough to win a happy popularity among people who like to laugh at the impossible rendered comic, and sufficiently credible."[54] With its satirical barbs aimed chiefly at an infidel culture that was being conquered by France (Moslem Algeria), and otherwise his most politically innocent production, *Cryptogame* was indeed suited to the broad family readership of *L'Illustration.*

Unable because of his eyesight and temperament to draw the work on wood himself ("In order get going at all, I have to burn the paper"), he wanted the execution entrusted to a "bold and comic" rather than a necessarily skilled draftsman: Cham. He knew Cham, the latest rising star on the Parisian caricatural firmament, from his work in *L'Illustration* over the previous year. The choice was a natural one, but Cham *was* a skilled draftsman, and, having quickly assimilated Töpffer's comic mode, he was now developing a blunter style of his own, more suited than the Genevan's to both wood engraving and the greater public.

52. See Kunzle 1981.
53. For the negotiations between Töpffer, Dubochet, and Cham, and the relationship between the various versions of *Cryptogame,* see Kunzle 1984.
54. Ibid., p. 141.



Having pressed his project with comic urgency on Dubochet, Töpffer now pressed it upon Cham. He wrote in the most flattering and courteous terms, but with a veritable deluge of highly detailed suggestions. Töpffer's attitude was unconsciously contradictory: he forbade Cham to copy in a servile manner and summoned him to be free—but in his own, Töpffer's, way, not Cham's. Töpffer continued to "pester" (his word) Dubochet with all kinds of little matters relating to the project, in an attempt not only to get the engraving done right but also to hurry it along. After the first installments had already been published, a problem surfaced with Töpffer's Abbé and missionaries, whom Dubochet turned into a professor (*docteur*) and a mayor and his adjunct in order not to offend Catholics.

In April, just before the eleventh and final installment was due to appear, Dubochet pronounced the whole venture, upon which he had staked as much financially as Töpffer had morally (the publisher had to pay for it twice: once to Töpffer, and again to Cham), "a wild success with young and old, although contested by some."[55] The album edition, however, which normally would have followed immediately after the serial publication and from which both publisher and author expected to recoup heavily, was much delayed, and David Bogue, publisher of Cruikshank's *Lambkin,* was able, by arrangement with Dubochet, to produce an English album edition before the French one finally appeared.

In the spring and summer Dubochet was writing to Töpffer in Vichy, where he was undergoing treatment to cure his swollen spleen and treat general debilitation. A letter raising the question of a German edition was written, *horribile dictu,* in his daughter's hand; Rodolphe, now too weak to use his pen, expressed the fear that he would not leave Vichy alive.

His public success with *Cryptogame,* added to his experiences with the doctors at the famous spa, where his enforced heavy drinking of the water seemed only to make his spleen worse, inspired him in April to conceive another comic strip, "a crazy medical story." Dubochet seized eagerly on the hint of another *bambochade* (*bambocciata,* humorous genre scene). He had printed in *L'Illustration* a strip set in Africa (and as such surely derived from *Cryptogame*), the inferiority of which only underscored the uniqueness of Töpffer, "creator of the genre." Fearing to importune a very sick man by demanding of him the slightest effort, Dubochet gently encouraged him in his medical satire: "Vichy must be crowded with people great and humble. You have there a vast field of observation and you will have drawn there from nature more than one episode of M. Hydrophile."[56] But in vain; Töpffer's eyesight and general weakness prevented him from scribbling the least figure for it, and in the end the medical treatment rendered him so much worse that he lacked the strength even to satirize it. He died a year later of leukemia.

Töpffer was disappointed with Cham's and the anonymous engravers' efforts, and posterity has judged them harshly (wrongly citing Cham as the engraver) in comparison with the original lithographic and pen drawings that are included in modern Töpffer collections. But the first published edition of *Cryptogame* in *L'Illustration* and the subsequent album actually established Töpffer's name, genre, and style before the "bon gros public" he always aspired to reach, with tremendous consequences for the character and diffusion of the comic strip.

Cryptogame, like *Vieux Bois,* is a parody of romantic love, but from the reverse starting point: the hero's flight from a fiery fiancée in order to pursue a passion for butterflies. Although as crazy and surreal in its incidents as any of Töpffer's tales, it is structurally more linear, borne along on a single narrative thread. This relative linearity, together with the relative lack of political satire, has facilitated its inclusion (in a much-doctored Dutch version) in the ranks of children's classics. Once more, brief comparisons of the various versions of *Cryptogame* offer precious insight into the author's creative process.

Töpffer's 1844 changes certainly give greater coherence and dynamism to the story. Although depicted as a terrible prime-mover already in 1830, Elvire, the dynamo that keeps the story revolving (and the other figures in it as well, quite literally), acquires true mock-heroic stature through the addition of several important incidents. With superhuman strength she whirls the Turk, who has kidnapped her for his harem, around by the beard and into the sea (Fig. 2.24). Later, appropriated for the harem and in immediate fear of ravishment, with genuine biblical courage she reenacts Judith pretending to submit to Holofernes, the better to plunge a dagger into the tyrant's breast and escape. (In 1830 she adopted the much less heroic tactic of hitting the Dey in the eye with a stone.)

The reaction of Cryptogame to the overall increase in the mass and speed of his fiancée's onslaught is correspondingly, and comically, heightened. Töpffer considerably prolongs Cryptogame's iron resistance to the various means Elvire uses to unfreeze her lover on board a ship in a polar climate: all her ardent pleas,

55. Ibid., p. 146.
56. Ibid., p. 148.

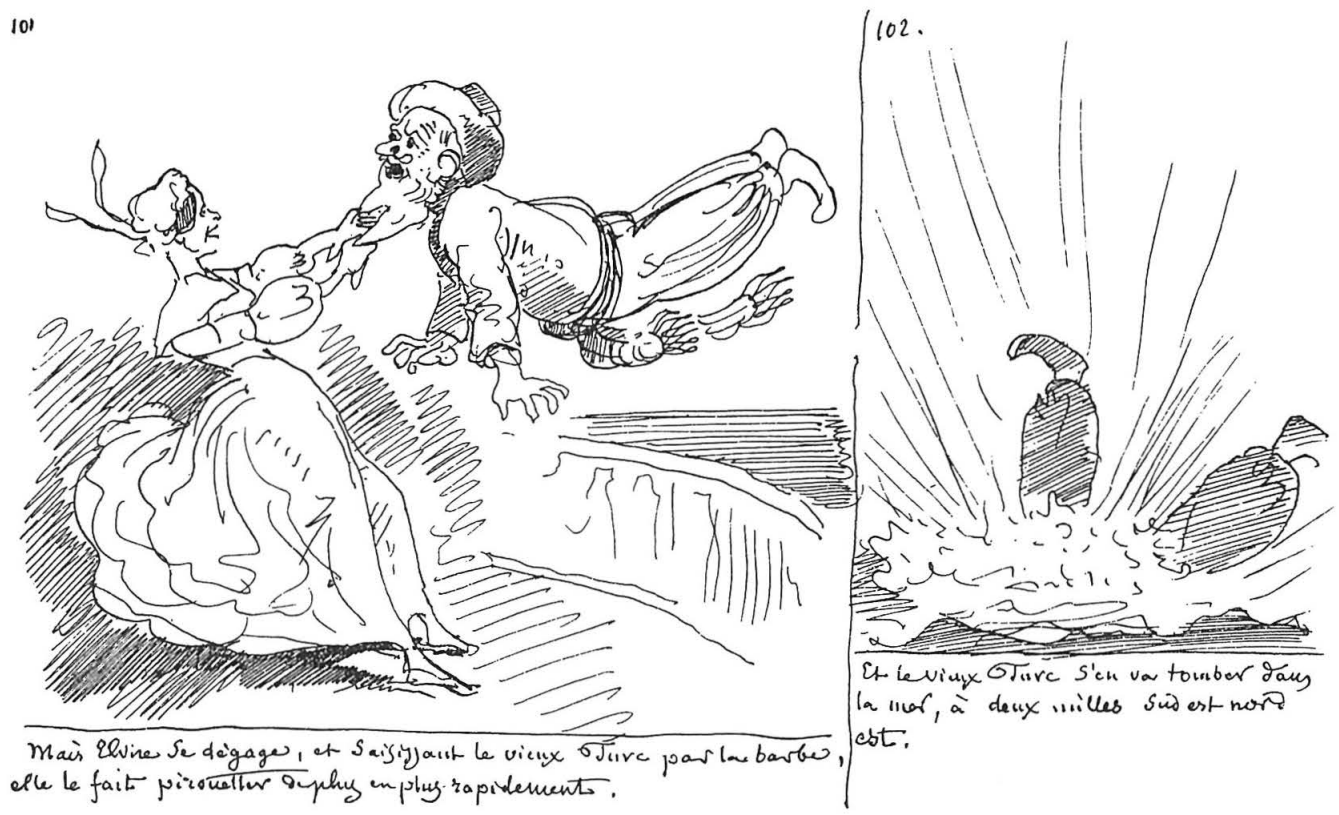


FIG. 2.24. *M. Cryptogame* (MS 1844). "[101] But Elvire frees herself, and, seizing the old Turk by the beard, swings him around faster and faster. [102] And the old Turk falls into the sea two miles away, southeast-northeast."

hot toddies, pectoral frictions, even roasting on a spit, leave him—literally—cold (Fig. 2.25). In 1844 Cryptogame tries actively to palm off Elvire on his companion the Abbé, impelled now by a double motive: fear of bigamy (not present in 1830) as well as of Elvire. And in the published version, in which the (celibate) Abbé has become a Professor, Cryptogame encourages the Professor's courtship of Elvire, proposing that they marry. The whole affair is enriched, in a classic, comically counterproductive maneuver, by Elvire's finding her own motive for encouraging the Abbé: to make Cryptogame jealous and thus (re)kindle his love.

In 1844 the introduction, much earlier in the story, of Elvire's rival, the Belle Provençale, who subsequently is married to Cryptogame secretly and instantly in the belly of the whale (his name in fact means "secretly married," from the Greek), adds another level of credibility to the hero's flight from Elvire. The marriage in the whale also adds a mythic dimension: the hero finds true love at last in "another world"; after his great trials he is in a sense "reborn," true to the biblical symbolism in Jonah's resurrection from the whale. And the marriage serves not only as a narrative crux befitting the mythic locale but also as a motivation for the escape: the movement of the dancers disturbs the whale's digestion and causes it to vomit most of them out (Fig. 2.26).

The denouement of the 1844 version is as violent as Elvire's temper and pursuit. Cryptogame's honeymoon, delayed by his further adventures, has just begun, only to be interrupted by Elvire. Her self-explosion (see Fig. 2.5) eliminates her from the story, clearing the way for an eternity of bliss; this, however, in a last-minute twist, proves very short lived: the bride belatedly confesses that she has eight children by a former marriage. The last full-page scene leaves the reader with a vision of comic, but common, reality: a "sufficiently happy" Cryptogame, still with the habitual butterflies stuck in his hat, glumly acquiescent to his fate—having escaped the fire of Elvire, he has managed only to land in the frying pan of a tumultuous brood of brats.

Five weeks before Töpffer completed the first draft of his story, the French invasion of Algeria, beginning on June 14, 1830, touched off a new, important, prolonged episode. The French considered that the Algerian tradition of piracy, their legendary reputation for cruelty toward their own people as well as Christian captives, their polygamy and harems constituted general, long-standing justification for corrective action. A personal offense of the Dey, who had dared, in a notorious incident of 1827, to swat the French consul on the face with a fly whisk, was one of the more immediate pretexts for the invasion. Without alluding to any particular provocations, Töpffer applies the stereotype of Arab stupidity and tyranny in such story situations as the Dey's capricious hanging of the court scientists; the massacre by Arabs of the entire crew of a Norwegian whaler; and the enslavement of Cryptogame and company—although they are apparently spared physical abuse in their respective roles: Cryptogame as gardener, the Abbé as tutor, and Elvire as harem maiden.

Once again, the climate of political and cultural criticism within which Töpffer first sketched a story was aggravated by the time he came to publish it fifteen years later. The continuing war to establish French control, and the heroic resistance of Abd el-Kadr, kept Algeria and North Africa in the public eye. The institution at the fourth volume (September 1844–February 1845) of *L'Illustration* of a separate index category, "Scènes d'Algérie," itself tells us how important Algeria had become to the French public. Excitement mounted in 1844 with Biskaray's expedition, the bombardment of Mogador, Bugeaud's victory at Isly, and the subsequent peace treaty—all featured in *L'Illustration*. Algeria remained prominent through the months *Cryptogame* appeared; indeed, the topic reached a climax in the very same issue that carried Töpffer's first Algerian episode (March 15), with a spectacular full-spread feature on Horace Vernet's "Capture of the *smala* [headquarters]" of Abd el-Kadr. This enormous, panoramic painting had been the sensation of the Salon that year. At the same time, beyond the conquest of Algeria, Arab customs and barbarisms had long been considered exciting subjects, and there existed a historically nonspecific orientalist tradition in the arts, emphasizing harems and the enslavement of Christians.

The Genevan artist also projected into Algeria his experience of civil disorder at home. In 1844 he added a scene showing the terrible chaos caused by the janissaries' method of choosing a new Dey, meant to mirror the anarchy Töpffer blamed on the electoral agitations of the Genevan radicals (see Fig. 2.4). Too busy fighting to notice that a fire is consuming the city, the Algerians lose all chance of escape and are driven into the ocean. As the French subjugation of Algeria was Europe's vengeance for piracy and other insults, so the scene of drowning represents the revenge of the escaping Cryptogame and company for the capture and enslavement they have suffered.

Ironically, the dim-witted and otherwise torpid Abbé causes the fire that is their salvation. Whereas Cryptogame is set to gardening, the Abbé is given the relatively privileged post of tutor to the children of the wealthy Moustacha—reflecting the historical tradition by which talented non-Muslims and foreigners were honored in the Turkish empire. This tutor has to contend with children who, like children everywhere, misbehave; and he is



FIG. 2.25. *M. Cryptogame* (MS 1844).
"[93] Elvire unhooks her lover, but M. Cryptogame, frozen as he is, falls on her. [94] Despair of Elvire, who turns the chosen one of her heart this way and that. Without being able to unfreeze him. [95] Elvire tries hot toddies, but M. Cryptogame, frozen as he is, takes no notice. [96] And sponging over the heart, but M. Cryptogame, frozen as he is, remains cold. [97] And roasting on a spit, but M. Cryptogame, frozen as he is, takes no notice."

given just two days in which to teach the boys physics or be hanged. While he applies the "prompt and sure" method of dealing with one child and letting the other rest (here Töpffer parodies a school publicity brochure), the unoccupied boy ties a beam to his tutor's leg. Fleeing for his life, the Abbé becomes a living embodiment of one of the scientific laws he was unable to impart: for in dragging the beam behind him, he creates a friction that eventually sets the forest ablaze (see Fig. 2.4). Thenceforth the beam is part of his persona, for he makes no attempt to free himself from it during all his subsequent adventures. He wears it as the permanent attribute of his pedagogic martyrdom, right down to the "tableau" of the last scene, in which Cryptogame's eight children, the Abbé's newest charges, fight over it. The beam seems to have become a special symbol of the burden of life—and, perhaps, of the Abbé's stupidity as well.

The author was evidently well pleased with his Algerian episode, because most of it survived intact in 1844. But another, roughly comparable, crescendo of movement, which had been particularly admired in Weimar, met with significant refinement. Starting from an almost true dead point (for when Elvire faints after a superlative fit of rage, the Abbé and Cryptogame prepare to throw her overboard, thinking her dead), a spark of energy from the suddenly reviving virago sets off a most wonderful chain reaction. Cryptogame flees, and she pursues; but then, in 1844, through a witty reversal of designs (scenes 127–128), Elvire, the pursuer of Cryptogame, becomes pursued by *him,* so that now he, the pursuer of the Abbé, both flees and pursues, by imitation as is his wont—a neat reversal of intentions all around, and the kind of mix-up that points to early movie farce. All the remaining moveables on board ship, infected by the contagion of energy, are then sucked into the vortex willy-nilly, in a descending hierarchy of significance and size (see Fig. 2.3).

These are all additions. Comparison of the 1830 and 1844 versions also reveals a curious example of reduction as well as a major cut. The reduction is of rats, which in 1830 infest no fewer than twenty-five scenes—fighting it out against the humans in the belly of the whale, clinging to the back of Elvire as she is hoisted aboard the Algerian brig, being eaten alive by the starving hero. Although all these rats were no doubt amusing to the schoolboys of the Pension Töpffer, the artist could not risk disgusting the mixed family readership of *L'Illustration.*

The amputation of the last fifty-eight scenes of the 1830 version (168–225) is harder to explain, however, for it affects the purest and most pristine, the most cinematic, funny, and physical, of Töpfferian farce. Yet perhaps the author deemed the whole sequence simply too silly for public consumption (Fig. 2.27). He



FIG. 2.26. *M. Cryptogame* (MS 1844).
"[73] As soon as the ceremony is over, M. Cryptogame engages the minstrel and gives his Belle Provençale a big wedding ball. [74] Unfortunately, the wedding ball gives a huge indigestion to the Whale, so that his digestive current begins to rise. [75] And the Whale throws up two-thirds of his food."

had left the story oddly suspended in midair, and needed to disentangle the narrative and disembark the protagonists for a proper denouement.

Confined in *L'Illustration* to three tiers of scenes within twenty-two large vertical pages, *Cryptogame* lost the spacious margins of the album format, which give air to a breathless narrative. The magazine also attenuated the forward impulse inherent both in the horizontal album shape and in the left-to-right movement of figures (which Cham, culpably, did not bother to reverse). Finally, the magazine's page format flattened out or obscured a characteristic alternation of rhythm: the *ritardando* of the single climactic or caesural scene spread over the whole page, followed by the *accelerando* of multiple narrow scenes of similar appearance.

The relative lack of looseness and spontaneity in the *Illustration* version is felt most acutely, as Töpffer well foresaw, in the faces. It is less of a disadvantage in his perfunctorily drawn radishlike hands and bloblike feet (where Cham's Elvire in particular gains an appropriate modicum of grace). But Töpffer left numerous all-important gaps in the characters' facial features, the aesthetic and psychological function of which he explained, at length, in his *Essai de physiognomonie,* the theoretical treatise he wrote soon afterward. Essentially, Töpffer's abbreviated physiognomic code allowed for more open expressions into which the reader could freely project nuances, as well as greater variety and mobility of expression; it reduced the need for absolute standardization and continuity in the facial type, so hard to maintain when working at high speed.

Less willing than Töpffer to take his audience's comprehension for granted, Cham filled out Töpffer's sketches in order to achieve immediate legibility, blurring psychological contradictions and simplifying complex emotional states.[57] Yet although he "vulgarized" Töpffer for the masses, his treatment is still more lively than the dead hand of the copyist employed for Aubert's plagiaries.

Töpffer had evidently begun to lithograph *Cryptogame* before he sent his manuscript to Paris, for it includes eight lithographed pages (scenes 9–16) in place of the original, discarded, drawings. The idea of a complete lithographic album in his own hand, out of the question as long as the serialization was running and the wood-engraved album imminent, revived when the latter was delayed (it did not appear until October 1846, after the author's death) and as his health continued to deteriorate. When the chance arose of incorporating the tale into a collected German-French edition of his picture stories (the rights to which he sold to Kessmann of Geneva by October 14, 1845), he lithographed the first eight pages of *Cryptogame,* making changes apparently for their own sake and to distinguish what would be truly *his* album from Cham's version of it. But with inspiration failing and his sickness now so grave that he had to give up his school altogether, the changes are not improvements. One senses tragically how physical pain and the fear of time running out have blunted the old precision of manual, visual, and conceptual control.

Having failed to check the progress of the Genevan revolution with his newspaper, Töpffer made a last attempt to do so with a picture-story, *The Story of Albert.* Didactic, polemical, and generally serious in tone, it has remained the least popular of Töpffer's published stories and is excluded from a major recent

57. A detailed analysis of some of the changes made by Cham, and by Töpffer himself compared with his own other versions, can be found in ibid., 148–167.

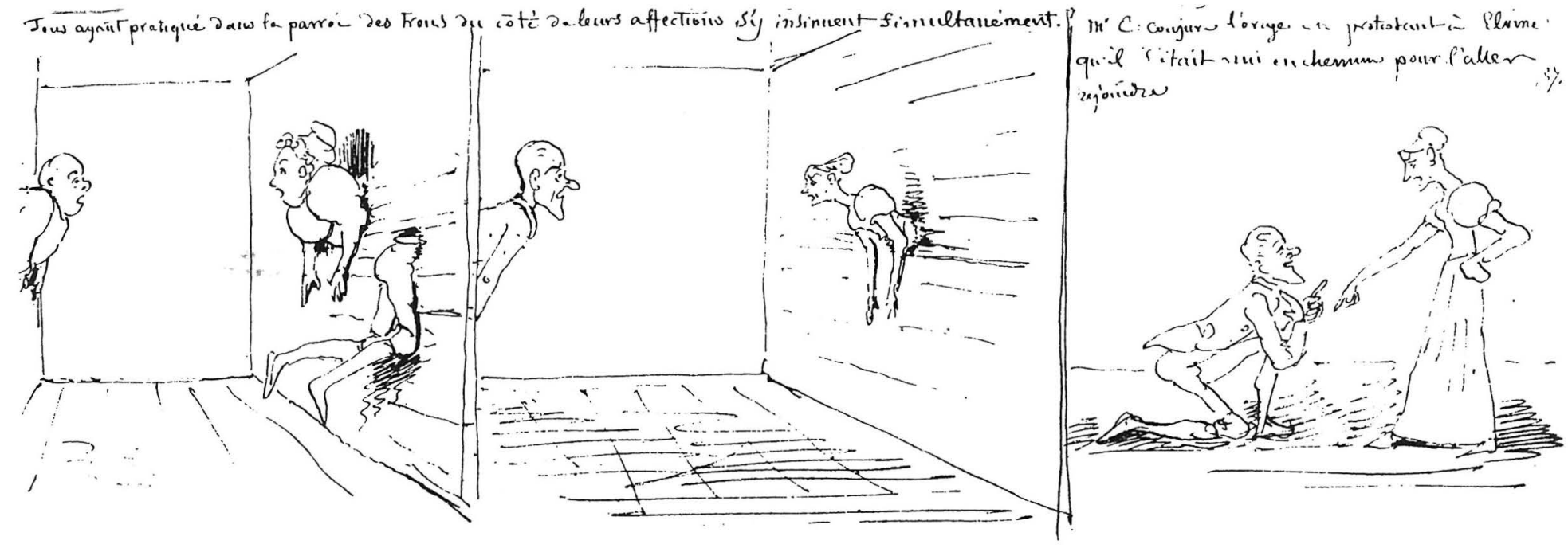


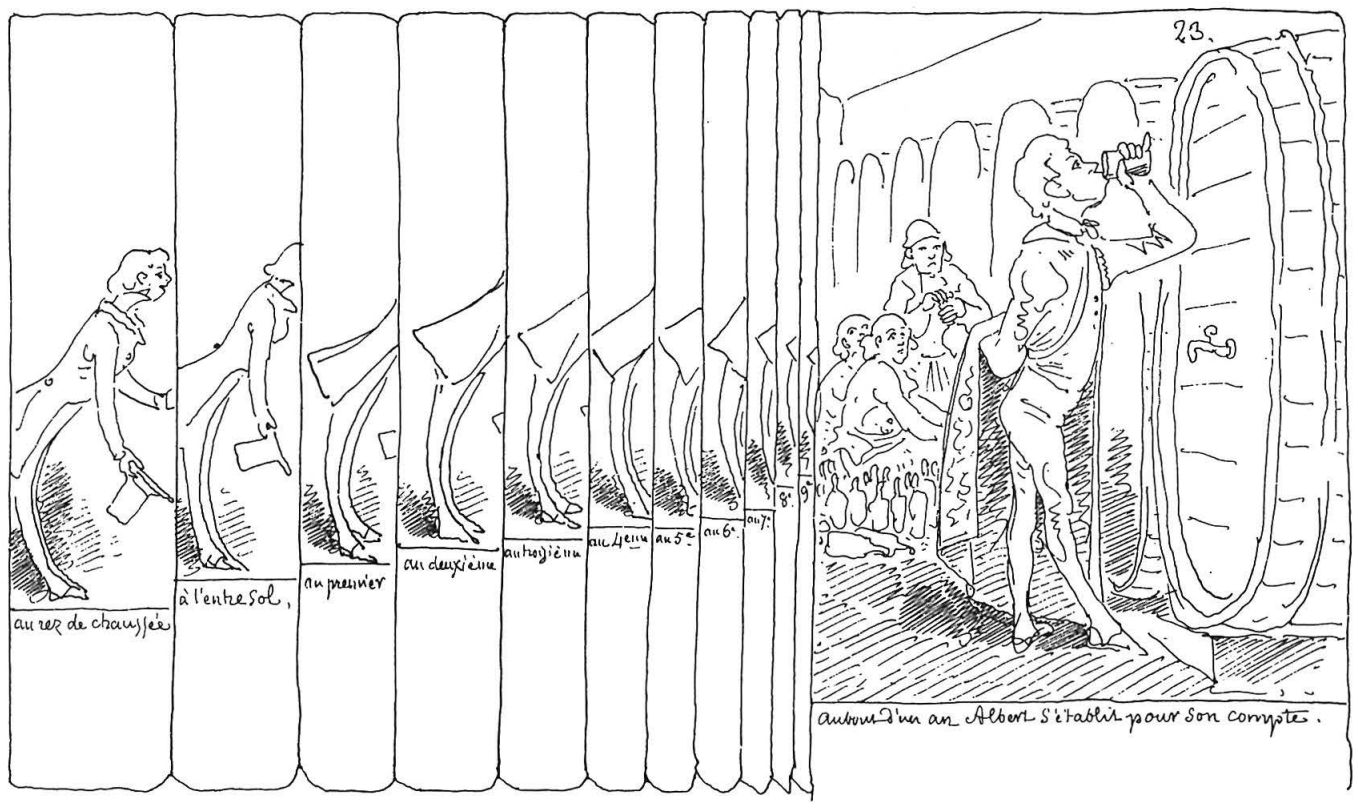
FIG. 2.27. *M. Cryptogame* (MS 1830).
"[185–187] All four make holes in the wall toward the objects of their affections and insinuate themselves through the holes simultaneously. / Mr. C. averts the storm by protesting to Elvire that it was he en route to join her. / . . . [191–194] Having tried to make a hole in order to escape while Elvire is asleep, M. Cryptogame finds the water entering violently, and is knocked over by it. / Great distress. / The water penetrates through the hole into the cell of the Belle Provençale. / Seeing the water coming in, the Abbé throws himself onto the floor in swimming position, to be ready."

German collected edition.[58] Its flashes of farce are rare and predictable, although it does have some redeeming graphic innovations (Fig. 2.28).

Albert is an attack on radical doctrines, opportunism, and journalistic agitation, following the story of a failed education. Here, however, the failure is blamed less on the prevalence of false doctrines (as in *Crépin*) than on an individual moral flaw. Old enough to be held personally responsible, Albert squanders his educational opportunities at the public schools and thus deserves his subsequent social humiliation. He is the overweening, downwardly mobile, wastrel son the bourgeois family had every reason to fear. Although Albert is evidently of good stock, the attitude of his parents, divided like the Crépins, is no help, Albert *père* knowing no other form of discipline than that of kicking his son in the pants (and this is repeated like a refrain), and his mother knowing no other remedy than to comfort him every time he suffers this abuse. Albert dabbles in the arts and sciences, abandoning one course of study after another. On a diet of jinns, void, death, oceans, and doctrines (another dig at Victor Hugo here), he launches himself as a Romantic poet; then he becomes a Carbonarist conspirator who flees when threatened with discovery. Thrown on his own resources, he repeats in the outside world the pattern of his scholastic shiftlessness. He tries and fails at a picaresque array of useful but lowly trades—dentistry, podiatry, popular publishing, selling wine and groceries, and manufacturing candles and chocolate without cocoa (this last an outright swindle of a *Macaire*-ish kind). In France he meets by chance with Mangini, Pacini, and Carabini, his old fellow Carbonarists, and joins them at the very lowly occupation of lamplighting, from which vantage point they will overthrow the government and undertake the great political illumination. Discovered, the conspirators again flee, this time to Switzerland, where the free press and relaxed government offer fertile ground for subversion.

Töpffer's target in *The Story of Albert* (originally called *The Story of Jaques;* in Fig. 2.28 we can see that Töpffer forgot to

58. Rodolphe Töpffer, *Komische Bilderromane,* ed. F. A. Herbig, 2 vols. (Berlin, Munich, and Leipzig, n.d.).



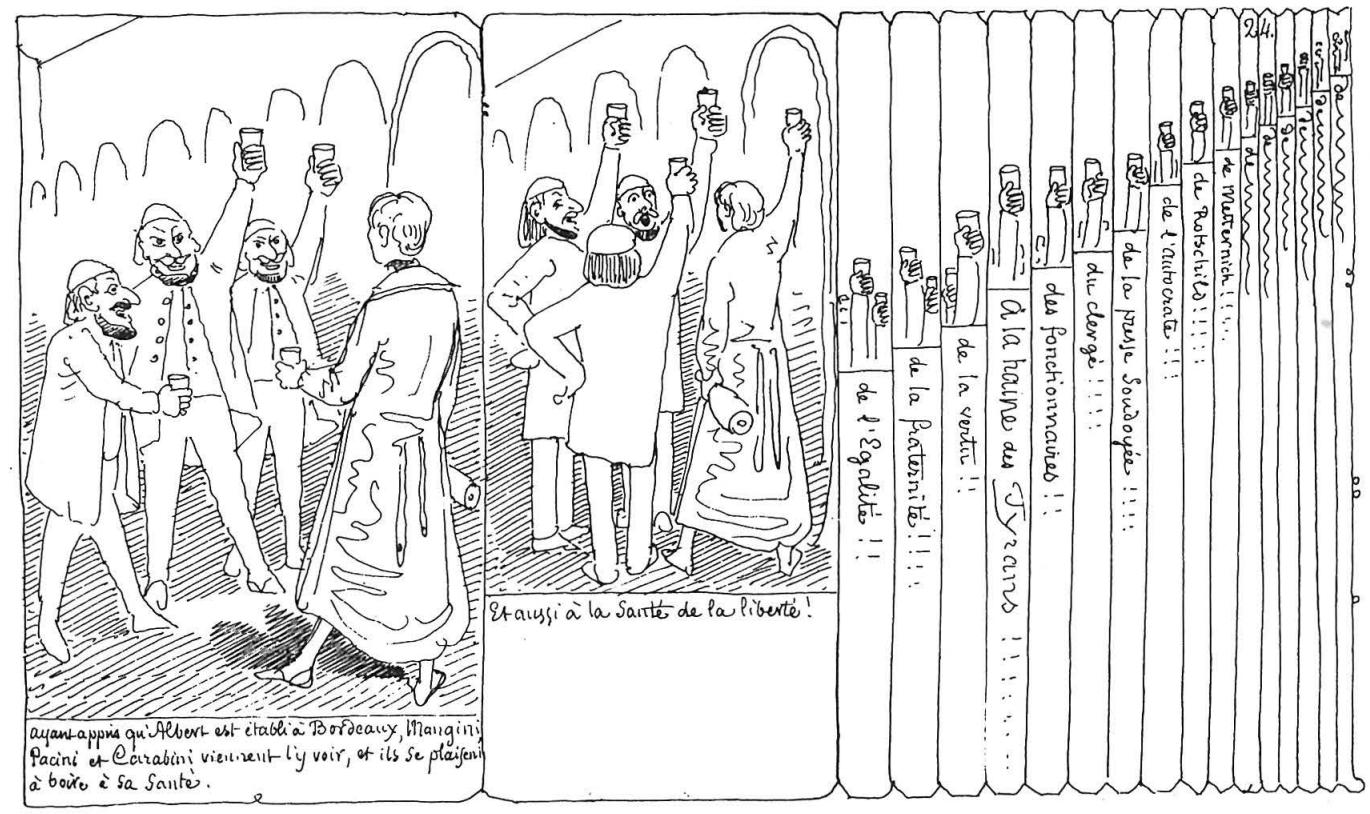




FIG. 2.28. *The Story of Albert* (1845).
"[23] At the ground floor / the mezzanine / first floor / second / third / 4th / 5th / 6th / 7th / 8th / 9th. / After a year Albert is established on his own account. [24] Learning that Albert is established in Bordeaux, Mangini, Pacini, and Carabini come to see him, and are pleased to drink to his health. / And also to the health of Liberty! / and Equality!! / and Fraternity!!! / and Virtue!! / To hatred of tyrants!!! / of bureaucrats!! / of the clergy!!!! / of the venal press!!!! / of the autocrat!!! / of Rotschild!!!!! / of Metternich!!! / of . . . [25] Unfortunately, bankruptcy is declared, and Jaques [Albert] moves out. / Entering the employ of a publisher-bookseller, Albert is charged with selling the large edition of *Metaphysics in Pictures,* with text and engravings, and he starts pestering people from floor to floor. / On the ground floor / on the first / on the 2d / 3rd / 4th."

change the name, bottom row, far left) is the Genevan radical leader James Fazy.[59] Son of a highly cultured and conservative important manufacturer father and a Fourierist mother, James Fazy was educated in Paris, where he militated as a journalist for the 1830 revolution and then against Louis Philippe, for which he was jailed. He was associated, briefly, with Mazzini (Töpffer's "Mangini") and the Carbonari ("Carabini"). Back in Geneva in 1833, Fazy founded several journals, including *Le Représentant,* with which Töpffer's own *Courrier de Genève* locked horns. Töpffer accused Fazy through the *Courrier*—as later through the figure of Albert the journalist—of engaging in unscrupulous, agitational appeals to mercenary sectarian interests. Töpffer, of course, spoke for a traditional oligarchical clerical-academic rule, whereas Fazy and his party, the Association du Trois Mars, represented major Genevan business interests, with which the large, skilled, and long-disenfranchised artisan class (mostly watchmakers) identified.

Albert is modeled only partly on Fazy the individual, however. He is also a political *type,* the revolutionary as caricatured by the conservative, then as now, so as to conceal the true nature of revolutions and revolutionaries. For indeed, whether agitating above or below ground, the typical revolutionary or Carbonaro was no shiftless coward, egotist, or drunkard who revealed secrets to strangers in cafés, rhetorically brandished daggers at meetings, and promised death to all tyrants and liberty to all peoples, sealed in an endless series of dinner-table toasts (see Fig. 2.28). Both Mazzini, the Italian nationalist, and Fazy were men of the highest moral probity, tenacious and single-minded. Where Albert is a phantast, a floater both in the realm of ideas and among people, Fazy was the epitome of pragmatism. Having outgrown utopian socialism, he strove to develop a moderate liberal position with respect to a free, competitive market economy and democratic procedures based on universal suffrage and parliaments (which other Swiss cities had had since 1830), which he saw as the only means of achieving stability and material progress.

Whereas the purpose of *Albert* is to vilify the character of the revolutionary, to trivialize his plots and the very idea of revolution, the "revolutionary" tactics that are presented as the most dangerous, because most successful, turn out to be journalistic. Albert's "revolutionary demands," like Fazy's, are liberal ones, economic and political reforms directed from above. They resemble those of the 1830 and 1848 revolutions, made by and for the press. Journalists were prominent in both, especially the latter, to which Geneva's rising was as a preliminary tremor to a European earthquake.

In contrast to the comic-opera posturing and adventurism of the story's first part, apparently set outside Switzerland, Albert's agitation in Switzerland/Geneva is conducted through "legitimate channels," in particular, an opposition press that appeals methodically to a spectrum of materially aggrieved sectors of the population, the last of these being the workers. The Genevan artisans in the watchmaking and allied trades, concentrated in the St. Gervais district of the city, politically well educated and traditionally combative, led the armed confrontations—as their fellow artisans in Paris did in 1830 and 1848.[60] It was these Genevan workers, then, who brought Fazy to power. But scrupulously, Töpffer does not show Albert/Fazy's paper as calling on the worker to rise and overthrow the government; rather, it appeals to the government to agree to long-overdue constitutional reforms and long-ignored popular demands for economic improvements. The workers rise up (singing the French revolutionary anthem); the paper demands that they calm down and that the government act. But the damage has been done, and violence and destruction ensue.

On February 3, 1843, an abortive attack on the Genevan town hall left three insurgents killed. In *Albert,* street fighting breaks out as if it were the inevitable consequence of open journalistic agitation, not as a result of any Carbonarist conspiracy. To this extent, Töpffer's satire is true to events. But as a projection of civil war, of total economic and political ruin, the fighting at the end of *Albert* is happily inaccurate: a few months after Töpffer's death, in October 1846, the workers of Geneva again confronted the city government, which refused to take extreme measures against them and resigned, leaving Fazy in power. The new regime introduced a period in Genevan history generally regarded as both prosperous and progressive; and in this new era, pace *Albert,* the change was not merely the occasion for the leader's personal enrichment.

Töpffer lost the political revolution at home; but the graphic revolution for which he argued was to be won in the 20th century. His *Essai de physiognomonie* and his essays on art, written serially in the 1830s and published by Dubochet as *Réflexions et menus-propos d'un peintre genevois* (first edition 1848), contain many of the seeds of aesthetic theory that have flowered in our own times. They are also—certainly more than Töpffer would have liked to admit—rooted in Romantic attitudes. The caprice, chance, instinct, and the unconscious which inform both theory and comic album; the insistence that all artistic signs are conventional rather than more or less close approximations of nature; the special expressive value attached to naive, crude, childish, and incomplete but "essential" forms, harking back (and over) to non-Western "primitive" art; the law by which any doodled face, "unable to exist without having an expression, must indeed have one" ("Töpffer's Law")—these ideas, although familiar now, were new then. Couched in a whimsical, meandering flow that seemed to resist being taken seriously, they have found a central place in Gombrich's analysis of physiognomic perception as a fundamental aspect of artistic illusion and representation.[61]

It is tempting to try to prove that in the 19th century Töpffer's theory-cum-antitheory of art exercised some influence (for instance, on the rise of impressionism); obviously his praxis—his picture-stories—did, for not only did they affect popular graphic styles but they also created the genre that this book explores. Théophile Gautier's careful appreciation of the *Réflexions* in the *Revue des deux mondes*[62]—which begins with a strenuous correction of Sainte-Beuve's disparagement of the picture-stories, published six years before in the same prestigious magazine—must have been read with attention; and the subsequent availability of editions of the *Réflexions*[63] indicates that the work was not forgotten. The little *Essai de physiognomonie,* in contrast, after its autolithographic (and thus limited) edition of 1845, was not republished until our own times.

The tenuous line of social theory embedded in the *Réflexions* purports to be the ultimate justification of Töpffer's graphic "follies." Being reproducible, they have a large potential audience; being of simple appearance (and so aside from their highly sophisticated content), they appeal to the "simple man," the masses of unlettered folk; conceived, like Hogarth's engravings, with a moral purpose, they serve social improvement. Unlike Salon painting, which is for the rich, and unlike *l'art pour l'art,* an absurdity leading to amoralism and political anarchy,[64] Töpffer's "engraved literature" serves the people. The artist, *malgré lui,* speaks for democracy; the citizen continues to militate against it.

59. Jaques (or Jacques) is the French equivalent of James. Töpffer changed the name in the eleventh drawing of the manuscript version to John, another English name similar in pronunciation to James (in French the *s* is silent), before changing it back again and finally opting, in the published version, for Albert.

    For a favorable view of Fazy, see H. Fazy 1887; for an unfavorable view, see J. Fazy 1865.

60. See Cherbuliez 1867, 128ff. and 193ff.

61. Gombrich 1960, 336–342; and Töpffer 1845, chap. 5.

62. "Du Beau dans l'art," *Revue des deux mondes,* September 1847, pp. 887–908.

63. *Réflexions* was republished in 1848, 1853, 1858, and 1865, with eight reprints 1872–1907. Essays included in another collection, *Mélanges* (1852), also bear on his aesthetic theory.

64. *Réflexions,* book 5, chap. 24.

CHAPTER 3

CHAM

Cham and Daumier: Two Careers, Two Reputations, Two Audiences

Two fundamental processes are involved in the mythification of Daumier, in the critical tailoring of the artist and his work to the needs of bourgeois art history.[1] First, Daumier the painter and artist is separated from and elevated over Daumier the lithographer, caricaturist, and journalist; and second, because it is absurd historically to discount the over five thousand prints from which Daumier made a decent living for forty-five years, a number of likely candidates are promoted from the low status of journal caricature to the higher status of the critically (and commercially) more valuable art print. In short, the print is separated from its context in the press, public opinion, politics, and history and elevated to the coffee table, museum, and auction room. This uprooting of art from a particular moment in history has been particularly drastic for caricature.

The separation of Daumier's art from contemporary history and his elevation from caricaturist to artist were facilitated by four material factors.

1. He made only or primarily large lithographic plates, physically suitable, whatever their subject, to detachment from the magazine in which they first appeared and to exhibition as art objects on the wall of a home (or later, a museum) or in the collector's portfolio. The magazine also often printed the lithographs separately, on especially fine paper, to attract collectors.
2. Daumier aimed to produce designs that were visually striking from a certain distance and, as far as possible, independent of captions—which the artist disowned—in order to reinforce their physical suitability as visual art objects.
3. He avoided narrative series of plates and narrative albums that demanded to be read rather than "merely" looked at, or that reduced the size, singularity, and isolability of the image.
4. Daumier was never fully or for long absorbed in work for the journals. Intermittently he left enough time and energy to sculpt, paint, and do watercolors. Publishers paid well enough for good illustrations and cartoons that an artist could live off them at a relatively low productive level; indeed, Daumier produced far fewer such graphics than did Gavarni, Doré, or Cham, each of whom may have achieved in shorter life spans more than three times Daumier's output.

In all of these respects, the career of Daumier may be contrasted with that of Cham. Cham's forte was the small design, which he arranged sometimes six to twelve on a page in a macédoine, sometimes according to a single theme or in a narrative sequence, and often reprinted and spread over the pages of a small, cheap album. He was concerned less with the visual impact than with the witty combination of picture and text, in which the caption was often of the essence and always of his own invention. Cham never practiced any medium but drawing for lithograph and wood engraving, his output of which appears incalculable.

These factors, though all contributed to the decline of his reputation and his exclusion from the 20th-century artistic pantheon (to which Daumier was quickly elevated), gave Cham, in his lifetime, a distinct commercial advantage. They also help explain why he was able to fill the gap left by Daumier's abrupt departure from the *Charivari* in 1861 (he stayed away three years), a departure Cham's commercially more viable talents may have, if not actually provoked, then certainly facilitated, hastened, or prolonged.

There is above all a class distinction within Daumier's and Cham's audiences, which explains both the posthumous critical elevation of the one and the critical neglect of the other. The readership of the *Charivari,* small as it always was, consisted of the wealthier upper-middle-class art-conscious republicans at the one end and the politically discontented, but more or less art-ignorant, lower middle class at the other. Daumier, I believe, spoke primarily to the former, and thus found his champions among certain members of the cultural elite with upper-class connections: Balzac, Baudelaire, Banville, Champfleury, and so forth. Cham, in contrast, spoke to the other end of the scale, those concerned less with "enduring art" than with the irritations and follies, large and small, of the sociopolitical day-to-day. Also in contrast to Daumier, who was tied almost exclusively to the *Charivari,* Cham tapped a vaster, more varied audience through his work for magazines with large circulations, such as *L'Illustration* (twenty thousand to *Charivari*'s two thousand); he thus reached a wider social spectrum that also embraced, very particularly and very importantly, children: a segment largely ignored by the politically so-

1. See Melot 1980, 159–195.

phisticated *Charivari,* although amply catered to in other publications of Philipon and Aubert.

Cham was the most successful caricaturist of what posterity has dubbed the "Age of Daumier." Some simple facts will demonstrate how dramatically the fame of Cham—whose name was surely known to far more people than was Daumier's for the thirty years preceding their deaths—has declined and that of Daumier, no less dramatically, has risen. Cham and Daumier died in the same year, 1879; yet despite the critical attention Daumier garnered through the exhibition of his paintings and prints the year before his death and the many appreciative essays written about him throughout his career (a body of criticism that, to my knowledge, has no equivalent for Cham), Cham was the first to receive full-scale biographical treatment,[2] in 1884—that is, four years before Alexandre's biography of Daumier. In Vapereau's *Dictionnaire universel des contemporains* of 1880, Cham is given slightly more space than Daumier. Cham's name was at this time still fully before the public, with several collections of designs, culled from his innumerable albums of the previous thirty or forty years, enjoying continued popularity. Relatively few such albums existed of Daumier's graphic work, however, and they were much more expensive. The *National Union Catalog* (pre-1956) of American libraries has nearly 160 entries for Cham dated or datable to the 19th century, ten times as many as for Daumier (16 entries); but for the 20th century, not a single publication of or about Cham is listed, as opposed to 83 for Daumier. Cham's oeuvre includes no less than 123 differently titled albums, exclusive of more or less composite (*factice*) anthologies.[3] In 1886, Béraldi appealed for a catalog of Cham's work, noting that it was an "intimidating task."[4] Yet no one collected Cham as Daumier is collected: Cham never found his Delteil. His oeuvre is indeed too vast for integral itemization and reproduction à la Delteil—though not too vast, one hopes, for computer and microfiche cataloging.

Comparison of Cham and Daumier reveals many paradoxes of journalism and caricature of the period. Why was Daumier—applauded ever since his death as the lifelong republican, the scourge of tyrants, the friend of the People—on the whole less successful, less "typical" of the republican and "popular" *Charivari,* than the aristocratic, "chauvinist," "reactionary" Cham?[5] We can only begin to answer that question here. Lacking a (long overdue) history of *Le Charivari* and a study of its political complexion as it evolved over the years—in which the text may well play a role distinct from that of the pictures—we are hardly in a position to assess the relative position either of Cham and Daumier within the journal or of the *Charivari* among contemporary journals of republican or oppositional tendencies. Daumier may eventually emerge as much more conservative (or cautious, or evasive) than the existing mythology would suggest; and Cham, for his part, might in fact have been the perpetual gadfly of society, more petty bourgeois–anarchist than aristocratic-conservative.

Ironically, but very typically, the two dozen or so comic strip stories from the early part of Cham's career[6] entirely bypassed critical attention,[7] were not republished, and are now the least available in libraries; yet at the time, this work probably reached the most readers (including, surely, many children), who read it literally to pieces. In some ways, too, the comic strips are the most intrinsically interesting and accessible of his work, because comprehension does not rely on advance knowledge of the day-to-day social and political matrix in which most of his other work is embedded.

Early Cham: Magazine Strips and Narrative Albums (1839–1848)

By his aristocratic birth in 1818, Cham stands socially well above both Daumier, the son of a superior artisan with some literary skills, and that middling sector of the bourgeoisie that is both target and readership of the satirical magazines.[8] Cham (in English, Shem), the son of Noah (Noé in French), was an apt pseudonym for the artist, whose real name was Charles-Henri-Amedée de Noé. (His names also form the acronym which is pronounced "CHAM," a coincidence pointed out by his colleague Bertall.) The comtes de Noé were a branch of the same ancient noble family, the counts of Toulouse, that also produced Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec; and an ancestor of Cham's owned a plantation in Haiti where Toussaint L'Ouverture worked as a slave—gratefully, we are told.

During the Revolution, the Noé family escaped to England. Thus Cham's father was educated at the famous Jesuit college of Stonyhurst, joined the British army in India, and married an Englishwoman; their daughter also married an Englishman, the (later) Admiral Manners. The comte de Noé brought an English governess from India, who, even when the family returned to France after the Restoration, never (in the best British tradition) learned a word of French. She no doubt contributed to Cham's bilingualism and the curious fact that Cham, although born and raised entirely in France, spoke French with a slight British accent—which nearly caused him to be arrested as a spy during the Franco-Prussian War. His sense of the comic was described as a blend of "British humour and French wit."[9] Cham's English connections were important in his subsequent development; using them, he forged a career of international scope, or at least reaching across the Channel. Indeed, had he pursued his English connections or been a careerist like Doré, he could have increased his audience vastly.

Cham was an aristocrat déclassé who sullied the family name by giving it, after many years of cohabitation, to a woman of working-class origin described by Alexandre Dumas *fils* as vulgar-looking, ignorant, parsimonious, and a social embarrassment altogether, but totally devoted to her master.[10] She dramatically committed suicide immediately after her husband's death. Cham refused to be known as the comte de Noé when the title came to him on his father's death in 1858; and he accepted the Légion d'Honneur only at the very end of his life.

As a youth he was expelled from the Ecole Polytechnique, then from a job in the Treasury, for incompetence and addiction to graphic scribbling. He spurned the lofty civil service career to which his family connections destined him. His father, however,

2. Ribeyre 1884; Alexandre [1892?].
3. The Cabinet des Estampes listing for Cham (Adhémar 1930ff., 4:235–257) has 241 items, most of them distinct albums. Given that some of these albums survive in unique copies in North American collections and in France perhaps in only one major public collection, that of the Bibliothèque Nationale (BN), there may in fact be Cham albums not listed in any major library catalog that have perhaps disappeared altogether from the public domain, bought and read to extinction. Cham is also credited with having executed unspecified anonymous works. Two of Cham's early (1840s) *physiologie*-type *miroirs* (*Miroir du Calicot, Miroir de l'Amateur*), which eluded (me in) the Cabinet des Estampes, are to be found in the Boston Public Library, with the bookplate of Oliver Wendell Holmes, no less. *M. Barnabé Gogo* is lacking its title page in the only copy known to me (BN). *Pincez-moi à la campagne* (Martinet, n.d.) evaded the *dépot légal,* not being listed in the BN, either in Imprimés or in Estampes. I have also been unable to find an album mentioned by Halévy 1880 as Cham's first: *Calembours, bêtises et jeux de mots tirés par les cheveux,* from 1842 (not in Adhémar 1930ff.).
4. Béraldi 1886, 4:79.
5. See Gérome, Cham 1883, 9, 13. Vachon (1879), in contrast, stresses Cham's moral and political indifference.
6. About sixteen before 1848, about seven after.
7. Halévy (1880) characterizes the period 1842–1848 as containing "rien de bien saillant."
8. The chief biographical source for Cham remains Ribeyre 1884.
9. Saliès n.d.
10. Preface to Ribeyre 1884.

collected art and was himself fond of drawing. He encouraged his son to train for a career in art among masters of his own social milieu: Ingres and the Vernets were frequent visitors to the Noé house. Cham entered the studios of Charlet and Delaroche but was soon expelled from the latter for a practical joke. By 1839 he had formally renounced painting, which he probably never began to learn in the first place, and, with encouragement from his father, threw himself into caricature.[11]

His path to the principal caricature publisher of the age, Charles Philipon, was opened by a friend of Philipon's, an official of the Ministry of Finance, Cham's erstwhile place of employment. Cham's early work coincides with the period when Daumier was experiencing his first broad public accolades with the *Robert Macaire* series (1836–1838ff.). The market for caricature, despite the prohibition of personal political satire, had continued to thrive, and now encompassed not only new ranges of social subjects but also new formats for graphic humor. One of these was the "physiologie," a small, cheap, well-illustrated text characterizing some favorite social type; with this form of humor, which became enormously popular in the early 1840s, Aubert made a minor fortune.

The young Cham contributed an untold number of cheap graphic *physiologies*—called, generically, "miroirs"—about the lower-middle-class types who were their primary audience. The *physiologie* marked a significant step in the commodification of the book—it was formulaic, cheap, instant, and, alas, essentially throwaway. Collectively, these booklets show the population of Paris as a harmless, hugger-mugger assemblage of amusing eccentrics[12]—and not at all politicized. The comic albums first launched by Töpffer in Geneva in 1835 (especially *Jabot*) may be termed narrative *physiologies;* these Cham then popularized and banalized for an audience a cut above that of the *physiologie* generally and a cut below that of Töpffer.

Cham's cousin, the duc de Feltre, gave the aspiring young artist, then in his late teens, copies of *Jabot, Vieux Bois,* and *Crépin* when they were first published, and Cham was immediately fired by the ambition to emulate them. Philipon no doubt encouraged him in this, for the publisher, naturally, wished to profit from the novelty. The *Charivari* began to copy Töpffer's *Jabot* on February 27, 1839, as an amusing frivolity that would contrast well with the more serious designs and subjects of Daumier and Gavarni, the stalwarts of the magazine. But the editor then abruptly changed his mind, perhaps realizing that readers would be unable to retain the thread of the story, with its many plot twists, over the interval he normally interposed between plates of the same series (a few days at least) and that to run *Jabot* daily would effectively eliminate Daumier and Gavarni for as much as two weeks.

Instead, Philipon and his brother-in-law and associate, Aubert, pirated *Jabot* in a poor lithographic copy of their own (sometime before April 1839, when Töpffer complained about it); they did likewise the same year with the two other albums Töpffer had published in Geneva, *Vieux Bois* and *Crépin*. Their success suggested the creation of more albums of the same type. The fact that Töpffer had originally published his caricatures anonymously[13] lent itself to anonymous sequels or imitations by another artist working in a style and mode of humor close enough to pass for those of the same author and to fit into the same series, which the advertisements, ignoring Töpffer's authorship, called simply "les Albums Jabot."

Cham made his debut on August 3, 1839, with *M. Lajaunisse,* which was advertised, following the Töpffer albums, as "baroque sketches with neither head nor tail, rhyme nor reason, but very funny." This and Cham's six or seven other direct Töpffer imitations, which succeeded over the next few years, are unmistakably Töpfferian yet, at the same time, quite original. Their originality lies in the first place in their autobiographical point of departure. Cham, now twenty-one, was very tall and thin, not unlike Töpffer's Monsieur Vieux Bois; he was also very pale, even yellowish, in complexion—whence his nickname, Lajaunisse (the-jaundice). This fortuitous circumstance not only accounts for the name and, to a certain extent, action of France's first native comic strip hero but also determines certain features of the behavior of subsequent Cham characters.

The transition from etching and engraving to lithography, pioneered in journalism by the French, had as one major economic rationale its tendency to reduce the need for color. Most of the better illustrators, print makers, and caricaturists working for the mass market after 1830 must have preferred to see their work uncolored; the addition of color was aesthetically superfluous, reminiscent of the cruder forms of popular imagery and the childish Imagerie d'Epinal. Daumier himself, like later collectors of his work, surely found the addition of color, when market considerations dictated it,[14] an aesthetic disaster.

Cham, however, working in a style and format different from Daumier's, desired and expected color to be added. Indeed, his graphic style at this time, based as it was on contours even simpler and using less shading than in Töpffer, invited it. Ribeyre tells us that the original drawings of *Lajaunisse* which Cham showed to Philipon had the hero's flesh washed with yellow. The artist surely hoped that his first album would be issued, like the better illustrated children's books, in hand-colored copies, and it may be that his adaptation of Töpffer's style, with the shadows reduced in extent and complexity and the contour lines made straighter and more continuous, was consciously designed to facilitate the addition of color. But neither the one copy of *Lajaunisse* known to me nor any copy of any later album by Cham or other caricaturists working in a similar style survives in a hand-colored form; nor do the advertisements I have seen mention a colored edition. It therefore seems unlikely that Philipon's young protégé convinced him to take this particular commercial risk, which would have meant raising the price on a five- to eight-franc comic album.

There is internal evidence, moreover, that Cham was thinking not only of yellow washes on his hero's flesh, but of other colors as well, for the story's captions here and there refer to the hero's natural yellow turning to black or violet anger, or to his becoming successively red, first in the face, then the legs, and then all over—colors that the original draft may have indicated in image as well as word. Much action turns about the hero's attempt to change his complexion to a sociably acceptable tint. But even if disabused by Philipon and Aubert from the start about the economic feasibility of hand coloring, Cham persisted in projecting in his captions color effects that are otherwise largely excluded, for obvious monetary reasons, from the history of the 19th-century magazine comic strip. Monsieur Lamélasse, in the title role of Cham's next album, also tries to improve the embarrassing color of his face, burned red in the countryside, by getting scrubbed until his face looks like "a half vanilla and half gooseberry ice cream."

Cham's sixth album, *M. Barnabé Gogo* (1841), toys with the artist's regrets over the essential colorlessness of the caricatural print. Having persuaded Aubert at least to give the title-page cartouche a pale green background, he inscribes on it what seems to be a complaint about that color and its lack in the rest of the album (Fig. 3.1): "This is not a color." Then: "No point in using [i.e., adding] colors if you don't want to have a rough time of it [pun: literally, see gray]"—which I take to be a warning to children inclined to do the coloring themselves, about which Cham may have had mixed feelings. He continues with a pun on the word "bleu," which pretends that the story, which is fairly violent, already contains color of a kind: "Histoire mêlée de bleus [story mixed with blues/bruises]." (The later story of *M. Boniface* uses a similar subtitle.)

The larger significance of this peculiar parenthesis on the title page of *Gogo* (which might otherwise be dismissed as schoolmasterish banter, comparable to Töpffer's warnings in his manuscript albums to turn the pages carefully and with clean fingers)

11. Ribeyre 1884, 49. A complete collection of Cham's work, carefully preserved and mounted by the artist's father and recently acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale, suggests that he came to be very proud of his son.
12. See Sieburth 1984, 163.
13. Genevans, but not Parisians, would have recognized the initials R.T. inscribed on each page of *Jabot*.
14. See *La Caricature* (*Provisoire,* from 1838), whose specialty was colored plates (including Daumier's), and which was aimed at a wealthier, and perhaps family, audience.



FIG. 3.1. Frontispiece to *M. Barnabé Gogo* (1841).

emerges when we take account of the content. *Gogo* is not only autobiographical in a more profound sense than *Lajaunisse,* but, more important, it also encapsulates both the conflict between the individual artist-genius and the public, his market, and the dilemma of the potential history painter forced into the production of caricature. The title-page cartouche shows the artist banging his head against the wall, his back turned on a history painting, held by demons, across which is scrawled the word "Refusé." He is the romantic stereotype of a "young genius" dedicated to a totally impractical ambition in high art. Having failed as a history painter, he is reduced to practicing the lowly profession of caricaturist. He succeeds brilliantly at this until his targets, the honest bourgeois, recognize themselves in his caricatures, nearly kill the artist, and break down the door of the publisher, who finishes Gogo off, leaving him to die in a manner of calculated indignity, "in the manner of M. Lamélasse," the grocer-hero of a previous album.

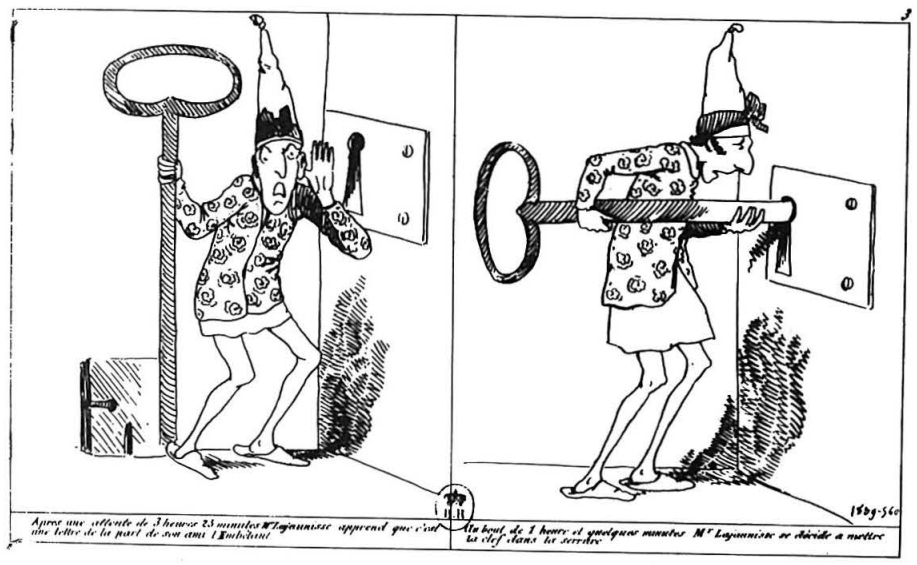
To the caricaturist, color is the essence and symbol of a career from which he is excluded; the only color he will get is in the bruises of social rejection, first inflicted on him morally when he tries to paint and then, as a caricaturist, physically. In *Barnabé Gogo,* Cham conveys a larger sense that careers in caricature and painting are mutually exclusive—as Daumier was shortly to discover. Painting carried all the social prestige; journal caricature carried the risk not just of social opprobrium generally but often of the vindictive wrath of individuals. The physical risks to caricaturists may be gauged from the high incidence of real-life duels among journalists, as reflected in the comic strips: in 1841, when *Gogo* was published, the famous duel in which Emile de Girardin killed Armand Carrel was only five years away. Cham himself felt obliged, at the end of his life, to challenge the editor of a rival caricature journal, which had attacked his drawings as insufficiently republican. Although the affair was settled, while taking fencing lessons in preparation for the duel Cham caught a cold, which ultimately led to his death.

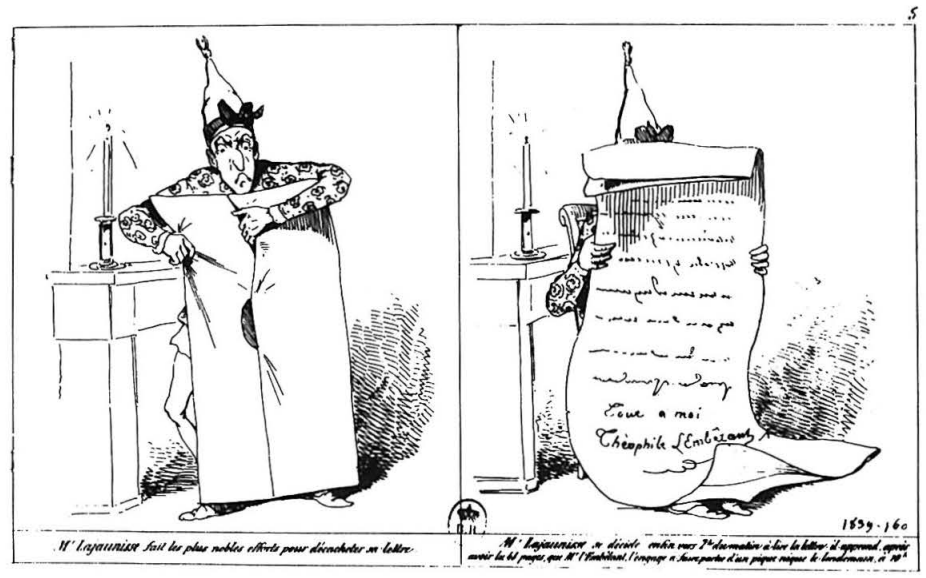
Cham, scion of a noble and wealthy family, was of course not pressed by economic considerations into the lower-grade artistic practice of caricature; but the realization that his gifts lay there rather than with painting must have aroused in him some measure of regret. The transition, or descent, from the glorious but impractical prospect of a career in painting to the inglorious but more practical (even potentially profitable) profession of caricaturist or illustrator depended to a great extent on the ability to renounce what passed for pictoriality and creative self-sufficiency in favor of an art that was contingent on literature and topical events.

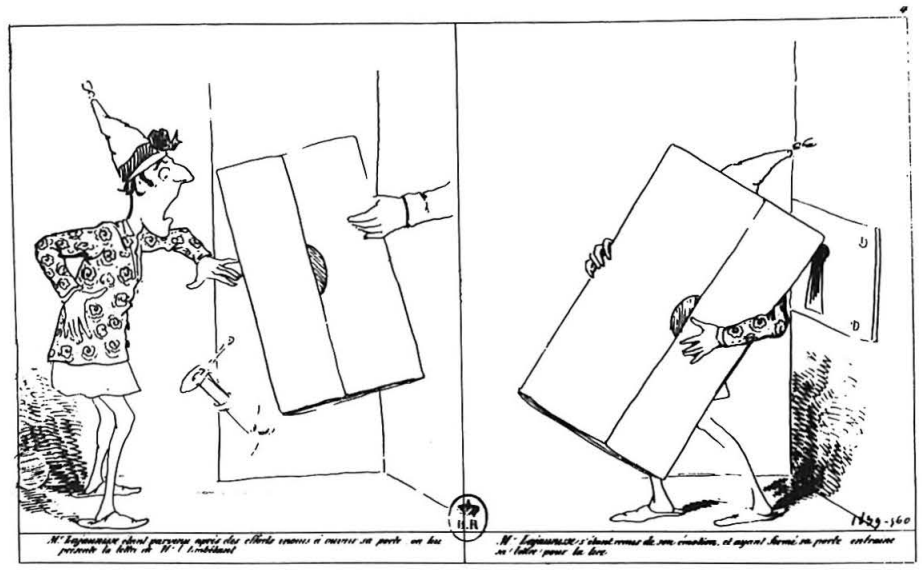
Cham was better educated than Daumier and endowed with literary skill far beyond that of his singularly unverbal rival. His superiority in the realm of the caption was evident from the start. As a contemporary remarked, comparing Cham with the supreme master of the domain, "A book has been made of the wit of Gavarni; it's ten books should be made with the wit of Cham, a wit scattered in all directions, less profound, less observant, less poignantly realistic, but always comic, always sparkling."[15] Such was his fecundity that he would often offer alternative captions to his designs. (He also wrote vaudeville and operettas, and always aspired to success in the theater, though in vain.)[16]

The captions in the early comic albums, like the graphic style, are heavier than in his later work; his wit, especially in the examples reproduced here, is often labored, self-conscious, and childish. The Töpffer influence is obvious, for instance in the comic exaggeration and precision, at critical junctures, of time dimensions. Two major, essentially popular, devices of verbal humor

15. Cited in Grand-Carteret 1888, 353, with a selection of some of Cham's more memorable captions. Halévy (1880, 8) also compares Cham favorably with Gavarni and calls for a book of captions by Cham to match the one made with Gavarni's captions. Gérome (in Cham 1883, 12) stresses Cham's superiority over Daumier, "qui d'ailleurs n'ecrivait pas la plupart des siennes [légendes]."
16. Picard (1929) says Cham is "not negligible" as a dramatic author.









that go beyond Töpffer's very restrained use of them are puns and syllepsis (for example, "He left in anger and the coach"). Cham also liked childish nonsense patterns—such as when Lamélasse, arriving at the bathhouse, asks for two tickets, "one for himself and one for his person"—and parodies of innocent schoolboy exercises—such as this description of Calypso espying Telemachus and Mentor: "Then she observed in the distance a young couple, one of whom was an elderly old man. The goddess, who was ever so clever, immediately recognized Telemachus in the person of the younger one and recognized the older one as a person she did not recognize. This man was a woman; this woman was Minerva disguised as Mentor."[17]

Although Cham has a certain verbal wit, he does not have the literary or imaginative stamina that allowed Töpffer to interlace the actions of a cast of characters through a variety of locales and a series of improbably, but somehow logically, connected adventures. Cham's early albums already show the defect that was to grow increasingly apparent: the tendency for actions to become disconnected and episodic, to the point where the "picture-story" turns into a different category of imagery, that of the macédoine, or grouping of miscellaneous vignettes related simultaneously but not progressing chronologically within a central theme. Eventually Cham settled for this format, with a prolonged transitional period (between about 1845 and 1852) in which the episodic character of his narrative is justified and structured by the choice of travel and tourism as his major theme—travel being inherently episodic, linear, and progressive. Meanwhile, the stories are becoming more realistic, conventionally satirical, and less surreal and childish.

Whereas in Töpffer a crescendo or snowball effect is applied to actions, in Cham the exaggeration often concerns everyday objects, as in children's illustrations. Monsieur Lajaunisse, "after waiting one hour and a few minutes," decides to insert a giant key into a lock, only to receive an equally giant letter, which, after reading it, he puts in a drawer (Fig. 3.2). In *Lamélasse* it is the enormous saber of a National Guardsman that, though comic enough in itself, actually precipitates a most bizarre accident, which in turn leads to an equally improbable and catastrophic outcome. Exaggerations of time and size are experiences of childhood, and with such devices Cham may be consciously using a childish mode, as in the subsequent scenes from *Lajaunisse* (Fig. 3.2)—the total effort required to blow out a candle, the total blackness that ensues, and Lajaunisse's realization that he has, as children do or fantasize doing, climbed into a drawer instead of his bed.

Cham, quintessentially among comic strip artists, is concerned with the social obligations, aspirations, and pretensions of the petty bourgeoisie. The *entrée en matière* of many comic strips is simultaneously the *entrée en société* of their heroes. Both *Lajaunisse* and *Lamélasse* open in a typically symbolic manner: a letter of invitation—Lajaunisse to a picnic, the grocer-guardsman Lamélasse to a National Guard ball. Lamélasse's preparations begin with a visit to the public bath in an effort to improve his peculiar skin color. There he suffers a chance encounter with a thief, whom we briefly saw earlier stealing the grocer's sugar confections; a semi-naked chase through the streets ensues, culminating in the arrest of the thief (Fig. 3.3). To judge by the comic imagery, being found naked in the street is the ultimate recurrent nightmare of the petty bourgeois, who live in fear of social exposure and unwitting conflict with the law; the nakedness in itself is usually the result of a perfectly laudable quest for bodily hygiene and physical recreation.

The prominence of bathing in the oeuvre of Cham, here and in many of his nonnarrative series,[18] as well as in the work of Daumier and other satirists, is no historical accident. Conscious of living in unsanitary and crowded cities, lacking indoor plumbing and running water, the bourgeoisie of the age of Louis Philippe

17. *Aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse* [1842].
18. For example, "Les Bains de mer en France" (*L'Illustration,* August 24, 1844), and "La Saison des eaux" (*Charivari,* July 20–23, 1847).

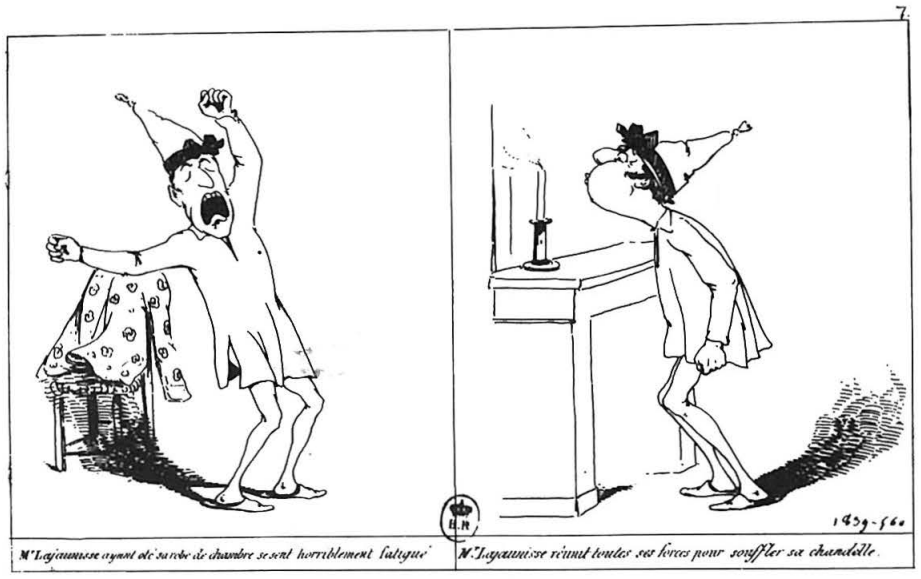


FIG. 3.2. *M. Lajaunisse* (1839).
[3] M. Lajaunisse hears that a letter has arrived from his friend l'Embêtant [Nuisance], decides to insert the key in the lock, succeeds in opening the door, [4] is given the letter, drags it off, [5] struggles to break the seal, decides at last toward 2 A.M. to read it, and discovers after 48 pages that it is an invitation to a picnic. [6] In order to lessen the volume, he jumps on it for 1¼ hours, and he puts it in a drawer he is unable to close. [7] Exhausted, he blows out the candle with immense effort, [8] goes to bed, and is astonished to discover it lacks pillow and blankets and is hard as a bench.

began to demand public facilities. Personal hygiene thus forms a whole network of concerns in both caricature and comic strip (especially the latter). Cham's Lajaunisse, Lamélasse, and Jobard are obsessed with bodily hygiene, just as is, in his very different and more irrational way, Töpffer's Vieux Bois, who changes his underwear whenever he is suffering an emotional crisis.

But Cham's heroes undergo violent *bodily* suffering, from which Töpffer's are exempt. Witness, above all, the nightmare torture chamber of Jobard's dentist (Fig. 3.4). The profession casts a demonic shadow over the whole period (as shown on p. 25): to lose one's teeth, as Jobard does, was a symbolic castration—and of a class that, if it could no longer bite back, feared being devoured. Indeed, devoured it might be, by the publicity-hungry medical and paramedical charlatans who abounded, particularly in mid century.

The minutiae of the toilette and personal hygiene become the foci of social anxiety for one particular upwardly mobile group, which crystallized in the 1830s and 1840s in a major social phenomenon—the dandy. The caricature magazines catered to this anxiety not only in the advertising columns but also in the caricatures and, especially, the comic strips themselves. In the 1840s, the *Charivari* satirized its internal contradictions as a magazine with constant allusions to the misdeeds of publicity; it was always beating the huckster Macaire within its breast. The advertisements that sustained the popular press at large ever since Girardin first introduced them on a large scale in 1835 provided an ever-increasing percentage of the magazine's income and a necessary financial cushion for its operations. From the 1840s, anywhere from one-third to a full page of the *Charivari*'s four pages of text went to advertisements. The very location of the Aubert shop in the Passage Véro-Dodat was propitious, for its neighbors were "two haberdasheries, a hairdresser, a glove merchant, a perfume shop, a music shop, a pastry shop, a pharmacist, and two tailors."[19]

Personal hygiene, which of course also embraced the cleanliness, proper fit, and style of clothing, was a particular obsession of the urban lower middle classes, superiority in this realm being one of the more obvious means of distinguishing them from the urban working class on the one hand and their possibly wealthier but more backward country cousins on the other. Lower-middle-class respectability, then, depended on an appearance that testified to relative distance from primary economic production.

Cham himself was a perfect consumer, the perfect dupe of advertising. Aristocratic as his origins were, he represents a typical petty-bourgeois hypochondriac, addicted to the industrial-age equivalent of folk medicine: the quack remedies peddled incessantly in newspapers and on billboards. The *Story of M. Jobard*—the first story to bear Cham's name—explicitly describes the hero as a victim of fraudulent advertising; Jobard is, as it were, the eternal dupe of Daumier's Macaire, then running high in the *Charivari,* in his roles as physician (or quack) and medical entrepreneur. Jobard (the name means "booby" or "muggins"), "encouraged by numerous posters" and "attracted by judiciary advertisements," left to himself on finishing school and harboring vague social aspirations, is easy prey to the vultures of publicity. He buys shirts and boots so tight he can't move in them, a water-repellent hat that soaks up rain like a sponge, collapsible headgear that will not straighten out, elastic suspenders that wreck his trousers, and gloves that tear instantly. Along with all the useless fads in clothing he follows those of personal hygiene, which leave him ill dressed, bald, toothless, and sick (see Fig. 3.4). Like Hogarth's Harlot, he dies while rival quacks quarrel over the respective merits of their remedies.

Cham's *Deux Vieilles Filles vaccinées à marier* (Two Vaccinated Old Maids Available for Marriage, 1840) suffer from grave physical disadvantages from the start. The very title of the album parodies a matrimonial advertisement; graphically, it resembles a large billboard. The album is about the tyranny of the intensely commercial and competitive marriage market and satirizes medical as

19. Cuno 1983, 349.

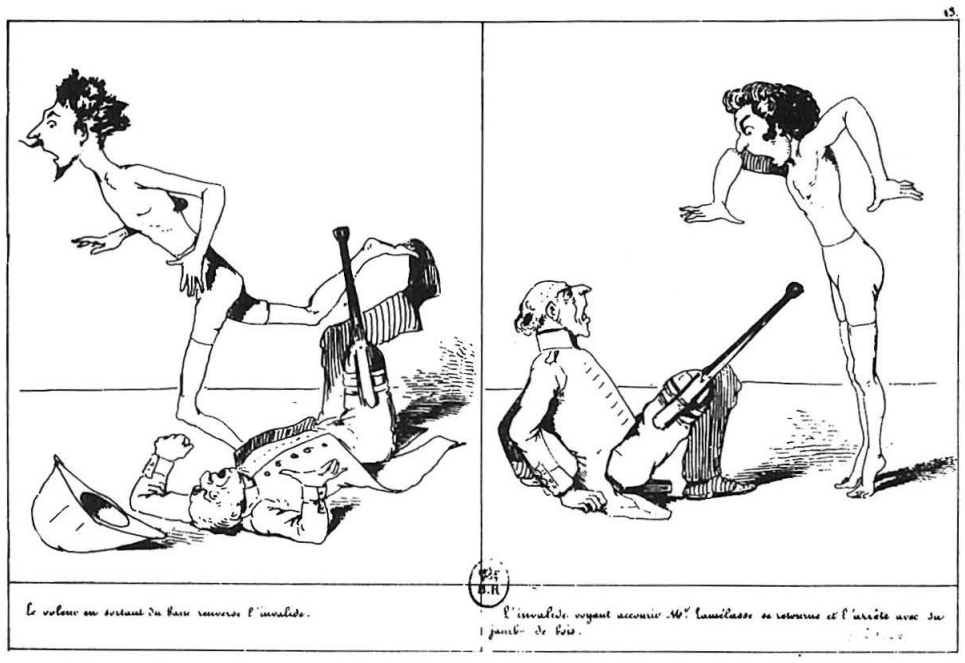




FIG. 3.3. *M. Lamélasse* (1839).
M. Lamélasse encounters a cripple knocked over by the thief, who is arrested for outrage to decency.

well as broadly matrimonial frauds. The ambitious Madame de Poupernicle, desolate at the prospect of her two perfectly ugly daughters reaching the age of thirty and remaining on the shelf, resorts to drastic and counterproductive medical remedies to improve their appearance. Their only suitors are as fraudulent as the physicians, invariably proving penniless. Like a business that has spent all its capital on promotion, Madame de Poupernicle finds at the end of the year that she has entirely consumed her daughters' dowry on expensive balls, leaving them totally unmarriageable.

A mere year after his debut, Cham is, in *Jobard* and *Deux Vieilles Filles,* already turning away from the nonsensical, absurdist, and essentially Töpfferian mode of the first three albums and toward more realistic conventional social satire akin to that of Daumier and his colleagues in the *Charivari*. This and subsequent shifts in emphasis in his comic narrative albums—not to mention his progressive abandonment of the genre altogether—bespeak a sensitivity to the changing market and a search for new formats. The amalgam of absurdism, nonsense, and arbitrary violence often leading to death, the desperate mixture of the macabre and the foolish, is characteristic of the 1840s, an age of burgeoning artistic realism and seething social discontent. Later, under the socially more placid Second Empire, Cham parodies neoromanticism and social frivolity in two characteristic narrative albums: *Les Aventures de M. Beaucoq* (1856) and *Mr. Papillon, ou l'amour autour de monde* (Mr. Butterfly; or, Love Around the World, 1863), in which woman is the object of a stereotypically picaresque pseudoromantic chase.

The more realistic, if still whimsical, style of Cham's first travel parody, *Travel Impressions of M. Boniface, Ex-Deserter of the 4th, 5th and 10th. His Excursions on Earth, His Head and Nose, etc.* (1844), establishes his stylistic independence from Töpffer. The album contains 121 (actually, better: CXXI) "chapters"—that is, single drawings, each surmounted by an epigraphic citation (often invented, no doubt) in imitation of a real novel. The album was probably executed in late 1843, just when Daumier was terminating his first series on the railways; indeed, Cham must have had direct experience with trains himself, probably in England, which he visited in 1842 and which was much ahead of France in railway development. Boniface uses the horse-drawn public coach to escape Paris, and then the railway from Folkestone to London, the speed of which is naively represented with trees on legs rushing past.

Boniface ("Simpleton") is a deserter from civic guard duty, to escape which he subjects himself to the visual monotony and multitude of physical indignities, discomforts, and terrors of travel on the Paris–Boulogne coach (Fig. 3.5). After a brush with the Garde Civique near Boulogne, followed by a horrendous, sickening Channel crossing, he arrives in England—a pretext for Cham to represent the bizarre local types, costumes, and customs (including a peasant selling his wife and funeral weepers for hire). The artist draws initially on his real-life experiences while visiting his English relatives, only rising above stereotypes and clichés to mock the much-vaunted British legislation against cruelty to animals (also targetted by Daumier, but which Cham probably admired). A fierce dog-lover, Cham surely sympathized with General Jacques de Grammont, who in 1845 founded the Société Protectrice des Animaux and was lobbying for legislation on the English model.[20] For kicking his own dog (Fig. 3.6), Boniface is condemned to a heavy fine and a formal courtroom apology to the dog.

The many cartoons by Daumier and others about vainglorious petty-bourgeois National Guardsmen are the context for the deserter Boniface, who ends up inducted for life into the brutal and tyrannical British army. When he deserts, he is summarily recaptured and flogged. Ultimately he succeeds in escaping, however, and when he makes it back to France he throws himself on the mercy of his superior officer, a grocer.

Boniface's desertion is in a sense only a pretext for his natural penchant for travel. Retirement presented the only real opportunity for travel to those merchants and tradesmen who, as long as they were in business, lacked the time or money for such luxury. This opportunity was depicted as a dream—or nightmare. In Cham's first lithographic, more Daumier-like, venture for the magazine in which he would soon become the star, *Journey from Paris to America Pursued to Le Havre Inclusive,*[21] Clopinet, a retired shopkeeper seeking excitement, never gets past Le Havre. To add to the physical miseries of the journey by cab and coach—assailed by falling luggage, never having time to eat, being held up, and so forth—he suffers the typical moral outrage of mistaken arrest and being beaten up by the cops, who take him for one of the bandits who had robbed the coach. Thoroughly disgusted with traveling by coach, he returns to Paris by the new means of transport, the railway train, which turns out to be even more dangerous: he narrowly escapes a head-on collision only by the timely explosion of the other train. Clopinet returns home on foot, vowing never to travel again (Fig. 3.7).

The following year, over no less than twenty issues (November–December 1846), Cham gave the *Charivari* another Christ-

20. The world's first animal welfare society, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, was founded in 1824; it acquired the prefix "Royal," at Queen Victoria's behest, in 1840.

21. The story comprises 89 drawings on sixteen pages in eight issues of the *Charivari*. The album edition, published by Arnauld de Vresse, with 133 drawings on twenty-two plates (copy in New York Public Library), appends "du sud" to "Amérique" in the title, adds several episodes at the end, and makes other changes. The explosion of the train may refer to a disaster (not a collision) of May 8, 1842, when fifty-five people were killed and over a hundred injured on the Paris–Versailles line.

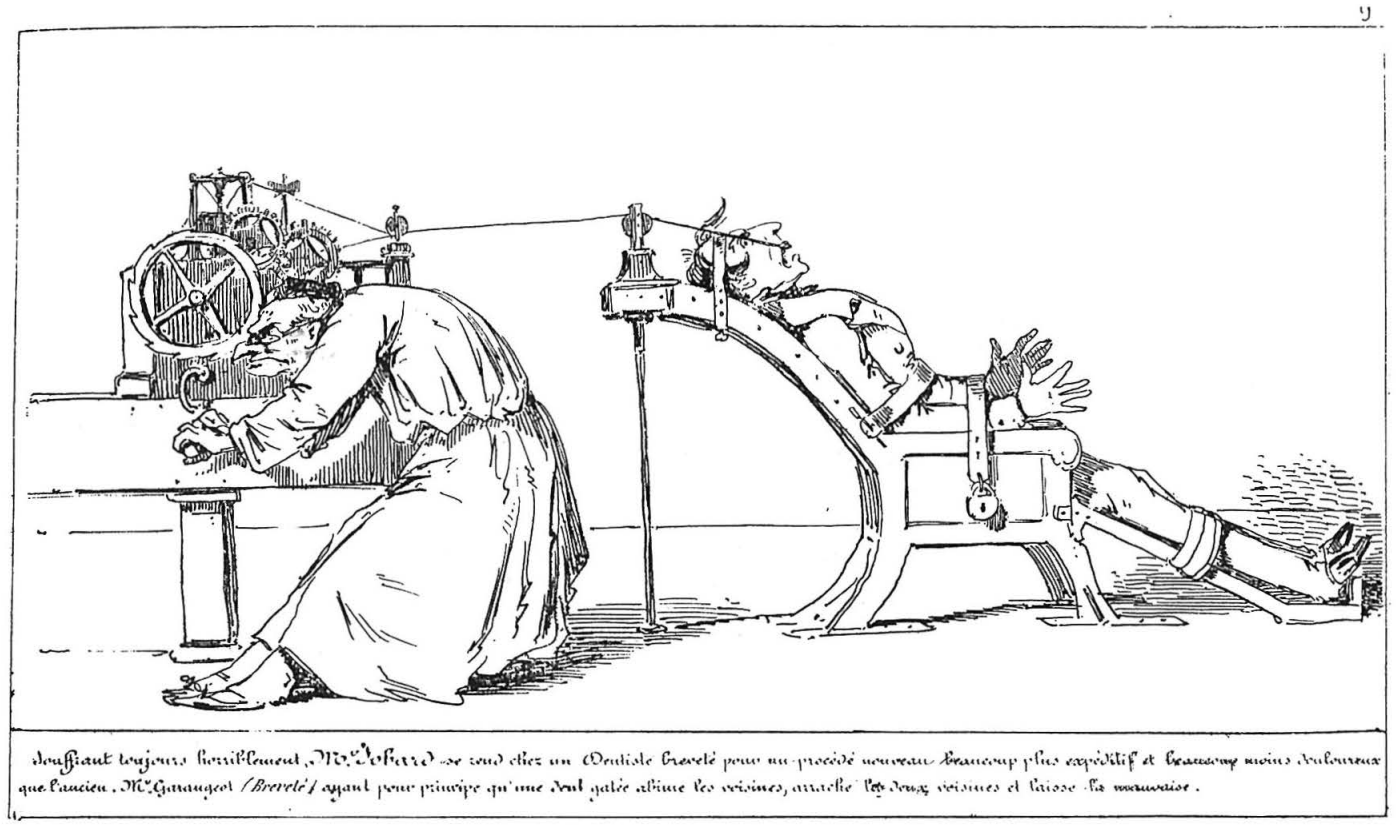
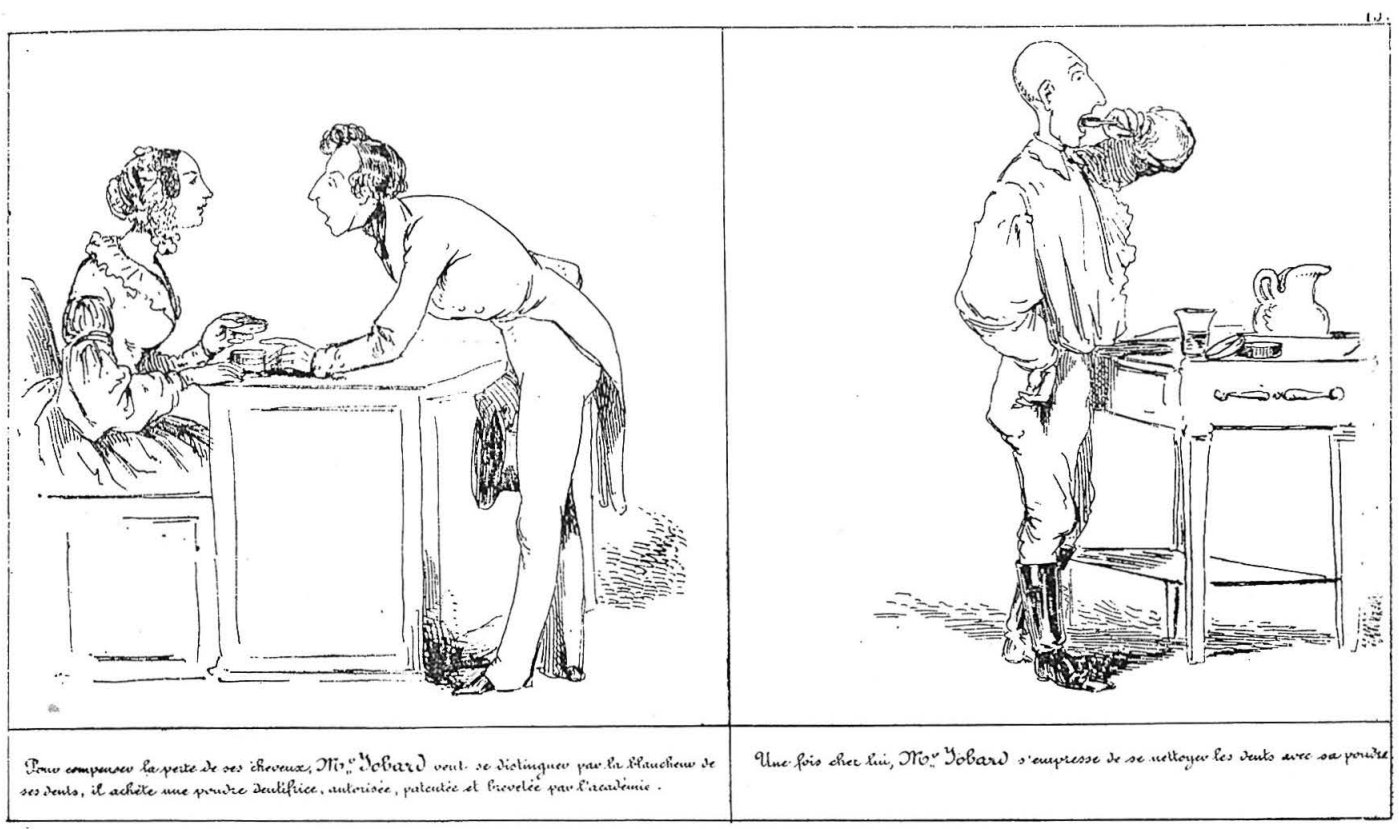
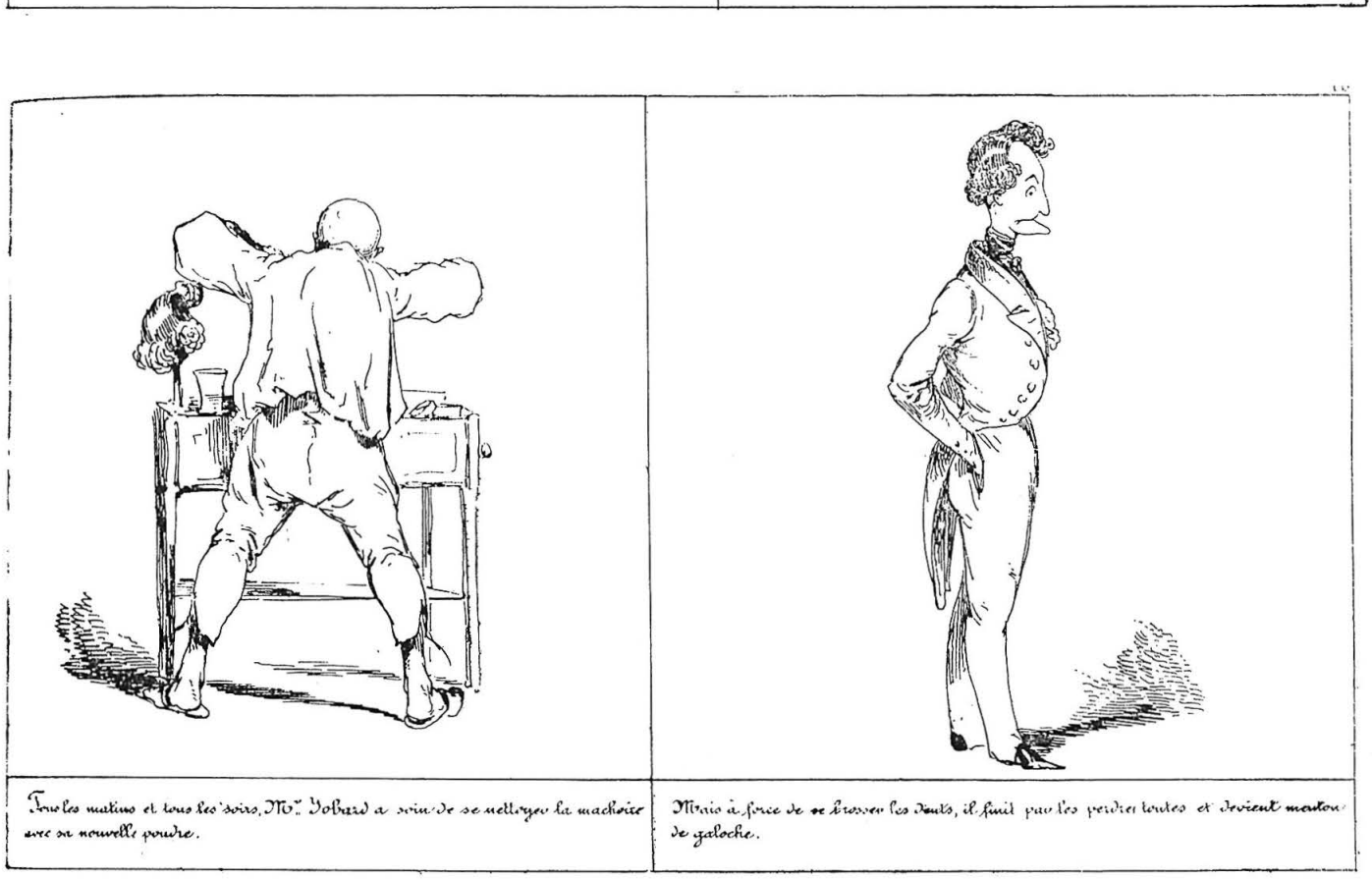


FIG. 3.4. *The Story of M. Jobard* (1840).
[9] In terrible pain, Jobard has the good neighboring teeth pulled instead of the rotten one, by a painless patented method. [15–16] He loses the rest of his teeth after brushing them with a patented tooth powder, and [17] consoles himself with false ones, guaranteed for ten years, [20] which break at first use.







Mr. Jobard cherche à se consoler de la perte de ses dents et s'en fait poser 32 à 3 F.s pièce garanties pour 10 ans.



Mr. Jobard se réveille plein de confiance et d'appétit mais il brise ses dents (garanties 10 ans) à la première mastication.



Privé de ses dents mais non de son appétit, Mr. Jobard pense à se confier aux soins de l'homéopate.

mas–New Year travel tale: *Lithographic Impressions of a Journey by MM. Trottman et Cham.* The tone here is more positive, concerned less with travel as a physical inconvenience and pain (although this element is still prominent) than with observation of the peculiar variety of national customs and conditions, which Cham, who himself traveled only to England (twice) and Baden (annually), freely satirized according to the known stereotypes. Belgium is the land of absconding cashiers, mine shafts, literary pirates, political refugees, and pickpockets. Russia is the land of snowdrifts, frostbite, man-eating wolves, candle-eating and boyar-roasting peasants, and police spies who denounce and expel innocent foreigners. England and Scotland are represented perfunctorily: London by silly fraudulent historical relics, Scotland by dolomitic mountains, kilts, jigs, and milk; whereas the stereotypical poverty of Ireland is enlivened by the real current political and revolutionary violence against British rule and on behalf of Daniel O'Connell, in the course of which Trottman-Cham is injured, arrested, and forced to flee like a criminal (Fig. 3.8).

A sequel, also published as an album (undated) but not first in the *Charivari,* where Cham's monopolization of twenty pages over two months may have been found excessive, was entitled *Nouveaux Voyages et nouvelles impressions lithographiques, philosophiques et comiques de MM. Trottman et Cham* (New Journeys and New Impressions Lithographic, Philosophic, and Comic, of MM. Trottman and Cham). As in Ireland, Cham-Trottman becomes immediately embroiled in civil strife, and the emphasis continues to shift, as 1848 approaches, from the touristic to the political. Caught in Spain by Carlist and Espanterist guerrillas, and then by government troops who identify him as a guerrilla leader, the hero twice narrowly escapes death. In Italy he is pursued as a brigand by papal dragoons and condemned to the life of a Dominican monk, in which he must break rocks like a criminal. After digging his way out of the monastery, he ends up in Turkey, land of exotic diseases, impalement, and the capricious sacrifice of lives to Allah. A forcible convert to Islam, Trottman-bey escapes thankfully back to France.

CHAPITRE XV. *Arrête, arrête, cocher.*
J.-B. ROUSSEAU.



La diligence fait son entrée à Abbeville. Le pont-levis pliant sous le poids de la voiture, M. Boniface craint un moment de mesurer aux dépens de ses côtes la hauteur des fossés d'enceinte.

CHAPITRE XVI. *La garde nationale est là.*
UN SAPEUR.



Passant devant la mairie, M. Boniface admire la tenue de la milice.

CHAPITRE XVIII. *Le cheval est l'ami de l'homme.*
BUFFON.



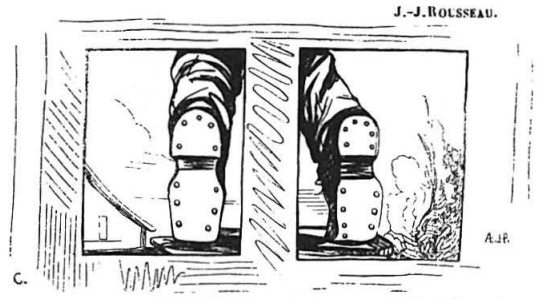
M. Boniface visite le relais.

CHAPITRE XVII. *Une arme à feu.*
PERPIGNAN



Arrivé au relais. M. Boniface manque d'avoir la cervelle brûlée à bout portant, par un bouillon que lui présente un gargotier. Le chien se distingue encore cette fois en partageant les malheurs de son maître.

CHAPITRE XIX. *O nature! que tu es belle.*
J.-J. ROUSSEAU.



Ce qui contrarie horriblement notre voyageur, c'est de voir entrer les souliers du postillon dans la composition des paysages qui se déroulent à sa vue.

CHAPITRE LXXI. *Numérote tes os que je te démolisse.*
POPE.



Ayant débarqué avec un fin sourire sur les lèvres, M. Boniface éprouve à l'instant même une impression anglaise.

CHAPITRE LXXIII. *Cependant c'était votre faute.*
BOSSUET.



Figure de M. Boniface a la fin du second tirage.

CHAPITRE LXXIV. *Un honnête homme en pareil cas.*
ALPHONSE KARR.



N'étant pas en train de rire, M. Boniface corrige son insecte qui folâtrait à ses côtés avec importunité.

CHAPITRE LXXII. *Et de deux.*
MIRABEAU.



Seconde impression.

CHAPITRE LXXV. *Il y avait une fois cinq ou six gendarmes.*
ODRY.



Cependant la police anglaise, qui ne plaisante pas, arrête M. Boniface pour voie de fait, avec préméditation, sur un animal.

FIG. 3.6. *Travel Impressions of M. Boniface* (1844). "M. Boniface, having disembarked with a subtle smile on his face, immediately receives an English impression. / Second impression. / M. Boniface's face at the end of the second printing. / Not amused, M. Boniface corrects his insect, which was importunately frolicking at his side. / But the English police, which does not joke, arrests M. Boniface for premeditated assault upon an animal."

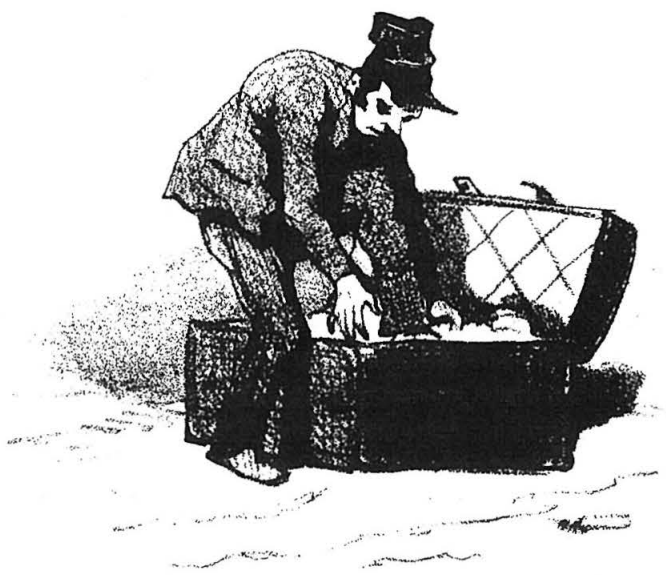
FIG. 3.5. *Travel Impressions of M. Boniface* (1844).
The coach makes a perilous entry into Abbeville. M. Boniface admires a sentry and visits the relay station. On board, he has boiling soup pushed at him, and his view is obstructed by the coachman's boots.



Le Conducteur prend son élan pour lancer la malle de Mr Clopinet sur le haut de la voiture



Mais la malle après tant d'émotions, ne peut supporter cette dernière secousse elle éclate et panche le sol des bardes de Mr Clopinet.



cependant le conducteur qui ne veut pas se laisser passer par les hirondelles, s'empresse de remettre les effets dans la malle et la malle sur la voiture



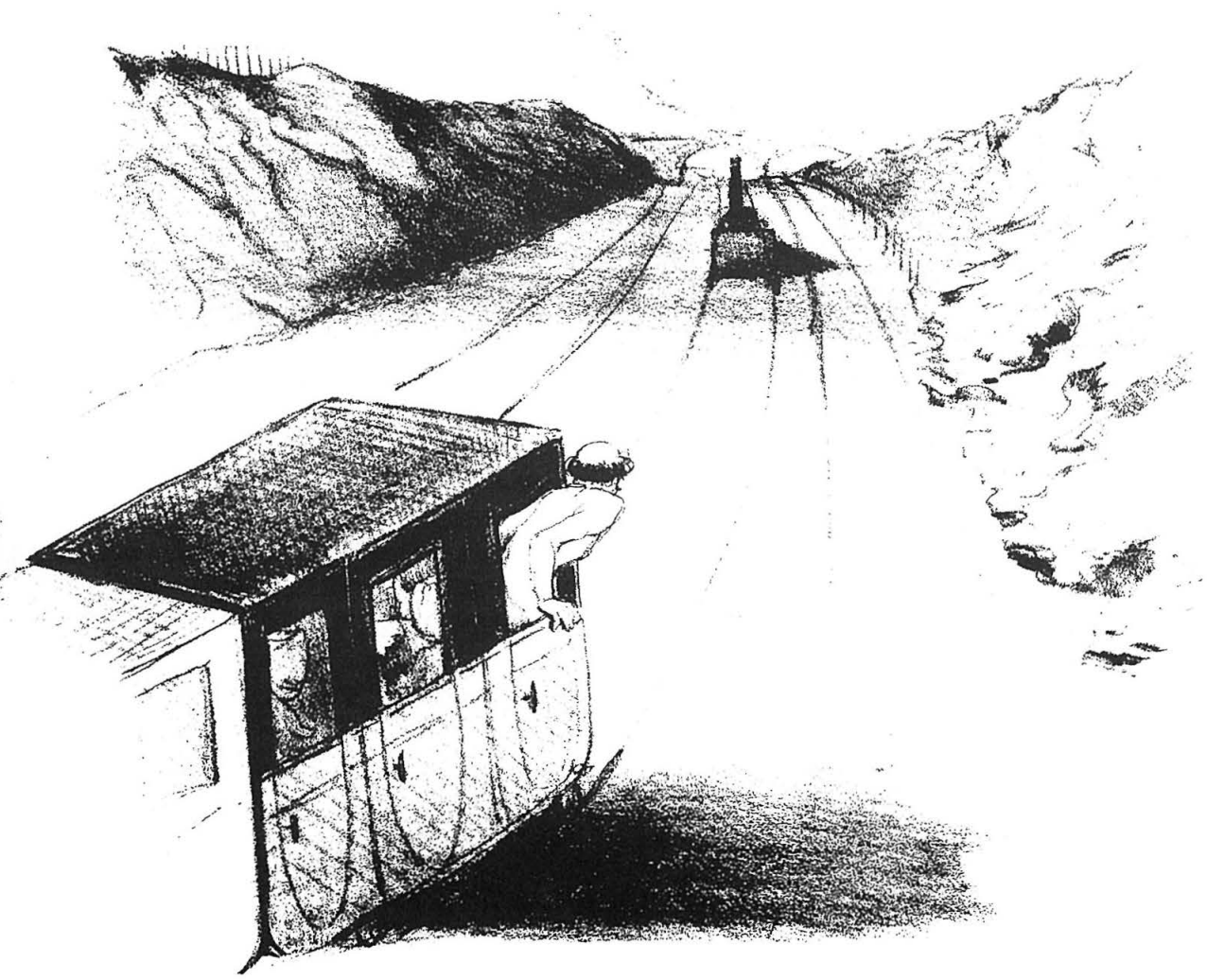
Alors Mr Clopinet s'installe dans l'intérieur à la place du milieu, ce qui lui procure l'avantage de se trouver nez à nez avec un carton à chapeau

Mr Clopinet suit agréablement les ondulations de la route et fait une étude des accidens du terrain

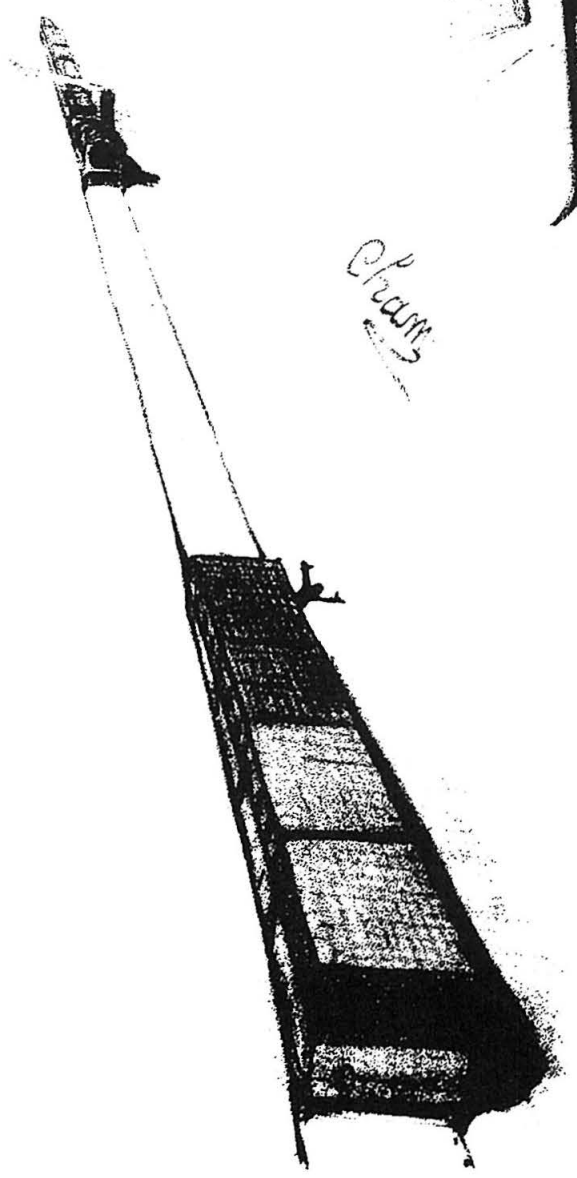
FIG. 3.7. *Journey from Paris to America Pursued to Le Havre Inclusive* (1844–45).
M. Clopinet has his luggage mishandled; he takes his seat in the coach, where he sits nose-to-nose with a hatbox and follows agreeably the undulations of the road and makes a study of the irregularities of the terrain. . . . In the tunnel, M. Clopinet has his watch pinched, and sees a train headed toward him on the same track. Indescribable travel impression.



Sous un tunnel Mr Clopinet est refait de sa montre



Bientôt ne sentant plus aucun mouvement, il met la tête à la portière et s'aperçoit que la locomotive s'est détachée du convoi



Dans l'autre direction il voit un second convoi qui arrive à fond de train



M. Clopinet éprouve une impression de voyage impossible à décrire

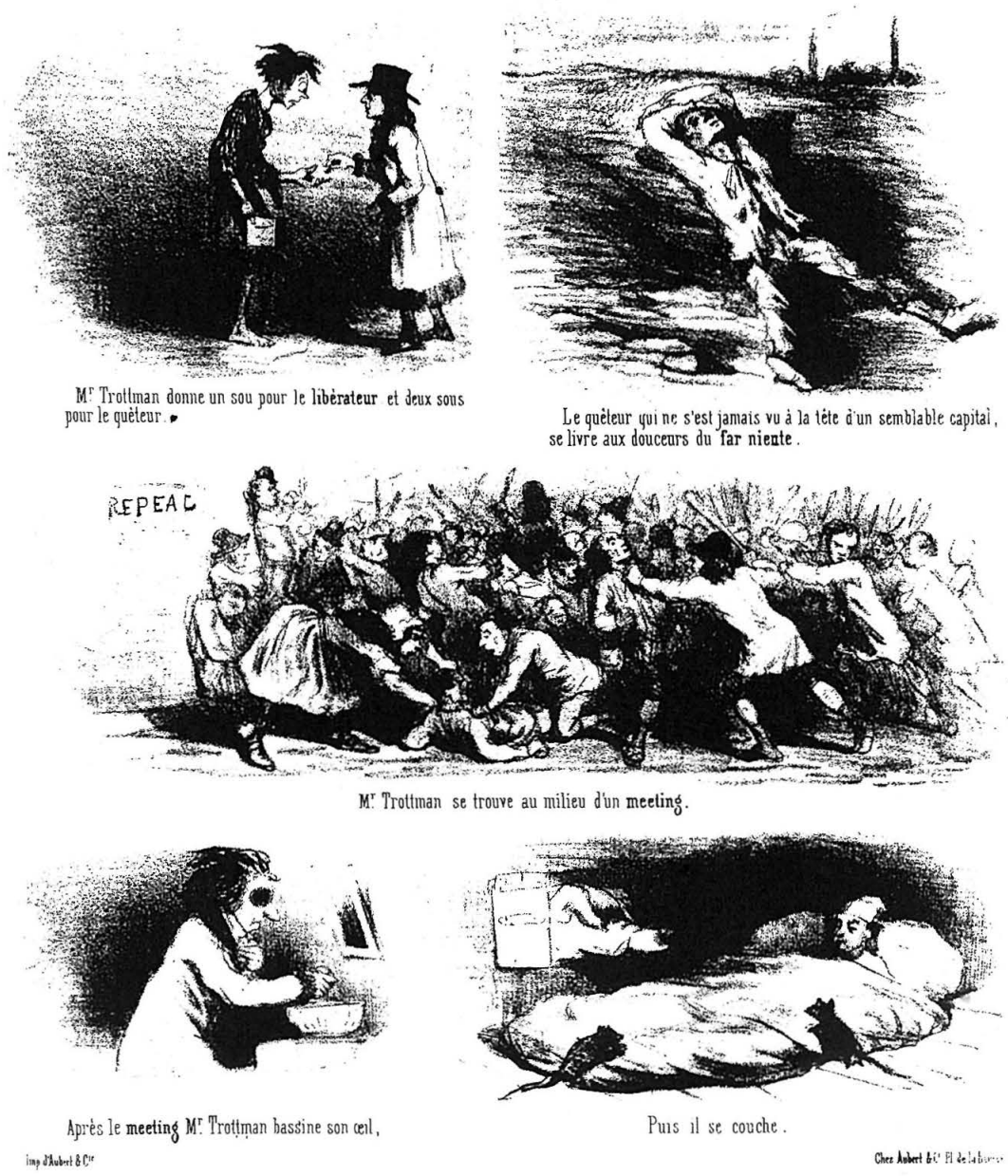


FIG. 3.8. "Mr. Trottman in Ireland" (1846).
Mr. Trottman gives coins to an Irish nationalist who uses them to take a rest. A meeting of Irish nationalists leaves Mr. Trottman with a black eye. His bedroom.

The last of Cham's big travel satires, *The Journey Around the World of Captain Cham and His Umbrella* (1852)[22] marks a brief revival of the genre as a diversion from political criticism, suppressed once more in 1852. We learn this explicitly in the literal point of departure of Cham's tale: the mine of political caricature has been officially closed down, and the bourgeoisie is "furiously worn out" as a topic of satire; so Cham decides to console his weeping pencil with a trip around the world, "in search of new subject matter." Cham's demand of a fifteen-thousand-franc advance gives the *Charivari* cashier a nervous fit, but finally he sets off with the editorial benediction (Fig. 3.9). The panorama of tourist stereotypes and harmless local idiosyncrasies has further receded, replaced by political persecution and the threat of execution, which escalate in a sequence of breathless inconsequentiality improvised, as it were, between bouts with the newspaper and other business. Cham is cast in his real-life role as caricaturist, pressed by the Grand Turk to do a *charge* (caricature) of a bothersome Russian diplomat. Turkey is now a caricature of France, with editors impaled on poles in the street and on hooks in the wall for having put unstamped, or unauthorized, press in the mail (reference here to a specifically French restriction on the press) and for having tried to start a Turkish *Charivari*.

Escaping on a British boat, Cham witnesses the legendary sadism of British naval discipline. In Ireland (again), Cham is assailed by famished natives who try to eat his boots and umbrella, by famished pigs, and by Irish revolutionaries who threaten his life. The Scottish jail and violently attack him for no reason, and the English shoot at him, recognizing him as French by his mustache. He is brought to the duke of Wellington and accused of having tried to effect a one-man takeover of the island. Cham then almost breaks his neck tripping over a rope held by Sir John Russell, who was trying to overturn Disraeli and the whole government—Cham is thus caught, so to speak, in one of *Punch*'s own cartoons, the political freedom of which Cham must have envied. When his umbrella saves him from arrest on a trumped-up paternity suit, he seizes a Chinese junk and arrives in America; there he finds the Americans busily manufacturing mystifications and canards for the benefit of the English and French newspapers. In South America, cannibals worship his umbrella and try to eat his hat. Saved when the chief chokes on the hat, Cham is able to jump into a whale's belly and get home.

The modest "five-franc pleasure trip" within France, which turns out to cost eighty francs, is also fraught with suffering, less dramatic but more real. Cham's *Voyage de Paris à la mer—Train de plaisir à 5 francs,* first published in the *Charivari,* August 9, 1850, when republished in a primarily political magazine, *Punch à Paris* (then embattled with the censorship; see below), stands as an extended metaphor of political and bureaucratic oppression: the endless waiting for a ticket, the crush of people, the roughness of the guards, the dreadful weather (political climate?), the lack of hotel accommodations, the petty thefts and petty suffering, all culminating in a 4 A.M. arrest by the Paris police for having brought back from the beach a souvenir rock, which they absurdly accuse the luckless tourist of planning to use in an insurrectionary barricade.

There were now important commercial interests behind the organization of tourism, which engaged in extravagant advertising. According to Cham's one-franc album *Les Voyages d'agrément* (Pleasure Trips, 1849), the first pleasure is that of reading the

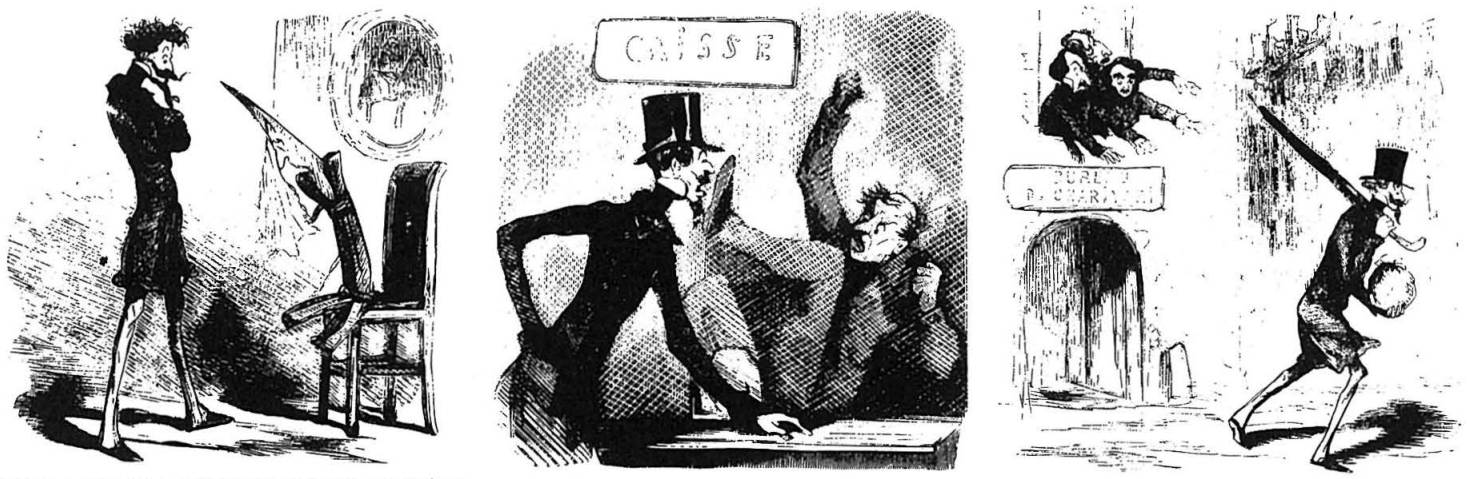
22. "Voyage exécuté autour du monde par le Capitaine Cham et son parapluie," *Charivari,* March 14, 21, and April 4, 1852.



Cham se rendant, comme d'habitude, à la mine de caricatures qu'il exploitait depuis nombre d'années, est fort surpris un beau matin en s'apercevant que l'entrée en est interdite.

Le malheureux crayon étant sur le point de succomber faute d'alimens, le *Charivari* lui livre en pâture un bourgeois de Paris.

Ayant tourné et retourné ce bourgeois dans tous les sens, le crayon s'aperçoit avec chagrin que ce sujet qu'on lui donne comme nouveau est furieusement usé.



Craignant qu'à force de se tourmenter son crayon ne perde sa bonne mine, Cham a l'idée de lui proposer une promenade autour du monde pour se livrer à la recherche de nouveaux sujets.

Se décidant à entreprendre ce voyage, Cham donne une crise de nerfs au caissier du *Charivari* en lui demandant une légère avance de quinze mille francs pour frais de route.

Muni de ses quinze mille francs et de son parapluie, Cham quitte les bureaux du *Charivari*, suivi des bénédictions des rédacteurs et des malédictions du caissier.

FIG. 3.9. *The Journey Around the World of Captain Cham and His Umbrella* (1852).
Cham finds the mine of caricature suddenly closed down. The *Charivari* feeds a bourgeois to his starving pencil. On careful inspection, the supposedly novel subject turns out to be furiously worn out. To cheer it up, Cham proposes to his pencil a world trip in search of new subject matter. The cashier has a fit on Cham's demanding fifteen thousand francs travel expenses. Cham leaves with the blessings of the editors and the curses of the cashier.

poster, which is alone worth the price: to London, Fr 175; to Algeria, Fr 600. Here the chosen destination of the tour is indeed Algeria, the controversial object of France's great recent imperialist venture; it is a politically charged choice. The *expected* mortality on this highly organized package is such that although nominally limited to one hundred travelers, it is deliberately overbooked by twenty-three to allow for attrition through fever, Arabs, lions, and "autres cas de détérioration particuliers au climat d'Afrique." Is Cham here thinking—and are we to think—only of tourists to Algeria, who cannot have been numerous at this date? True, Cham maintains his habitual bonhomie right down to the punchline: when the traveler complains that his wife, Adélaïde, has been carried off by Arabs, the rigorously honest travel company, admitting responsibility, offers a replacement, also called Adélaïde, free of charge. Yet those readers critical of the bloody and costly colonization of Algeria would have no difficulty in transposing this comic attrition of tourists to the real one of the military and civilian occupying forces.

As the Second Empire stabilized and France prospered, travel satire settled back into trivia. The complaint of Cham's *Oh, What Fun It Is to Travel* has no political edge and is limited to traffic jams, porters, customs, ticket collectors, false relics, and fleas.[23] The discomforts of travel into the countryside were merely a prelude and premonition of the discomforts of actually living there. Urbanized man was no longer able to readapt to "natural living." The Cham-like Mr. de Vertpré ("Mr. Greenfield"), in an album by Edmond Forest entitled *The Story of Mr. de Vertpré and His Housekeeper Too,*[24] retires from the civil service to the country to cultivate his melons and his rural neighbors. To mark his entry and score socially, he throws a dinner party, which, because of his unfamiliarity with and the almost calculated malice of the local rural environment (human, animal, insect, and meteorological), turns out an unmitigated disaster (Fig. 3.10). Vertpré returns in disgust to Paris, where he lives happily ever after, content to grow Spanish beans in a window box, with a lapdog and canary as his sole animal company.

Apart from the active hostility of nature in the raw and the frustrations of attempts to adapt to it, a major problem of the

23. *Ah, Quel Plaisir de voyager!* (Paris: Martinet, Hautecoeur, n.d.; copy in New York Public Library).

24. This rare album of 1840 was assumed at the time, as part of the "Albums Jabot" series, to be by Cham and was bound with other Cham volumes and catalogued as his in the British Library and Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Estampes (Adhémar 1930, Cham no. 3). Its authorship by Edmond Forest is specified, however, in an advertisement for the Jabot series in *Journal pour Rire* (January 1, 1853) and by Grand-Carteret (1888, 642).

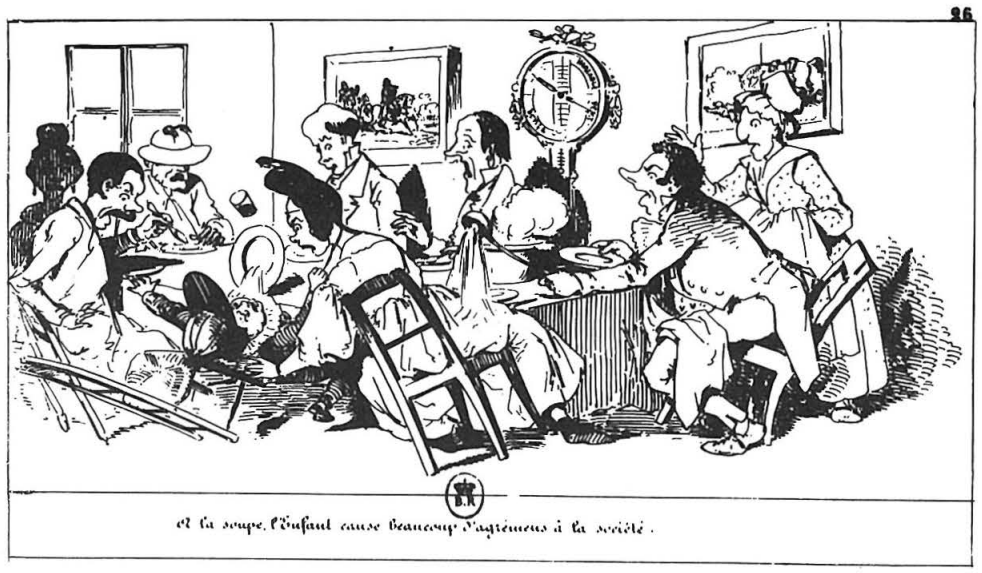


FIG. 3.10. Edmond Forest: *The Story of Mr. de Vertpré and His Housekeeper Too* (1840).
"At the soup the child causes much pleasure to the party. / The mother excuses him on the grounds that he is getting his new teeth. / Mr. de Vertpré, recovering, asserts that the child is charming. / Meanwhile the officer eats, / the man opposite yawns, / friend Durocher says nothing, / nor do the others."

summer retreat into the countryside was simply that of boredom—which the very magazines and albums we are studying were designed to alleviate. Hostesses also devised elaborate homemade entertainments, such as plays into which their Parisian guests were coerced as participants, and which might be experienced as the most excruciating tyranny.[25]

The classic pastime of country living was of course hunting, which satisfied primal urges to kill and provide. By failing as a hunter, Vertpré failed as a provider. This was a major source of humiliation to the middle classes, who had forgotten or never learned how to track game or handle a gun. The ubiquitous theme of the inexperienced hunter hitting, if anything at all, everything and everyone except his intended prey is familiar in the oeuvre of Daumier after 1836 and of Cham after 1845. The famous hare of the Saint Denis plain—which, though "attaqué, traqué et braqué et manqué [attacked, tracked, aimed at, and missed]" by six thousand Parisian shopkeepers who have sworn his death, intrepidly crosses Cham's two thousand *revues comiques*—is credited to the invention of that artist.[26] The harmless but unattainable hare symbolizes how completely the townsman has lost his ancestors' (and rural cousin's) skill as a hunter. There is no mention in Cham's biography that he ever went hunting, but he completely mastered the comedy of the sport to which so many petty bourgeois aspired. This was not, however, a comedy that lent itself to coherent narrative development; rather, the disjunct episode was most suitable, with one kind of accident and one kind of animal after another.[27]

Two other early albums, both of 1842, testify to Cham's continuing search for the most popular genres: parodies of the classics (*Les Aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse*) and of fairy tales (*L'Histoire du Prince Colibri et de la fée Caperduboula*); he also engaged in this second genre later with *Bluebeard* and *Sleeping Beauty*. *Télémaque* appeared while Daumier's famous *Histoire ancienne* was in full swing in the *Charivari* and after the notorious "Plague of the Ancients" had descended on Paris in the wake of Ponsard's extremely successful classicizing drama. Cham's *Télémaque* is a peculiar mishmash of episodes lacking in the continuity and comic largesse of a much better classical parody, Gustave Doré's *Labors of Hercules* (1847), also published as one of the Töpffer-Cham "Albums Jabot" series (see below and Chapter 4). *Télémaque* is most memorable for its captions, which debase the ancient heroes to the level of petty-bourgeois bureaucrats. Telemachus, called on to tell his story, starts like a nervous youngster from the provinces applying for a clerkship in town: "I am the son of my father, I have traveled a great deal on land, by sea, in France, by cab, by omnibus, by carriage, by Vespasian [street urinal], etc. I have a pleasant character and personally keep myself very clean."

The chief interest of *The Story of Prince Colibri [Hummingbird] and the Fairy Caperduboula,* which is also a confusing jumble of episodes, lies in the elements of political satire: the allusions to the usurpation of royal thrones, military tyranny, and massacre of peoples, in which the public, children and all, were at liberty to seek similarities with regimes past and present, at home and abroad.

Cham is, however, altogether more successful in a genre placed midway between the traditional fairy tale and the topical comic strip—the tall story à la Baron Munchausen, the 18th-century original of which is, in itself, a parody of the travel and hunting tale. The short *Adventures Ancient and New of a Famous Hunter,* the Baron de Crac, is part Töpffer, part parody of Alexandre Dumas as a spinner of improbable tales, and part Munchausen, episodes from which Cham borrows (Fig. 3.11).

It is an index of Cham's versatility within the genre of the picture-story alone (that is, irrespective of the great quantity of nonnarrative cartoons and series with which he filled the illustrated press in the 1840s) that he is capable of switching from the genial absurdity of the Baron de Crac to mordant satire containing overt, if generalized, political allusion. The combination of the two in *Prince Colibri* resulted merely in confusion, whereas the absurd Baron de Crac worked as Munchausen works, as does the consequentially political satire of Cham's *Episodes from the History of a Savage Nation; or, The Benefits of Civilization*. This story also appeared in *L'Illustration* (July 1846), still at this date a liberal magazine. Cham was probably inspired by the visit of the "King of the Ioways [Iowans]" to Paris to study "civilization" and by the Musée Indien of George Catlin, which exhibited in Paris in October 1845. In Cham's tale, the white man, calling himself "White Cloud," arrives in America and, dressed in an absurd but to savages impressive National Guardsman costume, immediately gains control of the Red Indian "I-o-ways" and corrupts them with the artifacts of civilization. The catalog of the disastrous influences an "advanced" culture may introduce to a backward people, whether relatively trivial (a health chocolate that gives the colic to a sacred ox or safety matches that cause fifteen villages to burn down) or more serious—pettifogging bureaucracy, alcoholism, civil dissension, military conscription, unjust taxation, slavery, the mesmerization and destruction of whole populations, or, most sinister of all, the propensity of people, having become literate, to write seditious pamphlets against an unpopular ruler, to rebel violently against him, and then to die out as they and the army exterminate each other—all this had obvious applicability to recent French history (Fig. 3.12).

25. This is the theme of Cham's *Pincez-moi à la campagne* (Paris: Martinet [1855]).
26. Halévy 1880, 6.
27. A typical but now very rare example of the genre is entitled *M. de la Canardière, ou les infortunes d'un chasseur, par un veneur ami du Héros* (Paris: Bureau du Journal des Chasseurs, n.d. [1845]), signed "H.E." (Emy), and advertised in *L'Illustration* 6 (January 10, 1846): 303 as part of the "Albums Jabot" series.

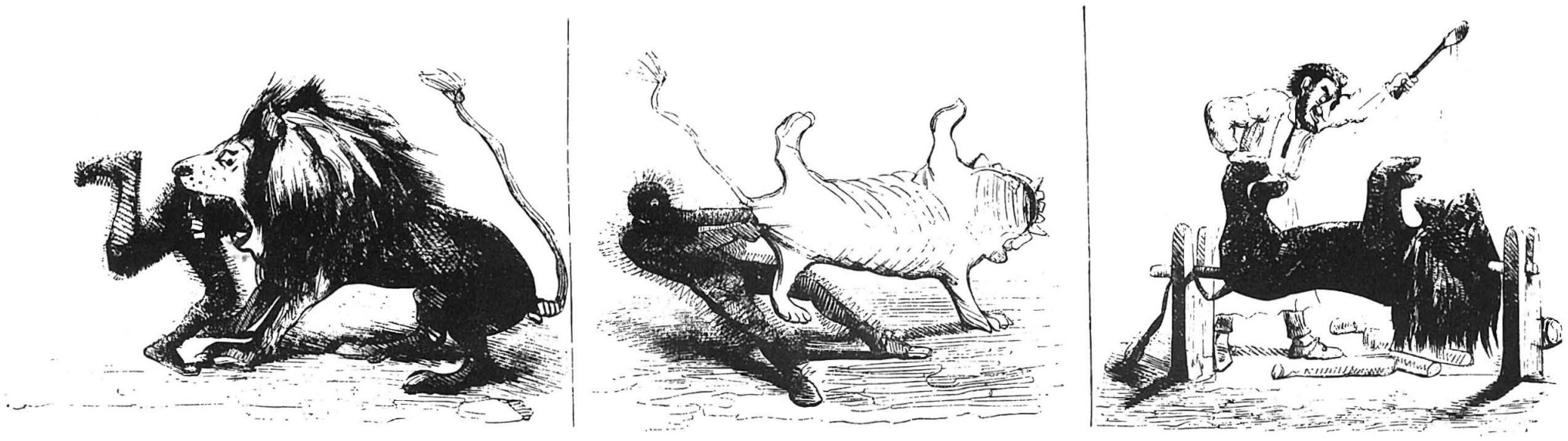


FIG. 3.11. *Adventures Ancient and New of a Famous Hunter* (1845). The Baron de Crac reaches clear through the lion's esophagus to grab the tail, and vigorously turns the lion inside out like a glove. The lion expires of confusion and pain. The Baron roasts him on a spit in his own juice, savoring in advance a beefsteak such as M. Alexandre Dumas never tasted. He returns to France draped like Hercules and sells his lion skin to a junk shop in the Rue Fontaine-Saint-Georges, where it may be seen every day from 10 P.M. to 4 A.M. [*sic*]. The Baron rests on his laurels and, in old age, sees his exploits drawn and told in *L'Illustration*. He exclaims incredulously, "The truth sometimes seems improbable."

Cham Revitalizes the Charivari

In the late 1830s the demand for graphic narrative was such that even the unliterary Daumier was pressed into service. His series "Mésaventures et désappointements de Mr Gogo" was used by Philipon, who had sold the *Charivari* in 1836, to launch (November–December 1838) a new enterprise, the defiantly ("provisionally") nonpolitical *Caricature provisoire*. "Gogo," evidently intended as a counterpart or sequel to the highly successful *Robert Macaire,* then two-thirds complete in the *Charivari,* depicted the fate of the investor duped by that financial charlatan, but the project failed for lack of a real scenario and was suspended after four weak designs. Another attempt at narrative, a conventional "Journée d'un célibataire" (Day in the Life of a Bachelor, June–September 1839, patterned after the "Day in the Life" explorations of particular social types), dragged on in an uncoordinated, lackluster fashion; neither artist nor writer (Philipon?) was able to warm to it, any more than to "Gogo," for the agreed-upon twelve installments. It ended in an album printed in a small, high-priced (twelve-franc) edition guaranteed to deter all but true Daumier addicts.[28]

The *Charivari,* meanwhile, was in trouble: A lawsuit was pending against it, and it faced internal dissension, which resulted in a shuffling of editorial staff and ownership. It was losing its identity as a caricature magazine; now included were many straight graphics as well as pages of fashion and book illustrations, paid for by clothing and publishing firms, that functioned essentially as advertisements. Haste in production, too, is evident in the skewed and upside-down drawings.

By 1844, however, with the acquisition of Cham (who joined *L'Illustration* and the *Charivari* almost simultaneously, in De-

28. Delteil 1904, nos. 545–549 and 607–618. For a more detailed study of these series, and the other material in this section, see Kunzle 1980, 213–224.

Épisodes de l'histoire d'une nation sauvage, ou les bienfaits de la civilisation, par Cham. — Deuxième partie.



Les fils insultent leur père.



Le Nuage-Blanc voit son autorité méconnue.



Le Nuage-Blanc, enfermé dans son palais, attend que la nation soit dégrisée; il commence à craindre d'avoir poussé la civilisation un peu loin.



La nation s'étant dégrisée, le Nuage-Blanc s'aventure hors de son palais.



Mais à dater de ce jour, les I-o-Ways se grisent régulièrement tous les dimanches et tous les lundis, battent leurs femmes, et méconnaissent l'autorité du Nuage-Blanc qui s'enferme chez lui.



Voulant arrêter les progrès du mal, le Nuage-Blanc envoie toute la nation à l'école pour apprendre à lire et à écrire.



Ayant appris à écrire, les I-o-Ways écrivent des pamphlets contre le Nuage-Blanc.



Ayant appris à lire, les I-o-Ways lisent les pamphlets publiés contre le Nuage-Blanc.



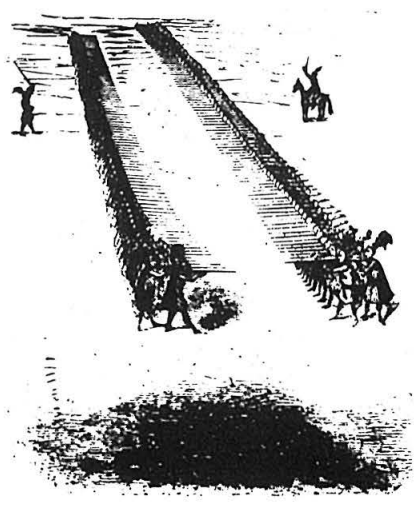
Le Nuage-Blanc arrache de désespoir tous les poils de son bonnet, en reconnaissant l'affreuse boulette qu'il vient de commettre en répandant les bienfaits de l'instruction.



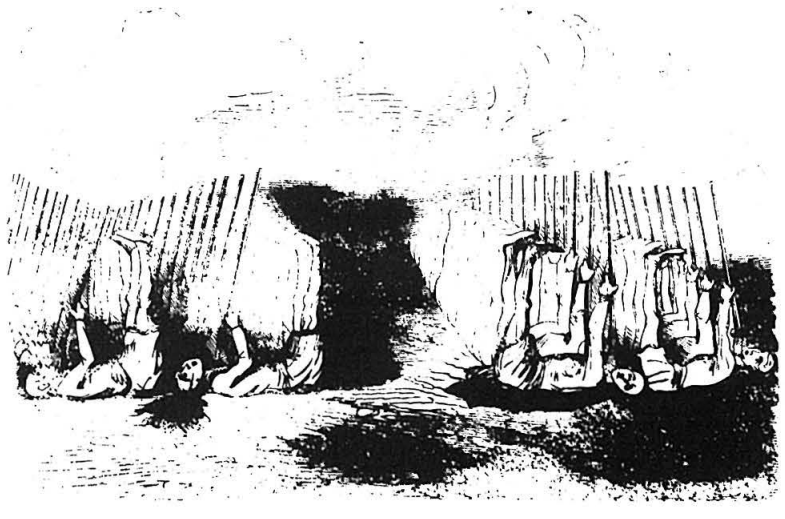
Cependant, une partie de la nation i-o-way s'étant révoltée, le Nuage-Blanc assemble son armée, et décore tous ses soldats sans exception, par manière d'encouragement.



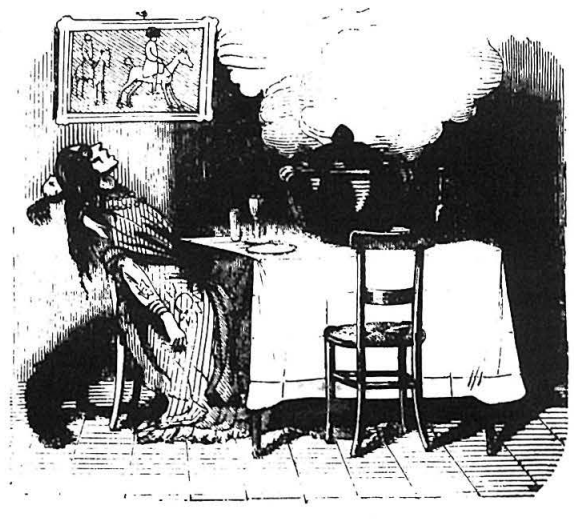
De son côté, le chef des insurgés assemble sa troupe, et termine sa harangue, s'engageant, avant le coucher du soleil, à boire grog dans le crâne de son ennemi le Nuage-Blanc.



Arrivées en présence l'une de l'autre, les deux armées se couchent en joue.



Et tirent toutes deux à la fois avec une si admirable précision, que tous les soldats tombent blessés à mort.



Les femmes, qui ignoraient la nouvelle, ne voulant pas se mettre à table avant le retour de leurs maris, moururent toutes de faim. Ainsi finit la nation des I-o-Ways, victime de la civilisation.

FIG. 3.12. *Episodes from the History of a Savage Nation; or, The Benefits of Civilization* (1846).
"[Row 1] Sons insult their fathers. / White Cloud sees a challenge to his authority. / White Cloud, confined to his palace, waits for the nation to sober up; he begins to fear that he has pushed civilization a bit too far. / When the nation has sobered up, White Cloud ventures out of his palace. [Row 2] But from that moment the I-o-Ways get drunk regularly every Sunday and Monday, beat their wives, and disregard the authority of White Cloud, who locks himself up at home. / In order to stop the evil, White Cloud sends the whole nation to school to learn to read and write. / Having learned to write, the I-o-Ways write pamphlets against White Cloud. / Having learned to read, the I-o-Ways read the pamphlets put out against White Cloud. [Row 3] In despair, White Cloud tears every hair from his busby, seeing what a blunder he has committed in spreading the benefits of civilization. / When a segment of the I-o-Way nation rebels, White Cloud assembles his army and gives decorations to all his soldiers, in order to encourage them. / For his part, the head of the insurgents assembles his troops and swears that he will be drinking grog from the skull of his enemy White Cloud before sunset. [Row 4] The two armies fire at each other simultaneously / and with such admirable precision that all the soldiers fall dead. / The wives, unaware of all this, not wishing to sit down to eat before their husbands have returned, all died of hunger. Thus ended the I-o-Way nation, victim of civilization."

cember 1843), the magazine was revitalized and once more fully caricatural. Cham burst into the market like a tornado. During the five years he was primary illustrator of *L'Illustration* down to the time it began to phase out caricature, he delivered about seventy series on a great variety of themes, each carrying between one-half dozen and two dozen drawings spread over one-half to two pages and totaling well over a thousand individual vignettes. At the same time, Cham was supplying the *Charivari* with an increasing number of designs, starting with the magazine's standard full-page lithographs, then moving increasingly into those series of small vignettes, narrative and not, that were to become his specialty.

Cham made his debut in the *Charivari* on December 20, 1843, with a twenty-plate series, which continued over the first six months of 1844, called "Moeurs algériennes—Chinoiseries turques," a title of calculated silliness matched by the (sometimes charming) silliness of the concepts. These contrast with the more serious "Troupiers en Afrique" by Benjamin Roubaud, which succeeded Cham's series in June 1844. Cham thus introduced a form of political commentary at a time when political criticism was taboo; although he never traveled to the theaters of war, he was to remain *Charivari*'s primary war commentator throughout the Second Empire. Indeed, travel might actually have hindered him, for he brought to this innately serious subject matter a particular spirit of detachment and frivolity, which (pending further study) appears effectively to mask the doubts, protest, pain, and other dissonant realities the magazine was unable openly to manifest.

Thereafter, Cham began to establish himself in his specialty: the scattershot, wittily captioned graphic joke assemblage, usually of topical import, which, especially in the form of the "Revue comique de la semaine" (*Charivari* from 1848; see below), became increasingly popular. This format garnered Cham honors and a prominence denied to Daumier all his life: whole issues of a daily that normally reserved three of its four pages for text, with the artist's name in large type on the front page. This first occurred on June 9 and 30, 1844, when, under the title "Revue charivarique de l'Exposition de 1844," he ridiculed some of the exposition's "3,963 exhibits and 212,454 new or perfected [industrial] inventions." Cham obviously loved exhibitions, whose very principles of organization, multiplicity, and variety he temperamentally shared.

His first real triumph, however, began on August 22, 1844, with the inauguration of his ten-part *Parodie du Juif errant*. This series appeared at fairly regular intervals following the publication of the volume parts of Sue's original novel, each part occupying the whole of the paper, until the last installment in September of the following year.[29] Although Cham did not write the text (this was done by Philipon and Louis Huart), as many as two dozen drawings fill half the space of each issue, making the artist clearly an equal, if not greater, attraction. In fact, the heavy advertising in the *Charivari* for the volume edition of the parody features Cham's name prominently, and those of the writers not at all. Demand for the paper was up every time the parody appeared, and there were repeated dire editorial warnings (to no avail) against foreign piracy.[30] Philipon and Huart, exhausted by their literary labors, credit Cham with "perfect understanding of the morality" of Sue's interminable novel, and thank him for dedicating himself to the venture despite his (supposed) commitment as assistant to M. Ingres in a major mural project.[31] A fantasy, of course, but could *popular* fame be a substitute?

Meanwhile, Cham had published in the *Charivari* his first real picture-story, the *Journey to America* (noted above), and established another genre—another kind of parody, artistic instead of literary—which was to enjoy unparalleled success throughout the century and be widely imitated in other journals: parodic caricature of the Salon exhibition. The first, much-promoted, caricatural Salon occupied a double issue (eight pages) on April 18, 1845; it was successfully hawked at the usual price of fifty centimes at or near the entrance to the Salon in the Louvre. The following year, too, Cham received a double issue (April 17) for the same event.

A full study of the Salon parody as a special phenomenon of graphic satire, art criticism, and even art politics is long overdue.[32] Suffice it to say here that this annual *clou* of both the Parisian artistic calendar and the caricature magazines remained Cham's exclusive fief in the *Charivari* until the year of his death in 1879. Cham should, therefore, be regarded as the pioneer of a new form of art criticism (in which he was soon followed, in 1846, by Baudelaire). An American observer claimed that his "verdict was awaited with more impatience than the verdicts of the critics" and

29. The ten parts appeared on August 22, October 5, November 12, and December 6, 1844; and February 25, April 5, May 15, July 8, August 30, and September 15, 1845. Cf. also the parody of Sue's *Mystères de Paris* for the magazine *Musée Philipon*.
30. *Parodie du Juif errant* (Brussels: Société Belge de Librairie, 1845); *The Parody of the Wandering Jew* (London: E. Appleyard, 1846). There were at least three different New York editions and a German edition. All of these were pirated.
31. *Parodie du Juif errant* (Brussels edition), 293.
32. For a list of 230 *Salons caricaturaux,* see Chadefaux 1968 (with the date of Cham's first effort wrong in the text—"1847" [p. 162] and correct in the bibliography [p. 166]). See also Kunzle 1980, 220.

that "the only men who had a grievance against him were those he did not caricature"[33]—which, even if exaggerated, indicates both the popularity and the innocence of the genre. Thus, with the *Salons caricaturaux* and the many series of vignettes that occupy all four pages of an issue, Cham established a precedent for the absolute physical predominance of imagery that, in 1848, Philipon would institutionalize with the *Journal pour Rire*.

Cham in England (1847)

Soon, by January 1847, Cham was in London again. Armed with a letter of introduction from Philipon and copies of his six published comic albums, Cham met the Vizetelly brothers, co-founders of the *Illustrated London News,* the English model for *L'Illustration,* and now engaged on a rival opposition paper, *The Pictorial Times*. The Vizetellys had done an English edition of Cham's *Barbebleue,* a parody of *Bluebeard,* and no doubt sought him as a regular contributor to the new paper—as did, presumably, *Punch,* with whose editors Cham also became familiar. The *Punch* circle provides us with the anecdote that testifies most vividly to Cham's extraordinary creative facility. After being introduced to Cham, the *Punch* editor Mark Lemon immediately sent him a large package of woodblocks, hoping to receive them back at the rate of one or two, or at most three, per week. The very next day, however, the whole package was returned, apparently a summary rejection. Yet, when the package was undone—O surprise!—"all the blocks [were] covered with drawings, and the captions—each wittier than the last—accompan[ied] them, together with a little note requesting a fresh consignment of blocks." Because English artists were not accustomed to improvisation, the *Punch* editors were all the more impressed.

Cham soon met other important literary figures in London, including Dickens and Thackeray, who gave a "hurricane welcome to this devil of a Frenchman who had more wit in his little finger than all the caricaturists of London put together in their heads"[34]—a judgment not very fair to Cruikshank, who also met Cham and wrote affectionate dedications on unpublished drawings he presented to the French artist.

Cham's work for *Punch,* if indeed it was used (and this I doubt), is not recognizable.[35] Yet Cham's reputation was such that a wealthy Englishman attempted to engage him in starting a rival to *Punch,* offering him the colossal sum of forty thousand francs per year on a three-year contract. We are not told whether Cham was at all tempted by an offer that would presumably have required him to settle in England. Meanwhile, he obliged publishers by doing the odd cheap children's book illustration.

The only major contribution by Cham I have been able to identify in an English magazine is in that curious monthly the *Man in the Moon,* which started in January 1847, with a large folding plate in each issue (see below, p. 308). The first of these, portraying the antics of a baroque troubadour called Don Guzzles of Carrara, was sufficiently Cham-like for people to think that it was by the distinguished French visitor. (Cham's name had appeared in the company of Phiz, Mayhew, and Kenny Meadows in the prospectus for the magazine.) In fact, however, *Don Guzzles* was of native authorship; the next issue corrected the misapprehension and carried Cham's parody of his London experiences: *The Foreign Gentleman in London; or, The English Adventures of M. Vanille,* "by M. de Noé, better known as Cham, the principal artist engaged on the *Charivari.*" This hodgepodge of the discomforts and dangers of the London street, house, and park (the attacks of porters and cabmen; the dangers of sash windows, which nearly guillotine him; the hugeness of the beds; the terrors of horse traffic and other large uncontrollable beasts; the danger of cricket balls and turnstiles) was probably knocked off in quite indecent haste, and was, as far as Cham was concerned, preempted by the series "Moeurs britanniques," which he had recently delivered to the *Charivari* (and which ran November 1846–June 1847).

Cham owed his great success in England not least to his reputation as a brilliant conversationalist—this in striking contrast to the morose and secretive Gavarni, who was in London from 1848 through 1851. Something of a society lion, Cham shone among men noted for their quickness of wit and extemporaneous oratorical skills, delighting Thackeray and Dickens. In France, however, he was less sociable and shunned the society to which he was entitled by birth, if not by his chosen profession.

Cham Dominant (1848–1862)

Cham was indeed the "principal artist . . . on the *Charivari.*" In France, a critic of the time coupled the name of Cham with that of Daumier.[36] And Flaubert, in his *Education sentimentale,* has Julien Sorel (in 1848) fill an embarrassed silence with Madame Arnoux by picking up a copy of *L'Illustration* and admiring the Cham caricatures.[37] In the course of the 1840s, Cham had erratically appropriated some of Daumier's style for his larger lithographs while building on his facility in the quick, witty, smaller wood-engraved drawings. His peculiar strength in the latter was gradually to assert itself against Daumier as the pre-1848 market for expensive albums of lithographs, such as those of Daumier or Gavarni, yielded to one for cheaper, smaller one-franc albums of sixteen pages, with four woodcut vignettes on a page. These albums became a monthly specialty of Cham's. Yet few of these are narrative in form, and soon the picture-story pioneered in France by Cham became the domain of other artists, including the young Gustave Doré and Nadar, in the new magazine started by Philipon on the eve of the 1848 revolution, the *Journal pour Rire* (see Chapter 4).

But Cham, even as he lost interest in free-form Töpfferian narrative, used his pages of small vignettes on a single theme to immerse himself in the flow of day-to-day events after the 1848 revolution. His grapeshot was aimed at some major targets not included in Daumier's capacious oeuvre, most notably the socialist Pierre Proudhon, to whom he dedicated, in 1848–1849, at least 180 drawings later collected in three different albums, one of which is episodically narrative in nature (*M. Proudhon en voyage*).

33. Whiteing 1880, 749.
34. Ribeyre 1884, 180.
35. Ribeyre (1884, 186) also says that Cham supplied the *Illustrated London News* in 1844, again in December 1851 at the time of the coup of Louis-Napoléon, and finally during the Commune of 1871. Again, his work, if present, is not evident.
36. The critic was Lemoinne, writing in 1849; cited by Adhémar (1954, 35).
37. *Education sentimentale,* chap. 2, pt. 3.

Another major target was the Haitian Emperor Soulouque,[38] whose posturing was used to ridicule the future French emperor. Cham also filled the *Charivari* and *L'Illustration* with innumerable drawings celebrating the triumph over socialism. Daumier, meanwhile, had come to the end of his great series of *Robert Macaire* and *Gens de justice* (Lawyers, 1845–1848), although his *Socialist Women* continued into 1849, as did his less-topical *Bons papas* and *Bons bourgeois* (Good Daddies and Good Bourgeois). Following the revolution, Daumier withdrew from politics and turned to painting, to which he dedicated himself seriously for the first time and with some initial encouragement from the young Republic, leaving Cham unchallenged to pursue the task of day-to-day political commentary.

It is an integral part of the Daumier myth that he was gifted with special political insight; witness Oliver Larkin, author of a popular American biography of Daumier, who offers this absurd comparison of the artist and Victor Hugo: "At this moment, his shrewd foresight and his ability to distinguish the genuine foes of the Republic from artfully contrived bogeys stood in sharp contrast to the political fumbling of his great contemporary, Victor Hugo."[39] So much for Victor Hugo and the impassioned activism of the soon-to-be-exiled writer, as opposed to the disillusioned withdrawal of the caricaturist. Daumier watched from a distance; his expressed unwillingness to resume attacks on Louis Philippe, now defeated and therefore arguably not a fitting target, extended to other actively threatening figures on the left: Proudhon, Leroux, and others. Changes in the directorate of the *Charivari* (whose staff, incidentally, offered to protect Cham's father, the comte de Noé, from the alleged danger of mob action by sheltering him in their offices) left Louis Huart in control.

Huart—who, having written many captions for Daumier, was cognizant of the artist's weakness in that domain—favored Cham. On January 9, 1848, Cham began his "Revue comique de la semaine," a mixture of nine and later twelve vignettes gathering together the topics of the week. This new Sunday special (his own invention) proved tremendously popular, and it became an enduring feature that remained Cham's fief in the *Charivari* to the end of his life, often appearing twice weekly. *Inépuisable* (inexhaustible) and *intarissable* (never running dry) are among the words used to describe his facility in extracting humor, week after week and year after year, out of even the most unpromising and trivial news items. He gathered his material from only one paper, the *Siècle*: "My procedure could not be more simple. Everything the *Siècle* takes seriously, I take otherwise."[40]

The miscellany review of the week, month, or year, copied by journals throughout France and in other countries, especially Italy, represents an innovation of considerable significance in the history of illustrated journalism and caricature. It evidently satisfied demands for variety, topicality, *modernité* in a way traditional series of social types, à la Daumier and Gavarni, could not. It offered multiplicity and comprehensiveness, a full sense of what was going on at different social and political levels, much as did the new "encyclopedic" illustrated news journal *L'Illustration* (significantly subtitled "Journal universel"). As a cultural characteristic of the 1850s and '60s, such topicality, variety, and multiplicity could be a matter for extended analysis. Grand-Carteret, sensing the significance of Cham's innovation, points vaguely to a change that had taken place since the 1830s and '40s: "Customs and ideas slowly changing by the force of events, a daily paper was no longer to be maintained just with studies and sketches [of types]."[41]

The daily news in little vignettes became, literally, household decoration when, in 1852, Philipon launched his *papier peint comique en rouleaux,* rolls of caricature meant to serve as wallpaper. The news, no longer a form of social or political activism, was now fodder for the industrialization of imagery. Radical ideas were submerged in the idea of economic progress as the 1850s gave way to mass depoliticization. The idea of defusing the bigger issue is contained in the very small scale of the Revue comique designs; this scale guaranteed that potentially serious or controversial subjects be taken lightly, skimmed over as inherently comic or trivial topics—that, in a word, they be read at a glance and (like the narrative strip) *at speed:* a speed the larger format excluded. Grand-Carteret notes Daumier's mistake in giving a full-page lithograph to the *fait divers,* the trivial topic of the moment: "Trying to give mere incidents in the street the importance of a big satirical composition, he weighed them down."[42]

Ludovic Halévy, in his preface to the first posthumous Cham collection, considers the inauguration of the Revue comique in January 1848 as the "real beginning," the true "path" and "form" of Cham, and draws up with relish a list of the political, military, social, artistic, and literary topics with which Cham was capable of dealing all at once. The sheer incongruity and confusion in his Revue, the mixing of serious and silly, great and small, tended to reduce all to a common level of triviality—or apparent triviality. Conversely, the trivial context here, as in the comic travel tale (to which we shall return) provides a cover for otherwise impermissible protest.

Cham was praised for his lack of political and personal malice, his "lively but unembittered pencil," and his capacity to mix "foreign and domestic politics" with "the snippet of news," to pass from the Eastern question to the cabman's strike, from the Italian war to the new cut of a military tunic.[43] His ability to absorb simultaneously the great and the small tends to conceal what it also subtly implies: a connection beyond mere chronological coincidence, through which the insignificant-seeming news item may be recognized as the microcosmic displacement of causes that erupt and coalesce into macrocosmic issues.

Béraldi hails Cham as the quintessential graphic journalist, whereas Daumier was a painter and Gavarni a philosopher. After 1848, journalism faced the task of informing (and entertaining) an electorate that now embraced the whole adult male population, which, with all its diversity of interests, needed to know something about everything. The Revue comique is the product of universal male suffrage and the plebiscite; and, in a world where the Napoleonic plebiscite gave the people only the illusion of power, the *Charivari* and its imitators sought to satisfy the new needs of an enlarged and more diversified readership by offering knowledge (or knowing) in the form of entertainment, as a substitute for power. The charade continues: today *Time, Newsweek,* and their ilk seek to persuade us that simply by being exposed to the kaleidoscope of global news we gain some form of empowerment.

Such was the popularity and fertility of Cham that in February 1850 he gained a journal of his own, illustrated by him alone, written partly by him, and identified wholly with him. By the logic of Cham's intimate connections with England and *Punch,* and by way of a return homage to that magazine (much admired and available in France, and subtitled "The London Charivari"), Cham's new magazine was called *Punch à Paris*. In it, Cham, represented as the son of Punch, is sent to complete his education in Paris and report back on his experiences, political as well as social. With the *Charivari* gamin acting as his guide, Punch *fils* sees the sights: the *socialisme de fantaisie,* represented by the newspaper baron Emile de Girardin, now a real power in the land; and real socialism, incarnated in Proudhon behind bars. (Cham had been invited by Proudhon personally to visit him in jail, but he declined on the grounds that he could not continue to caricature him if he had once met him.) *Punch à Paris* reflects the contradictions of the year preceding the Napoleonic coup d'état: it existed because of a relative freedom of the press in the past; its suppression signaled the censorship of the future. The magazine survived only four monthly issues, burdened with a now customary *cautionnement* (deposit) of eighteen thousand francs and a *timbre* (stamp duty) of six to eight thousand francs. After contemplating

38. *Charivari,* February 8, March 17, and April 12, 1850; and album. *L'Illustration* 14 (October 20, 1849).
39. Larkin 1968, 96.
40. Halévy 1880, 8.
41. Grand-Carteret 1888, 285.
42. Ibid., 349.
43. Béraldi 1886, 75.

raising the money in England, where *Punch à Paris* surely had a large following, the editors suspended publication, offering either to refund the balance of the subscription price to subscribers or to give Cham albums in exchange (a choice of five or six among twelve, at one franc each up to the amount owing). The last of its 192 pages shows the Parisian *Punch,* hoisted on a sword carried by a vicious hag labeled "Press Law," about to be dropped into the *fosse commune des journaux* (paupers' grave of magazines). When Punch *fils* returns home, his father fails to recognize him, covered as he is with the dreadful French disease unknown in England, a pox of censor stamps.

Indeed, Cham had every reason to be outraged by the censorship, which soon became as iron. In the *Charivari* of November 15, 1850, a full-page Cham cartoon shows the Press Law hag mercilessly cutting down the journal's pencil so as to render it unusable. In June 1851 the *Charivari*'s editor was condemned to six months in jail and a two-hundred-franc fine, for offense to the president of the Republic, Louis-Napoléon. The magazine, however, bent with the wind, as it had before.[44]

When the *Charivari* was suspended (December 2–10) during the 1851 coup d'état, subscribers were compensated with two Cham albums. As stated in the issue of December 14, Paris without the *Charivari*—and without Cham—had been driving everyone crazy. Direct protest was now impossible, even against the idea of censorship. Cham's parting shot against the ban on politics, which he experienced as a personal affront, appeared, as we have seen, the next year in his comic strip *The Journey Around the World of Captain Cham and His Umbrella.* Yet the ban did serve to raise his self-consciousness. His unprecedented step of casting himself as the hero of a comic strip remained unique for over thirty years. He is there both nominally and physically, his long, spare figure, conspicuous mustache, and huge umbrella dominating the images. (In the earlier *Journey of MM. Trottman et Cham,* his name is added to the title for no good reason.) This was not, however, Cham's first self-portrait. Already notorious for his addiction to lapdogs (which his colleagues in the *Charivari* offices came to detest), Cham once caricatured himself as a young man obliged to carry his aunt's pet to the dentist. He also parodied a Salon portrait of himself as a "thick subject thickly handled by M. Vibert." His "plâtrographie," a plaster head by the famous caricatural sculptor Dantan *jeune,* was reproduced full page in the *Charivari.*[45]

Such honors were not accorded to Daumier. Cham did once incorporate his more modest older rival into a series entitled "Etiquette for the Vulgar,"[46] in which he warned pushy youngsters not to go to Daumier with the request that he do a *charge* of their parents for publication. But Daumier is present here in name only; physically the caricaturist resembles Courbet, who was always considered fair game anyway, and in the album edition the name of Daumier was removed. Cham places himself in the august company of Courbet, Dumas *père,* Baudelaire, and Doré in a gossipy text series called "Cham et Doré aux enfers,"[47] where Satan graciously recognizes the singular merit of Cham. Sent to hell for his stage comedy *Pierrot-Quaker,* Cham comes off better than Doré, who winds up in hell because of fraudulent advertising for a huge painting of the battle of Solferino—which turns out to be only a miserable little drawing, his 1,597,044th. Yet Cham, no less than Doré, was vulnerable to the charge of overproduction, having an oeuvre estimated by Ludovic Halévy at over forty thousand drawings.

By 1858–1859, Cham's ascendancy, reinforced by his cartoons on the Crimean War, was consecrated when he was assigned the most important subjects in international affairs (the Italian war, China, Ireland, and Greece). Daumier was relegated to trivial domestic scenes. In 1859, the *Charivari*'s expanded format allowed Cham to increase his Revue comique de la semaine from nine to twelve scenes and to execute double-page center spreads, or *numéros double.* His inventiveness and fertility are amazing: in June and July he devised no less than seven twelve-scene macédoines on the Italian campaign. Meanwhile, his hitherto unpublished album *Zouaves* was offered as a subscription bonus, as were other collections of previously unpublished lithographs, including the highly successful *Tortures de la mode.*

As is well known, in 1860 Daumier, tired of drawing cartoons (and, one may add, of being compared with and having to compete with Cham), either was suspended or resigned from the *Charivari,* and he remained absent for three and a half years.[48] The slack he left was taken up by inferior artists—Vernier, Beaumont, Darjou, and many occasional visitors. Demand for old Daumier albums, not to mention editorial faith in their marketability, fell off completely. I found only one 1860 advertisement offering a Daumier album, a random collection called *Choses du jour,* as a *prime* (bonus), whereas there are many for albums by Vernier, Beaumont, and even Gavarni, now in retirement. But Cham continued to furnish the major *primes* through the 1860s, his one-franc albums still appearing regularly on the first of each month.

The *Misérables* parody of 1862–1863 represents the climax of Cham's career in narrative. Although we cannot follow the artist to the moment of his death, still in harness, in 1879 (the same year that Daumier died), we need only note the group portrait of the staff that the *Charivari* published for New Year 1867. There, under the title "Cartes de visite," three years after Daumier had made his triumphal return to the magazine demonstrating renewed energy and creativity, Cham, with his inseparable dog, Bijou, takes pride of place at the right hand of editor Véron—and ahead of Daumier.

Les Misérables de Victor Hugo *(1862–1863)*

The caricature journals had always paid homage to the celebrity of Victor Hugo. The author himself enjoyed seeing parodies of his work, which first became frequent in the 1830s after publication of *Hernani* and *Marion Delorme,* at which time he also encountered severe criticism.[49] The caricaturists, however, from Grandville and Daumier to Alfred Le Petit and Bertall, were generally respectful, although many criticized his initial support for Louis-Napoléon[50] (as we shall see in Chapter 4 with Nadar's *Monsieur Réac*), and Cham made fun of the poet's parliamentary aspirations of 1848–1849. There was, not unnaturally, a lull in the parodies during the first years of the writer's exile (1851–1870). Then, on December 3, 1859, and January 7, 1860, the *Journal Amusant* published a parody, in mock-heroic verse, entitled "La Légende des siècles!!! Par Victor Hugo!!!" with some large, fairly straight historical illustrations by Marcelin that were more or less in keeping with the grandiose mood of the original.

44. A record of the *Charivari*'s trouble with the police between 1851 and 1867 may be found at the Archives Nationales, F. 18, 325, 35.
45. Cham with pet: "Nos Gentilhommes," *Charivari,* June 22, 1846; Vibert portrait: "Salon pour rire," *L'Illustration* 1 (January 24–31, 1851): 61; Dantan head: *Charivari,* July 30, 1860. For Louis Leroy's hatred of Cham's dog, see "Cham et son chien," *Charivari,* January 30, 1883.
46. *Charivari,* October 4, 1853.
47. *Charivari,* August 31–September 4, 1861.
48. The dates are often given incorrectly in the literature. They are in fact April 3, 1860, for the last Daumier plate; and December 18, 1863, for the first plate on return. In the four months preceding Daumier's departure, Cham had executed for the *Charivari* 254 designs to Daumier's 14.
49. See Pirot 1858–1859. A conventional sentence of praise for Cham's parodies of Victor Hugo's novels (in general—which other Cham-Hugo parodies were there?) stating that his *Les Misérables* is "one of the most entertaining" ignores its unique character (Pirot 1958–1959, 210). Cham's parody is entirely missing from Bouvenne 1879.
50. E.g., Daumier, "Ca n'est pas tres solide," *Charivari,* no. 171 (1848).

Yet neither this nor the extensive Cham-Huart parody of Sue's *Juif errant* in the 1840s, which divided the honors between text and illustration, may be regarded as a precursor of Cham's parody of *Les Misérables*. It was an unrepeatable response to an unrepeatable masterpiece; Hugo's much weaker next novel evoked a more perfunctory response.[51]

The publication of Hugo's *Misérables* coincided with a new phase of self-confidence on the part of the caricature journals. The *Charivari* attracted heavy advertising from the Suez Canal Company through one of the company's investors, Eugène Philipon (son of the *Charivari* founder Charles Philipon), and other big enterprises followed suit. On April 4 the *Charivari,* "so small in size, so big in reputation," could point proudly to its inclusion in a book called *Les Grands Journaux de France,*[52] from which it quoted at length. It is not clear how far the *Journal Amusant*—referred to as its "twin" or "younger" brother, and taken over by the *Charivari* editor Louis Huart and Eugène Philipon on Charles Philipon's death on January 25—contributed to and shared in this reputation; the *Journal Amusant* was now quartered with the *Charivari* in the Hôtel Colbert, 16 Rue de Croissant, "setting up a common household" and "warming itself at the same fire . . . of satire and epigram."

Both journals prepared to profit from and contribute to the publicity that would attend the publication of Victor Hugo's first novel from exile and first novel since 1834. The day before the *Charivari* printed the *Grands Journaux de France* accolade, the first part of *Les Misérables* appeared in Brussels and Paris; it was preliminarily reviewed in the caricature journal as "one of the principal literary events of the century"—a judgment posterity has confirmed. Fuller reviews appeared on April 20 and 24. When printing difficulties delayed publication of the second and third parts, the *Charivari* was allowed to reproduce two small chapters of the original text in advance (May 17). Two days earlier (May 15), Cham welcomed the novel in a full-page cartoon showing *les misérables*—that is, the poor, "seized with giddiness"—as they are raised by the huge goose-quill of the master to the height of the towers of Notre Dame de Paris.

Meanwhile, on May 10 the *Journal Amusant* launched a promotional campaign in the pages of the *Charivari,* announcing its co-acquisition of the paper's principal cartoonist, Cham; then, on July 13 (the last parts of Hugo's novels had been published on June 30), the long buildup to the forthcoming Cham treatment began. The series started on September 6 under the title *Les Misérables de Victor Hugo, lus, medités, commentés et illustrés par Cham* (Les Misérables . . . Read, Meditated, Commented on, and Illustrated by Cham) and continued in ten installments—corresponding exactly to Hugo's own divisions of "10 tomes en 5 volumes"—down to April 4, 1863, making an unprecedented total of 240 drawings and forty-one full pages. The protracted and irregular periodicity of the parody, with small gaps of one to three issues and two major gaps of five weeks (between the first and second installments) and eight weeks (between the sixth and seventh), reflect the assessment that the novel's popularity was no mere bubble and that the regular miscellany of other material need not be sacrificed. (Cham's major series preceding *Les Misérables,* ten single-page installments of commentary on the Great Exhibition in London, had appeared in the *Charivari,* a daily that had no trouble concentrating the episodes in the summer months when the exhibition was open, with a special consignment of the paper sent to London to be sold in the streets and at the exhibition entrance.) The gaps in the appearance of Cham's parody may also be explained by his exceptionally busy schedule; he was responsible for 55 of the 120 illustrated pages of the *Charivari* over the last four months of 1862 (when Daumier was on his long "sabbatical" from the magazine), nearly half of those being midweek and Sunday twelve-scene macédoines—a total of 308 drawings.

The great popularity of Cham's *Misérables,* at ten installments of three to four pages each (and always including the front page) over a seven-month period, each installment dominating an entire issue of the *Journal Amusant,* testifies to the unique dual appeal of the most popular caricaturist[53] and most popular writer of the age. And insofar as Cham effected a complete transposition of the novel into another, primarily visual, genre, his comic strip version may be regarded as a precursor to the numerous film adaptations that have been made (twenty-four by 1969).[54]

There can be no doubt that Cham's parody, frivolous as it is, is to be construed both as representative of the caricature magazines' general admiration for Victor Hugo and as an act of personal homage. But the novel met with a barrage of criticism, in some of which Cham's parody shares—or perhaps opportunistically partakes. As a standard edition put it in 1909: "Rarely was a novel more commented on, discussed, praised, celebrated, glorified, attacked, vilified."[55] Much of the abuse was only the petty rancor of petty minds, hysterical and stupid; but important names in literary criticism, including Baudelaire, Goncourt, Taine, and Lamartine, were also offended. It is in indirect reference to this critical rejection that Cham has the good bourgeois readers of the novel, male and female, rather than the townspeople of Digne, flee at the approach of ex-convict Jean Valjean.

Les Misérables was the great literary anachronism of the century. This archromantic novel, which appeared just as the realism of Flaubert and the Goncourts was reaching its height, incarnated in the extreme what the new literary wave abhorred. The inflated, hyperbolic, Manichaean presentation, so passionately engaged and subjective, was irreconcilable with the new principles of sobriety, objectivity, and emotional detachment. The author was dismissed as a mere caricaturist: "Victor Hugo cannot help making caricatures of everything he touches";[56] "a caricature is not a historical picture."[57]

Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, a writer of some stature whose reason Hugo apparently stunned, claimed that a deserved indifference had quickly descended on the work after so much noise, in the preface (dated September 26, 1862) to a "critique" whose only effect can have been to fuel the fire. D'Aurevilly's book consists of ninety-five hostile pages of previously published newspaper articles, grouped according to the five-part structure of the original novel. Better (or worse) yet, a really lengthy work (two volumes, totaling 661 pages) by Eugène de Mirecourt called *Les Vrais Misérables,* which was also laid out like the original novel, sought to demolish Hugo's book piecemeal by means of careful textual citation. So strong were these critics' feelings that, like Cham, with his very different motivation, they were impelled to attempt a kind of parallel or "counter-*Misérables*."

A number of popular-verse parodies and adaptations were created as well. One of these renders the story respectfully, in simple, traditional balladic verse to be sung "to the tune of Fualdès," and was no doubt to be heard at village fairgrounds and popular music halls.[58] Another, more sophisticated, version, relying on knowledge of the novel and very incomplete in its rendition of the story (but as addicted as Cham to puns), was to be sung "to the tune of The Wandering Jew"; it had sixty illustrations of a conventional, mildly caricatural style and was also generally uncritical.[59] The preface to the 256-page *Anti-Misérables* of Francisque Tapon-Fougas, in contrast, declares war on Hugocracy and Hugolatry, and vituperates with a violence unusual at the popular

51. Se André Gill's parody of *Les Travailleurs de la mer* in *La Lune* (March–April 1866) and André Grévin's parody of the same novel in the *Journal Amusant* (May 5, 1866). Stop's "Salammbô, traduit du Carthaginois" (*Journal Amusant,* January 10, 1863) devotes twelve drawings to Flaubert's novel, of which the most curious is the caricature of Courbet avowing himself incapable of matching the writer's taste for the disgusting.
52. Ribeyre and Brisson 1862, 399–416.
53. I make the case that Cham was more truly popular than Daumier in Kunzle 1980.
54. Gaillard 1969, 251.
55. Hugo 1909, 352.
56. d'Aurevilly 1862, 45.
57. Cuvillier 1862, 3–4.
58. Lavergne 1862.
59. This version was by A. Vémar; it also came with an almanac. See Pirot (1958–1959) for the various titles under which it appeared.

level and more akin to that of the elite critics, raging against this "intellectual cataract," "this ancient crumbling *gloire,* this moth-eaten pedestal," in an attempt "to reduce . . . to ashes and dust both pedestal and statue . . . in the name of the honor of good French language, taste and sense."

Vémar's *Complainte des misérables* alludes to the international fame of the novel (reputedly going into nine foreign editions simultaneously) and to the fact that "Messieurs Cham et Baric / M'ont croqué avec chic [Baric and Cham meanwhile have sketched me with real style]." Baric—independently, it seems, of the caricature journals—designed an extensive series half as long as Cham's and with smaller drawings, published by Arnauld de Vresse in two albums of the one-franc format used for Cham's more popular series.[60] (I have not seen Cham's *Misérables* published thus, separately.) Baric's parody, although it adds to our sense of the great popular diffusion in other forms of Hugo's novel, is neither critically interesting nor very funny. Baric also did a similar comic strip parody of Hugo's *Ninety-three* (1874).

While the literary pundits fumed, the book enjoyed unprecedented popular sales. The publishers and bookstores were besieged; poor workmen clubbed together and organized lotteries to get copies; six other editions appeared in 1862. A cheap edition (at Fr 35) appeared the following year, and a popular illustrated edition (at Fr 10, or one hundred installments at ten centimes each) was launched in 1864, featuring two hundred illustrations by Brion.[61] Rumors flew as to the stupendous profits realized by author and publisher. Cham's closing vignette shows Fortune crowning the ten-volume work with Fr 400,000; in fact, Hugo sold the rights for twelve years for Fr 300,000, a huge but not entirely unprecedented sum, and the publisher made Fr 517,000.[62]

Cham's critical-caricatural leitmotif, his point of departure and of constant return, is one on which all critics, pro and con, agreed: Hugo imposed himself mightily on both his material and the reader. The manner in which the narrator in *Les Misérables* is at once the recorder of reality—of a known, verifiable, minutely documented historical truth—and the sovereign creator of the most improbably, indeed impossibly, heroic epic, who intervenes personally not only to make subjective observations and judgments but also to perform in the role of Providence, even God himself, has appeared as the essence of the "Je Hugolien," and it was a new departure in the relationship of artists to their art and public.[63]

The massive liberties Cham took with the novel offered escape from an overbearing authorial presence. In the parody, Cham shows and names Victor Hugo no less than twenty times, refers to him in the captions on another five occasions, and on another three manifests him in the form of an almighty pen. He thus plays on the reader's awareness not only *that* Hugo imposes himself but also, and more important, *how* and *why* he does so. Cham shows Hugo manipulating characters according to his whim, moving them in and out, creating and killing them off, and forcing them into the most unpleasant situations; but he also shows Hugo provoking resistance, as if the characters were real historical figures who resented being pushed around by authority, or actors fighting against a domineering writer-director who causes them also to fight against one another. Hugo is thus presented as one who ruthlessly enriches and empowers both himself and his product at the expense of his human, historical raw material, which seeks in vain to escape its creator. The caricaturist materializes the writer's self-assumed role as Providence, History, and God, as one who can put great generals in his pocket, sweep away a regiment of infantry, and drown armies in a flood of ink (Cham refers here to the seventeen-chapter digression on the battle of Waterloo, which many critics found too much). The plot itself, despite (or perhaps because of) its marvelously intricate logic, is sensed as an artful contrivance, a mechanical toy responding not to nature but to the cunning manipulation of the author (see Fig. 3.14, bottom).

All this, plus the personification of the reader as the most manipulated figure of all (he appears four times, twice reaching the end of a volume in tears—which are surely Cham's own), says what was obvious at the time: *Les Misérables* was an assertion of literary and social power, almost a political act, to which one succumbs as to the irresistible, but consciously, half resisting, and certainly with mixed feelings.

Cham's coverage of Hugo's immense novel is, considering the limitations of length and his compulsion to be funny at all times, relatively methodical, balanced, and complete. All the leading characters and most of the leading events are illustrated or at least referred to; certain memorable lesser characters and incidents are also present, although as many are, inevitably, absent (such as Petit Gervais, Enjolras, and Soeur Simplice). Cham, in his ten installments, says more about the novel in every sense than does the entire body of Brion's rather limp two hundred illustrations. He exudes, above all, a kind of parallel but crazy energy; and as characterization goes, his is the brightest of all the illustrators of the period, after only Hugo's own incomparable caricatural portraits of characters from the novel, which he executed for his own amusement.[64] Cham is not trying simply to replicate the story; he aims to capture idiosyncrasies, moods, and highlights, even if he subverts them. His interspersion of allegorical designs well conveys Hugo's method of using exposition on philosophical ideas and great moral struggles to mark caesuras in the fast-flowing action.

Although he generally follows the sequence of Hugo's text fairly closely, Cham makes one major transposition: he starts with the early life of Jean Valjean leading to his incarceration, which Hugo postpones to a flashback of memory when Valjean passes the night at the bishop's. This shortcut also affects Cham's major omission, the life and character of Bishop Myriel. The saintly bishop does, however, figure prominently in the first drawing, which occupies the whole page, showing him and Valjean engaged in a "steeplechase" up the Tree of Good and Evil. There is only one "error of fact," and even this may be deliberate: Cham has Javert personally, rather than some undefined local authority, arrest Champmathieu (20340; I.6.2).[65]

Comic simplifications, distortions, and exaggerations, some of them of the silliest kind, of course abound, for these are the stuff of parody, especially Cham's. But they are limited to the level of the action, for Cham does not attempt to parody Hugo's very distinctive linguistic style, as so many others had done and would do. At the most, he makes sportive play with the writer's famous taste for antithesis and what Lamartine called "the precipice of paradox":[66] for example, "M. Madelaine [*sic*] is torn between his good genius who urges him to return to the galleys where he was

60. Baric 1862. I have seen only the first album of this very rare work in the Cabinet des Estampes of the Bibliothèque Nationale, covering the first two parts of the novel (Fantine and Cosette). This album contains forty-eight woodcuts on twelve pages, very much out of order, with some odd interpolations not in Hugo (e.g., p. 10, scenes 38–41). Pirot (1958–1959, 226) lists two parts comprising 104 vignettes.
61. Published complete by Hetzel and Lacroix in 1865. A separate album of twenty-five of the Brion woodcuts was published in 1862 and marketed in photographic copies in London and New York with a letter of praise from Victor Hugo.
62. Guyard 1957, x.
63. See *Histoire littéraire de la France* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1977), 9: 123–129.
64. Hugo drew caricatural character sketches of Thénardier, and three quite different versions of Gavroche. In addition, included in the section "Images des Misérables" in the corpus of Hugo drawings (1967, nos. 465–474) are two drawings dated by the editor to the "end of exile," casting Gavroche and Jehan Frollo as the two bad boys of Corinth who vex Diogenes in his barrel. It has escaped the notice of contributors to the Hugo literature that these are close copies of the fourth and ninth drawings of a Bilderbogen by Wilhelm Busch called *Die bösen Buben von Korinth* (1862/1863, reproduced in Kunzle 1985, 33). The intermediary was probably a version by Gédéon in *L'Eclipse* (January 30, 1870).

    Manifested from early years, Hugo's skills as an artist, especially in a fantastic and caricatural vein, were well known to friends and commented on in print. The year of *Les Misérables,* 1862, also saw the first publication of drawings by him, in etchings by Paul Chenay.
65. The five-digit number refers to the Cham drawing, and is evidently the journal's inventory number. The three digits are those of part, book, and chapter in Hugo's novel.
66. Hugo 1909, 372.

so well off, and his evil genius who begs him to live happy and serene racked with remorse" (20341), the caption to an allegorical design illustrating the famous chapter "Une Tempête dans un crâne" (I.7.3).

Linguistically, Cham relies on syllepsis and pun, both forms of verbal compression for which he was famous. These can be quite effective; the sentence "Jean Valjean works at the port of Toulon and dirties his heart [shown conspicuously in the drawing] even more than his hands" (20223) sums up admirably an epoch of Valjean's existence in which the author emphasizes the moral over the physical degradation. Syllepsis serves Cham's need for compression or conflation of incidents: the important description of Monsieur Madeleine's (Jean Valjean's) industrial enterprise in jet beads and of his activity as mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer is conflated with the action by which he risks revealing his past: "M. Madelaine raises a factory with his savings, and a cart with his shoulders." There follows Cham's very worst pun: "'C'est fort, ça! [That's great; but *forçat* = convict],' says the police agent Javert, 'si cela en était un! [if that is what he were].' (This pun is excusable in a petty official.)"

Victor Hugo himself described the pun in *Les Misérables* as "la fiente de l'esprit qui s'envole [the droppings of wit on the wing]." Crude wordplay, like argot or slang—on which the novel incorporates a mini-treatise—is the mark of popular expression. Cham's version of Hugo's novel is as if written by the irreverent and gay Parisian urchin Gavroche (whom he, like other critics, accused of stealing from Eugène Sue), representative of the "people" and functioning as the "caricaturist" of bourgeois society and its cultural norms: "He [the urchin] deflates exaggerations, laughs at mystery, sticks out his tongue at ghosts, brings pretension down to earth, caricatures the overblown epic. . . . For the solemn vision he substitutes his own irreverent fancy."[67] Shortly after this passage, which introduces the gamin's *physiologie,* Hugo tells us (in chapter 8) a version of the old story of how Louis Philippe helped a gamin inscribe on a wall the royal portrait as a pear.[68] Hugo, like the king, understood caricature, even when it was directed against himself; and *Les Misérables* contains many real, if sly and unobtrusive, comic touches and dialogues, as well as parodies of learned and legal rhetoric. The destiny of the urchin-satirist and, in the case of Gavroche, the revolutionary at war with the society is that of rebels and the wretched who as adults, says Hugo, are "almost invariably ground up in the mill of the social order" (chapter 13, paraphrased)—like Busch's Max and Moritz?

There are numerous other points of contact between the method of the great romantic writer and that of caricature, and particularly comic strip. Many of the sentences and paragraphs in *Les Misérables,* terse, abrupt, of wonderful simplicity, read like captions to images that have been or could be evoked at length. Trivial objects become hallucinations, like the doorknob at the Arras tribunal (20343; I.7.8). Events snowball; small incidents and accidents lead to immense catastrophes. Coincidence is Providence and King. Hugo's impressionistic evocation of the physiognomy of a historical moment by means of a hodgepodge of news trivia, best represented in the chapter entitled "L'Année 1817" (I.3.1), has its exact counterpart in Cham's specialty, the Revue comique, the peculiar character and function of which we have noted. The Revue comique had become too much a feature of the illustrated journals to have escaped Hugo's attention.

It was easy for Cham to join in mocking the improbability or implausibility of this or that episode. The constant use of coincidence (Cham's Javert lands from the skies on Valjean's shoulders as he leaves the sewer, like a figure from Töpffer) was but a venial sin. Not so, however, the blatant disregard for common sense. One example among many: the unlikelihood that Fantine, desperate as she is, would really abandon her adored child to a strange and villainous-looking couple. Cham does not omit the occasion of this fatal impulse. In Hugo it is a visual one, and Cham yields, with Fantine (and Brion, the "official" illustrator), to the charm of the bizarrely picturesque but tender image of the Thénardier children swinging on a chain between the huge wheels of a cart. Cham's next drawing shows Fantine, disheveled but not caricatured, handing over her frightened child to the female Thénardier, the *sauvagesse* whose appearance matches Hugo's vivid description (itself patently influenced, like so much caricature, by illustrated physiognomic manuals) so much better than does Brion's illustration. Bristling with cruelty and greed, she is a comic fairy-tale ogress about to devour a child that is much more of a baby than Hugo's almost-three-year-old. Cham's caption is pure sarcasm: "Seduced by the benevolent air printed on the face of Madame Thénardier, Fantine gives her Cosette . . ." (Fig. 3.13).

Then comes an example of Cham's comic-callous conflation, of a sequence that starts as a conventional mercenary transaction and ends, after many vicissitudes which Cham omits, in the grotesque, repulsive, and perhaps implausible: "[Fantine] agrees to 50 francs a month, plus her hair and front teeth to cover sugar and soap." The bitter pathos of her forced descent into self-mutilation and prostitution is the occasion of another typical distorted causality: "Fantine profits from her lack of hair and teeth to make conquests and improve her position" (Fig. 3.13).

Hugo wraps great implausibilities in a finely stitched and fitting web of detailed observation, preparation, and justification. His realism takes careful account of clothing, always a preoccupation of the comic strip—and of Cham. Two examples here: Jean Valjean's yellow overcoat and his military headgear. The overcoat had already struck one critic as the last garment a man who wished to remain inconspicuous would choose;[69] made of a rough, threadbare, ocher-colored cloth (a color Hugo assures us was not unusual at the time), it was appropriate to "extreme indigence and extreme cleanliness," the garb of a "former tutor of good family returned from emigration" (II.3.6). And yet, in an unexplained contradiction, the police pick Jean Valjean out from the crowd and follow him because he is suspicious-looking. For Cham, dressing a man in such an overcoat is an example of the author's malice, for it causes passing urchins to flee in horror and Victor Hugo's own tailor to "fall grievously sick, seeing his client's bad taste" (20409).

Cham's manner, over the last third of the story, of endowing Jean Valjean's headgear with a comic character and narrative life of its own has partly, I think, to do with the caricaturist's need to detach himself from the text and have a bit of fun on his own account; it also stems partly from an impulse to lend Valjean a visual distinction in keeping with the increasingly heroic stature he is given as the novel progresses. Hitherto dressed in a huge-brimmed hat or, when bareheaded, with his hair like an electrified haystack (following Hugo's text, turned white since the Champmathieu trial), Valjean adopts, per Cham, an outlandish *bonnet à poil,* or busby, when obliged by Louis Philippe (oddly, not at all the portly, pear-shaped stereotype) to join his National Guard. Cham ignores Hugo's careful prescriptions of the moments when it is appropriate and safe for Valjean, still on the run from the police, to wear the busby. It serves various incidents and jokes[70] and, finally, as a gag (literally) for Javert when the insurgents capture him at the barricade. Jean Valjean replaces the headgear by shooting down the plumed metal helmet of a military fireman—by which Cham transposes an incident in the novel testifying to both Valjean's perfect pacifism and his perfect marksmanship. Valjean is stuck with this helmet, as outrageous-looking as the busby (and, as it were, a comic Homeric epithet for "hero"), during all his subsequent adventures through the sewers and right down to the wedding of Cosette, who had rusted it with her tears at Marius's illness.

At the end Cham puts Valjean through four quick costume changes, the last two in a grotesquely pathetic way: first, when the old man actually dresses himself in the clothes Cosette had worn as a little girl, which, according to the novel, he had in fact carefully preserved but which he there merely kissed and wept into;

67. Hugo 1976, III.1.3.
68. The pear/Louis Philippe appears in a Victor Hugo drawing of the period in question (early 1830s); see Hugo 1967, no. 57.
69. Courtat 1862, 10–11.
70. As in a Cham series dating back to February 14, 1846, "Tribulations de la garde nationale" (*L'Illustration* 6:381).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Rue du Croissant, 16. Rue du Croissant, 16.

JOURNAL AMUSANT

PRIX : 3 mois. . . . 5 fr. 6 mois. . . 10 » 12 mois. . . . 17 »

JOURNAL ILLUSTRÉ, Journal d'images, journal comique, critique, satirique, etc.

PRIX : 3 mois. . . . 5 fr. 6 mois. . . . 10 » 12 mois. . . . 17 »

LES MISÉRABLES DE VICTOR HUGO

LUS, MÉDITÉS, COMMENTÉS ET ILLUSTRÉS

par CHAM.

2e PARTIE.

AU SERGENT DE WATERLOO.

Les petites Thénardier, enfants entre trois-quatre ans et deux grosses roues de charrette.

Séduite par l'air de bonté empreint sur la boutique de madame Thénardier, Fantine donne Cosette à garder et nourrir.

Convient de cinquante francs par mois, plus ses cheveux et ses dents de devant pour remplacer le sucre et le savon.

Fantine profite de ce qu'elle a pris un cheveux et [illegible]

FIG. 3.13. *Les Misérables de Victor Hugo* (1862).
"The little Thénardier girls, between three or four years and two big cart wheels. / Seduced by the benevolent air printed on the face of Madame Thénardier, Fantine gives Cosette to her to nurse and raise. / Agrees to fifty francs a month, plus her hair and front teeth to cover sugar and soap. / Fantine takes advantage of her lack of hair and teeth to make conquests and improve her position."

then in the *coup de théâtre,* when Valjean, unnecessarily perhaps but heroically, reveals his shameful past by, as Cham has it, actually putting on his old convict's uniform. Marius appears to accept this, instead of rejecting it as in Hugo, and Cham makes double nonsense of the next scene, in which father and daughter sit on the mantelpiece for lack of chairs, which Marius (per Hugo) had removed to signal his disapproval (Fig. 3.14).

The archaic, romantic, virginal-spiritual passion of Marius and Cosette, which the author evokes with tender astonishment and an admiring, not entirely uncritical incredulity, becomes for Cham an acute case of foot and shoe fetishism. Of course, Cham was not predisposed against all the novel's manifestations of romantic love; he treated the ecstasy of Fantine and Tholomyès respectfully and admired the delicacy with which the author prepared Marius and Cosette's nuptial bed. But Marius's behavior with Cosette in the garden in the Rue Plumet, which other critics found excessive as well, offered too ready a target. In the purity of his love, says Hugo, Marius never took more than one kiss, would not have dared to look at Cosette's ankle or speak of her garter, regarded all her accessories as sacred objects, and was "overwhelmed" (as he tells her) by the bottom of her skirt when it exposed the point of her shoe. He studied her feet in a microscope and adored and prostrated himself to kiss them. Cham, however, has Marius and Cosette rolling in ecstasy at each other's feet, and when Cosette appears before her father wearing Marius's boots, his suspicions are aroused (20737). Returning to this "lunatic" love (with the moon presiding indulgently), Cham burlesques the expression in Hugo's almost self-parodic anthropomorphic nature of the human lovers' forbidden, sublimated carnality. Hugo: "The blossoms opened to enrich them with their scent, and they poured out their hearts to the blossoms. A vigorous, carnal world of flowing sap surrounded these two innocents, and the words they spoke set up a quiver in the trees" (IV.8.1). Cham (with a drawing to match): "Carried away by the situation, the trees give themselves up to a wild polka, virtue not having struck root in the Rue Plumet garden" (20765).

Senselessly, unnecessarily (and implausibly), Hugo makes Marius, threatened with separation from Cosette, carve his address in the plaster of a wall of her home, which duly stirs the first suspicions of Jean Valjean. Cham shows Marius's action to be as indiscreet, in his situation, as if he had scrawled his name and address in huge letters over the whole of the wall of a two-story



Jean Valjean s'excuse de ne pouvoir assister au repas de noce, prétextant une invitation au Bal Chicard.



20868
Rentré chez lui, Valjean pose sur un tabouret et essaye les vieux effets de sa chère petite Cosette.



Le lendemain matin, voulant réveiller agréablement son gendre, Jean Valjean endosse l'uniforme et va offrir son boulet comme ornement de cheminée aux nouveaux mariés.

Il lui fait accroire des amis partout, se dit Marius. Mon cher ami, je vous fais passer à ma femme.

20867
Valjean vient voir madame Marius, et se trouve réduit, faute de chaises, à s'asseoir avec Cosette sur la cheminée.



20868
Par un moyen mécanique tout ingénieux, M. Victor Hugo promène Jean Valjean de la porte de Cosette à la rue de l'Homme-Armé, et *vice versa*.

FIG. 3.14. *Les Misérables de Victor Hugo* (1863).
"Jean Valjean excuses himself from the wedding dinner, on the pretext of an invitation to the Bal Chicard. / Back home, Valjean weeps and tries on the old clothes of his dear little Cosette. / Next morning Jean Valjean pleasantly greets his son-in-law in his old convict's uniform and gives him as a wedding present his iron ball for a chimney ornament. / Friends are needed everywhere, thinks Marius. My dear friend, continue giving your good advice to my wife. / Valjean visits Madame Marius and finds himself, for lack of chairs, reduced to sitting with Cosette on the chimney. / By means of a very ingenious mechanism, M. Victor Hugo transfers Jean Valjean back and forth between Cosette's door and the Rue de l'Homme Armé."

house, "on the model of what he [Marius] saw on the premises of M. Nadar the photographer" (20767). Cupid writes "Crétin" on his tablet, and rightly so.

Cham signaled that he was engaged in something more than a conventional parody of a less-than-conventional novel by his title, which avoids use of the word "parody": *Les Misérables de Victor Hugo, Read, Meditated, Commented on, and Illustrated by Cham*. As parody, as satire, as reproduction of Hugo, Cham's is a very mixed affair. The balance of what is omitted or glossed over is hard to establish, as against what is inordinately developed. Like any other reader, Cham remembered some features more than others. One of these was the doll given by Jean Valjean to Cosette. This doll plays a conspicuous part in the narrative at and around the time she is rescued from the Thénardiers. It is a symbol of the good life, of the human warmth Cosette has been denied and any child deserves.[71] It becomes the link in a chain of little incidents that reveal not only her character, the character of the Thénardiers and their children, and the manner in which they oppressed her, but also the power, humanity, and destiny of Valjean and the manner in which he rescued her. From his personal experience as a father, the author renders through the dolls of Thénardier and Cosette, perhaps for the first time in the history of French literature, the true psychology of the child.[72] The doll becomes the pivot of a power reversal, and Hugo prepares deliberately for it in a chapter entitled "L'Entrée en scène d'une poupée" (II.3.4). The doll is an imposing character in itself, majestically tall, beautifully dressed, the town's major attraction when displayed in the shop.

Cham, like all caricaturists, worked with visual disproportions. He had already noted (as had another critic, Courtat) how impossibly big was the bucket of water, as described by the author, that occasioned the first encounter of Jean Valjean and Cosette. The doll in Cham thus becomes a grotesquely thin, totally graceless, tremendously elongated object, almost as tall as Valjean himself. Cosette, who instantly names it Catherine, clings to it even as she is purchased from Thénardier like a piece of mer-

71. Is it also a symbol of the grande dame that Cosette might become, as Baronne de Pontmercy? An early note, dating from 1845–1848, proposed a four-stranded plot: "Histoire d'un saint—Histoire d'un homme—Histoire d'une femme—Histoire d'une poupée" (i.e., Myriel, Valjean, Fantine, and Cosette; see Guyard 1957, xv). But in what sense, at this point, is Hugo identifying Cosette with the doll?

72. See Gaillard 1969, 147.



Poursuivie par Chat-Vert, la malheureuse Cosette devient forcément une coureuse!



Toujours pourchassé, Jean Valjean passe devant le jardin des plantes et voit avec plaisir que les tigres eux-mêmes versent des larmes sur sa position, tant M. Victor Hugo l'a rendue intéressante

FIG. 3.15. *Les Misérables de Victor Hugo* (1862).
"Pursued by Chat-Vert [Javert], the unfortunate Cosette becomes perforce a runner [*coureuse,* streetwalker]. / Still on the run, Valjean passes by the zoo, and sees with pleasure that even the tigers shed tears over his predicament, which M. Victor Hugo has rendered so dire."

chandise and tucked under Valjean's arm, as if she herself were the doll (20419). Cosette's attachment to her doll is mimicked by Cham's own attachment to the pathetic concept and bizarre graphic effect of the tiny disheveled girl clutching her huge, graceless toy. There are now three characters—Valjean, Cosette, and Catherine—and Victor Hugo is very precise (and probably autobiographical) about the gradual transference of Cosette's affection from the doll to Valjean, her protector, who now moves into a paternal role. Cosette eventually comes to the point where she "prefers an hour with him even to a ravishing tête-à-tête with Catherine" (II.4.4).

Discovering Javert on his tracks, Hugo's Valjean moves hurriedly from the Gorbeau tenement, taking with him nothing but some money and Cosette. There is no more mention of the doll,[73] which Valjean could hardly have risked allowing Cosette to take along, given the imperious necessity of not attracting attention; he is even annoyed at a tiny incident over the payment of the toll at the Austerlitz bridge. Cham, in contrast, shows Valjean escaping at full tilt, dragging Cosette who flies through the air after him, with the doll in her grasp flying after her. At the beginning of Cham's fourth part, the motif is repeated, in closer view, with most of Valjean cut off and Javert, visible in hot pursuit, reaching for the doll, as it were, with his cane (Fig. 3.15). This full-width vignette is followed by a similar one, set in Cham's version in the Jardin des Plantes (where even the tigers are moved to tears), and then a fourth scene, also full width, of Jean Valjean's "indignantly throw[ing] the doll over the Austerlitz bridge, since it was lacking in feeling and had a wooden reaction to these painful circumstances" (20442). It is as if Cham is expressing *his* indignation at the author for having made *his* favorite doll unaccountably disappear.

Cham's transformation of Hugo's novel ranges from the detailed "textual" critique to the interpolation of what amounts to a new character for the hero and a new dimension to his social relations. King Louis XVIII appears only twice in the novel, first at some distance and very fleetingly, when he attempts to decorate Valjean-Madeleine for his services to commerce, which Valjean refuses. To this trivial detail, which serves not to advance the narrative but only to illustrate the hero's social prestige and self-denying character, Cham devotes a whole allegorical drawing (20339). It also serves later as the justification for the recurring concern that Cham imagines the king would or should show for the welfare of one who had proved himself a sterling citizen, a nationally known mayor, and the inventor of a profitable new industrial process. Yet in the novel, the authorities continue to hunt Valjean on a technicality as the worst kind of recidivist. The implausibility of this merciless hounding of the once-honored citizen was duly noted by the critics, who deemed the whole work immoral, subversive, and an odious libel on a society that could never be so harsh in reality. Although Cham's repeated interpolation of Louis into the narrative as Valjean's would-be friend may be regarded as a caprice, it also stands as a mocking "correction," a reminder of authorial negligence or defiance of realism.

King Louis makes his second and last appearance in the novel, again in an impersonal way, in the course of his noisy, swift, arrogant progress through a Parisian suburb, observed by hostile bystanders; this occasion provides the context for the senseless police pursuit of a certain individual in a poor, ocher-colored coat, who wants only to disappear in the crowd. In Cham, however, the king leaps out of his carriage, "having recognized [Valjean] and deciding to offer him the Cross [of the Légion d'Honneur] once again." Valjean flees the honor (20415).

Cham's King Louis, thinking his beloved Monsieur Madeleine dead, adopts court mourning for a week; when he finds him alive, he provides him with a recommendation to his brother, Charles X, whom Madeleine-Valjean (sick from having Victor Hugo burn his arm "to amuse the reader") engages to take over the storytelling for a while. At the very end, at the death of Jean Valjean, the "immense angel, its wings stretched out" (Hugo's image) ready to receive his soul, turns out to be the king once more.

What is the significance of these royal interventions in connection with Hugo's idea of revolution? The world of *Les Misérables* is that of a society governed by first a Bourbon, then an Orleanist monarchy, under both of which Hugo had flourished and to which he had adhered. From Louis XVIII he had accepted a

73. The only other mention of the doll comes at the very end, in one of Hugo's most delicate touches, where the dying Valjean reminds Cosette of the doll and tells how much he regretted her not having had it with her at the convent.

stipend for his first book of poems, from Louis Philippe a peerage and admission to the Academy. After 1848, when he was briefly Bonapartist, he moved rapidly to the left, professing republicanism, democracy, and antimonarchism. It served Hugo's political purpose to show monarchy as merciless. Cham, the aristocrat déclassé, was inclined to be less harsh, and he attributes to Hugo personally ("furieux contre le gouvernement," 20771) the construction of the barricades, as though these were barricades against the imperial government, which had sent him into exile and from which he refused to accept amnesty. And Cham is not far wrong.

Cham was less sympathetic to the idea of revolution than Hugo. Not inaccurately, he has Marius join the movement "without knowing what it was about" and, crazed by his love, comically seize a guard to make him cry "Vive Cosette." Marius's comrades-in-arms of the Société de l'A.B.C. go to the barricades "in the hope of getting a government which will pay their café expenses" (as Valjean goes in the hope of getting Louis XVIII to join him there). Cham chides the author, who depicts the battle as a tragic, heroic, and historic necessity, for painting the barricades a fantastic, poetic pink and for gilding the cannonballs and bullets. (The caricaturist, of course, shows Hugo doing this literally.) Laced through Cham's extensive and textual treatment of the barricades (right down to such a curious detail as the omnibus) is a critique, shared with Lamartine, of reckless, emotional revolutionism, which Hugo romanticized and exemplified in Marius, his self-portrait.

The barricades in the novel are presented as those (lesser ones) of 1832, but they are really those of 1830, and even more of 1848: of revolution against tyranny. Although Hugo himself had marched out, unarmed, *against* the working-class insurgents of June 1, 1848, fourteen years of neo-Napoleonic despotism had cast them in a heroic light. The barricades, Hugo predicted, were the "heart of the subject" and would "make the success of the book" as an indictment of the current regime.[74] Indeed, the whole novel, said a critic deemed to be appealing for a government ban, was a "veritable demonstration of 1848."[75] Even though the censorship moved only to suppress the stage version of the novel, conservative critics were in no doubt as to its revolutionary, socialist, and subversive purpose—which does much to explain its immense popularity as well. In this light, it is hard not to view Cham's treatment of the heroic martyrdoms on the barricades of Eponine, Gavroche, and old Mabeuf, each of which is given a different foolish twist, as the characteristic caricatural dilution and neutralization of real popular political aspirations. For Cham at this point, revolutionary self-sacrifice might be dismissed as just so much romantic nonsense.

74. Gaillard 1969, 199, 217.
75. Cuvillier 1862, 353.

CHAPTER 4

FRANCE, 1848–1853

Nadar's Mossieu Réac: *A* Macaire *of the 1848 Revolution*

In the aftermath of the 1848 revolution a truly militant comic magazine was launched by Pierre-Jules Hetzel and Nadar. Hetzel, a writer, bookseller, and publisher, had been directly involved in the February revolution and had held ministerial posts in the provisional government. After the elections of December 10, however, he left public life to return to publishing and writing, including the "famous"[1] *Revue Comique*. He went into exile following the coup d'état of 1851. Nadar, born in 1820 as Gaspard Félix Tournachon, became famous later as a photographer and balloonist. An autodidactic draftsman, he had led an unfocused, Bohemian life doing occasional caricatures. Not active in the February revolution, in March 1848 he joined the Polish legion, made up of Polish émigrés of 1830 and French volunteers who wanted to get the Russians out of Poland. Thrown back by the Prussians, the expedition failed miserably, and by May Nadar was back in Paris.

The *Revue Comique,* launched in November 1848, lived up to the phrase *à l'usage des gens sérieux* (intended for serious people), which appeared at the top of every right-hand page. The magazine set itself the specific purpose of halting the ascendancy of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, who since the summer of 1848 had been preparing his candidacy for the presidency of the Republic. Despite a subtitle that made it sound like just another eclectic news magazine ("Moral, Philosophical, Political, Critical, Literary, and Artistic History of the Week"), the focus was always political and directed against Bonaparte and Bonapartists. Indeed, the comic strip that opened the first issues of the magazine constitutes the genre's most direct and historically contoured indictment of the career of the man whose regime was able to suppress the magazine altogether after a life of just over a year (Fig. 4.1).[2] Writers included Auguste Lireux and Clément Caraguel of the *Charivari* and the poets Emile de la Bédollière and Gérard de Nerval; the list of seven artists includes Bertall among lesser-known figures, but Nadar, who apparently was responsible for editing the magazine as a whole, drew (as "Nadard") all the original strips and most of the single cartoons.

The frontispiece takes over an English cartoon (credited to the *Puppet Show*) contrasting the great Napoleon and his nephew—in an assumption, as it were, of "English" satirical freedom. The format is reminiscent of *Punch,* in the framing of the text and the regular full-page *charge,* but the weekly strip constituted the bulk of the "500 political caricatures" claimed by the first, six-month, volume.

The *Revue Comique* opens with a loosely chronological and more or less allegorical sequence of forty-two vignettes—run, over three consecutive issues, down the outer columns of the center pages (in itself an unusual arrangement)—entitled *The Illustrated (If Not Illustrious) Adventures of the Prince pour Rire.*[3] Nadar mocks the career of Louis-Napoléon (often in contrast to his uncle: the goose trying to imitate the eagle; Fig. 4.1, top left), his abortive insurrections, and his attempts to form alliances with heterogeneous opportunistic political elements and journals (Fig. 4.1, bottom left). Prominent among the latter are Emile de Girardin's popular *La Presse,* which, having promoted the ouster of King Louis Philippe and supported the Republic, now threw its weight behind Louis-Napoléon (it is shown here in the guise of Robert Macaire), and *L'Evénement,* represented by its founder, a bulbous-headed Victor Hugo, then also a supporter of Louis-Napoléon. In Fig. 4.1 (top right), rural France is shown beating up the Napoleonic goose; it fact, it was the presidential candidate who was beating up the peasantry (Daumier's famous figure Ratapoil represents the sinister thug employed for this purpose), and he won a massive plurality in the countryside using a mixture of physical intimidation and populist rhetoric. The last vignette of the sequence (Fig. 4.1, bottom right)—published with the preceding at the time of the December elections, which swept Prince Louis-Napoléon into office—shows Victor Hugo and Adolphe Thiers, a former minister under Louis Philippe and now also a backer of the new president, among the three puppet masters counting their winnings after the play. The political puppet play, mounted as a benefit for the three Bonapartist newspapers, ends with the puppet Louis-Napoléon brandishing his club over a prostrate republican France. Nadar shares the Bonapartist politicians' illusion: if Louis-Napoléon ever was their puppet, he very soon became the puppet master himself.

1. Thus commemorated in Vapereau (1880); the *Revue Comique* is virtually ignored in the primary biography of Nadar by Dilasser and Prinet (1966, 53).
2. Thirteen months (November 1848–December 1849), and thirty-eight undated issues.
3. *Prince pour Rire* is untranslatable, though in this context "Joker Prince" comes near.



— Prince, je vous amène ces messieurs, tous vieux de la vieille, pour composer votre cabinet et votre cour.



Les villageois, s'apercevant qu'on n'a pas du tout payé pour eux les impôts, ainsi qu'on le leur avait promis, se livrent à une grande chasse à l'oie.

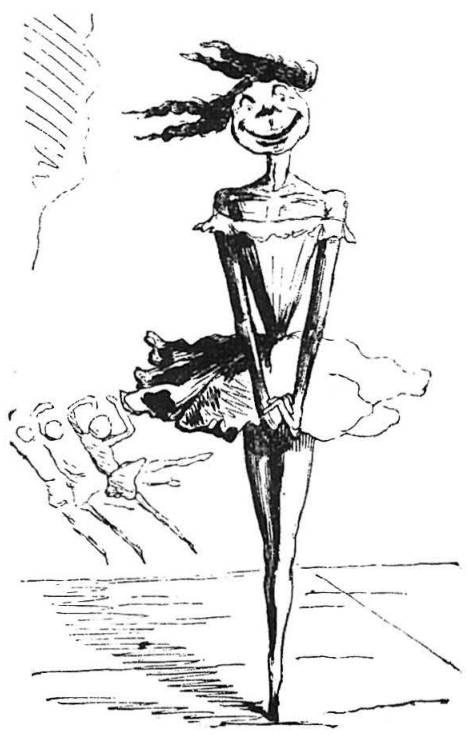


Le prince, ne les trouvant pas assez bien mis, choisit son cabinet et sa cour parmi quelques journalistes de ses amis et plusieurs personnages très-considérés dans toutes les tables d'hôte des Batignolles.



La farce est jouée...

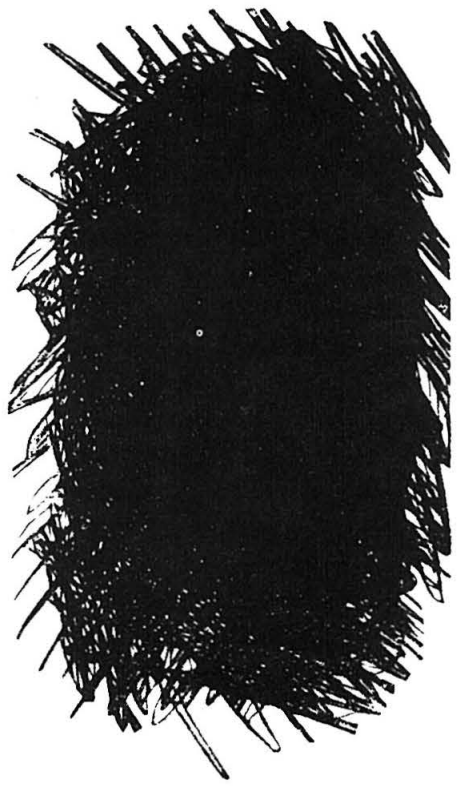
FIG. 4.1. Nadar: *The Illustrated (If Not Illustrious) Adventures of the Prince pour Rire* (1849).
"Prince, I bring you these old gentlemen, all of the old school, for your cabinet and court." / The prince, finding them ill dressed, chooses his cabinet and court from among some journalist friends and several highly rated personages. / . . . / The villagers, seeing that their taxes have not been paid for them at all, as was promised, go in for the great goose chase. / The farce is over... [On placard: Performance for the Benefit of three needy newspapers—*La Presse, Le Constitutionnel, L'Evénement*. Price of Seats has gone up.]"



Il faut dire que mossieu Réac, outre *la banque* de son agent de change et les manœuvres remarquables de ses innombrables courtiers, n'a pas négligé de faire hommage de quelques actions à mademoiselle Loulou Mouillefarine (dite *la Cigale turbulente*), jolie danseuse, qui a l'oreille du ministre.— si j'ose m'exprimer ainsi !



...non plus qu'au célèbre journaliste Blagagnac, de Marseille, qui a prouvé et démontré tant qu'assez dans son estimable journal...



...que l'affaire est parfaitement claire.



C'est alors que mossieu Réac, dans un rapport fort remarquable, annonce aux actionnaires « que les travaux sont entrepris sur toute la ligne avec une grande vigueur, — MAIS qu'une montagne à percer occasionnera quelques retards. »

Les nez des jolis petits actionnaires commencent à prendre de la dimension.



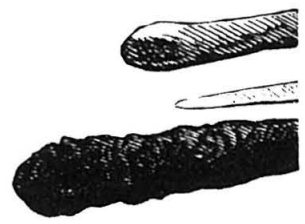
« Et qu'après la montagne, les ingénieurs ont rencontré la mer Atlantique, qu'ils avaient oubliée dans les premiers devis; mais l'ingénieur en chef surmontera aisément cette difficulté au moyen de rails dits *marins* posés sur des coussinets en liége. »

Les nez des jolis petits actionnaires s'allongent excessivement.



« Toutes ces difficultés, continue mossieu Réac, n'arrêtent pas le zèle de l'administration, appuyée sur l'intelligence et le patriotisme des actionnaires; elles seront surmontées, grâce à quelques appels de fonds supplémentaires et à quelques emprunts. »

Les nez des jolis petits actionnaires ne connaissent plus de bornes.



Report des nez
des jolis petits actionnaires.

Cependant les actions baissent dans la même proportion. — La prime disparaît et les versements ne se font plus.

FIG. 4.2. Nadar: *The Public and Private Life of Mossieu Réac* (1849). Chap. 3: "Fortune smiles on His Industrial and Philanthropic Efforts." [Row 1] M. Réac, banker and financial manipulator, has not failed to offer complimentary shares to Mademoiselle Loulou Mouillefarine (called *The Turbulent Cricket*), a pretty singer who has the minister's ear, / as also to the celebrated journalist Blagagnac, of Marseilles, who has proved to the hilt . . . / ...that the affair is perfectly clear. [Row 2] M. Réac announces that tunneling through the mountain will cause some delay. The noses of the nice small shareholders grow longer. / And that after the mountain, the engineers encountered unexpectedly the Atlantic Ocean, which difficulty will be easily overcome by means of "marine" rails placed on cork cushions. The noses grow longer. All these difficulties will not lessen the zeal of the administration, relying on the intelligence and patriotism of the shareholders; they will be surmounted by appealing for supplementary funds and a few loans. The noses know no bounds. / Continuation of the noses. Meanwhile, the shares take a dive, the bonus disappears, and investment stops.

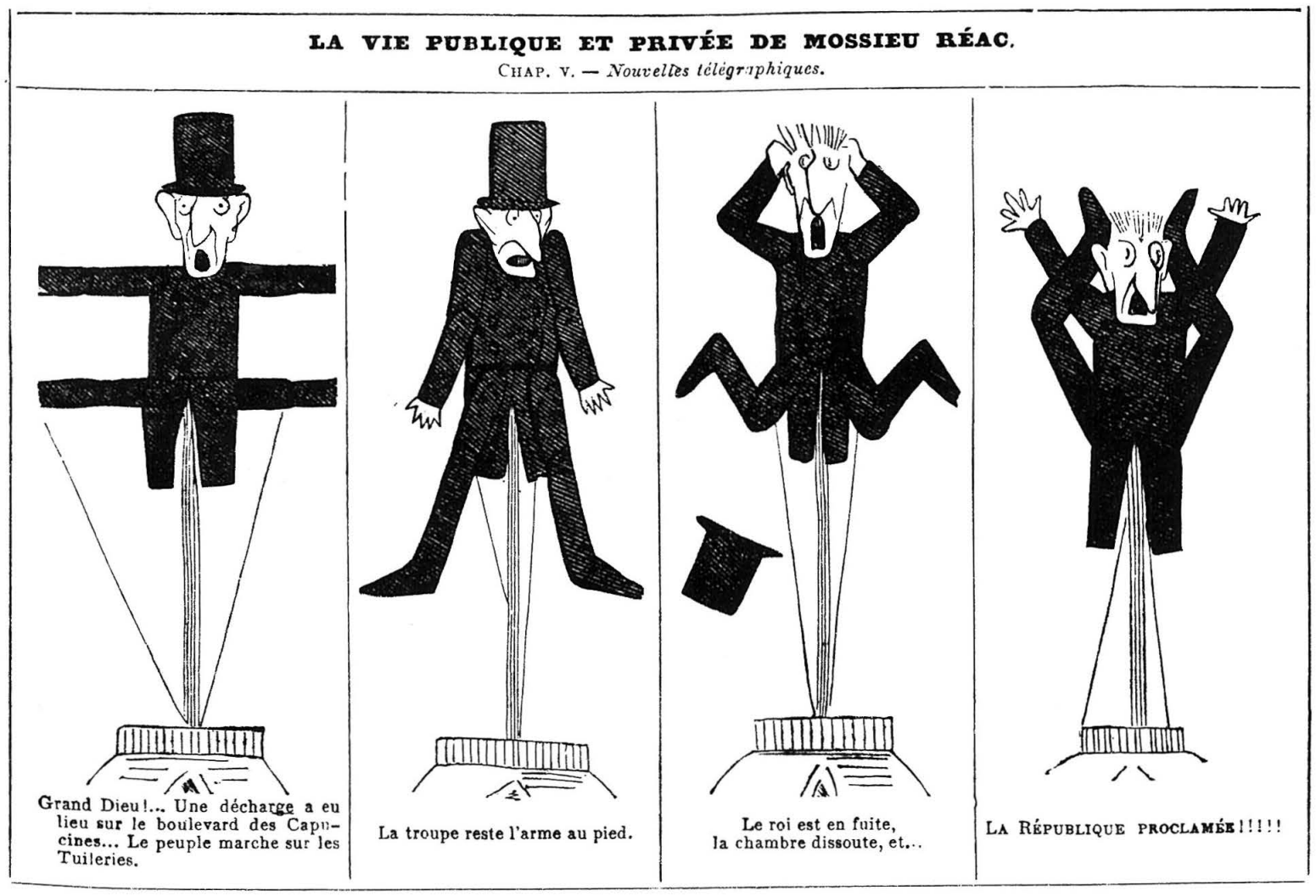


FIG. 4.3. Nadar: *Mossieu Réac* (1849). Chap. 5: "Telegraphic news." "Good God!... Shooting on the Boulevard des Capucines... The people march on the Tuileries. / The troops refuse to act. / The king is in flight, the chamber dissolved, and... / THE REPUBLIC PROCLAIMED!!!!!"

In its propaganda war, the *Revue Comique* correctly identified journalism as the factor that, having made the revolution itself, would now decide the future form of government in France. Unable to attack directly the current master of propaganda, who was now president of the Republic, Nadar started *La Vie politique et littéraire de Vipérin, journaliste et industriel* (The Political and Literary Life of Vipérin, Journalist and Industrialist).[4] Vipérin is a venomous crook, represented as a viper serving one master after another, a blackmailer, a swindler in business, a betrayer of friends, and capable by his mere viperous presence of causing his noxious prison cellmates (other animal vermin) to die. The viper is identifiable as Emile de Girardin, director of *La Presse*.[5] A former supporter of Louis Philippe's Guizot ministry, on February 24 he had personally told the king to abdicate; then, after helping to form the republican government, he moved onto the side of reaction and Louis-Napoléon. Girardin also had a genius for insult and duels: he had killed the editor of the rival *National,* Armand Carrel, in a duel that was hailed as a victory of the brash, commercial, opportunistic new press over the morally and politically principled kind.

Neither the *Vipérin* nor the *Prince pour Rire* sequence is successful, however, either graphically or as narrative. It was not until Nadar found, under the increasing ban on attacking the political personalities of the regime, a generalized social type who could function, without individual biographical constraints, as the quintessential Bonapartist bourgeois turncoat that he was able to create a memorable comic strip hero. His new series, *The Public and Private Life of Mossieu Réac,* is of unusual coherence and length (148 drawings, divided into ten "chapters" and run horizontally at the bottom of the center pages of twenty nearly consecutive issues, February to September [?] 1849). It bears the mark of Töpffer, and entirely to its advantage—in the framing and elimination of background, the emphatic contours, the physical hyperactivity, the consequent nimble development of incidents and farce, and above all the creation of a distinctive but expressive physiognomy for the protagonist.

As an embodiment of the ascendant reactionary forces in France, Réac is identified ancestrally with various persons of myth and ancient and modern history who persecuted or rejected the progressive and unorthodox. As a child, his nature is selfish, cruel, hypocritical, and treacherous; he is educated by superstitious and stupid servants and Jesuits. He is a juvenile (and later, mature) Robert Macaire, the quintessential swindler created by Philipon and Daumier in the previous decade and still immensely popular, who stalked and postured across the social and economic panorama of France. For Réac, academic and commercial work are as one; throughout he cheats and wheedles his way to success. His "fortunate physiognomy" gains him a position as clerk to a bailiff, to whose repressive functions (evictions, bill collecting, and so on) his personality is ideally suited, and he always lands on his feet when attacked by angry victims. Finally—now the true adult Macaire—he engages in crooked "philanthropic" industrial enterprises, launched with the usual maneuvers and bribes at the highest level. (Nadar, like Philipon with the original *Macaire,* was prevented from using recognizable names.) Réac's consortium proposes to build a railway from Krakow to Monaco, with a branch line via Madagascar, but when unforeseen problems arise—mountains to tunnel and oceans to traverse—the shares plummet, the shareholders are bereft, and Réac and his fellow crooks abscond (Fig. 4.2).

They then invent "dung-bread" (*bouse-pain*) and launch a Great Philanthropic Society for the manufacture of flour from horse manure. Given its excessively low nutritional value and manufacturing cost, the government commission declares it proper to be adopted in hospitals. Thus Réac rises to become hospital administrator and member of the Charitable Board (equivalent of the United Way in the United States), and up the ladder to deputy, decorations, and prefect.

He reacts in horror to the news of the revolution, like an aerial telegraphic Chappé-system puppet (Fig. 4.3), but succeeds by means of various political disguises in shifting cunningly from left to right (at one point he adopts, as Nadar himself did, the costume of the Polish nationalist). Reác is the quintessential political con man, conspirator, and agent provocateur, a truly political Robert Macaire exploiting a revolutionary situation to his personal profit.

He finally teams up with the rascally young Aristo, son of General Baron Aristo de Taupinois (*taupe* meaning "mole"), with

4. *Revue Comique,* no. 6 (December 16, 1848): 85–92 (twenty-two scenes).
5. See the Horay edition of *Mossieu Réac* (1977), with a preface by François Caradec.

LA VIE PUBLIQUE ET PRIVÉE DE MOSSIEU RÉAC.

CHAP. VIII. — *Faits et gestes parlementaires de mossieu Réac.*



Mossieu Réac, quand tout est terminé, se lève à la hâte, et crie que les insurgés ont commis des horreurs. — Il écrit au *Constitutionnel* qu'ils ont chargé leurs fusils de projectiles qui empoisonnent.



Il assure
qu'ils ont scié le nez de M. Véron
entre deux planches,



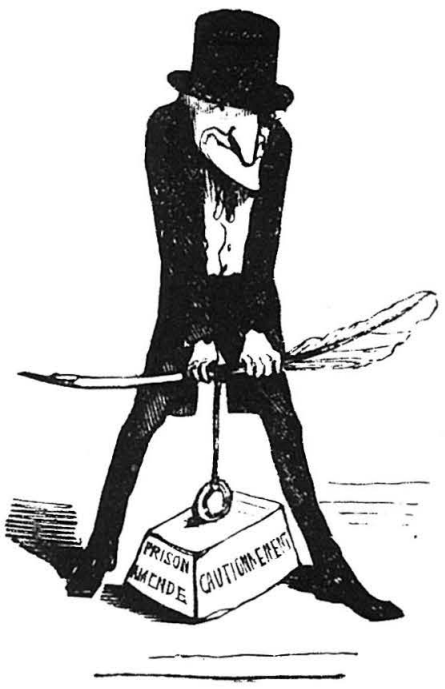
...que M. Thiers a eu deux chevaux
tués sous lui.



Et il arrête énergiquement une vivandière qu'il accuse de vendre, en guise d'eau-de-vie, de l'acide prussique.

LA VIE PUBLIQUE ET PRIVÉE DE MOSSIEU RÉAC.

CHAP. IX. — *Quelques opinions de mossieu Réac.*



Au reste, toujours conséquent avec lui-même,
il vote, comme il les comprend,
la liberté de la presse,



...la liberté de discussion,



...et le droit de réunion.

FIG. 4.4. Nadar: *Mossieu Réac* (1849). Chap. 8: "Parliamentary Activities of Mossieu Réac"; and Chap. 9: "Some Opinions of Mossieu Réac."
"Mossieu Réac . . . hastily rises to accuse the insurgents of atrocities. He writes to the *Constitutionnel* that they loaded their guns with poisoned projectiles. / He asserts that they have sawed M. Véron's nose between two planks, / ...that M. Thiers had two horses killed under him. / And he forcibly arrests a vivandière whom he accuses of selling prussic acid in the guise of brandy. / . . . / Meanwhile, ever consistent, he votes, as he understands them [the terms], for freedom of the press [on weight: prison, fine, deposit], / freedom of discussion, / and the right of assembly."

whom he plots against the provisional government and sows among the peasantry a campaign of slander, accusing the government of communism, orgies, and larceny. Posing as a worker and, when exposed, styling himself "gentleman worker" (*ouvrier-rentier*), he fiddles the ballot—as the Bonapartists notoriously did—and is elected deputy. Surviving from his bed the nightmare of the June worker insurrection, Réac, after the declaration in Paris of a state of siege on June 24, uses his position in parliament and as a member of the National Guard to spread fantastic tales of atrocities committed by the insurgents, to have them punished accordingly, and to enact repressive legislation against the press, freedom of assembly, and unemployed workers (Fig. 4.4). Rejected by the electorate in the legislative elections of May 1849 (where the Right in fact gained massively at the expense of the Center), but buoyed up by the *Constitutionnel,* Réac renews his old alliance with the aristocracy and marries Mademoiselle Aristo de Taupinois.

At this moment Nadar's Frankenstein broke loose, as it were, to revenge itself on its creator in the form of the censorship, which descended after the elections of May 1849 and would, by the end of the year, kill the magazine. In an editorial text entitled "The *Revue Comique* in Revolution," Nadar tries to absorb and perhaps deflect the shock of censorship by anticipating the worst. He describes how the offices and printing works of the magazine are raided and smashed and the material for the latest issue, the most beautiful yet, scattered to the winds. This depiction must be understood as a metaphor or projection rather than a representation of the censorship in action at this time; in fact, the raid is attributed to the personal, clandestine intervention of Mossieu Réac himself. When the *Revue Comique* appeals to its staff to reconstitute the issue just destroyed, the chief editor complains that he is unable to write with his pen gagged; the chief artist, meanwhile, lives in fear of being arrested on suspicion of being suspected [*sic*] of having seen a demonstration pass by the previous day, and in any case, he is unable to replace his broken pencil at a time when the sale of pencils is forbidden.

Abandoned by timorous literary and legal professionals (was Nadar now fighting the battle on his own?), the magazine decides to compose the destroyed issue itself—in manuscript, with a few scribbled marginal illustrations, and most of the text crossed out for safety. But this is judged inadequate, and the magazine is in despair at the prospect of failing the subscribers. Suddenly Mossieu Reác returns to the scene of his crime. A fight ensues, followed by negotiations about the content of the issue—which reflects the actual daily and weekly struggle of opposition journals under the later Second Republic and Second Empire against prior censorship, security deposits, stamp duties, and worse. The customary full-page cartoon, which shows Russia knifing the French Republic in the back, passes muster. But Réac himself dictates the text, which follows under the title "The New Expurgated *Revue Comique*" as a parody of the right-wing press and the *Constitutionnel*-style invective against the Left. The issue is dedicated to "Monsignor" de Falloux, the new reactionary minister of education.

At that point the chief engraver enters, carrying the *Réac* blocks, which the magazine tries to salvage. Réac, though naturally indignant at the idea of the series continuing, permits it to come to a decent end—as long as all political reference is omitted. In effect, the final scenes of *Reác* deal ostensibly with his private life, but this is, of course, political anyway. Réac one day finds his aristocratic wife in compromising intimacy with a "horrible rebel," and he himself is faced with an ever-growing family of red-bonneted children chock full of fighting instincts. In a confused response to the political gag on him and the Left generally, Nadar evidently fantasized a recrudescence of rebellion and republicanism, with the aristocracy betraying its alliance with the reactionary bourgeoisie in favor of a flirtation with the Left.

The next issue of the *Revue Comique,* also supposedly edited by Reác himself, consists of a text recounting his political nightmares, illustrated with parodies of famous history paintings featuring Réac. But this was no substitute for the comic strip, and in recognition of the demand he had created for the genre, quite apart from its political purpose, Nadar gave himself over in the remaining half dozen issues to a Töpfferian frivolity copied exactly from the *Fliegende Blätter* of the preceding year (see p. 225); even the title was adapted to emphasize the political gag: *The Entertaining and Nonpolitical Adventures of Tailor Lapp and His Apprentice Pipps.*

The final issue carried a defiant verse-epitaph by Emile de la Bédollière, written in solemn alexandrines, which denounces the censorship and its minions. In summary paraphrase: "This collection is complete, its struggles are over, an implacable law consigns it to obloquy. The press is too stormy a sea and is infested with piratical laws that extort gold for stamps and security deposits. 'Heretical' sailors who chart too bold a course founder on the reefs of confiscation, fine, lawsuits, and prison. We, meanwhile, sleep in our tent, our arms piled, awaiting our moment of revenge."

After the demise of his *Revue Comique,* Nadar fell back on Philipon's *Journal pour Rire,* of which he became editor and regular contributor. Although the *Journal pour Rire* avoided politics as a rule, Nadar nevertheless managed to slip in an "Odyssée du Prince-Président Soulouque,"[6] ostensibly about the Haitian black who had recently declared himself emperor but transparently a satire on the prince-president Louis-Napoléon, who is actually mentioned by name. The petty, barbaric tyrant is engaged in a propaganda tour with his court of sycophants and hired thugs, who cry "Vive l'empereur" and beat up republicans and anarchists. The prince-president-emperor has a mania for distributing decorations at every institution he visits, even giving one to the black at the apex of the famous painting *Raft of the "Medusa"* by, as Nadar has it, Girodet (actually Géricault).

The Journal pour Rire. *Doré's First Narrative Albums. The Travel Tale (1847–1853)*

The bulk and best of the French comic strips of the period 1848–1882 appeared in Philipon's *Journal pour Rire* and, from 1856, in its offshoots, the *Journal Amusant* and *Petit Journal pour Rire.* We should therefore pay special attention to the beginnings of the *Journal pour Rire,* the first French comic magazine that claimed entertainment as its primary purpose and, unlike the *Charivari,* forewent (or seemed to forego) serious social, not to mention political, comment. The comic strip, with its farcical veneer over some very serious concerns, flowered in a relaxed atmosphere of an ostensibly depoliticized, freewheeling social comedy, which informs many aspects of lower-class or popular culture after 1848. The cultural impetus of the 1848 revolution was quickly diverted, but the form of that diversion still bore the marks of its social origins.

The *Charivari* underwent some vicissitudes after the laws of September 1835 (which, as Philipon claimed, were aimed specifically at him) closed it off from personal political satire. The circulation quickly fell; it picked up again after 1836 with Daumier's *Macaire*[7] and Gavarni's *Lorettes* but then fell once more in 1839; it finally recovered again in the early 1840s, with the decisive help of Cham (as we have seen), to remain buoyant down to the revolution. Philipon, meanwhile, had founded a new *Caricature* in 1839, to which he added an ironic *Provisoire* to indicate that its

6. *Journal pour Rire,* September 27, 1850; thirty-nine drawings.
7. According to an advertisement in the *Journal pour Rire* (February 12, 1848), ten thousand copies of the *Macaire* series had been sold, thus increasing the demand for the paper.

abstention from politics should be regarded as provisional. This journal was printed in (or bore the imprint of) The Hague for safety, but despite the participation of Daumier and the introduction of hand-colored lithographs, it expired in 1843.[8]

In December 1847, on the eve of the revolution—which took him, like most people, by surprise—and after "three years of mysterious and latent incubation," Philipon announced a magazine to which he gave the simple but rather untranslatable title *Journal pour Rire* (Laughter Magazine, or Magazine to Laugh At), priced at forty centimes and printed in large folio size (24 by 17 inches)—thus slightly cheaper, much larger, and more pictorial than the *Charivari*. A *charivari* was a raucous, satirical hubbub; the laughter of the new weekly was to be frank and free, an antidote not to corruption but to boredom: "The *Journal pour Rire,*" said the editor in the specimen number, "is to amuse a bored century," and to keep its compatriots in a state of permanent joviality, which was very propitious to health. It would be innocent and social without aspiring to the political and would have (also unlike the *Charivari,* with its single illustrated page) "LITTLE TEXT AND MANY PICTURES—such is the motto on our banner." The integration of text and illustrations was to cause some trouble as long as the art was lithographed, until finally the old approach was abandoned in favor of text and type-compatible wood engraving. The specimen number also launched a new comic artist for the new age of social comedy, the sixteen-year-old Gustave Doré, who drew for this auspicious occasion a crowd in a great zigzagging queue before the Aubert shop, waiting to buy and staggering out with piles of magazines and books, presents for nephews and nieces.

Hard news, when it obtruded willy-nilly on the journal, would be "merchandised." A perfect example of this fundamental process of communication in the age of the bourgeoisie can be seen on the front page of the second issue (February 12), two weeks before the revolution: Abd el-Kadr, the great Algerian national leader, had, after years of valiant resistance against the French, finally surrendered. He was brought to Paris and became the "lion of the day." Doré shows him merchandised as toy, literary biography, picture, and, in the ultimate vulgarization, the subject of a fairground balladeer singing, before a comic strip–like banner of pictured exploits, of "Abdel le Cadet" (Abdel the Younger).

The king abdicated and fled on February 24. How would a "nonpolitical" journal react? Would Philipon's radical and republican tendencies reassert themselves? Those tendencies had, over the years, become blunted. The *Journal pour Rire* in its February 26 issue, which was slightly delayed by the disturbances, expressed its stunned amazement, temporizing under an editorial headed "a few words not for laughing." The magazine felt hard put to take advantage of the abrupt disappearance of the censorship, unable any longer to "make politics a laughing matter [*faire de la politique pour rire*]"—for whom would it laugh at? Surely not the provisional government, nor an ousted regime certain never to return. Recalling his battles against the deposed monarch (twenty-six lawsuits in a year, thirteen months in jail) Philipon promised not so much to abstain from politics, which was hardly possible at this moment, but to do nothing that might "revive hatreds which should be extinguished, irritate wounds which should be allowed to heal, injure friends, or humiliate the defeated." It was the "pacifist" manifesto of a social sector that wanted the change in government and redistribution of power to include the middle and lower bourgeoisie but feared a radical restructuring of society that would give power to the working class.

When the class war erupted at the barricades in June, the *Charivari,* the *Journal pour Rire,* and *L'Illustration* took sides against the workers, deriding them as socialists and communists—just as Marx, in *The Communist Manifesto,* had predicted the petty bourgeoisie would abruptly betray the workers. The comic magazines avoided representing the actual fighting in the streets, which was too frightening. Yet the readers were now responsible electors: at a stroke, the franchise increased from two hundred thousand to nine million. Laughter relieved stress, and it gave a sense of power. Old caricatures for which Philipon had been prosecuted were now safely reprintable. Circulation soared, necessitating all-night work.[9]

Doré, a primary attraction, was perfectly fitted for the new magazine. Signing the sixteen-year-old on for an unusual three-year contract, Philipon recognized in this facile child-artist the very embodiment of the spirit of his new journal—carefree, lighthearted, unreflective, excited but not disturbed by the political ferment. The gamin of journal caricature, still a schoolboy, Doré reveled in the revolution, as might have any child who did not suffer from it. His style was one of variably systematized graffiti, and he showed already the fertility that would become his hallmark, reputation, and notoriety. The magazine wanted pictures, lots of them, some thirty per issue—and Doré would provide, eventually at least, 1,422.[10] His parodic "Annonce illustrée," which exaggerates the journal's own advertisement "1,500 cartoons [annually] for 15 francs" into "274,5000 [*sic*] cartoons for 15 francs," is a semi-conscious self-parody.

His spontaneity and crudity—though he could draw much more academically—were particularly effective in crowd scenes, and as such may have been influenced by Richard Doyle, who, since 1846 as a youth of twenty-two years, had been embellishing *Punch* with parodic medievalizing and deliberately childish "outline" compositions. Doyle used this style for all historical or mock-historical subjects and to parody the various more or less archaizing (Nazarene or stark classical) styles of the painters who had submitted cartoons—that is, large preparatory designs—for history paintings for the new Houses of Parliament in Westminster. Doyle's style gained popularity in France (he was copied and imitated by Nadar in his *Revue Comique* in early 1849)[11] through a number of political cartoons directed against the now-deposed French monarchy, especially at the time of the Franco-Spanish royal marriage (September–October 1846) and during the "invasion scare" of January 1848. This scare, which no one took seriously, elicited from Doyle an amusing parody based on the Bayeux tapestry, complete with crude inscriptions (Fig. 4.5), and dedicated to the architect of the neo-Gothic new Parliament buildings, Charles Barry: "Our Barry-eux tapestry—Ye Foraye of the Frenche from the veridical and right pleasante chronicle of Maitre Punch." This parody, run continuously across eight pages of a single *Punch* issue, thus constitutes both a kind of comic strip and a parody of what the popular histories of our genre like to regard as one of its most noble ancestors.

Doyle's peculiar method, so different from that of *Punch* stalwart Leech and the magazine's other artists, culminated in his famous series *Manners and Customs of Ye Englyshe,* which started in *Punch* on March 1, 1849. (For more on Doyle, see Chapter 13.) Two installments of the series were quickly picked up by *L'Illus-*

8. The volumes for 1841–1842 of Philipon's *Caricature Provisoire* are missing from the Bibliothèque Nationale, and it is not clear that they existed. This was not the first French caricature journal to try printing abroad. The little-known *Caricature Française* (March–November 1836, thirty-two issues surviving in the British Library), archly calling itself a "journal without subscribers and without contributors," was modeled on the *Charivari* but incorporated caricatures previously published by the English *Satirist*. It proclaimed in its first issue that, with "French caricature gagged and killed on its native soil, *La Caricature Française* resumed its free flight on the shores of the Thames, under the protective laws of a truly constitutional monarchy."
9. According to the issue of March 4, the print run was 9,000, which even by mechanical press took a week to produce. On October 7, 1848, the print run was stated to be 5,500 subscription copies, rising to 8,000 in January 1849, with 6,000 additional copies offered for sale in the streets. According to Dilasser and Prinet (1966, 58), in May 1849 the circulation stood at 14,000, including 8,000 subscriptions. This was much in excess of the *Charivari,* which reached a circulation of only 3,000 at its best (with *Macaire*).
10. Valmy-Baysse [1930], 2:18.
11. "Vue de Californie" (*Revue Comique,* January 20, 1849), credited as "d'après un daguerréotype communiqué au Punch de Londres," is copied from Doyle's "A Prospect of Thomas Tyddler . . . ," originally published in the second issue of *Punch* for that year. This speedy borrowing attests to the style's appeal in France. Nadar followed with an imitation of his own and direct copies (thefts, actually—unattributed to *Punch* and with Doyle's initials removed [*Revue Comique,* February 10, 1849, pp. 181, 220–221]) made from *Punch* 16 (1849), 46–47.

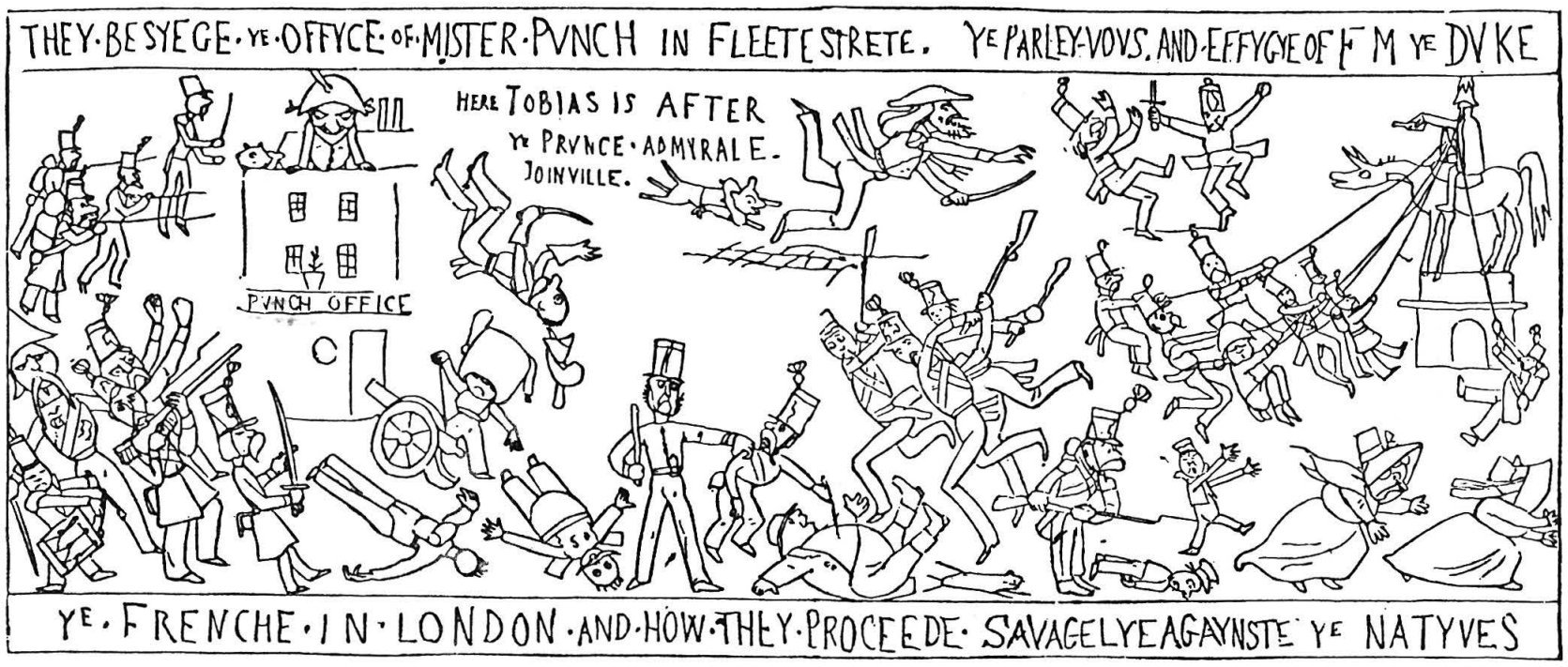


FIG. 4.5. Richard Doyle: "Ye Frenche in London" (parody of the Bayeux tapestry; 1848).

tration, [12] which freely admitted its penchant for borrowing from the "London Charivari" and announced its intention to reprint the whole series. The accompanying text praised the unnamed artist for his accurate rendering of the audience of a musical pub (*estaminet lyrique*) and for his "very curious and delicately executed physiognomies" of the stereotypically impassive British. The French magazine enlarged on the peculiar fascination of the style, attributed to a mysterious *célèbre inconnu* ("some very serious person in London"), with its apparently childish naïveté of line, reminiscent (says *L'Illustration*) of the drawings of the Parisian gamin on walls and in schoolbooks, of the Ioway Indian on his wigwam, of Etruscan vases and medieval manuscripts—and of Töpffer. "Childish" drawing was in the air: *L'Illustration* reminds us that even the illustrious Grandville, whose manner of drawing was so unchildish, was collecting and studying children's drawings at the end of his life.

Doré, who surely saw *Punch,* reached simultaneously a crescendo of production in a similar style, so that on both sides of the Channel the "outline" style, which Töpffer had made the basic language of the comic strip, reasserted itself against the volumetric style of Daumier and, now, Cham. The style seemed to derive not only from children but also from "the people," and was suited to the quick evocation of masses of figures—at the very moment when "the people," "the masses," had once again entered on the historical stage. Doré thus became the graffitist of the middle-class "masses," in a journal with a much more numerous and generally less educated readership than the *Charivari.* And "the masses" of course included adolescents; any caricature journal counted on sales to older children, and the number of series by Doré, himself a schoolboy, and others about the life of schoolboys and the behavior of *enfants terribles* must have recruited many readers from that age group.

At this moment of social renewal, which was also seeing the renewal of the comic strip as a genre, the childish and the graffito as they attained a certain journalistic legitimacy deserve closer scrutiny. Every popular disturbance spawns graffiti. In the early 1830s children had scribbled the famous *poire*-fathead of Louis Philippe on walls, to the king's own amusement as well as that of readers of the *poire*'s regular domiciles, *La Caricature* and the *Charivari.* In the April 1, 1848, issue of the *Journal pour Rire,* while Doré was parodying the Salon paintings and practicing that dazzling mix of styles and effects that was to underpin the *History of Holy Russia* (see Chapter 5), Monta was in the Salon Carré rendering caricaturist homage to the admission of people's art, the gamin graffito, to the once-elite exhibition. The regular route of admission, though now democratized, was still, as before, restricted to high-class genres; nonetheless, on the dado below the line of pictures the gamin makes his defiant "revolutionary" improvisation: a *poire,* together with the inscription "Vive la République." The indulgent editorial comment, "in view of the [new] liberty, this gamin thinks he can freely exhibit his political and artistic opinions," contrasts with the reaction of the guard, probably an army veteran, who sniffs bitterly at all this democratization of art and public and suffers the mockery of smocked workers.

The freedom was more complete artistically than politically. In Doré's "Collège en revolution" (April 15), the schoolboy revolt—which in Daumier's earlier *Professeurs et moutards* (Teachers and Kids, 1845–1846) threatened to succeed—is suppressed. The *Journal pour Rire* treated the demands of unemployed workers and the poor harshly. Its "Travailleurs pour rire" series (June 3 and 10) ridiculed the major demand of the workers, government-sponsored workshops for the unemployed (*ateliers nationaux*)—the assembly's sudden abolition of which provoked the bloody days of June 23–26, when troops under Cavaignac, conqueror of Algeria and the new hero of the *Charivari,* killed fifteen hundred rebels at the barricades. "Communism" was crushed, and Doré celebrated the event by illustrating in numerous vignettes the familiar arguments of conservatives—for instance, that the "free" distribution of wealth makes workers idle and selfish.[13] The denunciation of "communism" continued,[14] and by October 7 "politics" was reduced to the level of vulgar fairground huckstering, the *foire aux idées.* As the seriousness of Louis-Napoléon's bid for the presidency became apparent, he too was cast as the *candidat pour rire,* the fairground clown singing the ballad of his exploits in front of the customary pictorial banner (November 18). This mild, pro forma opposition, which was directed against all candidates and parties, may be compared with Nadar's vigorous, principled campaign against the future emperor in his own magazine, the *Revue Comique,* which entered the political stage at the very moment the *Journal pour Rire* left it. When Louis-Napoléon won the December elections, Philipon's magazine accepted its "total defeat" as expressing "the will of the majority," which must be respected (December 16).

12. *L'Illustration* 13 (March 24, 1849): 64 and (May 12, 1849): 172. The first installment, depicting an "estaminet lyrique," is closely copied from *Punch* 16 (1849): 114. The second, "Musique et thé . . . chez Madame ⁂," is apparently printed from the same block as Doyle's "A few friends to tea and a little musyck," *Punch* 16 (1849): 164.
13. "Le Communisme en tableau, les aristocrates sans le savior," *Journal pour Rire* July 1, 8, and 15.
14. The bigger anticommunist cartoons were published as a collection called *Bêtisorama, ou le Communisme, le Fouriérisme et les autres folies de notre époque* (Aubert catalogue, *Journal pour Rire,* 1850).



FIG. 4.6. Gustave Doré: "Drawing for the Occasion" (1850). "Would you call this the most revolutionary people in Europe?"

Meanwhile, the *Journal pour Rire* had, on September 16, switched from lithographs, the "older" satirical medium, to wood engravings, a change that passed without editorial comment; in fact, it is not visually very evident, since the lithographs had been executed largely in pen and ink rather than the chalk preferred by Daumier and Gavarni in the *Charivari*. The motive was thus certainly practical and financial rather than aesthetic, connected with attempts to cut printing costs. Doré's speciality in the unshaded, simplified outline style now proved especially valuable; it was cheaper to engrave, especially with large, crowded scenes. Indeed, Philipon may have encouraged Doré to develop and preserve this style, as opposed to his other basic mode, which relied on dense hatching that, though allowing for more characterization, was much more costly to engrave. In 1849 Doré, using an outline style somewhat less childishly archaic than Doyle's, settled into a series of social scenes featuring large crowds and remarkably lacking in incident. The style lent itself to the high viewpoint, of which Doré's "Une Soirée" and "Fête de village" (June 16 and 30, 1849) are early examples, as well as forerunners, in terms of subject, of Léonce Petit (judging from the coifs, the *fête* is set in Normandy or Brittany). In the urban domain, Doré also viewed from above the hundreds of figures crowding the Champs Elysées (October 6); it is the crowd for the sake of the crowd, which does nothing in particular or funny. This work is all symptomatic of the transition from the pointed satirizing of types and individuals to broad and bland comedy treatments of the social scene. Caricature at this level adopts an uncritical social distance. As the caption to a bird's-eye view of skaters puts it (Fig. 4.6), who would believe these people were once revolutionaries?

But the comic strip maintained in the years after 1848 a sharp focus on social anxieties intensely and individually experienced. The crowd is experienced from within; and travel—through which an individual could escape one kind of crowd, only to join another—becomes the very substance of the comic strip, as Cham had already demonstrated. Tourism burgeoned once the revolutionary disturbances subsided, stimulated by the new vogue for international exhibitions; these culminated in the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, whence Bertall reported at great length as official correspondent of the *Journal pour Rire* (August–September). A magazine such as the *Journal pour Rire* promoted travel in several ways simultaneously: in the advertisements of the railway companies; in the *primes,* or bonuses, to advertisers (any business taking one hundred francs' worth of space received a first-class round-trip ticket to London); and in editorial features about travel and exhibitions, which often took the form of comic strips.

Travel far and near, made possible by surpluses of income during the postrevolutionary economic boom—from which even some of the lower urban classes benefited—became a metaphor of social change and movement, both upward and downward. Travel had become a practical necessity for workers looking for a better (or any) job, and it seemed a psychological necessity for the bour-

geois trying to escape, but only succeeding in reproducing, the stresses of urban life. Thus, between 1849 and 1853 travel and social ambition, entwined already in the fantasy world of Töpffer, are plaited into the many-stranded narratives of the comic journal. The comic strip shows the traveler as the urban Everyman, trying to expand his horizons, improve his lot, escape dead ends. The discomforts, failures, and renunciations attendant on travel allegorize the pain of the social struggle, the frustration of hopes, and the fear of falling along the way.

The theme of travel appealed to social classes who felt they were on the move, who saw vistas of opportunity beckoning yet at the same time strewn with obstacles. There was no artist to whom this challenge presented itself earlier, or more forcibly, than Gustave Doré, whose first narratives deal specifically with travel as a metaphor of social and artistic ambition.

Gustave Doré, born in Strasbourg in 1832, started drawing as an infant. By the age of four he was illustrating complicated battle scenes and had total recall of fairy and folk tales. He probably saw the albums of Töpffer and Cham and certainly those of Grandville, which he directly imitated as soon as they appeared; by around 1840, when he was eight years old, he had executed his first comic picture-story, *Les Aventures du chien Fouilleux* (also called *The Brilliant Adventures of M. Fouilleux*), a sequence of drawings presented to, and perhaps suggested by, a neighbor in his native Strasbourg recounting the misbehavior, punishment, and convalescence of her dog. Drawn in a "common little drawing book such as children used at school," this was never published, although Doré (or his mother) did preserve it, making it available to his first biographer, who reproduces two scenes.[15] Doré was encouraged in his "childish scribbling" at home, and this indulgence was extended by his teachers, as witnessed in the marginal decorations of his schoolbooks and, at the lycée of Bourg-en-Bresse (where the family moved when he was eleven), his drawings—in lieu of verbal descriptions—of classical subjects.

Gustave's mother, pushing her engineer husband's career and planning for those of her children, and convinced from the start that Gustave was a genius, brought the family to Paris in September 1847. The visit was intended to last only three weeks, but as Gustave tells the story, the ambitious fifteen-year-old was already determined to stay in the capital to pursue a career in fine art. After seeing the shop window of Aubert, he went back to the hotel "to dash off a few caricatures in the style of those at which he had been looking."[16] Taking advantage of a momentary absence of his parents, he returned to the Aubert shop and presented the drawings to Philipon, who agreed to take him under his wing. In April of the following year Philipon concluded with Doré's father an agreement by which the boy would stay at school in Paris and execute at least one cartoon or page of cartoons a week for three years, at a fee of forty francs a page (the regular fee, as paid, for instance, to Daumier at the height of his fame).[17] The contract stipulated that he should do no other work for other publishers and that any surplus was also to be offered to Philipon. In retrospect, Doré was glad to have been spared at this point a dreary return to the provinces and to have gained access to the world of art while still so young; but he was less happy to find himself legally contracted to journal caricature for three years, in which position of economic bondage he was to remain for another six or seven. But with Philipon, Doré laid the basis for a reputation; "at Philipon's," as Nadar put it, "there's a kid who does somersaults like a monkey and draws like an angel."[18]

Philipon had already used a drawing by his young protégé in the specimen number of his new magazine, the *Journal pour Rire* for December 27, 1847; he also had his brother-in-law and business associate, Aubert, publish a picture-story which Doré had first drafted at Bourg-en-Bresse, *The Labors of Hercules*. Promoted as the work of a fifteen-year-old, this story appeared as one (the twelfth) of the Töpffer-Cham "Albums Jabot" series and is now exceedingly rare.[19]

The idea of parodying the ancient myths probably occurred to Doré as a small child. He had already done illustrations to the story of Calypso, with a witty commentary in incorrect and dialectal French.[20] Even at the Collège Charlemagne, where he was now a student, admiring teachers encouraged his now professionally proven gifts in caricature—and quite at the expense of the ancients, for he would be asked to do blackboard portraits of famous characters from Roman history to demonstrate to his fellow pupils what they were "really" like. Doré must also have known Daumier's parodic *Histoire ancienne* and, probably, Cham's *Aventures de Télémaque*.

The prospect of publication presumably inspired Doré to work up his *Labors of Hercules* afresh, with a consistently witty, elegant, occasionally calligraphic line and compositions that are altogether richer in scenic and graphic effects (more shading and anatomy, more landscape and accessory) than those of his model, Töpffer. Doré's prodigious memory for literary texts was developed early. The likelihood that he worked from memory, improvising as he went along, would explain why the labors follow a slightly unconventional order,[21] that one (involving the man-eating mares of King Diomedes of Thrace) is missing, that the amount of space devoted to each labor varies (from twelve pages for the killing of the Hydra to a single scene for the capture of the Minoan bull), and that Herculean incidents not normally considered to belong to the Twelve Labors (Hercules' marriage to Deianira and the slaying of Cacus) are included.

Doré's hero is a squat, dwarfish, pot-bellied clown, a cross between Töpffer's Jabot (also a social climber) and Daumier's gloomy, paunchy, and degenerate but once-stalwart Hercules sweeping out the Augean stables. The motivation, conduct, and ambiance of Doré's hero have a petty-bourgeois and childish cast to them. He is, in the first instance, driven by petty rivalry with his half-brother and superior, Eurystheus, who has a wager on the matter (which turns out to be no more than the price of a bottle of beer). Hercules, like Doré, craves social applause. Eurystheus, and lesser local authorities along the way, represents the dominant power structure, in which the "low-born" (petty-bourgeois) Hercules desires a place.

For his defeat of the Nemean lion—which he mock-heroically hurls by the tail through the air, sending it spinning like a top before antiheroically shooting an arrow point-blank up its immobilized anus (Fig. 4.7)—Hercules is solemnly congratulated by the mayor of the commune of Nemea, as though he were some local hunter being rewarded for killing a wolf. The lionskin winter coat becomes a local spectacle, a sideshow attracting a mile-long queue of tourists who fight their way forward through endlessly zigzagging crowd-control barriers. After all this, naturally, Hercules plays the social lion (from the menagerie of Grandville?), strutting around town, cigar in mouth and club in hand like a dandy's cane, a medal pinned to the lionskin coat.

The marshland where, in legend, the Hydra dwelt allows Doré to transplant the hero's activities to the Landes, the marshy

15. Roosevelt 1885, 56.
16. Jerrold 1891, 25.
17. Valmy-Baysse [1930], 58. The most Daumier got ever was fifty francs for a full-page drawing. After two years, according to the contract, Doré would get sixty francs; a single smaller drawing would earn him fifteen francs.
18. Cited in Gosling 1973, 12.
19. Sometimes mentioned in the literature as published early in 1847, before Doré even came to Paris, *Les Travaux* is announced in the local newspaper of Bourg-en-Bresse on December 14, 1847 (Doré 1963, 79). No copy could be located in the United States; neither the British nor the French national library catalog lists it.
20. The extent of commentary and lack of continuity disqualify the Calypso parody as a picture-story. See Roosevelt 1885, 56ff., with reproductions between pp. 70 and 89, for the work of Doré, aged ten; and Doré 1975, nos. 1343–1352, for work dated or datable to 1845. Doré also executed, in forty-six drawings on thirty-one pages of a school exercise book, a series entitled *La Mythologie,* now in an American collection (Doré 1963, 76).
21. The various dictionaries I consulted gave slight variations in the order of the labors. Doré departs markedly from their rough consensus by placing the episodes of the Stymphalian birds and the Minoan bull toward the end, instead of the middle. The Doré album is reproduced in toto in Doré 1975, 1062–1108.

N.° 2



Le terrible lion de la forêt de Némée lui apparaît . . . . . .



Hercule, unissant l'adresse à la force et au courage, saisit l'animal par la queue, et le fait tournoyer avec la violence d'une fronde.

N.° 3.



Tant avait été violente la vitesse toujours croissante avec laquelle Hercule l'avait fait tournoyer.



Dégagé des mains d'Hercule, le monstre va se planter en terre à deux lieues de là.

N.° 4.



Avant de rien hasarder, Hercule s'assure qu'il est bien mort.



Il déterre la bête qui ne donne plus signe de vie. Une raideur glaciale s'est emparée de ses membres.



FIG. 4.7. Gustave Doré: *The Labors of Hercules* (1847).
"[2] The terrible lion from the Nemean forest appears..... / Hercules, uniting skill to strength and courage, seizes the animal by the tail, and whirls him violently around like a catapult, [3] with such increasing velocity and violence / that the monster is pitched into the earth two leagues away. [4] Before taking any risks, Hercules makes sure that he is good and dead. / He digs out the lifeless beast, now frozen stiff. [5] The mayor of the commune of Nemea congratulates the conqueror on ridding his domain of so troublesome a neighbor. / Hercules decides to have the tanner make a winter coat out of the skin. [6] The tanner finds himself besieged by an endless line of curiosity seekers. / The overcoat fits perfectly."

French province where people walked about on stilts. Thus, the homage paid Hercules is (literally) a stilted one, as the local notables of Lerna proudly decorate the door of their very primitive *mairie* (town hall) with the seven severed Hydra heads, and when Hercules complains of having caught a head cold after stumbling through the marshes, they offer to teach him the only dry way to leave: on stilts. Yet this relatively simple labor the mythic athlete cannot, alas, master. His social reputation is further threatened when local scientists refuse to believe in the Hydra until they see material evidence. The scene (p. 18) showing the dumbfounding of provincial scientific pretensions is reminiscent of Töpffer.

The Genevan's influence may be felt in other ways at this juncture as well: in a page (16) that varies the height and width of frame and text; in the arbitrary exaggeration of the time dimension (Hercules keeps the monster subdued in the same position, for no apparent reason, "for two days and two nights"); in certain verbal litanies around "uniting skill with strength [*unissant l'adresse à la force*]"; and in the cut-off figures of the hind-chasing scene (pp. 23–25; see Fig. 4.9). Doré's early propensity for puns, moreover, which may have been encouraged by Cham, is well displayed in the scene depicting Hercules, totally transmogrified by mud and slime, *en tête-à-tête* with the astonished hepta-headed Hydra

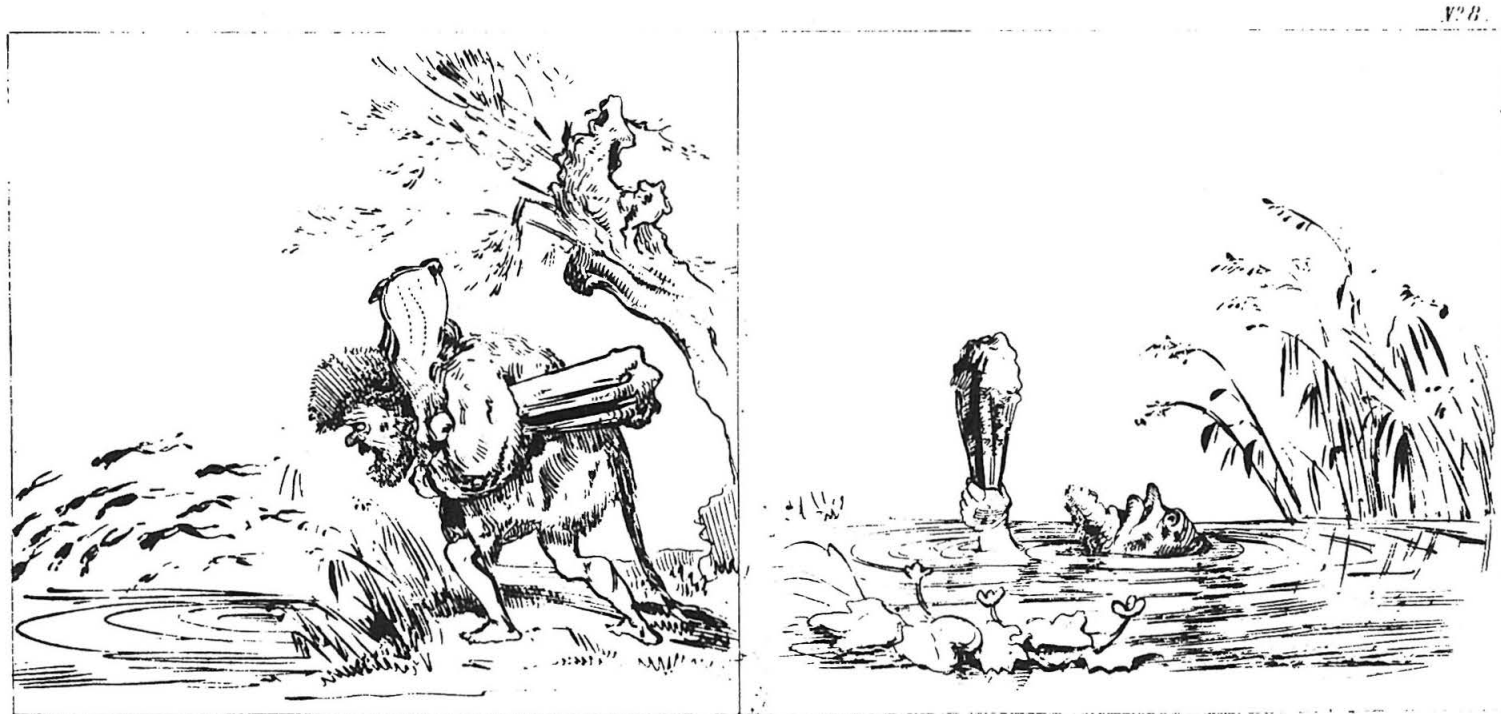


FIG. 4.8. Gustave Doré: *The Labors of Hercules* (1847).
[8] At Lernea, Hercules finds very marshy land ahead. / Then some very damp areas.
[9] Hercules emerges covered in bog plants. / *En tête-à-tête* with the dreaded Hydra, which monster no doubt takes the stranger for a weeping willow or the rarest of toads.

(Fig. 4.8)—graphically as well as verbally one of the funniest Doré ever conceived.

Realizing, no doubt, that he had lingered disproportionately over the first two labors, Doré dispatched the Erymanthean boar in short order. Although the caption describes him conventionally as "ravaging the countryside," the drawing depicts him contemptuously turning his back on a group of artillerymen firing shells that explode harmlessly on his hide. Hercules presents this monster alive, as bidden, to Eurystheus, who reacts like a nervous parent to whom a child has "innocently" brought some loathsome reptile. Doré lingers once more with the Arcadian hind, which labor, according to legend, occupied Hercules for over a year. In a series of picturesquely varied effects, Hercules is humiliated and teased by the frolicsome creature, disrupts peasantry and property in the chase, and withers away until he is reduced to a hairy spook (Fig. 4.9). By the time he captures the creature (which is by accident), he is a billion leagues away from home. To pay his way back—in this tourist economy—he resorts to becoming a showman in a provincial fair, displaying his huge strength, his beard, and his golden-antlered hind: the commodification of himself and his legend. He then becomes a market porter and rents out the hind to a zoo. Later (p. 38), still "never getting a sou for his labors," Hercules is reduced to employment as an artist's model, posing as himself slaying the Nemean lion.

Doré hurries past the Queen of the Amazons (a bluestocking in the dress of the National Guard, à la Daumier and his *Bas-Bleus* [*Charivari,* 1844]) without even pausing to consider how she should be overcome—but Hercules already has her girdle, as prescribed, plus muff and cashmere shawl for good measure. Later, the useful citizen has the chance to offer groaning basketfuls of apples from the Garden of Hesperides to Madame Eurystheus for her apple compote. The hero pursues his "voyage of discovery" through the thirty years of Augean stable filth, in which he once again nearly drowns. His brilliant diversion of the river Alpha through the stables Doré (son of an engineer and acting on some sense, perhaps, that such a plan necessitated the mustering of social forces greater than those of a single individual, however strong) renders by having the hero absurdly transfer water from the river to the stables in a watering can.

The last third of the album becomes fragmented and diffused, with themes discarded as quickly as they are taken up, until, at the conclusion, Hercules roasts himself on a pyre in order to win a "stool" on Olympus, medals, a halo, and the hand of that "goddess of freshness and youth," the lemonade seller Hebe.

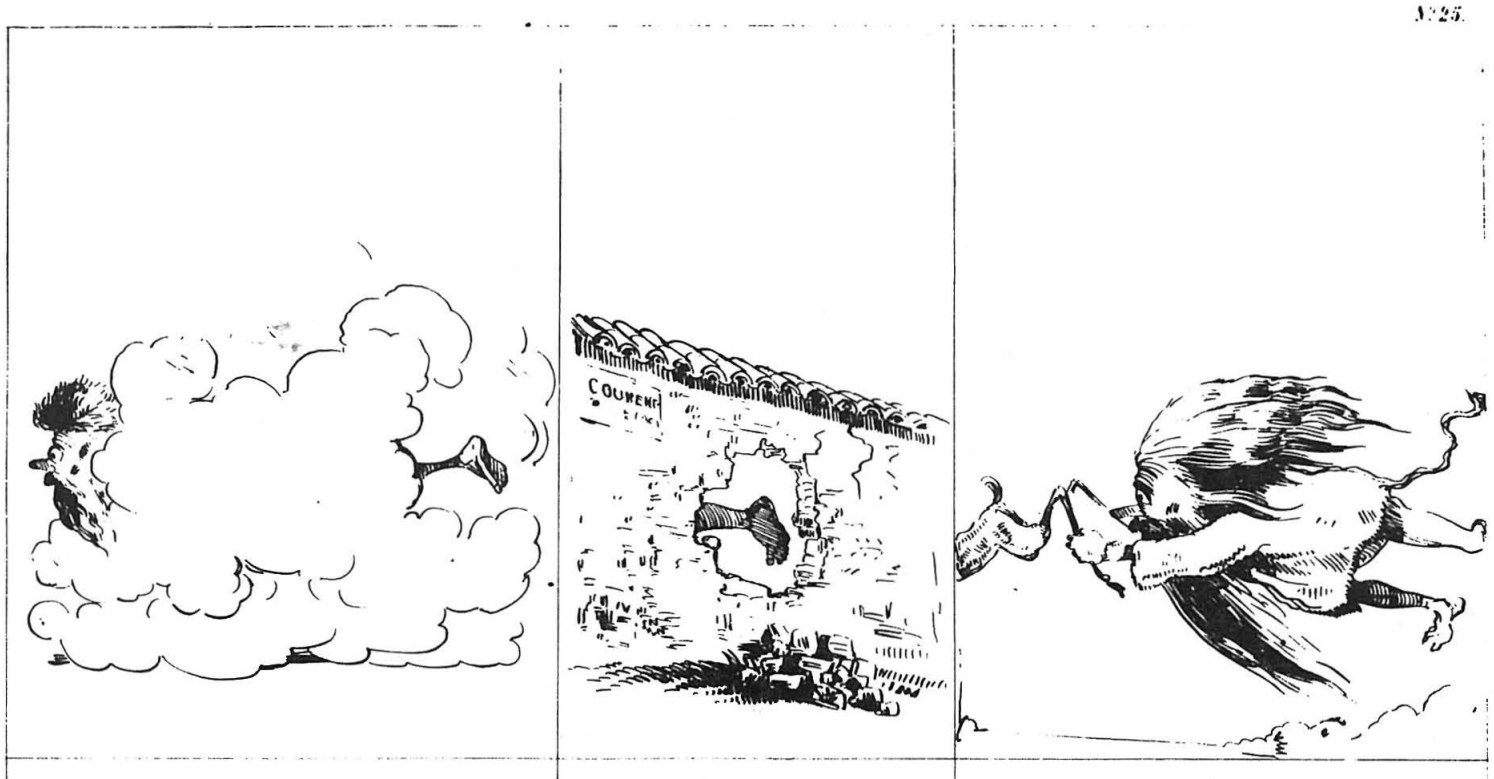
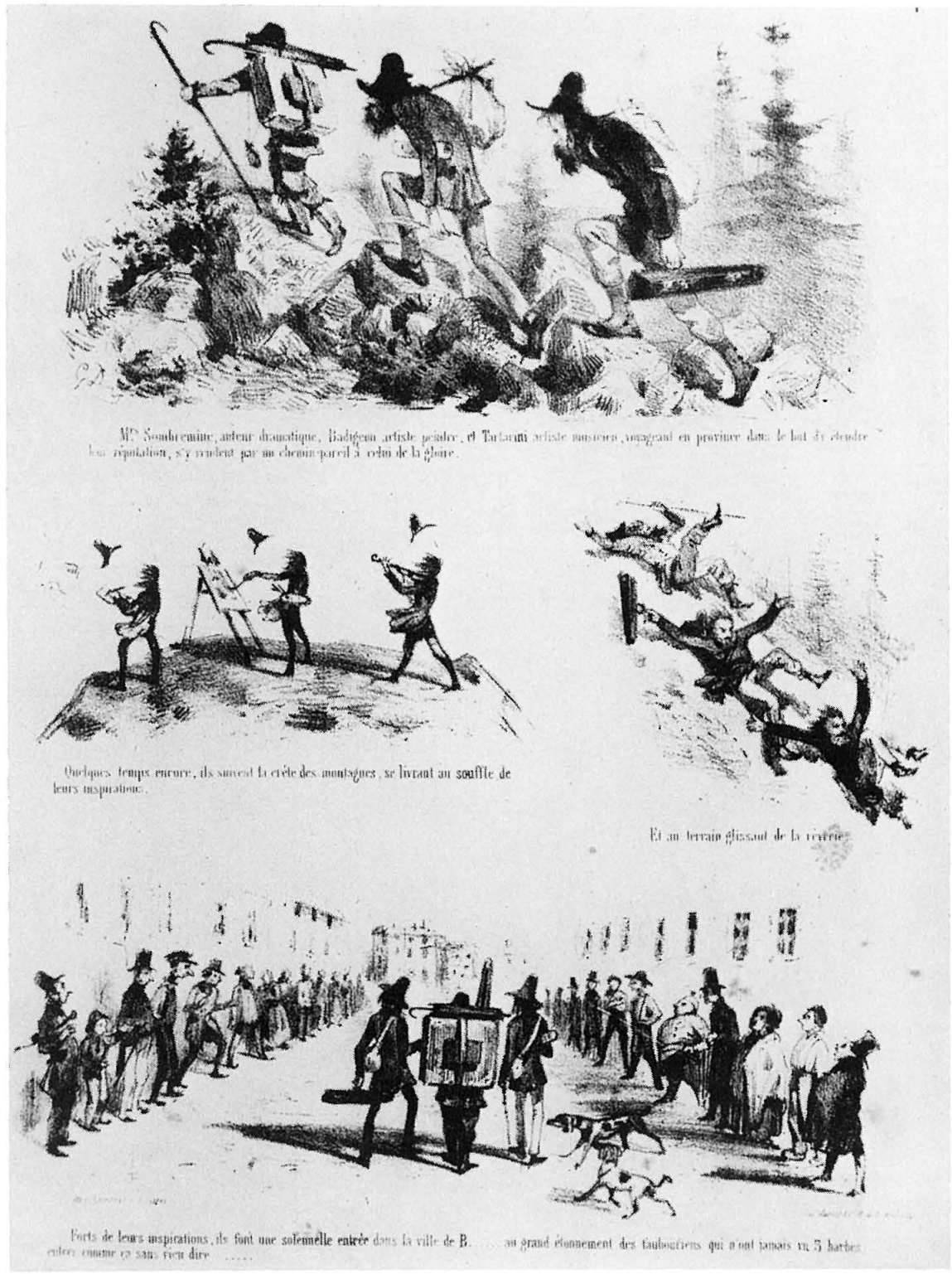


FIG. 4.9. Gustave Doré: *The Labors of Hercules* (1847).
"[25] He disappears in clouds of dust. / All [of the convent wall] yields to his rush of despair. / Got it!..... [26] The diabolical creature [the Arcadian hind] resorts to throwing itself over a precipice, but Hercules in his noble obstinacy holds on. / The pair gain incredible speed, and Hercules, scared for the first time in his life, fears the deer creature will doe him in. [27] A river cleverly takes in the two aeronauts, bad news for the hind, good news for Hercules! / Finding himself 1,000,000,000 leagues from his homeland, to earn return passage Hercules takes advantage of his long mane and his rich booty to give an extraordinary public performance."



MM. Sombremine, auteur dramatique, Badigeon, artiste peintre, et Tartarini artiste musicien, voyageant en province dans le but de étendre leur réputation, s'y rendent par un chemin pareil à celui de la gloire.

Quelques temps encore, ils suivent la crête des montagnes, se livrant au souffle de leurs inspirations.

Et au terrain glissant de la rêverie.

Forts de leurs inspirations, ils font une solennelle entrée dans la ville de B..... au grand étonnement des faubouriens qui n'ont jamais vu 3 barbes entrer comme ça sans rien dire .....

FIG. 4.10. Gustave Doré: *Three Misunderstood and Dissatisfied Artists* (1851).
"Messrs. Sombremine, dramatic author, Badigeon, artist-painter, and Tartarini artist-musician, off to the provinces to make their reputation, take a road resembling that of glory. / For a time they follow the mountain tops and surrender to the breath [wind] of their inspiration, / and to the slippery slopes of dreams. / They make a solemn entry into the town of B..... to the astonishment of the suburbanites who have never seen three beards enter like that so silently....."

Uncomfortable as he later insisted he always was with journal caricature, Doré served the *Journal pour Rire* with about four hundred drawings the first year, and a thousand more up to 1855. His father's sudden death in 1849, which left the family in some straits, was an added incentive for the young man to break from the confines of caricature. By 1850 he had left school, rented a large painting studio, and executed his first—and characteristically large—Salon paintings (he had already exhibited two pen drawings in the Salon of 1848). Bypassing the caricature magazines, the normal prior vehicle, in 1851 he produced two comic narrative albums, which were published by Aubert and Arnauld de Vresse: *Trois Artistes incompris et mécontens* and *Dés-agréments d'un voyage d'agrément*. Whereas *Hercules* represented a genial fantasy on the absurdities of social ambition and social rewards constrained, especially in the latter section, by a preexistent mythological substructure, with the two new albums Doré wrote his own scenario and engaged contemporary social mores more coherently and systematically than in either *Hercules* or the random comic drawings for the *Journal pour Rire*. The choice of theme in the 1851 albums shows an ambitious, self-aware nineteen-year-old standing on the launching pad, sardonically surveying and mixing alternative worlds: one of failure, one of success. The "mixed worlds" are also those of narrative technique, and Doré is suddenly able to unfold that great expansion of graphic vocabulary which is to reach its climax, caricaturally, in *Holy Russia*.

Three Misunderstood and Dissatisfied Artists, Their Journey to the Provinces . . . and Elsewhere!! Their Devouring Hunger and Their Deplorable End, a long (153 vignettes) and ambitious undertaking, opens with a naked allegory of ambition: the three friends—Sombremine ("Somber-face"), representing dramatic literature; Badigeon ("Whitewash"), painting; and Tartarini, music—are shown as mountaineers ascending the rocky path of glory, only to slither down the "slippery slope of dreams" into the small provincial town of B., which smothers and mocks their grandiose schemes (Fig. 4.10). (The town might be the Bourg-en-Bresse of Doré's earlier school years, or even Strasbourg, to which he returned on a visit to find his youthful fame ill-received.)

The three artists end up jointly mounting a frightful melodrama, with totally incompetent local actors and musicians and an audience consisting of a handful of obtuse petty-bourgeois types attracted by complimentary tickets. This audience finally breaks out of its somnolence only to chase bats in the attic, which brings down a chandelier and causes the Tragic Climax of the fifth act to pass unnoticed.

What kind of culture do these provincials appreciate? In literature, the novels of Madame de Genlis; in the visual arts, crude banners advertising exhibitions of freak animals. Just as provincial melodrama is a caricature of authentic Parisian drama, so provincial culture generally is a caricature of Parisian culture—and one that cannot bear to see itself caricatured. Doré inserts at this point the stereotypical reaction of the bourgeois (provincial or not) to caricature: condemned to giving a small child drawing instruction at five sous a lesson, Badigeon sees his pupil, thanks to his efforts, develop an all-too-ready (and prolific) instinct for cari-

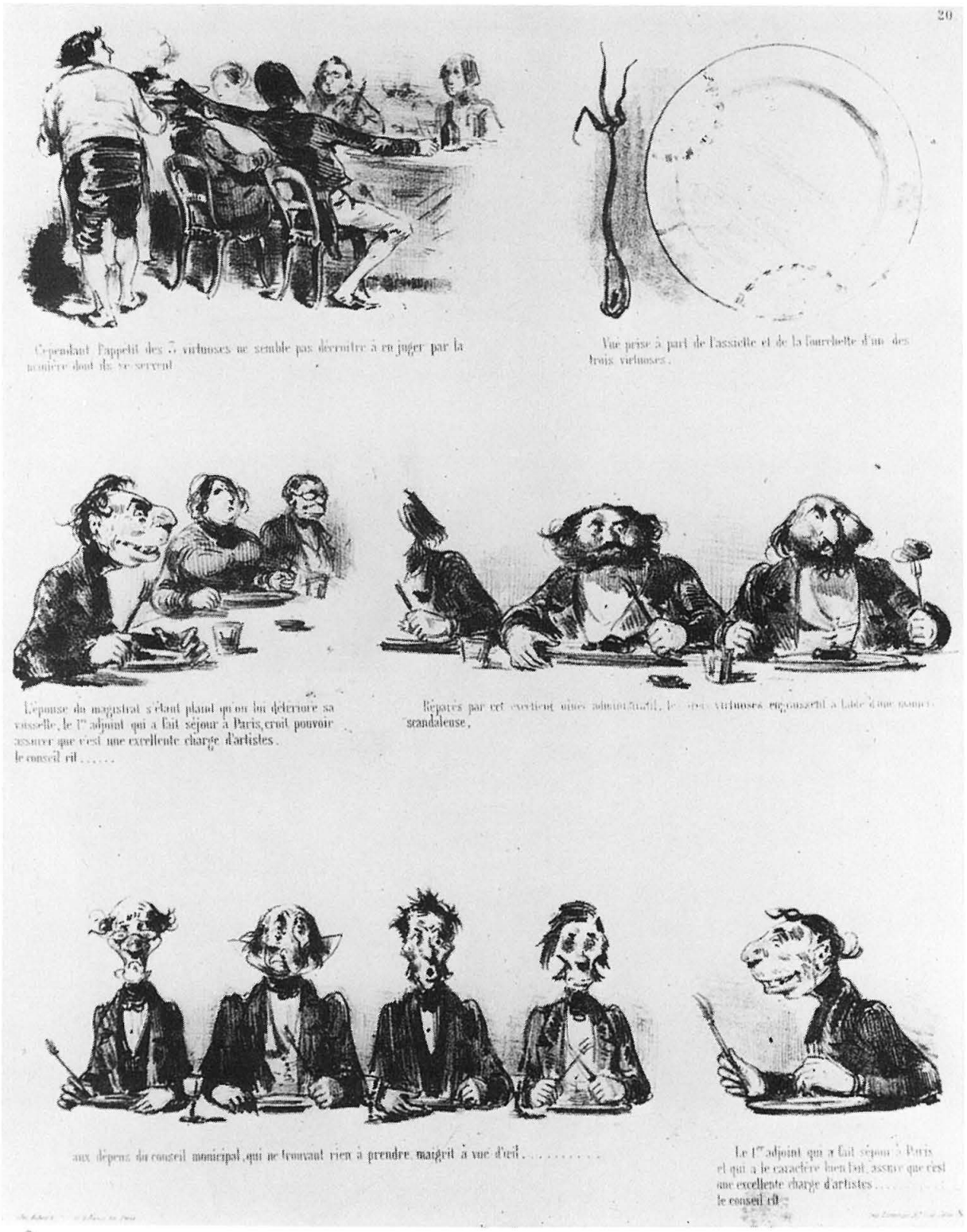


FIG. 4.11. Gustave Doré: *Three Artists* (1851).
The three ravenous artists damage the tableware, and gorge themselves, obliging the municipal council to go without, all of which is excused as a "studio joke."

cature, which the father ("sévère mais juste," of course) feels obligated to stifle by rubbing the artist's nose in his work and giving him a kick in the pants.

Of necessity, the artists learn to adapt to the market. Badigeon discovers, after widespread rejection of his talents as a portraitist (everyone has already been daguerrotyped), the way into provincial graces and wallets: pictures of local bigwigs surrounded by their landed and animal property. But he jeopardizes his first really important commission, an overdoor of fruit and flowers, by absently superimposing his dream for a grandiose apocalyptic religious painting (just the kind of dream Doré himself harbored).

The third and final major episode shows the artists, whom one now understands to be only semiadapted to the humiliations of making a living in a provincial town, at last honored by an official invitation to a gala dinner with the municipal council—for "les artisses [*sic*] c'est drôle et ça fait rire [artist types are fun and good for a laugh]." Their manic reactions to this "honor," which reach a crescendo of hyperbolic absurdity, testify, I think, to Doré's sense that the tension between the individual artist and society is a two-way affair, a matter of mutual rejection. Indeed, Doré was already in his mind rejecting the eminently marketable field of caricature, even as he was—or would be—rejected by the Salon critics.

In their behavior the artist trio parody the stereotype of the Bohemian artist: after weeping a flood of grateful tears, they arrive in a state of such extreme starvation that they devour everything in sight—everyone else's food, the tableware—and even nibble on the mayor's hand. Such bizarre behavior is indulgently dismissed as "studio jokes" (Fig. 4.11); but when it injures his child, the mayor peremptorily orders them out. Mayhem breaks loose, with artists and administrators (later joined by the National Guard) throwing tableware at one another (Fig. 4.12). The alarm is sounded and transmitted to the minister, who proves to the king that a whole province is in revolt and advises him to abdicate. Doré identifies the king by name and appearance as Louis Philippe, noting that this was the true cause of the 1848 revolution (Fig. 4.13). This promising fantasy, in which artists are the shakers of governments, is cut short, however, and we return to the artists' individual fates as they are stoned out of town by an angry citizenry less generous than the municipal council, who, idiocy written all over their deformed heads, inanely continue to admire the artists' wit and freedom. The artists briefly join a troupe of wandering actors but are quickly thrown out once more for their "indecent appetite." Unable to achieve the romantic solution of suicide in any of the regular ways (for lack of water, pistols, or rope; Fig. 4.14), they fall upon and devour each other, down to their boots, which objects, stained with their black blood, are solemnly buried after the proper criminal investigation in an anonymous grave. Mutual self-destruction and oblivion before posterity are the pathetic results of the "devouring ambition" which the bourgeois ethic otherwise readily accorded to the artist-individual.

Apart from the light it throws on the nineteen-year-old would-be genius's struggle with his overweening ambition and

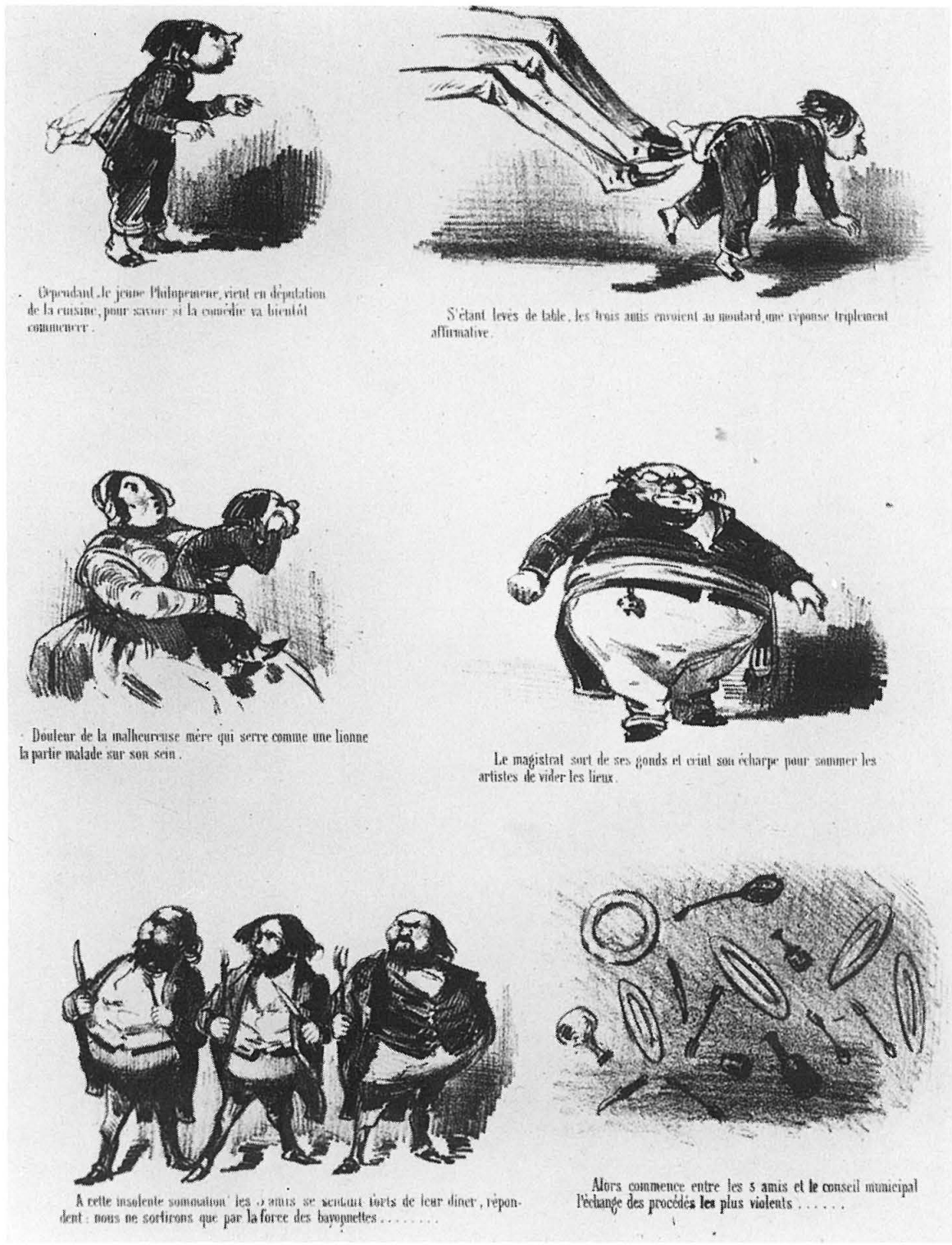


FIG. 4.12. Gustave Doré: *Three Artists* (1851).
The artists kick out the child, and are ordered out peremptorily by the mayor. They stand defiant, and the violence begins.

corresponding fear of rejection, *Three Artists* unfolds a battery of new graphic devices (or new combinations of graphic devices), which would be fully exploited in *Holy Russia* three years later. A much larger page size (its verticality further distancing it from the Töpffer format) allows him greater flexibility in the layout, including the new freedom to scatter unboxed vignettes of varying size and proportion, as well as angle and depth of vision. The soft lithographic chalk, too, offers greater versatility than the lithographic pen of *The Labors of Hercules,* enabling Doré to apply solid strokes of black and deep shadow to give his figures lightning definition and semaphoric action, with the precision of a Callot (via Grandville?). Doré also begins to exploit both the pictographic, isolating in close-up such objects as flying tableware or a chomped dinner plate, and the graphic literalization of verbal metaphor. The narrative sauce is further thickened and spiced by an admixture of farcical and macabre touches, a Töpfferian physiognomic progression, and "musical" repetitions and permutations of attitudes. These are especially noticeable at the end (see Fig. 4.14), when the three figures act out their despair in harmonic unison, a schematized repetition of poses achieving variety through a changing angle of vision and direction of movement. *Three Artists,* quite apart from the greatly superior interest of the story, is incomparably richer in its whole graphic and montage effect than are the albums of Cham, who now was beginning to abandon pictorial narrative altogether for other graphic genres. And yet there was no second edition of *Three Artists,*[22] or of Doré's succeeding narrative albums, all of which are today very rare.

Dis-Pleasures of a Pleasure Trip was probably executed after a summer holiday in Switzerland in that same year, 1851. If the variety of graphic devices seems less, it is only because the range of activities, restricted more to that of the true travel narrative, is smaller. Specific references to Töpffer are less apparent than are those to Grandville (the mountaintop musical reverie concretized in animated musical notes [p. 19] is in open homage to Grandville's *Barcarole*)[23] and, less directly, Daumier (bluestockings furiously scribbling in the Swiss hotel room [p. 23]). Such devices as the "Töpfferian" refrain, in which one scene and caption punctuates or gives circularity to the narrative, now seem absorbed into Doré's own mode—and will be developed more intensively and more personally in *Holy Russia.*

Monsieur Plumet, the hero of *Dis-Pleasures,* is also devoured by ambition, that of turning a life hitherto devoted to conquest of the haberdashery trade toward a nobler and more sublime experience: conquest of Swiss mountain peaks. This is also an artistic endeavor, for Plumet supplies himself with—apart from a hat with an enormous brim, an alpenstock of enormous length, and

22. Doré 1975 (which reproduces the whole, pp. 1137–1161) carries the publishing lines: "chez Aubert et Cie, éditeurs; imprimé par Lemercier, 8 francs" (listing, p. 1136), and "Féchoz & Letouzey, Libraires Editeurs, 10 francs" (title page reproduction, p. 1137); Roosevelt (1885, 109–110) cites Arnauld de Vresse as publisher. The only advertisement I have been able to find in the *Journal pour Rire* for any of the early Doré albums (including *Holy Russia*) is for *Three Artists* (January 31, 1851, eight francs).
23. Sello 1969, 289–291.

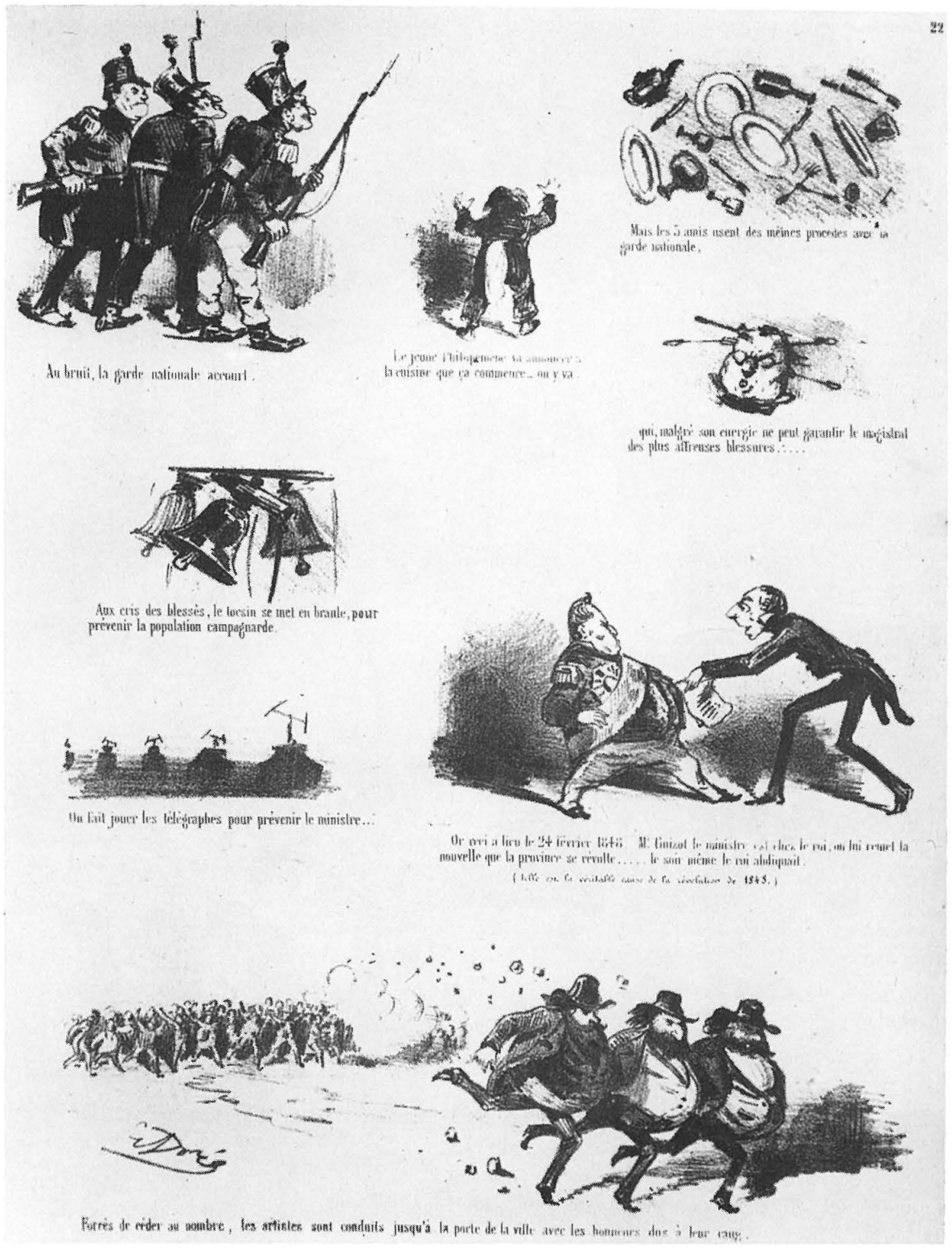


FIG. 4.13. Gustave Doré: *Three Artists* (1851).
The battle is joined by the National Guard. The mayor suffers frightful wounds. The alarm is sounded. The telegraph alerts the minister, who, on 24 February 1848, advises the king to abdicate. The artists flee.

the usual tourist knapsack—a drawing album in which to record the source of his inspiration. The rest of the book consists of Plumet's own sketches, of which "the famous Doré" becomes the editor and Aubert (merely "Aubert"—not so famous he?) the publisher. Madame Plumet contents herself with purchasing some printed "travel impressions" in order to be assured of getting them right.

When, at the very end, Monsieur Plumet encounters "the famous [again] M. Doré" in person, whose presence has naturally caused a great commotion in the locality, he agrees to have Aubert publish the album: not as art, however, but—to Plumet's mortification—as caricature. Here Doré clearly reveals his ambivalence about the genre that was still his economic mainstay. The author depicts himself as no mere caricaturist but as a "protégé de la gloire" painting a huge landscape in a wild ravine, of the very kind he imagined himself in reality painting to stun the Salon critics. Plumet's naive assumption that Doré, the famous "caricaturist," must be executing a caricature of a landscape earns him a kick in the pants from Doré the Salon painter, who would never cease to resent the critical rebuffs he suffered in that role.

Doré's satire targets the avarice of the Swiss as exploiters of tourism as much as the ambitions of the tourists themselves. The local folklore of wrestling matches, cannonades, and alphorn music is laid on especially for tourists, at a price. Every service, useful or not, demands a tip. Special tollgates are set up on minor local routes; a glass of milk by the wayside costs ten francs, and Plumet plays goatherd for twenty. In a lofty philosophical mood the hero, while imbibing the beauties of the Supreme Being by the Arve, is himself imbibed by the river's swell and dragged into a mill; on rescuing him, the miller makes him cough up Fr 75,50 (the exactitude of the sum suggests a standard toll imposed for touristic inexperience). And Madame Plumet spends a fortune on guides who remain totally idle while ostensibly searching for her "lost" husband.

Some of the dangers of travel in Switzerland are more imagined than real. The avalanche is only soot falling through the chimney; and the bear from which Plumet claims to have been (and depicts himself as being) saved only by the timely intervention of an eagle, which carries it off in its claws, was, according to Plumet's skeptical editor Aubert-Doré, only a marmot carried off by a hawk. The greater physical threat is, significantly, human and social: a tremendous procession, honored in the only full-page design of the whole book, of beggars and cretins who pursue the Plumets' carriage on its way to Chamonix and shower it with stones, in solidarity ("animés par l'esprit de corps") and as vengeance for the injury caused one of their number by the coachman's whip. There is real social fear here, and Doré vents it by showing Plumet "cruelly chastising" one of the cretins he happens to capture under his hat, like a butterfly in a net (Fig. 4.15, top right).

Doré enriches the stereotypical comedy of mountaineering by showing us Plumet's ascent of Mont Blanc from beginning to end, through Madame Plumet's telescope on the hotel balcony. Through a series of seventeen successive circular designs (Fig.

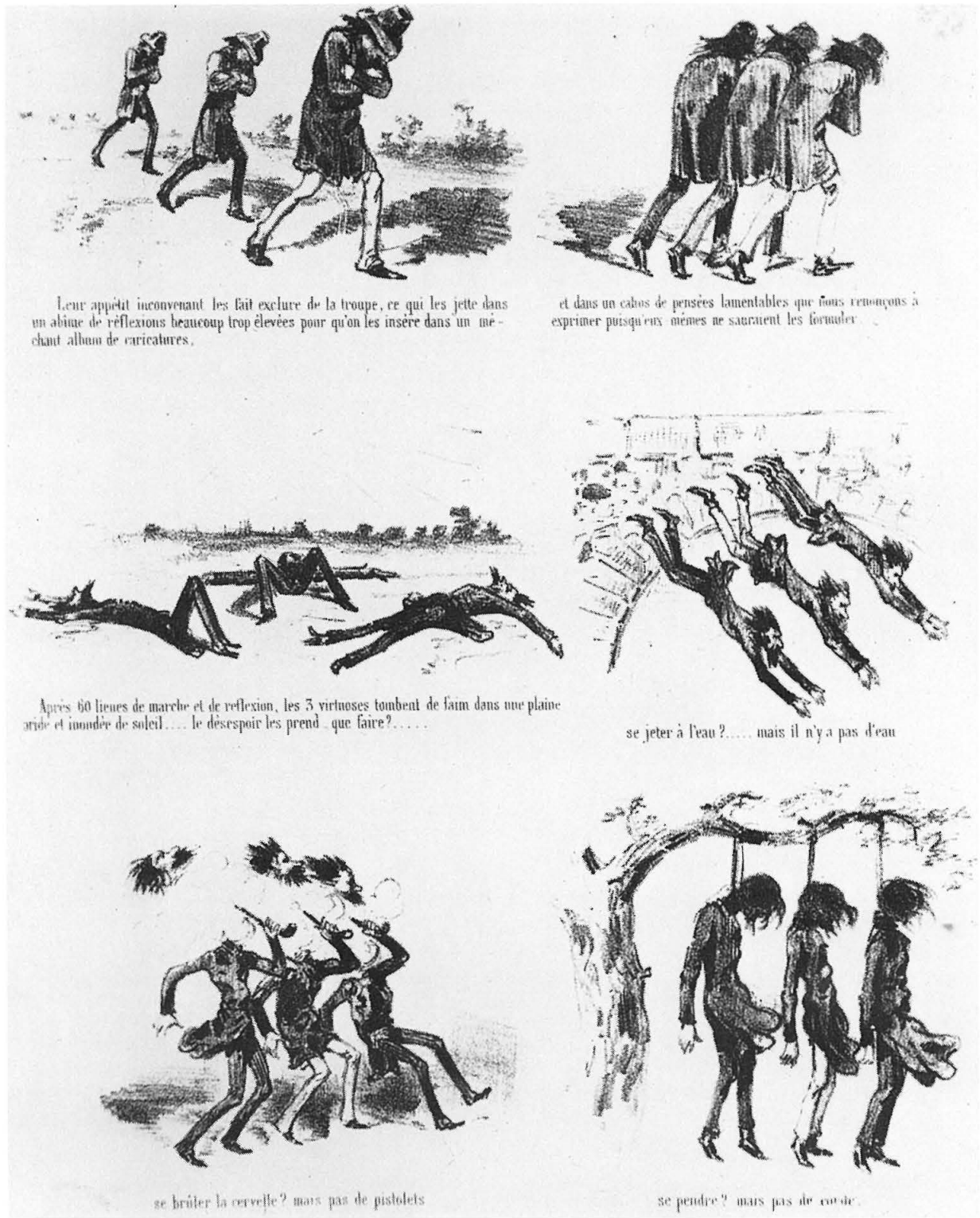


FIG. 4.14. Gustave Doré: *Three Artists* (1851).
Still ravenous, despairing, prostrate with hunger in an arid, sun-struck plain, they contemplate suicide, for which in each case the means are lacking.

FIG. 4.15. Gustave Doré: *Dis-Pleasures of a Pleasure Trip* (1851).
"[9] To amuse us, the coachman whips the cretins . . . / who shower the coach with stones / My wife faints and has to be carried to the nearest chalet, and I cruelly chastise a cretin I caught under my cap. / Roadside refrain in Savoy: 'You wanna adopt our chillun?' / 'Look Sir, we are ashamed of being Savoyard, poor and ugly as the country is; as soon as Mont Blanc is French, we'll try to tunnel through it.' / 'Watch out, coachman!' 'Sorry, Sir; fact is, I was just recently a cabbie in Paris. . . .' / 'Doan worry, madame, doan worry; 18 people fell here, 3 coaches there, 30 mules with their ladies over there; doan worry, madame, doan worry.' / The coach enters a torrent... 'Doan worry, madame, it's still the road.' / Finally Madame declares she won't continue through the water without a bridge (to be built at her expense of course), and she is carried to the nearest chalet. [10] Then, leaving my faint-hearted wife to mope in a chalet, I went off to seek inspiration. / A landscape!... No good, the sketch lacks the smell of the woods. / Suddenly embraced by a native who claimed to have swept my chimney once upon a time, / I sketched him quickly while he told me his life as a *Savoyard* [itinerant vendor] in Paris. / But in the heat of his speech he carelessly fell on me, so that with one foot he signed the portrait (as promised) / and the other my face."



Cependant le cocher croyant nous être agreable distribue aux crétins maints coups de fouets l'un deux est enlevé de terre par l'instrument,



ce qui les irrite violemment. Animés par l'esprit de corps, il font pleuvoir sur nous une grêle de pierres



tant il y eut qu'il lui transporter ma femme exanimée au plus voisin chalet, tandis que mes châtiens cruellement punissaient les crétins que j'avais pris sous ma rasquette



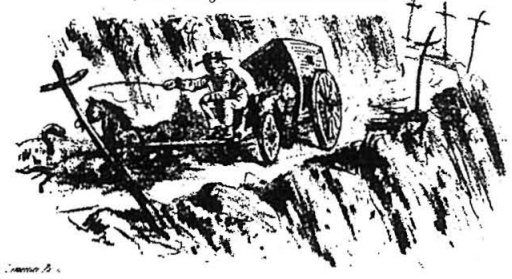
— « Voulé-vous adopté nious infans »
Refrain des grandes routes en Savoie.



— Voy'vous m'sieu, on est honteux d'être Savoyard j'nays est trop pauv' et trop vilain : on tâchera ben une fois d'être l'mari blanc sont t'rrancé pour qu'on y fasse ses p'tits tunels.



— Cocher, cocher, ou donc nous menez-vous ?
— Ah ! pardon m'sieu c'est que j'ai été cocher à Paris tout dernièrement et j'croyais encore tourner la rue Belle Chasse.



— As pas peur, madame, as pas peur. ici il est tombé 18 personnes, là il est tombé 3 diligences, là, 36 mulets et leurs dameurs, as pas peur, madame, as pas peur. . . . . .



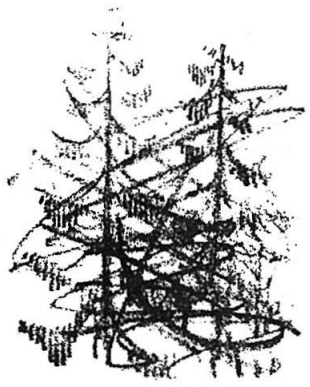
Plus loin, la voiture entre dans le lit d'un torrent — as pas peur madame, bouge pas, c'est la route



Enfin madame déclara qu'elle ne passerait par l'eau qu'on lui eut fait un petit pont [illegible] bien entendu. et la transporta au plus voisin chalet



Et puis, laissant la plus pusillanime des femmes se morfondre dans un Chalet j'allai au grand air recueillir l'inspiration



Un paysage !... j'effaçai bien vite ce fâcheux croquis. A ces sortes d'essais ne manquera-t-il pas toujours l'odeur des bois ?



Je fus tiré de cette triste pensée par un indigène qui m'embrasse en me disant avoir ramoné ma cheminée dans le temps



Je pris un léger croquis de ce personnage pendant qu'il me racontait au long la carrière de **Savoyard** qu'il avait mené à **Paris**.

Mais dans le feu du discours l'imprudent se laisse glisser sur moi, un pied porte sur l'album et aussi le portrait s'y trouve signé de lui comme il me l'avait promis.

Autre pied avant porte sur ma tête j'avais l'air d'avoir ma cheminée sur la tête, la honte

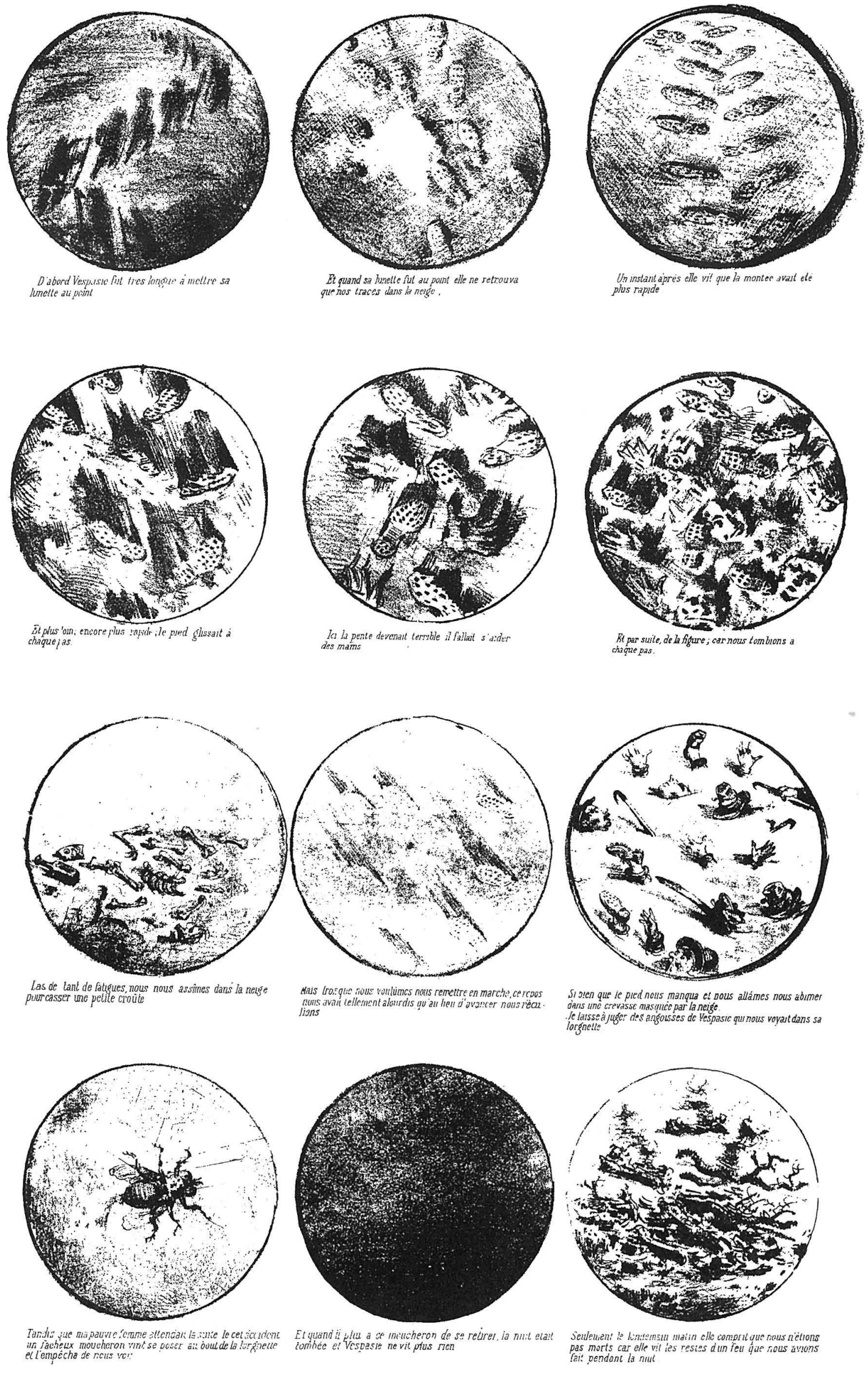


FIG. 4.16. Gustave Doré: *Dis-Pleasures of a Pleasure Trip* (1851). Pp.15–16.
(through Madame Plumet's telescope): Out of focus, / mere footprints; / up a steeper slope, / slipping, / using hands, / and then face, falling at each step. / Tired, we stop for a snack, / but, too heavy to advance, we slip / and fall into a hidden crevasse—anguish of Vespasie. / A fly on the lens blocks the view. / Nightfall. / The following morning she sees the debris of a fire we made that night.



Le lendemain je prends un guide pour visiter les ruines qui dominent le village.



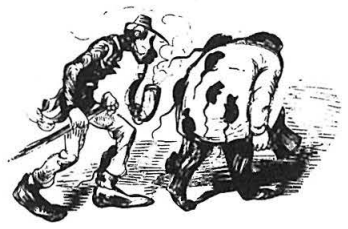
On y trouve encore quelques caveaux où l'on peut se promener et trouver des trésors.



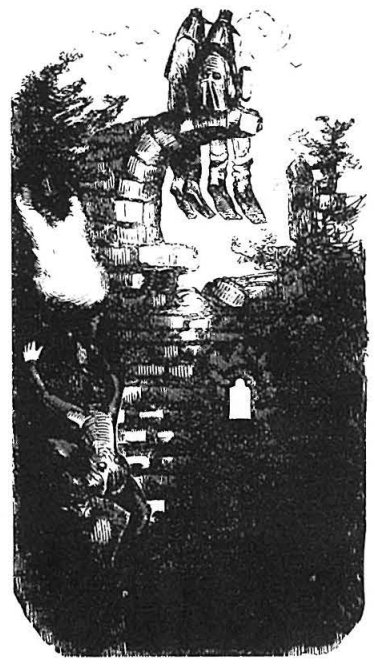
En effet je viens d'en trouver un !... Je viens de voir l'or briller.



Déception ! Je mets la main sur une calotte kvcloise à bords fourrés et à passementeries dorées.



Je sors en jurant que je ne visiterai plus de caveaux de ma vie.



En grimpant à un tronc de lierre, j'arrive au haut d'une tour. Deux poètes étaient assis sur le mur absorbés dans leurs méditations.



A peine étais-je arrivé au sommet qu'une partie du mur s'écroule en emportant mon guide !... Les flegmatiques poètes ne sourcillent pas.



L'horizon retentit de mes cris... Les poètes ne semblent pas entendre. .



Survient la pluie. . Nous subissons le sort des gargouilles d'église Les deux poètes se donnent si peu de mouvement que l'herbe des ruines prend racine sur eux.



Et toujours ils méditaient. . Désespoir cruel. la faim me dévorait, j'attendais impatiemment un coup de vent qui voulût tout anéantir....



Dieu est grand ! ! m'écriai-je en voyant poindre mon salut au milieu du ciel .. « Mösieu Poitevin criai je... » Les deux poètes étaient muets... Ils méditaient toujours.



Sauvé !... Mösieu Poitevin m'a entendu et est venu à moi. Malgre nos instances, les deux poètes n'ont pas voulu quitter leurs méditations sur les ruines et la chute des empires. Tant mieux pour le cheval.



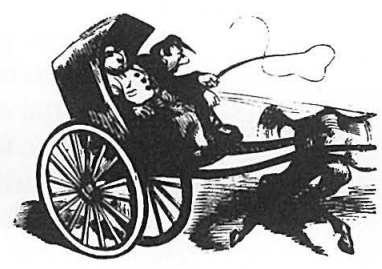
Nous n'avons pas de charge à la descente. . Nous tombons sur une cheminée surmontée d'un nid de cigogne



Nous nous relevons meurtris. Mösieu Poitevin m'avertit que je lui dois 4,000 f. .. Comprends pas...



Ce qui nous vaut une fessée cruelle des indigènes, qui ont pour les cigognes un culte particulier.



Je paye enfin ; mais je n'ai plus même assez pour continuer mon voyage en bateau.

FIG. 4.17. Gustave Doré: *Trip Along the Rhine* (1851).
I take a guide, / explore vaults, / see gold! / —decoration of a fur cap / and leave rat-infested. / Two meditating poets ahead of me. / Part of the wall collapses, carrying off my guide—the phlegmatic poets don't turn a hair / or hear my screams. / Rain. We become as gargoyles. The poets take root / and meditate still. Ravenous, I await some all-destructive wind. / God is great! I cry, seeing salvation. The poets still meditate in silence. / Saved . . . by Mo'sieu Poitevin. The poets continue to meditate on ruins and the fall of empires. / Unfortunate descent on a stork's nest. / I owe Mo'sieu Poitevin 4,000 francs. Nonplussed. / Resulting in a beating up by natives who have a cult of storks. / I pay—but am cleaned out.

4.16) the reader becomes at once the distanced, retrospective spectator of Monsieur Plumet's folly and the detective piecing together all the indirect evidence of the various mishaps that make up the ascent: first, before the lens is properly focused, we see the blurred shadows of figures climbing; then, in precise close-up, their spoors—slipping footprints, clutching handprints and even faceprints, debris of luncheon and fire, the lost watch. Finally, the climbers become indeterminate specks in the far distance. Although Plumet and his posse of guides arrive at the bottom of the mountain in so many snowballs and have to wait for the sun to dry them out, his success is considered remarkable enough for the mayor of Chamonix to crown him publicly with a laurel wreath, like a real mountaineering hero.

Doré's attention to foot and handprints in the snow is that of the printmaker seeking analogies in nature. Yet he went further, depicting effects that only recently have been incorporated into printmaking and other relief processes: the fossil marks of the banal, the "estampe trouvée." With somewhat sadistic relish, Doré shows how the "accident" of a human print imposes itself brutally on the artists' print. The rustic Savoyard, sitting for artist Plumet and telling all too warmly of his experiences in Paris, "accidentally" impresses one hobnailed boot on Plumet's sketchbook, ineradicably desecrating a whole page of drawings, and the other boot on his cheek (see Fig. 4.15, bottom, right). Plumet engages a local female herbalist to treat his damaged face. But his treatment of *her,* in a gesture characteristic of the ever-present town-

country conflict, earns him another, symmetrical, handprint ("allopathic medicine") on the other cheek. Both foot- and handprint are punningly explained to Plumet's wife as just more "impressions de voyage."

Among the morals of the story, Doré (promoting himself to the very end) lists "that the albums of Gustave Doré will always tend to embellish nature and sad reality." But the relatively expensive (ten-franc) album may not have sold,[24] for the author did not attempt to follow up with any comparable independent venture the next year. Instead he returned to the safety of the *Journal pour Rire* for his next satiric travel tale, on an ostensibly similar topic: *Une Ascension comme quoi l'on peut trouver son bonheur sous la neige de Mont Blanc* (An Ascent; or, How One Can Find Happiness Under the Snow of Mont Blanc)—but a much slighter affair.[25] Whether because he had to leave the freedom of the lithographic stone for the confines of the woodblock or because the story may not be entirely his own invention, Doré shows much less verve. The starting point is a young speculator's "suicidal" decision to climb the mountain in an attempt to escape the consequences of a financial disaster. After running the gauntlet of petty and fraudulent historical mementos, he arrives in Switzerland, only to find that French imports have replaced the renowned Swiss products and that urban services (a bootblack awaits him on the summit) and urban pleasures (he finds a ferris wheel also camped in the snows) have supplanted the rustic primitivism he expected. A fortunate avalanche allows him to make the acquaintance of an eligible maiden gathering herbs on the craggy peak. He marries her, renouncing suicide and speculation in order to lead a proper bourgeois family life. The story bears two hallmarks of Doré self-promotiveness: the narrator shows himself drawing in a huge album, evidently hoping to escape from the Bourse (representing commercial journal illustration?) into Art; and the newspaper he is given in the remote Alpine chalet is the *Journal pour Rire,* the very issue that two and a half years earlier carried Doré's own drawings for *The Man with the Hundred Thousand Ecus*.

Doré also executed in 1851 an album-length (eighty-four drawings) sequence for the *Journal pour Rire,* under the title *Voyage sur les bords du Rhin* (Trip Along the Rhine). This relatively conventional satire on the passive tourist experience has none of the romantic trimmings of artistic aspirations. The narrator of the Rhenish journey suffers the tribulations of the typical tourist in Germany—the greedy and pestering guides, porters, and sacristans; and the obstreperous students, whose life is dedicated to carousing, smoking, and creating musical din any place and any time, but especially where there are tourists. Real physical threats are represented by swaggering, choleric Prussian military, who are the only "monument" to be seen in the boring town of Coblenz and who literally trample underfoot the tiny, pudgy narrator. He suffers even worse from local peasants and Catholic priests (?), who beat him up with sticks for disturbing sacred storks' nests. This treatment is all the more undeserved in that the nests were actually dislodged, in a fantastic interlude, by the hooves of a horse ridden by the famous aeronaut Poitevin, whose balloon rescues the tourist (for a price, of course) from the teetering outcrop of a ruin where he had been stranded and starving for days (Fig. 4.17).

This particular episode is one of the most cinematic Doré ever devised, showing in quick succession six similar scenes, three in medium and three in close-up view, of the progressively crumbling ruin. The terror of the tourist is contrasted with the composure of two German poets, who become literally rooted to a freehanging segment of the topmost arch—an emblem of romantic aloofness and a loftily precarious existence. Other graphically innovative sequences show the succession of castles perched on mountaintops, repeated three times at different points in the journey and soon reduced to a few flat, perfunctory lines to demonstrate how quickly even (or especially) the picturesque becomes monotonous; the "drunken house" effect of medieval half-timbered buildings curving in all directions over the streets; and an interpolated romance, slipped in with a quick succession of tiny vignettes of varying character, angle, and depth, recounting an absurd fairy tale set in the Crusades about a princess and a knight who turns into a gnat—all parodies of different stereotypical components of the romantic vision in its quest for poetic solitude, the picturesque, and the medieval fantasy. This vision, once culled from literature, has now become absorbed into tourism, which commodifies experience—as does the cartoonist also.

24. Roosevelt (1885, 109–110) speaks of its "immense popularity," which I am inclined to regard as mere rhetoric, especially because she herself goes on to comment on the extreme rarity of the album (in 1885)—"perhaps there are not a dozen copies in existence." I have seen no advertisement for it. Using three different publishers (Aubert, de Vresse, and Féchoz et Letouzey) and two different printers, Doré seems to have had to shop around. The high price (eight and ten francs) of this little volume, as of *Three Artists,* probably restricted the sales of what must have been a very limited printing in the first place.

25. Twenty-eight drawings over six pages of a single eight-page issue (*Journal pour Rire,* June 12, 1852; repeated, with a slightly different title, in *Petit Journal pour Rire,* no. 229 [1860]). The sequence is identified as a "fragment of the album of a young speculator, M.B.∗∗∗—drawings by G. Doré." Later, after he had abandoned caricature, Doré would depict the ascent of this same mountain in a highly romanticized manner (for the *Monde Illustré* [1860], reproduced in Doré 1975, 1046, 1226, and 1227).

GUSTAVE DORÉ'S *HISTORY OF HOLY RUSSIA*:

From the Crimean War to the New Cold War

Increasing fame as a caricaturist did not satisfy Doré. Ignored at the spring 1854 Salon, he determined after the summer vacation once again to try painting. Devoured by envy at the prices the academic painters such as Gérôme and Meissonier commanded, when he heard that the latter had received Fr 200,000 for a single picture, Doré "threw a childish fit," "nearly tore his hair with rage," and "had a convulsion." He determined to outdo the older artist by painting the "abominations of Paris, with all the old streets, all the wretches, and outcasts, and many other realistic things," in a series called "Paris as It Is," twelve colossal compositions "painted . . . in less time than it takes most artists to prepare their brushes and canvasses."[1] The artist presumably quickly destroyed these works when his mother's asking price of Fr 140,000 was found excessive by a prospective American client, and Doré never referred to them again. To cover the "failure," and at the same time "escape from the Philipon drudgery," Doré embarked on two independent, monumental graphic projects: an illustrated Rabelais, which was planned as a cheap weekly serial publication in virtual rivalry with the *Journal pour Rire;* and a sort of Rabelaisian historical travel tale, blending the caricatural genres and techniques he had used hitherto, called *The Picturesque, Dramatic, and Caricatural History of Holy Russia.*[2]

This long-neglected, recently resurrected work represents the climax to Doré's career as caricaturist and narrator. It is also the most contradictory of his productions, for it is not only a gigantic joke but also, behind all the distortion and derision, a polemic with a serious patriotic purpose. As a propaganda salvo it misfired, in relation both to the market and to Doré's career. Its subsequent publishing history in the twentieth century is a bizarre story in itself, the pattern of revival corresponding to the pattern of European feeling toward Russia, right down to the present.

At once entertainer and propagandist, Doré embraces the contradictions of his role in a self-conscious spirit. Both attracted to and dismissive of the rhetorical tricks of his sources, he brings himself, as the "lofty and skeptical" historian, on stage as he parodies, with an ingenious array of graphic devices, those who attempt to shed light on the obscurity of legend and prehistory. Doré thickens the obscurity of Russian prehistory with a tangle of names of tribes and places and an equally sticky mess of names of rival authorities, both exaggerations of the exotic erudition of one of his principal sources in this area, Karamzin[3] (Fig. 5.1). Doré also mocks Karamzin's patient disentangling of fact from fiction—which the caricaturist treats as of equal value—as he works up his balladlike reflexes and refrains of murder, fratricide, death by the "tsar's colic" (poisoning), lethal struggles for the throne, and the eternal Russian march on Constantinople. This is not the place to show how Doré tampered with his major sources, Karamzin or Ségur,[4] in this or that episode.[5] It is evident throughout that Doré's distortions are governed by two motives: to make Russian history look as grim as possible and at the same time to make it look as silly as possible (Figs. 5.2 and 5.3). From start to finish, Doré matches his graphic whimsies with verbal follies, indulging the pleasures of punning to such an extent that it is often the lure of a pun that determines the selection of the episode.

It matters little to Doré who was fighting whom and why; it is the pattern of massacre and countermassacre that is intended to shock and amuse. The permutation of graphic effects within this pattern was to Doré a primary artistic challenge. He draws upon a thesaurus of devices for the representation of the various degrees and modes of killing, bringing variety to the Western stereotype of Russian barbarity and freshness and spontaneity to the cliché of their sempiternal sanguinary traditions.

Even the pacific reign of Yaroslav the Wise becomes the occasion for foolish jokes, whereby en*light*enment is brought on a diet of candles (an ancient topos of Russian barbarism) and the ruler's legislative efforts are encapsulated in a tariff of mutilations. Doré cuts imperturbably through the major paradox of Russian history as perceived by the West: the price of efforts to westernize—that is, civilize—the nation was paid in "oriental" barbarisms of coercion.

The Russians progress through their historical development by means of the knout. Doré reaches a satirical plateau, both graphically and verbally, with his extensive Rabelaisian disquisi-

1. Roosevelt 1885, 154ff.
2. The volume's full title includes Doré's historical sources: *L'Histoire . . . de la Sainte Russie, d'après les chroniqueurs et historiens Nestor, Nikan, Sylvestre, Karamsin, Ségur, etc.,* Commentée et illustrée de 500 magnifiques gravures par Gustave Doré, gravées sur bois par . . . Sotain, J. Bry aîné, 1854.
3. Karamzin 1819. The first 550-page volume of this eleven-volume work, which Doré surely no more than skimmed, contains 86 pages of bibliographical references.
4. Ségur 1829.
5. Cases in point would be the revenge of Olga on the Derevlian envoys and her use of birds as firebrands to ignite Korosten (Karamzin 1819, 1:195, 220; Doré [1854] 1967, 13, 19). Subsequent references, if otherwise unattributed, are to Doré [1854] 1967.

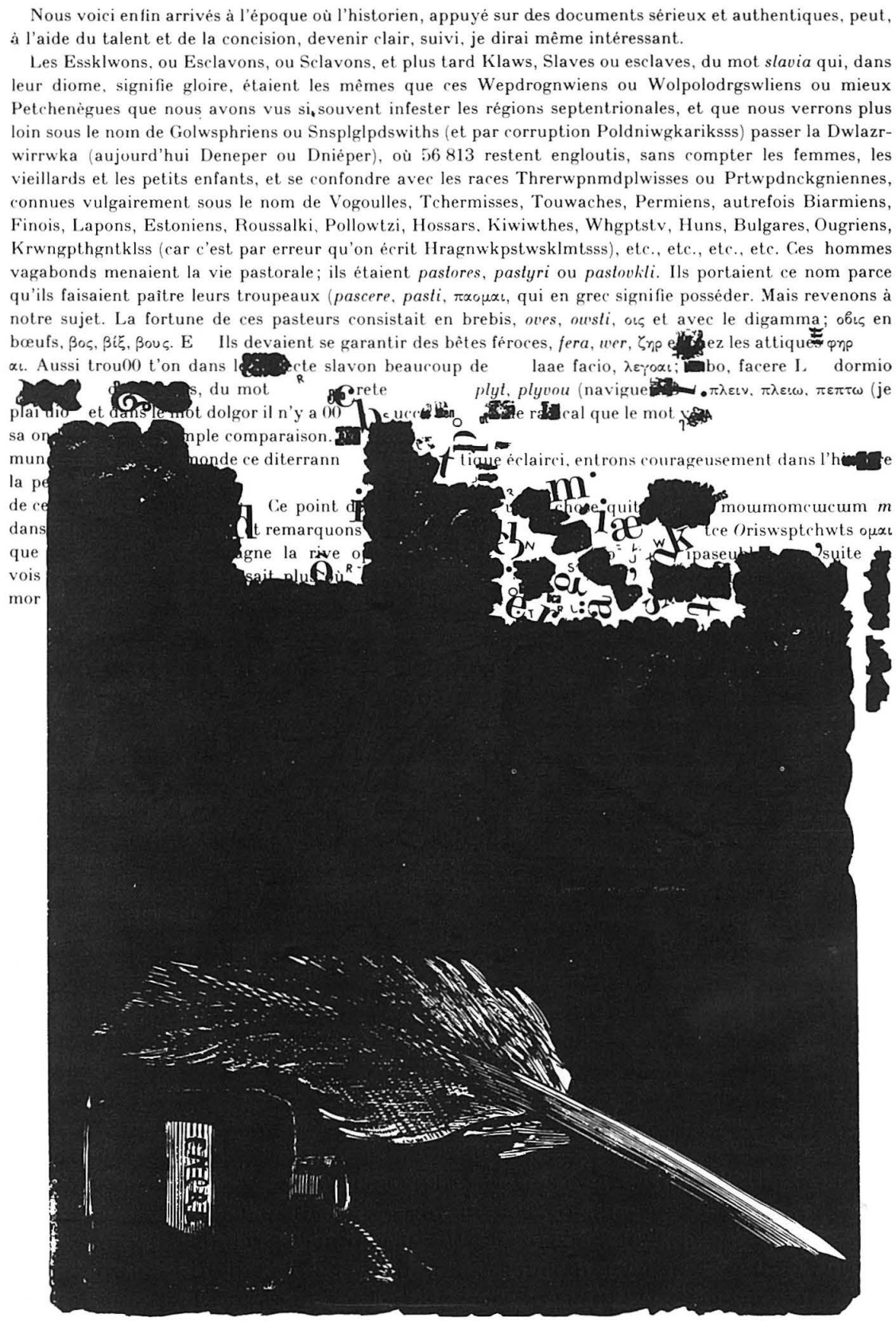


FIG. 5.1. *Picturesque, Dramatic, and Caricatural History of Holy Russia* (1854).
Concise, clear, and coherent historical account of early Russian history.

tion on this instrument, which he represents as the quintessence of Russian law and society, in the spirit of a contemporary polemic (which he probably knew), *The Knout and the Russians*.[6]

As he piles horror upon horror, Doré coquets with his fear of blunting his readers' sensibilities. Pretending to quail before the reign of Ivan the Terrible, he is disposed to summarize it (with the necessary decency) in a single black blot. But he immediately returns to his task with new relish, picturesquely rendering new panoplies of torture (Fig. 5.4). Relief from the litany of cruelty comes only with Peter the Great; here Doré, in his mixture of horror at the tsar's punishments and admiration for his efforts toward modernizing the realm, follows Ségur and the received opinion of the time. In general, however, Peter's positive accomplishments are trivialized, and the gigantic and costly achievement of building St. Petersburg in a marsh is the occasion for the author's dazzling demonstration of command over the "text-image disjunction" peculiar to cartoon and comic strip art: the text represents the claims of Peter's propagandists; the image, the reality of his crimes—the "common factor" and pivot being in many cases a pun (Fig. 5.5).

With Catherine the Great, Doré again reveals a certain ambivalence, perfunctorily recognizing her "greatness" and at the same time scurrilously twisting her reforms into atrocities (the schools she founded, for instance, turn out to be "geological": Siberian slave-labor mines).

The year 1812, an obvious turning point in Russian history, is marked by a break in Doré's narrative style, with the only completely textless page, showing the burning of Moscow and a couple of trite allegories of the triumph of Winter. Doré can hardly have believed such clichés himself, but they served as a mask for the unrepresentable: the massive defeat and loss of life among Frenchmen and the beginning of the end of Napoleonic glory. As a refrain, a premonition, "1812" had already figured in Doré's history; and now it was to be rammed down the Russian throat.

The reign of Nicholas I brings the narrative up to date. Here Doré illustrates the vision of the marquis de Custine: universal servility, militarization, and oppression. He then passes to the opening of hostilities in the Balkans just prior to the Crimean War, and the tsar's great gamble as he rolls his dice over Europe. Indeed, his action is the military-political extension of the mania for gambling among the Russian landowners generally, who play for high

6. Lagny 1854, originally published in Paris in 1853.

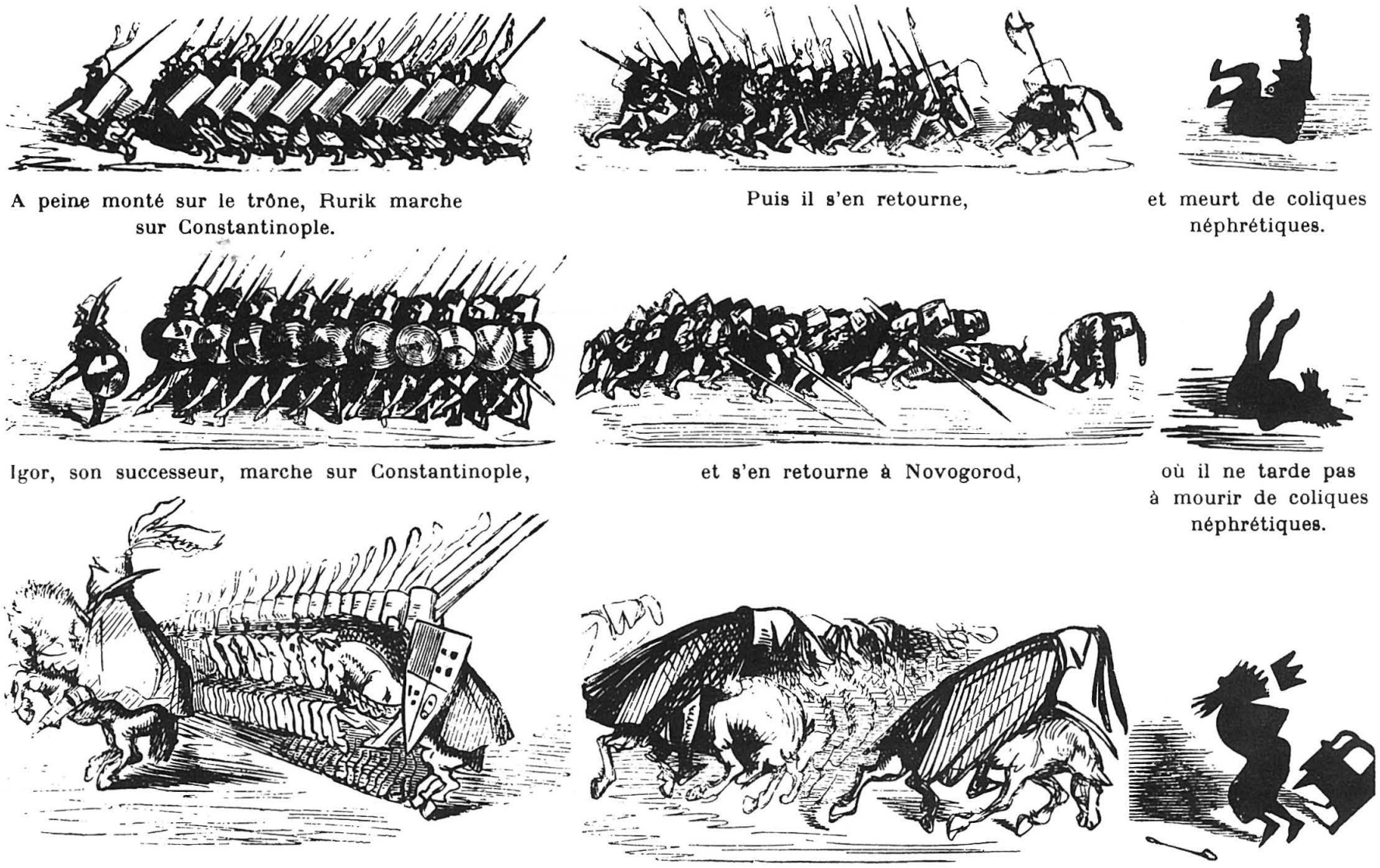


FIG. 5.2. *History of Holy Russia* (1854).
"Rurik has hardly gained the throne when he marches on Constantinople. / Then he returns, / and dies of kidney pains. / Igor, his successor, marches on Constantinople, / and returns to Novogorod, / where he soon dies of kidney pains. / Oleg, his successor, marches on Constantinople, / and returns home, / where the ancestral complaint soon finishes him off."

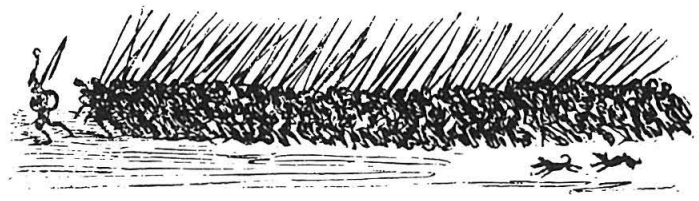
stakes—including serfs, whom Doré represents as bundled up like banknotes.

A quarter century before, Turkey had been the vile oppressor of Greek Christians; now she is the blameless victim, bullied by the arrogant Russian Prince Menshikov. Doré, under pressure as both journalist and satirist to document some of the complexities of the negotiations preceding the war in the Crimea, allows text (in the form of long speeches) to predominate for several pages. His reportage is spiced with his own parody of classical oration, political harangue, and biblical chronicle, hysterically exaggerated and couched in a Rabelaisian luxuriance, which acts as a very thick sugar-coating to a very bitter pill—that is, Russian aims to absorb the Turkish empire. Dropping into ballad doggerel saturated with bizarre rhymes and compulsive puns, Doré depicts the tsar, in his rashness, overriding his advisers. This was largely the view of the French press, which sought to reassure the public that their enemy was not a whole nation but only one megalomaniac individual, the tsar. The folkish (and childish) ballad form (to be sung "to the tune of the Good King Dagobert") may have served to defuse fears engendered by Russian belligerence, as indeed may have caricature itself, with its childish, regressive characteristics—especially in the case of Doré, whose thematic and stylistic crudities are extreme. But the "magical" capacity of caricature to degrade and injure had to be reserved for the enemy; it is significant of the whole enterprise that Doré shows inexhaustible facility and energy for the depiction of Russians in suicidal and internecine bloodletting, but he cannot confront the Russian capacity to kill foreigners.

How does Doré deal with the Russian navy's total destruction of the Turkish fleet, with great carnage of Turkish sailors, at Sinope in November 1853? This event, which did more than any other in the pre-Crimean stage of the hostilities to rouse alarm and anger among the Western allies, and which was propagated by their press as the foulest military atrocity, is sloughed off by Doré as an implied Russian defeat (p. 92) following and akin to the bombardment of Odessa.

Another lesser, but curious, factor made for distortion of Russian history as well. On several occasions Doré infiltrates into his treatment present French concerns about domestic abuses, which cannot help undermining the historicity of the situation he ostensibly describes. Let us take, for instance, the parodistic eulogies by partisans of rival candidates for the throne after Vladimir's death (p. 23), which appear as captions to pictures of mutual extermination by the Russian parties in question. Yet surely these eulogies reflect, closer to home, Doré's cynicism about electioneering and other democratic or pseudodemocratic processes, characterizing both the French republican regime, which introduced universal manhood suffrage in 1848, and the new Napoleonic regime, which had based its authority on the plebiscite. For the politically conservative Doré, democratic debate was the prelude to anarchy.

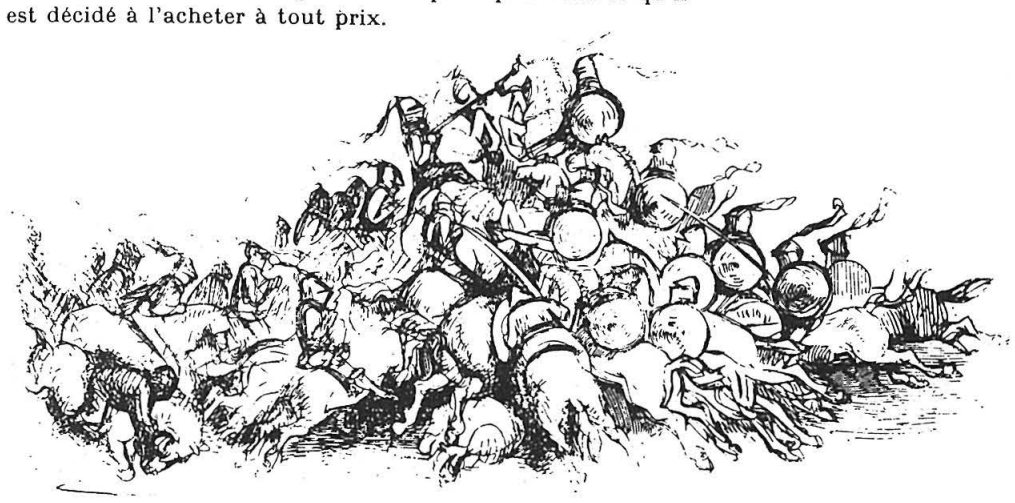
At the same time, as a caricaturist for papers with republican sympathies, Doré not only suffered from the severe restrictions placed on the opposition journals by Napoleon III but also subscribed to the popular view that the press, generally, served as an instrument of resistance to authority. Quite inaccurately, Doré attributes the introduction into Russia of the printing press and the spreading use of books to the subversive desire of the lower orders, the muzhiks who set up clandestine presses in the forests to plague and haunt the tyrant Ivan the Terrible. Yet Doré must



Isiaslaw II, à son avènement au trône, lève une armée et va déclarer à ses voisins que c'est la paix qu'il veut et qu'il est décidé à l'acheter à tout prix.



A de pareilles protestations, ses voisins ne peuvent réprimer un mouvement de surprise.



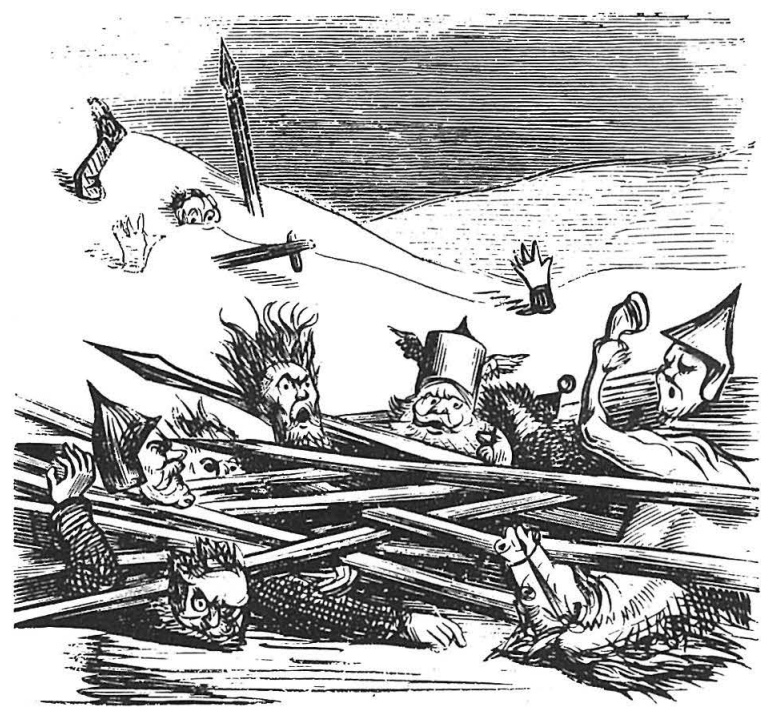
C'en était déjà trop; ce ne pouvait donc plus être qu'une guerre à mort, aussi le premier choc fut-il terrible, comme vous pouvez penser.



De mémoire d'homme on n'avait vu croisement de fers aussi violent·



Sur ces entrefaites, les rigueurs du climat viennent jeter le plus grand trouble dans les combinaisons stratégiques,



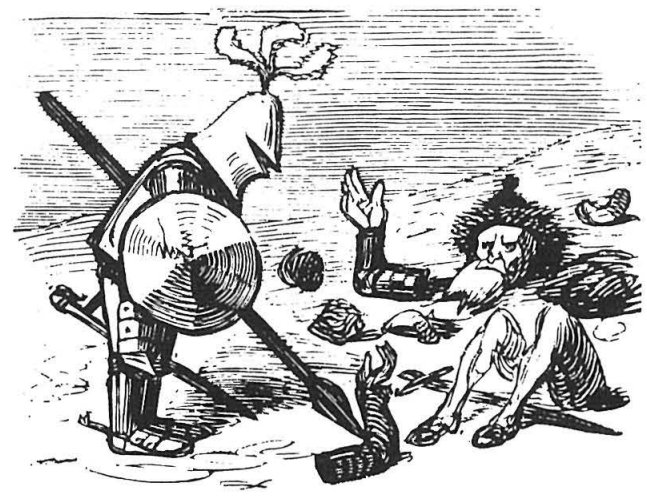
et rendent l'issue du combat tellement douteuse que chacun croit devoir entonner son Te deum.



Le chroniqueur Nestor penche pour que tous deux aient été vainqueurs.



Mais Nikon, de son côté, penche pour que tous deux aient été vaincus.



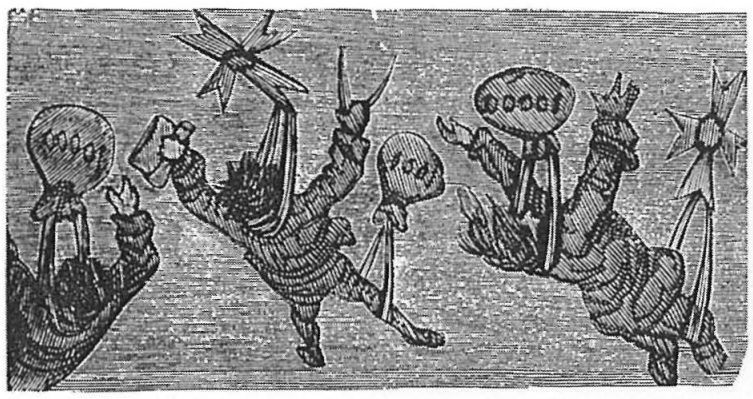
Avant de quitter le champ de bataille, le fils d'Isiaslaw, homme très facétieux, lui fait observer que s'il veut régner, ce sera dans un état très démembré.

FIG. 5.3. *History of Holy Russia* (1854).
Isiaslaw II raises an army and declares to his neighbors that he wants peace and will buy it at any price. / Surprise of neighbors. / War to the death. / The most violent passage of arms known to man. / Climatic rigors confuse strategy / and the outcome of the battle. / Nestor inclines to victory for both sides. / But Nikon inclines to defeat for both sides. / The humorous son of Isiaslaw observes to him that if he wishes to reign, it will be in a very dismembered state.



Cependant, vers l'an 1561, cela redevient plus montrable. Ivan, en vieillissant, s'est beaucoup radouci et a beaucoup calmé l'excentricité de ses procédés.

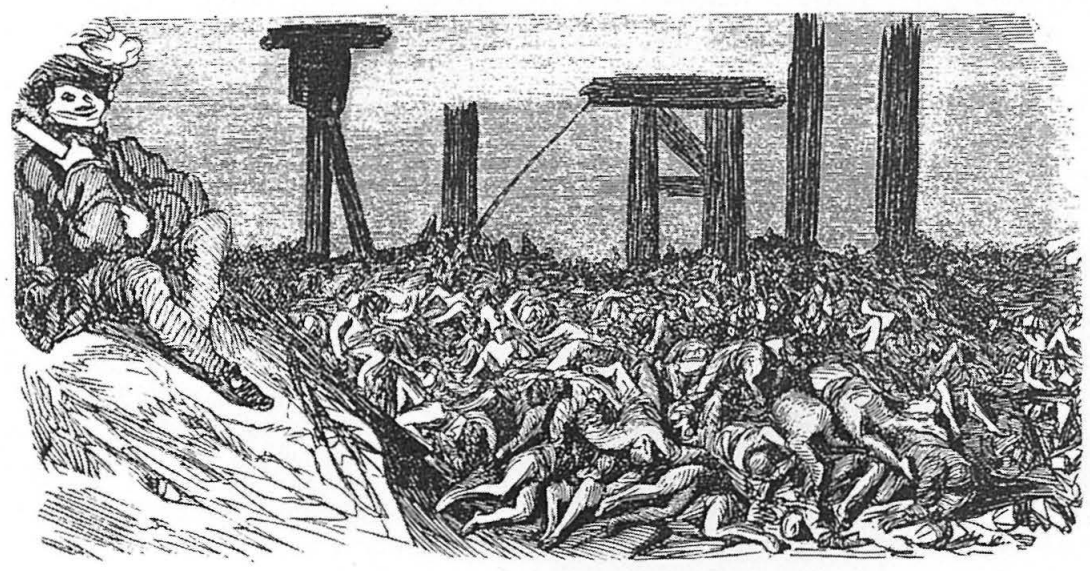
FIG. 5.4. *History of Holy Russia* (1854).
"Around 1561, however, history becomes more presentable again. As he grows older, Ivan mitigates the eccentricity of his methods."



Ne pouvant douter cependant que ses projets ne soient en grande défaveur parmi les siens, Pierre croit le moment venu de distribuer des encouragements.



Ce qui les encourage à étudier la chose plus à fond.



Le terrain venant à se solidifier, Pierre à ce sourire victorieux et splendide du génie qui se sent enfin compris.

FIG. 5.5. *History of Holy Russia* (1854).
"In order to counter popular resentment, Peter finds the time ripe for incentives / for the matter to be studied in greater depth. / As the ground gets firmer Peter smiles the triumphant and dazzling smile of the genius who is finally understood."



FIG. 5.6. *History of Holy Russia* (1854).
My pencil is scandalized by the writings of Karamsin, and rebels. I plead, it hesitates. / Nothing is so mincing in its manner as my pencil caught between prudery and the creative itch. / It whispers in my ear what is to come; my blushes and confusion tell all. / Not so easy, though. My publisher reminds me of my contract. M. Bry is certainly not lacking in decency; on the contrary, his prudery as a publisher is proverbial; but he is convinced that all may be clothed in good humor. / Under accusations of disloyalty and threats of lawsuits I yield—cursing the day I first set eyes on a publisher.

have read in Ségur that Ivan himself introduced printing into Russia.[7]

Again, also with respect to censorship, we find feigned self-censorship in treating the reign of Catherine the Great, in Doré's time as since perceived as an era of fabulous debauchery. The playful interlude here (pp. 66–67) starts with a "decently indecent" academic orgy scene, with which Doré mocks the "morality" of his artistic and political rivals, the academic painters. Summoned not to shrink before the disgusting naked truth, Doré imagines himself challenged in turn by his inner censor (symbolized by his bashful pencil), his publisher, and finally the Law (Fig. 5.6). By court order, the publisher de Bry, whose contract with the artist would have forced him to render the truth, however dreadful, is made to place a vine-leaf (i.e., figleaf) over the whole scene. This episode, redolent of the legal and other maneuvers of the opposition press since 1830, and resumed under the harsh regime of Napoleon III with respect to political censorship, reminds us of the regime's collateral *moral* censorship, which was to become notorious in the history of French literature with the prosecution in 1857 of *Madame Bovary* and *Les Fleurs du mal*.[8]

Doré's work ends with thirteen pages of cartoons (all but one full-page size) which expose the lies, hypocrisy, and foolish ambition of the tsar and try to reassure the French public of imminent victory at no cost to themselves and as little as possible to the Russian people. In the next-to-last drawing (Fig. 5.7), Achille Champavert, the "typical" French soldier, softens and sheds tears over the suffering of the Russians, but finally he leaps over the ship's gunwale, eager to engage the enemy and to save "having to kill too many of them fine fellows."[9] The optimism was misplaced, however, and the killing of so many fine fellows on both sides, which immediately followed the publication of Doré's book, condemned it to oblivion.

The Genesis, Uniqueness, and Failure of the History

In mid 1854 the war against Russia broke out, and the French sent troops to the Black Sea. The thirteen pages of allegorical cartoons tacked on after the "Moral" and "Epilogue" to Doré's *History of Holy Russia,* executed in a graphic mode quite different from the rest, suggest that Doré first responded to the war with conventional, *Charivari*-style cartoons. But the *Charivari,* already filling with lithographs on the war[10] by its regular contributors Cham and Daumier (Fig. 5.8), had no use for them, nor had Doré's regular outlet, the strictly nonpolitical *Journal pour Rire.* Doré reacted in characteristic fashion by immensely enlarging the scope of his enterprise: instead of a series of single cartoons about the Russian threat in 1854, he would do an extensive narrative, to comprise eventually over five hundred drawings (as he estimated on the title page) on the long, continuous history of Russian barbarism from the earliest beginnings down to the outbreak of the war.

7. Ségur 1829, 200.
8. Less well known, but antedating Doré's book by a year, was the prosecution of the Goncourts for a description of a Diaz painting showing naked lovers embracing; Doré had himself protested the institution of preventive censorship in the *Journal pour Rire* in 1852 (Hemmings 1971, 61ff., 73n).
9. This cartoon was presumably conceived at the time the French army was preparing to cross the Black Sea for Sevastopol (the crossing took place in September 1854); lack of explicit reference to the fortress-port that was to be on every Frenchman's lips within a month or two, or to the costly victories of Alma and Balaclava, indicates that the whole book was completed sometime in August, at which time there is also a conspicuous hiatus in Doré's contributions to the *Journal pour Rire.*
10. A collection called *Les Cosaques pour Rire,* forty lithographic caricatures from the *Charivari* by Cham, Daumier (with nineteen plates), and Vernier (and, priced at fifteen francs, nearly ten times the price of Doré's wood-engraved album, page for page), and a similar album called *Chargeons les Russes* by Cham and Daumier were both advertised in the *Charivari* of December 30, 1854. Both are concerned only with Russia's contemporary political conditions and military intentions.



FIG. 5.7. *History of Holy Russia* (1854).
"'Champavert! We'll get there soon enough—don't be such a Russian eater!' 'Russian eater yourself; don't you see that if we don't get there immediately, we'll be having to kill too many of them fine fellows.'"

The Picturesque, Dramatic, and Caricatural History of Holy Russia is unique in several respects, within both the artist's oeuvre and the tradition of 19th-century graphic art. It is, first of all, the only major work (discounting the much smaller comic albums he did in his teens) that Doré both wrote and illustrated of which the entire conception and execution (excluding the actual engraving) was completely his own. Second, it is the last major consistently comic work he executed and represents a culmination of his youthful phase as a caricaturist.[11] Third, although it is primarily a pictorial work rather than an illustrated text, the captions have a peculiar, pun-laden wit of their own, and several pages contain large blocks of writing that testify to Doré's considerable skills as a literary parodist in a Rabelaisian vein. Fourth, in terms of the major categories of graphic art in the period, it is by far the largest comic strip album of the century. It is also, by any standards, one of the funniest and most imaginative, deploying a dazzling array of graphic devices. Finally, it is the most thoroughly political, polemical, and topically relevant graphic work of Doré's vast oeuvre.

Despite all these exceptional features (yet partly because of them), *Holy Russia* is the least known of Doré's major productions, for Doré himself seems to have suppressed it, never speaking of it to anyone. When interviewed in the days of his greater fame, Doré was altogether dismissive of his youthful efforts in caricature. Most biographers and critics from 1861 on ignore the book or limit themselves to giving only the title; barely any show signs of having looked into it, and none of appreciating its unique character.[12] Of course, Doré's political persiflage clearly threatens the image of the artist as the immortal illustrator of immortal literature; moreover, given the accredited bourgeois hierarchy of artistic styles, it is not surprising that writers ignore his major independent work simply because it is in the "inferior" genre of caricature. But it is more puzzling to find that even historians of caricature have been unable or unwilling to fit it into the mainline tradition of political cartooning. Apart from the question of its availability, I am tempted to wonder whether its moral, political, and physical enormity has not conspired against it.

Commercially, Doré's audacious venture appears to have failed in its own time. The first and only 19th-century edition, published by de Bry in 1854, was produced very cheaply on newsprint and priced very low, at four francs even less than the much smaller lithographic *Labors of Hercules*. The use of wood engraving rather than lithography allowed for a large, cheap printing, and Doré surely hoped for a broad market. Yet I have seen no advertisement for *Holy Russia,* even though, as a major work by an emerging young artist, the favorite and protégé of Charles Philipon, one would expect it to have been advertised in one of Philipon's journals. Nor have I found a review. One may hypothesize that Doré's project, novel in so many ways, was not exactly welcomed by the publisher, de Bry, who consented only because of the great success of Doré's Rabelais edition,[13] about which he

11. Doré continued to furnish the *Journal pour Rire* with cartoons until well into 1855, but the bulk of his comic drawings precede the Russia book.
12. The earliest biographical notice (Neuville 1861) fails to mention the work at all. The omission of the *Holy Russia* from the big compendium on caricature history by Grand-Carteret (1888, 328–332) may be explained by the political rapprochement between France and Russia in the late 1880s. The full-scale biographies of Roosevelt (1885) and Jerrold (1891) discount, or are embarrassed by, the work, and Valmy-Baysse [1930] gives only a perfunctory description. The British Library and French Bibliothèque Nationale catalogs both fail to credit Doré as author. Cf. Varshavskii 1966.
13. *Oeuvres de Rabelais* (Paris, 1854).

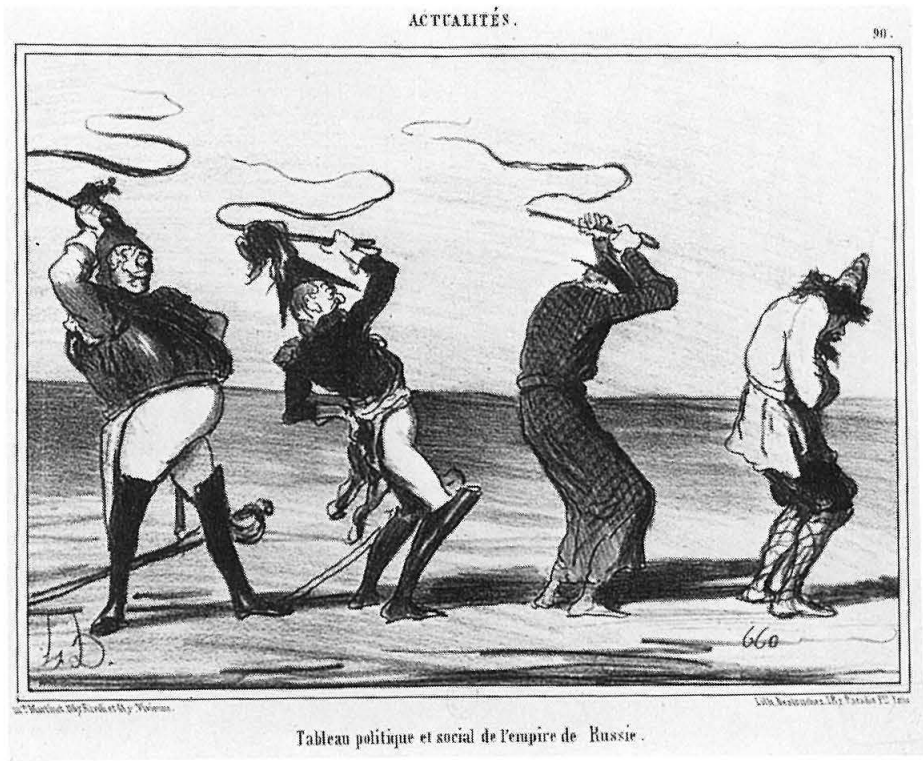


FIG. 5.8. Honoré Daumier: "Political and Social Picture of the Russian Empire" (1854).

had also initially had doubts, and that the *Holy Russia* (an entirely different proposition altogether) was financed wholly or in part by Doré himself. This would have been characteristic behavior for the notoriously pushy young artist.

There was another commercial problem with the distribution of the book. Its novel format foreclosed what had by now become the easiest way of selling a popular illustrated work of any length, that is, by installments like the Rabelais edition, which had appeared in seven parts at one franc ten centimes each. *Holy Russia* (at four francs) had to appear all at once or not at all and, given the propitiousness of the current political situation, quickly. The popular illustrated edition of Custine was also in preparation at this time.[14] Speed in executing the drawings was no problem to Doré, but he must have ridden herd on his team of engravers, the name of whose head he credits on the title page in letters spaced and sized almost as prominently as his own: five hundred illustrations "gravées sur bois par toute la nouvelle école, sous la direction générale de SOTAIN." Sotain had headed the same team that engraved the Rabelais illustrations and must have been inured to Doré's methods; but it cannot have been easy for them to cut drawings using so many different styles at once, compared with the relative stylistic homogeneity of the Rabelais.

Doré was probably in an even greater hurry than usual. But events still moved too fast for him. His fervor of execution was borne on a wave of simpleminded patriotism and Russophobia. He may even have hoped to ingratiate himself with official circles promoting the war. But these points of support, seemingly solid in 1854, soon weakened.

Why Doré Misfired

The great fear inspired by Russia in the mid 19th century, as still today, was due not least to her enormous size, straddling two continents. She was reputed to have a gigantic army, three hundred thousand men actively under arms and three-quarters of a million, possibly even a whole million, available.[15] To the French, whose population had declined in proportion to other, faster-growing major European powers, the Russian supply of manpower appeared unlimited. Russia was an ogre from the age of Genghis Khan, an antediluvian giant whose efforts to advance from a "natural" state of barbarism posed a threat to the very existence of European civilization. Defeated by Russia in 1812, occupied by Russian troops in 1815, France feared that the ogre might be hungry for more than just French culture. In recent years Russia had suppressed nationalist-democratic insurrections in Poland and the Austrian Empire, had twice defeated Turkey, and now threatened to dismember altogether the sultan's domains.

The French travel writers of the years preceding the Crimean War vied with each other in their invective. In the best-selling book by Marquis Astolphe de Custine, to whom Doré explicitly refers and to which we shall return more particularly, Russia was "the dreariest, most monotonous, most barren country on earth."[16] In fact, Custine denied that it was a country at all: its population was subhuman, endowed with no greater consciousness than that of savages or animals—like the walrus and polar bear, no doubt, whose sinful union, according to Doré, produced the first Russian. The country was commonly described as a prison, an "immense barrack, in which everyone is under arrest"; a patchwork of races held together by a "monstrous machine," the Russian army, which exercised "an inexorable discipline, the workings of which absolutely stupefy the mind."[17]

The discipline exacted in the Russian army, cruel even by British standards and crueler still by French, was a leitmotif of the books on Russia of this period, and Doré projected it back into the whole of Russian history. We cannot doubt that the common soldier—coerced by his lord into the army, miserably paid, fed, and clothed, with very little chance of advancing through the ranks—was a pitiful sight. Daumier depicts him repeatedly, in early and mid 1854, in comic degradation, a famished wretch both conscripted and drilled by the knout. "When a man is once enlisted, the brutality of his instructors, the cruelty of his officers, the privations of every description which he has to undergo, and the passive, animal-like submission to the requirements of a torturing system of discipline, soon reduce him to the level of a mere walking machine."[18]

Yet this walking machine was shortly to astonish Europe by his resilience and courage against the finest troops of France and England. At the time that Doré was at work on his book, the great pitched battles and siege of the Crimean War had yet to be fought, although disease was already taking a disquieting toll

14. Custine's *avertissement* to this edition (see n. 16) is dated June 15, 1854, although the publication dated is given as 1855. Doré's Rabelais edition was on sale by July (it was reviewed in Alexandre Dumas's *Mousquetaire* for July 8), so one may assume that Doré was working intensively on *Holy Russia* soon afterward.
15. Lagny (1854, 26) put the figure of "active or quasi-active men" at one and a half million. I am informed that a Soviet historian has recently established that, on the eve of the Crimean War, the Russian army numbered 1,118,000, not counting reserves; see L. G. Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armiia i flot v XIX v.* (Moscow, 1973), 16.
16. Custine 1846, 136. The success of the book was prodigious: a note to the second edition cites four pirated editions published in Belgium, England, and Germany. (One of the pirated editions, the "5th," of 1844, published in Brussels, contains a Russian reviewer's witty and scathing critique of the work.) According to the illustrated edition of 1855, 160,000 copies were sold in France, and foreign sales accounted for another 200,000 copies. Feeling against Russia at this time was further exacerbated by an article by the rightist Emile Montégut called "De l'Idée de la monarchie universelle" in the *Revue des deux mondes* of July 1854 (Groh 1961, 199).
17. Lacroix 1845, 329.
18. Lagny 1854, 47 and 189; Lacroix 1845, 329; Lagny, 29.

among the allied armies. The grisly stories of slaughter and suffering in the Crimea, which gradually filtered back to France through letters and the uncensored British press, cannot, of course, have affected the conception of Doré's work, but they may well have prejudiced its reception. What was comic hyperbole in Doré came too close to the reality that followed. After forty years of European peace, the casualties on the allied side seemed appalling, and on the Russian side they were far worse.[19] The new technology of war, especially the deadly and erratic artillery round-shot (which the French were spared in Algeria), tended to chop up bodies rather as Doré shows them chopped up by the sword and ax. One could see, as the balls bounced toward one, how "with a peculiarly distinctive thud bodies would be cut in two or limbs or heads knocked off." Doré's grisly vision was acted out on the battlefield: an English soldier was shocked to see a Zouave tip a body into a grave and then pick up a loose leg and stick it in the corpse's crotch. Battles were described as "abattoirs." Many of Doré's drawings read like descriptions of makeshift hospitals, the surgeons' "arms covered in blood, the floors strewn with limbs just amputated and slippery with gore."[20]

By 1855 Doré was no longer just funny. His grisly chronicle had been overtaken by history. His absurdism took the Russians and the incipient war too lightly. It may be that his satire would have missed its mark whatever the direction of the war and public opinion. The artist was caught between contradictory impulses: he wanted to make the Russians look not only as wicked as possible but also as absurd as possible. If he had done the one rather than the other, he might have had more success with the public. His parodic mode, moreover, was a new one. Töpffer, Cham, and Daumier, models for caricatural travel tales and comic mythologies, could offer little guidance to Doré as he embarked on an enterprise such as no caricaturist or illustrator had ever attempted. Parody of ancient myth, a well-established literary and graphic genre, was one thing; parody of the whole history of a vast and menacing empire was another entirely.[21] Sharing the widespread fear of Russia, and at the same time able to take a comic view of it, Doré sets out both to satirize the enemy and to parody the excesses of his fellow critics. Like Rabelais, whose masterpieces he had just finished illustrating, he invents a satirical method that leads him into self-parody; a Russophobe himself, he mocks the litanies of Russophobic writing. But Russophobia had spent itself.

The political atmosphere in the latter part of 1854, when the book first appeared, was conducive to good initial sales; cartoons against the Russians proliferated, and hopes for a quick victory ran high. But as the year 1855 ran its course and the war dragged on, failures before Sevastopol, mounting casualties, and stories of extreme suffering and military mismanagement began to affect the public mood. The number of cartoons about the Crimean War fell off markedly in the *Charivari,* and Doré may have found his book stagnating in the bookstores. Early in 1854 patriotism and love of military glory had produced general acceptance of the war effort, but there was never any deep-seated conviction and determination in its favor. Later casualties, sufferings, expenditure, and lack of victories caused the public mood to "wilt to deep discouragement."[22] It would therefore seem that Doré's virulent and absurdist satire, which spoke to an unqualified optimism about the war, suffered in a climate of popular opinion that had probably never been enthusiastic in the first place, and that rapidly degenerated just when the book should have enjoyed accelerating sales. Doré failed; or rather, historical events that conditioned the public mood failed him. The peace negotiations of early 1856, when Napoleon personally initiated and propagated a diplomatic embrace so sudden and warm as to astonish the French public and offend the British government, may actually have required the complete withdrawal of *Holy Russia* from the bookstores.

Doré drew certain conclusions from his failure. He decided that the absurdist comic mode into which he slipped with such facility was inappropriate to the gravity of the theme, which he henceforth dealt with in serious illustrations and painting; and further, that exploitation of his comic gifts served only to lock him more tightly into a professional categorization under which so many caricaturists of the age chafed (and no one more than he), and which held out too little social or economic reward. Doré's ambitions now turned in a decisive new direction. In 1855, a tremendously productive year, he conceived a uniform edition of illustrated world literary masterpieces (he became famous—or notorious—for his boast "j'illustrerai tout"), and he followed up his great success in Rabelais illustrations with many other book illustrations, among them Balzac's *Contes drolatiques,* which sealed his reputation. He also found more dignified outlets for his patriotic sentiments about the Crimean War: first, in a huge painting depicting the battle of Alma, which was exhibited at the Salon with some critical success in the spring of 1855; and second, by founding with Philipon a journal, the *Musée Anglais-Français,* to which he gave a large number of serious, documentary, and sentimentally pro-French (rather than satirically anti-Russian) illustrations from the Crimea.

Twentieth-Century Editions

Ignored and ineffective in the 19th century, Doré's *History of Holy Russia* was revived in the 20th century for purposes of anti-Russian and anticommunist propaganda. There have been five editions: German ones of 1917, 1937, and 1970; a French one of 1967; and an American one of 1971. Articles on the book have also appeared at historically critical junctures. In the first of these,[23] published at an early stage of the First World War, the German author, Karl Voll, notes the historical irony that the "same" French who now were proudly allied with the Russians against "German barbarism" had in the 19th century held a very low opinion of Russian civilization. Voll's ringing praise of Doré's album is clearly touched by its political timeliness in 1915. Sharing both the evident contempt in which the French held Russia in 1854 and Doré's grotesque gloating over the long history of Russian internecine cruelties, Voll imputes to Doré an impartiality that the artist openly mocks. According to Voll, Doré had undertaken to depict the horrible sequence of barbarities "without softening anything or passing anything over in silence." In other words, Doré was true to historical reality. Voll's praise of the book as "one of the most brilliant creations of the great draftsman" implies, I think (given the conventions of art history in making such judgments) that he believes it represents a higher kind of truth (when did Great Art ever lie?).

19. "The losses in battle were: allies 70,000 men, Russians 128,700; and the total losses, from all causes and in all theatres of the war: allies 252,600 . . . Russians 256,000 men" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 11th ed., 1910, 7:453b, citing Otto Berndt, *Die Zahl im Kriege*).
20. Barker 1971, 245, 119, 189, and 117.
21. The nearest prototypes of comic history would be English, and there is no reason to suppose that Doré knew them: *A Comic History of England* (1847–1848) and *A Comic History of Rome* (1851–1852), both by Gilbert à Beckett and illustrated by John Leech.
22. Case 1954, 50.
23. Voll 1915. See also "Geschichte des Heiligen Rußlands. Eine Folge von Holzschnitten von Gustav Doré," *Kunst und Künstler* 13 (April 1915): 307–310, a shorter article also inspired by the political moment.



Voyageur nouvellement arrivé en Russie, trouvant, comme M. Custine, qu'à Pétersbourg la surveillance est telle que les murs ont des oreilles.

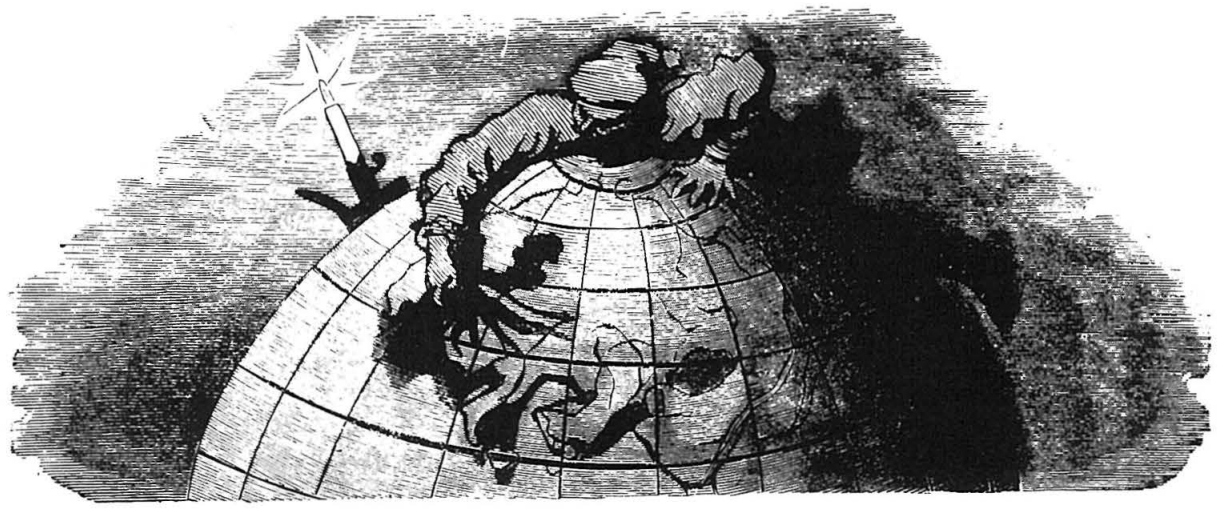
FIG. 5.9. *History of Holy Russia* (1854).
"Visitor newly arrived in Russia finding, like M. Custine, that in St. Petersburg surveillance is such that even the walls have ears."

The timing of the first complete (or almost complete) reprint of Doré's book, the 1917 Munich edition,[24] marks it in a general way as part of the war effort; but the preface, dated March 1917, without specifically mentioning the revolutionary activity in Russia, seems to take sympathetic cognizance of the Russians' own resistance to the historic tyranny. On March 15 (n.s.) the tsar abdicated and a provisional government was installed. The German government, which helped move Lenin from his Swiss exile back to Russia, had every interest in aiding the overthrow of tsarism; the publication of Doré's book was thus probably perceived not only as reinforcing the will to resist Russia from without but also as somehow aiding the resistance to tsarism from within. Hence the relatively moderate tone of Peter Scher's preface. Nevertheless, little of this large edition[25] may have reached the public, for at the beginning of peace negotiations between Germany and revolutionary Russia in early 1918 the German government ordered the book to be bought up in the bookstores and destroyed. The fate of the second German edition, entitled *The Most Picturesque, Enthralling and Strange History of Holy Russia* (1937),[26] is even more curious. Originally published, apparently before Hitler rose to power, in a *Liebhaberausgabe* (collector's edition), it quickly acquired a reputation among bibliophiles. With the coming of Hitler, however, the book got into difficulties, though the government's position toward it was unclear and contradictory. Goering supposedly intervened on its behalf, but the Propaganda Ministry condemned the translator, Oskar Weitzmann, to a *Schreibverbot* (ban on writing) because of his work on the book. Ironically, *Holy Russia* was characterized as pro-Bolshevik propaganda, its depiction of tsarist atrocities as "justifying" the Revolution. By this time half of the edition had been delivered to subscribers, and the rest was left unbound in the warehouse. Then the Nazi *Chef-Kommentator* Hans Fritsche declared the book acceptable but upheld the ban on political grounds. Most of the warehoused copies were burned in the bombing at the end of the war, and the rest were destroyed by warehouse employees in fear of the approaching Russians.

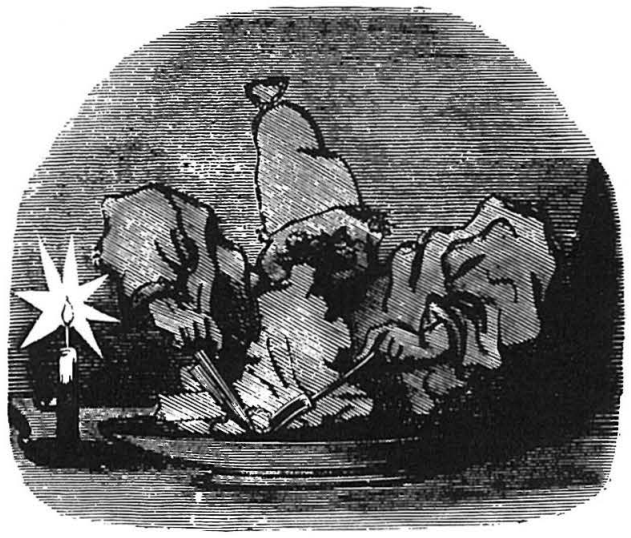
The 1970 edition, with a postface by François Bondy,[27] reflects a very different phase of German history—that of the Federal Republic's *Ostpolitik* (its attempt to improve relations with the German Democratic Republic and other nations of Eastern Europe). Bondy calls *Holy Russia* a persiflage and quotes Konrad Farner's monograph on Doré, where it is characterized as "a grotesque distortion of history . . . and yet a unique artistic achievement."[28] A contemporaneous German journalistic judgment notes that it is a "destruction of history." The rationale for the 1970 edition, far from being one of simple hostility to Russia, lay in an attempt, within a current of rising interest in Doré among both East and West Germans, to place the bias of earlier German editions as well as Doré's original conception in historical perspective—explaining, without justifying, its anti-Russianism.

Although America did not produce an edition during the height of the cold war, the book was conscripted in March 1951, at an early phase of the Korean War and the McCarthy period, for a feature article in *Life* magazine headed "Like Czar, Like Commissar: 100 years ago barbaric despotism ruled Russia as it does today."[29] The article reproduced a large number of drawings from *Holy Russia* to accompany extracts from the marquis de Custine's *Russie en 1839,* which had just been published in New York in its first English-language edition (retitled, significantly, *Journey for Our Time*). This virulent, unrelievedly anti-Russian four-volume work by a conservative French aristocrat was based on a two-and-a-half month visit made in 1839. Yet in the introduction to the

24. *Das heilige Rußland.* Mit 477 Bildern. Verdeutscht und hrsg. von Peter Scher (Munich, 1917). The figure "477" represents a subtraction from the "500" given on the title page of the first edition, an estimate that is actually too low. The statement that "the 33 [*sic*—should be 23, by my count of the missing drawings] suppressed drawings were no doubt those [considered by the Germans] insufficiently hostile to Russia" (Valmy-Baysse [1930], 51) has been repeated since, but is unsubstantiated and demonstrably unfair. The suppression of the 23 drawings was done not for political but rather for technical and aesthetic reasons, largely. Changes in the captions have a similar rationale. In contrast, the La Fontaine fable cartoon (Doré [1854] 1967, 97) was eliminated perhaps because of fortuitous resemblance of the Russian Wolf to the German Kaiser, complete with eagle helmet; the last full-page cartoon (see Fig. 5.7) might have been dropped because it showed the (now enemy) French in a heroic role.
25. Published by the large and prestigious art-publisher Albert Langen, the print run is identified (in the copy I used) as "fourth to sixth thousand."
26. *Die Äusserst anschauliche, fesselnde und seltsame Historie vom Heiligen Rußland,* herausgegeben und neu übersetzt von Oskar Weitzmann, im F. W. Hendel Verlag zu Meersburg am Bodensee und Leipzig. The date 1937 does not appear on the copy I saw but is confirmed in the *Deutscher Gesamtkatalog, Neue Titel. 1935–1939* (Berlin, 1940).
27. This is a facsimile of the 1937 Meersburg am Bodensee edition (see n. 26, above) (Gütersloh, Bertelmann Kunstverlag [1970]). Bondy's postface is our major source on the fate of previous German editions.
28. Konrad Farner's *Gustave Doré, der industrialisierte Romantiker* was published in Dresden in 1963; passage cited, p. 53.
29. *Life,* March 5, 1951, pp. 108–129.



L'état de surexcitation et d'éréthisme nerveux dans lequel l'ont jeté les incidents de cette grande journée suscite à Pierre, pendant son sommeil, les rêves les plus fantasques et les plus ambitieux. Il se voit caché derrière le pôle nord et décollant de dessus le globe la carte d'Europe;



Qu'après l'avoir *décollée*, il assaisonne à la sauce TARTARE et mange avec un appétit de géant.



Arrivé au morceau occidental, il découvre que sa sauce tartare, en rapprochant l'Angleterre de la France, a tellement bien engagé les contours de l'une dans ceux de l'autre, que, malgré toute sa force, il ne peut les dégager; aussi, ne pouvant plus mâcher ce qu'il a déjà dans la bouche, il se voit sur le point d'étouffer.

FIG. 5.10. *History of Holy Russia* (1854).
"In nervous overexcitement . . . Peter dreams the most fantastic and ambitious dreams—of being hidden behind the North Pole and stripping the map of Europe off the globe. / Having *stripped* [beheaded] it, he seasons it with TARTAR sauce and gobbles it up greedily. / Reaching the western part, he discovers that his tartar sauce has glued England and France so tightly together that . . . he can't separate them; . . . he chokes."

1951 New York edition, Lieutenant-General Walter Bedell Smith, a former ambassador to Moscow (1946–1949), describes it as "the best work so far produced about the Soviet Union" and evidence of the "measure to which the Stalinist regime is turning the clock back in Russia."[30] Bedell Smith compares Stalin to Tsar Nicholas I, claiming as well that the Soviet Union had published an abridged edition of Custine, complete with Doré drawings, but later blacklisted it when readers apparently began to equate Custine-Doré's Russia with the country under Stalin.[31]

Once Custine's book was discovered by a member of the diplomatic corps in Moscow, it soon became required reading in the embassy. *Life* used Doré to reinforce the message of Custine, with a centerspread of vignettes from *Holy Russia* headed "War, Gore, Patricide, Turk Trouble." Although admitting that Doré had invented a great deal—"names, facts, and dates"—and that he wallowed in puns and jokes, the article stressed that he had followed the (implicitly objective) accounts of life in Russia by Custine and others and that, for all its extravagance, the book stands as a biting indictment of the continuing tradition of Russian barbarism and tyranny. *Life* could not resist indulging in a bit of extravagance and distortion of its own, "improving" a Doré caption so that he appears to inculpate the Revolution, as well as an early Russian ruler: the Doré caption, "Ne peut-elle [Olga] songer à cet attentat à la morale publique sans que les roses de la pudeur colorassent ses joues" (p. 13),[32] becomes "immorality—as in revolutions—makes the virtuous Olga blush."

The always contentious issue of spying, exacerbated by the trial of the Rosenbergs as spies for the Soviet Union (featured in *Life* the same month), caused the magazine to single out the Doré vignette of the foreigner (Fig. 5.9, identified by Doré as Custine himself) asleep in bed, spies peering at him from all sides. The *Life* article uses the drawing specifically to depict the plight of American diplomats. An associated quotation from Custine, who disapproved of even the extremely restricted freedom of the press under Louis Philippe, is made to demonstrate the diplomatic disadvantage suffered by the United States, with its alleged habit of open discussion, vis-à-vis the Russians, with their habit of deception and secrecy.

Twenty years later, the cold war seems scarcely to have thawed. The 1971 New York edition of *Holy Russia,* under a title oddly

30. Custine 1951, 5; cf. Kennan 1971, viii n.
31. Prior to the October Revolution, excerpts from Custine were published in the journal *Russkaia starina* and as "Nikolaevskaia epokha" in the series *Russkaia byl'* (1910); neither had illustrations by Doré. I know of no evidence to support Bedell Smith's allegation about a suppressed Soviet edition.
32. Doré's caption translates: "[Olga] cannot contemplate this outrage to public morality without the roses of modesty coloring her cheeks." Thus the word "revolution" does not appear at all in the original.

closer to that of the Nazi-period edition than the original French,[33] has an introduction by Richard Pipes, professor of history at Harvard University and then director of the Harvard Russian Research Center, that manages to combine a historical explanation of Doré's prejudice against Tsarist Russia with an application of Pipes's own prejudice against Soviet Russia. Pipes acknowledges both the European tendency, evident ever since the "discovery" of Russia in the late 15th century, to present that country in caricatures and stereotypes, and the "swelling tide of Russophobia which spread across Europe," out of which there originated "nearly every" modern myth and prejudice about the country. He also recognizes of Doré's principal source, Custine's *Russie en 1839,* that "as a historic source the book ranks low," that it was "sensational," written impressionistically and at high speed after a brief visit to Russia. And yet Pipes admires in Custine a kind of suprahistorical sense for atmospheric reality, supposedly rooted in the author's "intuition," which was, in turn, "possibly rooted in his homosexuality." Custine's book is above all, according to Pipes, a prophecy of the Russia of the future, and although (here approvingly citing George Kennan) "not a very good book about Russia in 1839 . . . , [it is] an excellent book, probably in fact the best of books about the Russia of Brezhnev and Kosygin." The clear implication is that Doré's album, based as it is on Custine and sharing that writer's hostility to Russia, has this prophetic quality as well.

Pipes correctly points out that the "manner of presentation" is Rabelaisian and that Doré engages in "gargantuan" exaggerations; at the same time, *Holy Russia* is, as a satire on despotism, historically on target, not only with respect to Nicholaevan Russia but with respect to Communist Russia as well. Ignoring the difference between the Russia of Stalin and that of Khrushchev and Brezhnev, Pipes reduces the "spectrum of political debate" in the Soviet Union today to the "chore [*sic;* perhaps meaning choice?] between a two-knotted and three-knotted knout." Concluding with this flourish straight out of Doré, Pipes leaves us in no doubt that the purpose in publishing this first English-language edition of Doré's *Holy Russia* must be to remind us, once more, of the menace of Russian despotism.[34]

Thus, Pipes uses the book, as did the Germans before him, for propagandistic purposes. It seems that the Harvard professor, subsequently well known as a consultant for the CIA and as an adviser on and spokesman for President Reagan's foreign policy and the new cold war, harbors, in totally different and infinitely more perilous world-historical circumstances, a vision for our future like that which Doré culled from the Russian past, a vision of catastrophic slaughter: "Nuclear war has to become imaginable. We have to confront the facts realistically, not emotionally."[35] And indeed, in his crass nationalism, in his gross distortion of a whole history of a people, in his grisly visions of mass slaughter, and not least in the bonhomie with which he countenances it, Doré does speak to the political crudities and Armageddonism of our nuclear age.

The use of Doré goes on. A 1980 article in the *New York Review of Books* by another Harvard professor[36] recommends reinforcement of the Euro-American alliance against the threat of Russian expansionism. The article is illustrated by drawings from Doré's *Holy Russia,* which represent various forms of the Russian menace against Western Europe. The most telling, with respect to the new cold war politics, show the Russian trying to swallow up Europe (Fig. 5.10) and as a warrior horde descending upon a land of peaceful peasants—a transparent allusion to Afghanistan.

The French 1967 edition of Doré's satire, in contrast, far from being motivated by hostility to the Soviet Union, attempts—substantially, creatively, and with graphic means comparable to Doré's—to "correct" his political imbalance by bringing Russian history up to date in a relatively sympathetic way.[37]

The *History of Holy Russia* is Doré's climax to and exit from caricature and the comic strip, produced at the very moment that the comic strip went into temporary eclipse. The impetus of the 1848 revolutions was finally spent. The Crimean War itself constituted a diversion (and a successful one) of domestic dissent toward a new era of nationalism. Dore's albums on the frustration of social ambition (and we may include here *Holy Russia,* as a polemic against ambition in its national-political form), themselves relative commercial failures, indirectly sound the requiem for the aspirations of 1848. The artist's own personal and professional aspirations are henceforth geared to the illustration of the literary classics, a decidedly conservative, and economically safe, domain.

33. *The Rare and Extraordinary History of Holy Russia* with over 500 illustrations by Gustave Doré, translated by Daniel Weissbort, and with an Introduction by Richard Pipes (New York: The Library Press, 1971). The Library Press was run by Melvin Lasky, an editor of *Encounter* magazine, which was known to have received funding from the CIA in the 1960s. Lasky continues to be active in right-wing journalistic causes.
34. Given the authoritative tone of Pipes's introduction, one may point to three small errors (among others elsewhere) in as many lines on p. 2. Doré was not, at the time *Holy Russia* was published, an "unknown cartoonist employed by Philippon's [*sic*] *Journal pour Rire,*" but already a public favorite. His *Holy Russia* was very far from being his "first independent publication," as Pipes says, for it was preceded by no fewer than five such works, all substantial albums; they are indicated in Valmy-Baysse [1930] and in the standard biographies of Doré.
35. Cited in the *Guardian* (New York), April 15, 1981, p. 2. This viewpoint is elaborated in Pipes's recent collection of articles, *U.S.-Soviet Relations in the Era of Detente* (Boulder, Colo., 1981), esp. chap. 6, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War." Pipes has also demanded that the Soviet Union abandon communism or go to war.
36. Hoffmann 1980, 41–48.
37. This is done by means of an extensive, twenty-eight-page graphic "epilogue" by Alain Meylan, which I deal with in Kunzle 1985, 295–299.

CHAPTER 6

FRANCE, 1851–1870

Journal pour Rire

Doré, the artist-schoolboy who became too successful too quickly to consider regular schooling in art, shared the general sense, sharpened by the democratic jolt of 1848, that education was an arena of the struggle for social progress as well as the key to individual success. Indeed, after 1848 education became one of his favorite themes. And the *Journal pour Rire,* with its audience embracing schoolchildren, made fun not only of school life but also of the educational tools that were the stock-in-trade of the Aubert shop. "The Child's Book of Rules for Proper Behavior: Memories of a Religious Schooling"[1] is a hilarious parody of the etiquette books that instructed the lower classes on how to behave in and conform to the better society they aspired to. The parody also ridicules the dominant Jesuit system of education, with its emphasis on petty discipline and obedience to worldly norms. This extensive series (ninety-two drawings over six pages), arranged higgledy-piggledy and in semi-narrative form, follows one life story, from a young child's rising in the morning at home to his going out into the world as a young man. Petty rules for the practice of modesty, piety, and decorum, deportment, dress, and even facial expression (Fig. 6.1), use of a handkerchief, and address of superiors (especially the prestigious Oncle d'Amérique) are mocked by the viscerally ill-bred child, who learns them hypocritically, as a necessary facade for the furthering of social ambition. He is, in effect, the satirist of bourgeois breeding, and of the emphasis on externalities.

In the schools, too, the outward signs of success are all that matter. Daumier had mocked the schools' habit of giving prizes for everything—even health. Failure to win at school portended ill and caused loss of face in the parents' home community. In Doré's "Schoolboy's Holiday," the parents have to fake a laurel wreath for their son, Achille, in order to impress the local peasantry (Fig. 6.2). Achille knows that the alternative to academic success, to becoming an engineer, may be cruel indeed: to wit, manual labor, which he is allowed to supervise, and the mere sight of which is enough to exhaust him and cause him to fall sick (Fig. 6.3).

The lower bourgeois was ever afraid of slipping back to an inferior occupation. Regression to agricultural or urban manual labor, when shown, is usually in a very degraded context. As mechanization undercut the demand for skilled labor, many a literate boy could have read his own future as an oppressed factory worker or as peon to a morally and economically degraded master into such a story as "The Apprenticeship of Onésime Doudou." From age twelve the poor child is subjected to a litany of horrible, meaningless forms of work and a life of regimentation and starvation reminiscent of Dotheboys Hall in *Nicholas Nickleby* and the workhouse in *Oliver Twist*. The immiseration of fathers and consequent neglect of the children threw them on the mercy of the industrial system, which expressed itself in sardine-tin-like sleeping arrangements, physical brutality, and starvation, such that the father does not even recognize his son when the boy's apprenticeship is up (Fig. 6.4). It is not specified just what Monsieur Vautour ("Mr. Vulture"), "member of several philanthropic societies," produces with the labor of all his apprentices; rather, the satire encompasses any of the small factories that characterized Parisian economic life, and which aimed to produce as much as possible as cheaply as possible.

The characteristic rhythm of rise and fall, for which in earlier centuries the individual was held responsible, is now determined by uncontrollable circumstances and carried through various social types. It is generalized in "The Splendors and Decadence of a Pair of Boots," in which the boots themselves tell the tale from abattoir up to high-life romance and down finally to the garbage. The caricaturist in his own lowly occupation had every reason to identify with this falling diagonal, generalizing it as the "Disillusionment of an Artist" anywhere. He depicts the downard spiral of the trained professional, reduced to giving private drawing lessons to children, to undertaking cheap portraits of all-too-numerous families and households, and then to painting tradesmen's signboards and shutters (at eight francs for a ten-foot height). Finally, hating art, he joins the army.[2]

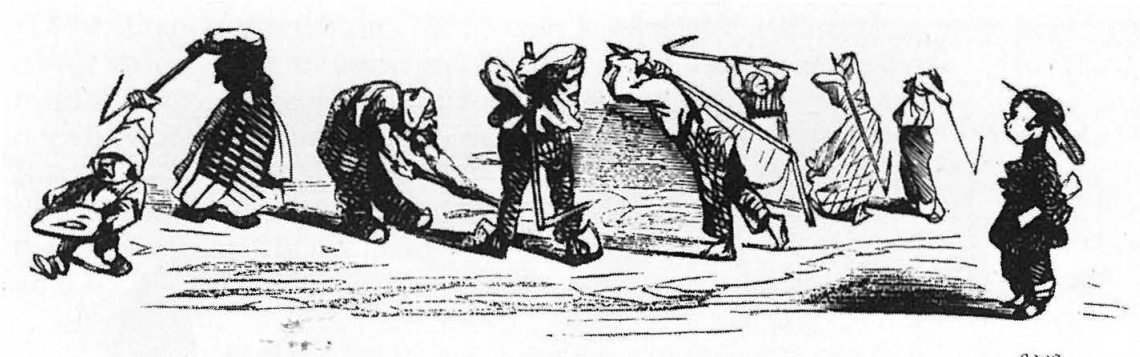
The straight rise to fortune and eminence as a result of virtue and hard work, in the manner of Hogarth's Industrious Apprentice or as preached by Samuel Smiles in his famous *Self-Help*

1. *Journal pour Rire,* November 21 and 28, 1851. The title picks up that of a popular manual derived from Erasmus. Cf. a comparable humorous series by Bertall, "Album du collégien," in *L'Illustration,* August–September 1850.
2. Boots: *Journal pour Rire,* May 21, 1853, by Stop. Disillusioned Artist: *Journal pour Rire,* March 2 and 23, 1851.



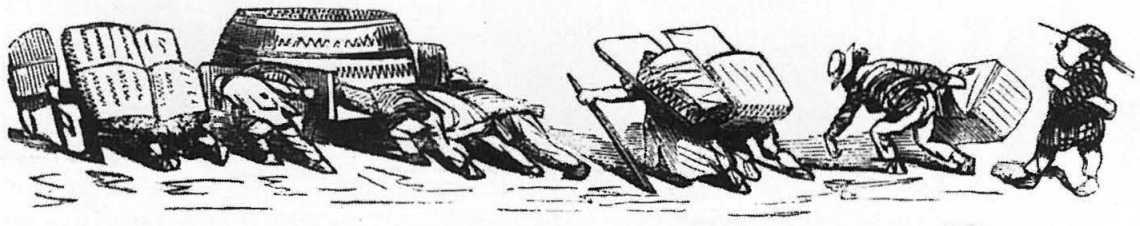
FIG. 6.1. Bourdachut and Vivant Beauce: "The Child's Book of Rules for Proper Behavior" (1851). Chap. 2: "Comportment in the Street." "Be careful not to let your socks fall down / or laugh at people / or let your shirt stick out / or eat in the streets. / The eyes are the mirrors of the soul / If nature has not favored you with soft, graceful eyes, / correct this lack with a cheerful and modest countenance. / Don't look weird or scared. / It's very rude to look at people out of one eye, like archers taking aim, / or to look askance at someone."

FIG. 6.2. Gustave Doré: "Schoolboy's Holiday" (1852). "Little by little, M. Clopinet comes to believe and proclaim that his son has won ten prizes, of which young Achille is justly proud."



6288

M. Clopinet admet son fils à surveiller le battage du blé,



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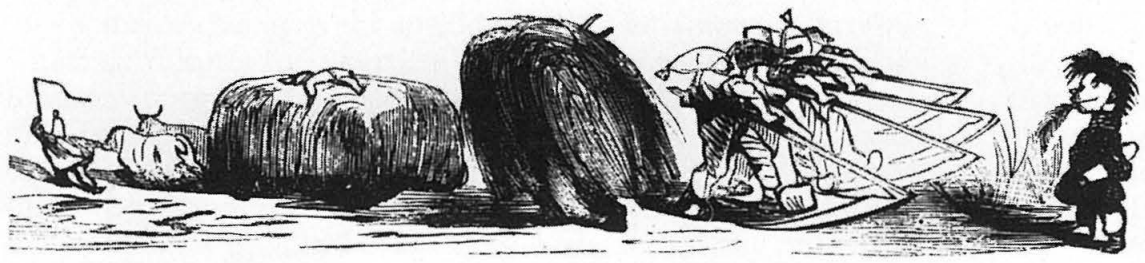
à veiller à ce que la vendange se fasse honnêtement,



6290

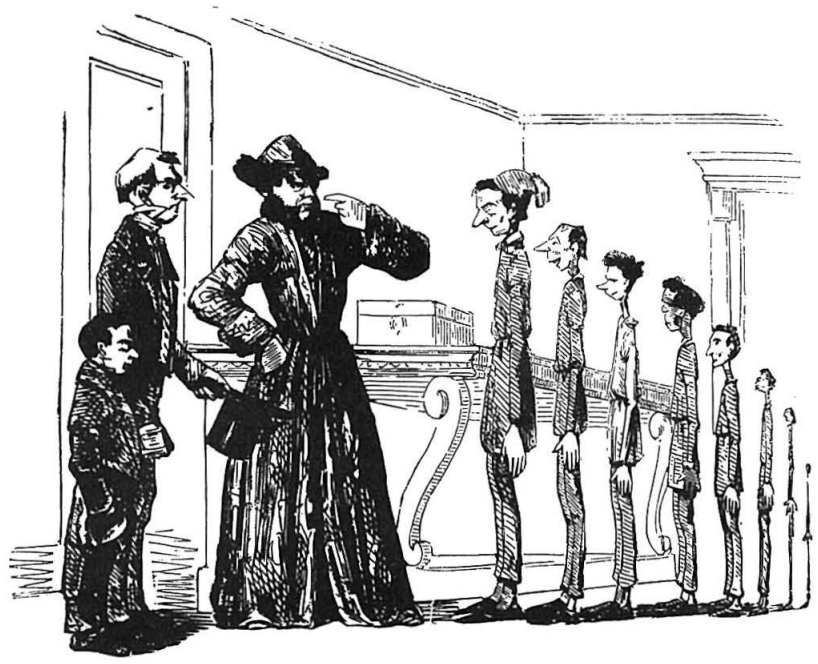
ainsi que le regain.



6291

Épuisé par tant de travaux, le jeune Achille s'endort sur ses foins d'un sommeil de quinze jours et quinze nuits.

FIG. 6.3. Gustave Doré: "Schoolboy's Holiday" (1852). "M. Clopinet lets his son superintend the threshing of the corn / and make sure the harvest is carried out correctly, / as well as the after-crop. / Exhausted by so much labor, young Achille falls asleep in the hay for fifteen days and nights."



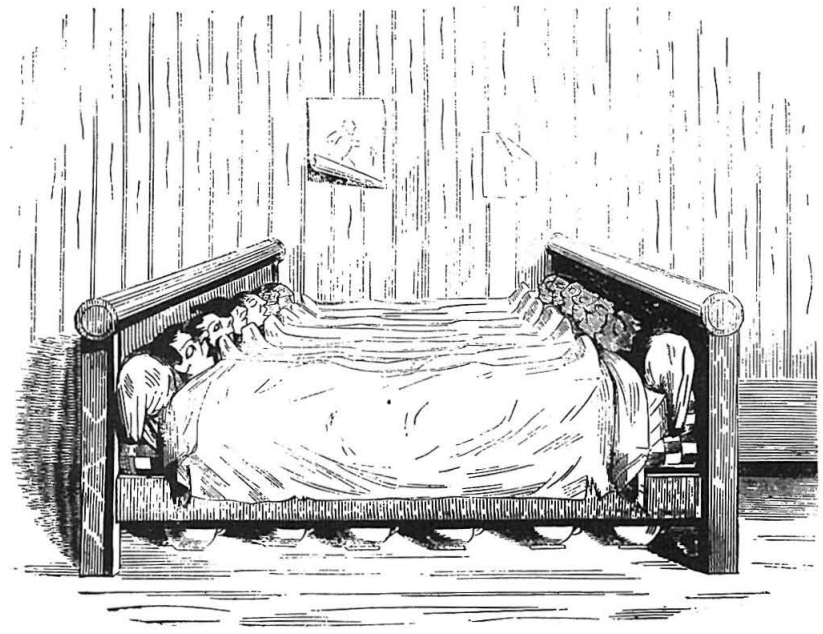
11463

Le papa ayant demandé au patron s'il nourrissait bien ses apprentis, M. Vautour les lui montre.



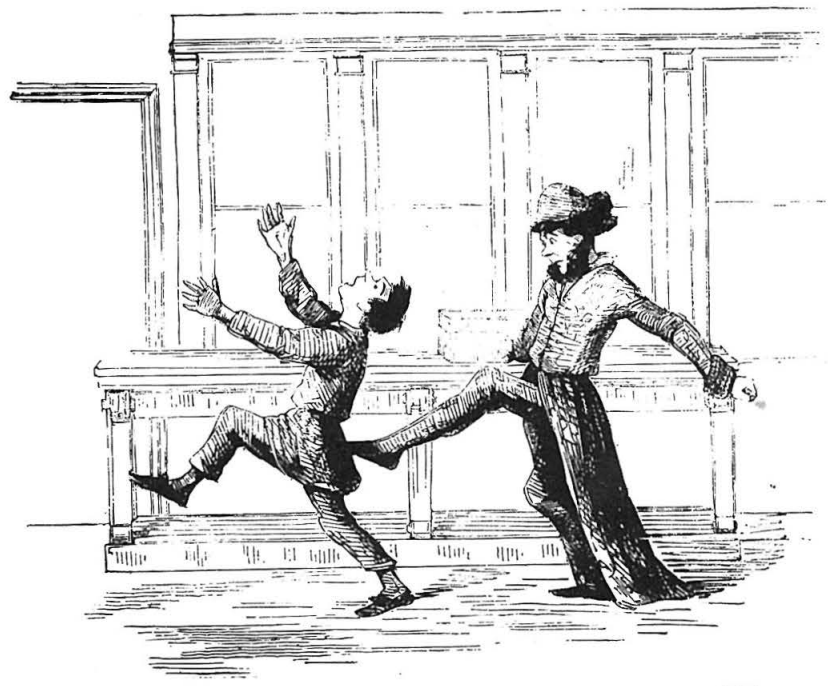
11467

Sa patronne lui donnant les premières notions de l'art culinaire.



11472

M. Vautour, membre de plusieurs sociétés philanthropiques, se fait un devoir du bien-être de ses apprentis.



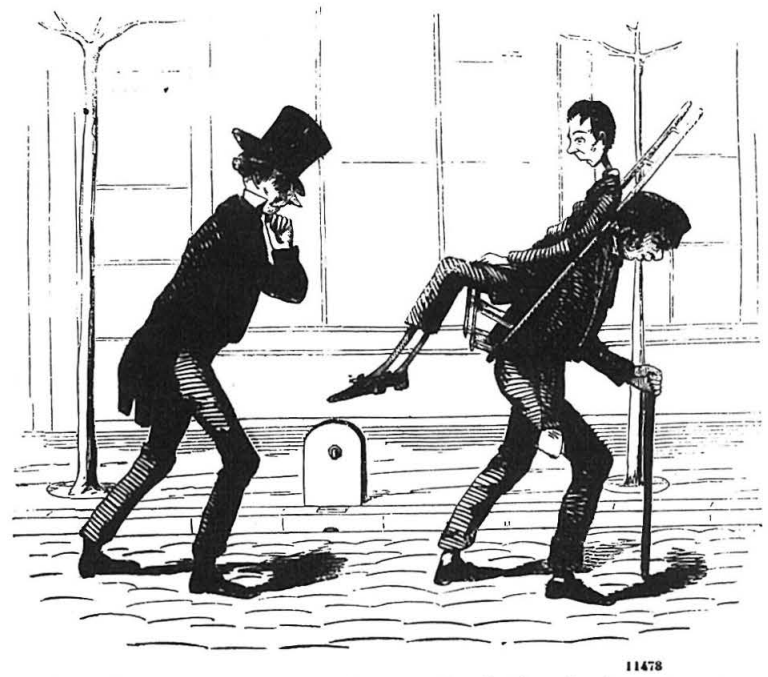
11475

Aussi sont-ils l'objet de ses soins les plus touchants.



11477

Après une absence de trois ans, M. Doudou vient demander des nouvelles de son fils. Chose étrange! le père ne reconnaît pas son enfant.



11478

Les quatre ans d'apprentissage sont finis : son père vient le rechercher, après avoir remercié M. Vautour.

FIG. 6.4. Prosper Giroux: "The Apprenticeship of Onésime Doudou" (1855).
M. Vautour shows the father how well fed his apprentices are. / First lessons in cookery. / Philanthropy in the sleeping arrangements / and on the job. / After an absence of three years, M. Doudou finds his son unrecognizable. / The four years of apprenticeship over, his father comes to get him, after thanking M. Vautour.

(1859; French translation, 1865), was a myth the 19th-century comic strip sought to puncture. Wealth, if it comes at all, comes from the outside, usually in the form of an inheritance; and it will only be squandered and lead to trouble. In 1850, the *Journal pour Rire* picked up from an obscure English journal of 1847–1848, the *Man in the Moon,* a long, meandering story on this theme and, making some instructive changes, published it under the title *The Man with the Hundred Thousand Ecus.*[3]

In keeping with Doré's more aggressive style and layout, which drops the regular framing of the English version and fractures the narrative still further, the emphasis shifts somewhat—from the dream of wealth to the realities of class conflict. The inheritance is now much larger (compared with the fifty pounds in the original), the clerk's extravagance wilder, more dangerous, and more socially hostile. In the new version, the nouveau riche clerk, Narcisse Pomponnet, gets a cab to lord it over his friends, and then he acquires a tilbury with seven horses, with which he mows down the passersby (as in a real Parisian street massacre of 1848); in the English original he merely splashes and bowls over a few pedestrians.

A major change is the introduction of an amorous intrigue, which substitutes for a particularly fanciful, magical, and socially innocent fairground episode in the original. Narcisse Pomponnet's pursuit of a mysterious lady in a coupé results in his being challenged to a duel by her protector, whom the French clerk flees (and who comes to substitute, in effect, for a shopkeeper through whose window the English clerk had been accidentally projected). These figures act as nemeses who haunt the hero to the end. But there is a difference between being throttled, reduced to a pygmy, and hurled through space by a squat shopkeeper irrationally furious because of a broken window and being treated thus by a huge, bearded, presumably aristocratic protector of a beautiful lady. The French clerk had dared to pursue her from the opera to a park embellished with exotic winter plants, all of which are marked Do Not Touch or Watch Out. The aristocracy exacts revenge on this low-class interloper into the garden of their vices. The avenger, moreover, appears just after—and physically resembles—a dark, burly cop who has arrested Narcisse for indecent exposure (Fig. 6.5).

But retribution is also, as in the English version, circumstantial and atmospheric. It is a nightmare, crazy world where things, strangers, and chance conspire against the poor clerk in every way; and in the French version he is not even allowed to return to normal life, which in the English original is accomplished by the law clerk's realizing his decent, modest ambition of becoming a lawyer and raising a family. Rather, after escaping the mustachioed avenger, the hero of the French version flees London for France, where he is besieged by financiers but disgusted by the Bourse. He continues to have nightmares of the mustachioed man and dreams of the lady in the coupé, amid incidents whose raison d'être are some very Doré-like puns. Unfortunately, Doré, off and running on his own, was cut short by his editors, and a promised continuation did not materialize.

The Töpfferian realm of fantasy into which the clerk is projected cedes to greater realism in a rather later and altogether more down-to-earth account of the tribulations of reasonable ambition: "How the Young and Overly Gallant Aimé Bourdonnot, Herbal Druggist, Relaxed One Fine Sunday from the Fatigues of the Week." The elegant calligraphic title page enshrines an important bourgeois social ceremony: the invitation to a picnic, at which the host, an affluent rentier (and conservative, reader of the *Constitutionnel*) hopes to ensnare a good match for his daughter.[4] To complete the party, the druggist is invited along. The graphic line is adapted from Töpffer, as is the refrain of pleasurable anticipation at this wonderful opportunity for the shop assistant—an ironic refrain, it turns out, for a series of little disasters, each one all too real, accumulates in a nightmarish way: after losing hat and train ticket, he finds no room on the omnibus and has to walk miles in tight boots; when at last he arrives at the picnic site, he is blithely humiliated and treated as a servant; he suffers heat, rain, hunger, and exhaustion; and finally, after being beaten up by the peasantry for starting a small fire, he must pay through the nose for the damages when everyone leaves him in the lurch. Bourdonnot's only rewards for all this suffering are a huge useless vase he wins at a fair and an ugly elderly female to accompany home. Ultimately, he is found by the police—a vagrant, body and vase shattered like his social ambitions (Fig. 6.6).

The sufferings of urban man in the countryside at the hands of cops, peasants, weather, and insects had been a commonplace since Daumier; some comic strips do little more than string together the master's *Pastorales* to form a narrative sequence, as was done also with the famous Gavarni series of *Lorettes.*[5] The countryside is rarely seen as a locus for agricultural work. When the peasant appears, it is in confrontation with the bourgeois; the peasant's work thus becomes, in effect, that of fending off or chastising the invader, the bourgeois pest. But some bourgeois sought to imitate their feudal ancestors by increasing the productivity of the estates they owned, conceiving of their country villa's garden as a sort of scientific-agricultural laboratory. Daumier's bourgeois occasionally attempt such agricultural "labor"—and fail. In "Life in the Provinces—The Story of an Invitation to the Country," which Doré dashed off in conspicuous haste, a gentleman, after the usual agonies of the journey, discovers to his horror not only that he must oblige his host by listening to his boring discourse about horticulture but also that he is actually expected to pick up a rake and help in the work. Retiring to bed at sundown like a peasant, beset by bedbugs and cock crows, he is driven to beseech his wife to write him a letter saying she is dead, which gives him the necessary excuse to escape.[6]

We have recognized the imagined and real-life physical sufferings of travel and life in the country as a transplantation of the woes of the urban social struggle. These sufferings may also be understood as a sublimation of the fear of a life of manual labor and physical toil, traditionally the permanent condition of the peasant. These fears existed not only on the part of the bourgeoisie, however. A large class of humble craftsmen and tradesmen, too, economically squeezed as they were by industrialization, lived in fear of being relegated to the ranks of the manual laborer. For them, emigration represented escape from such a prospect, and they fantasized a life in the New World, a life of greater privilege and leisure than they could have at home, a life as the European masters in some tropical paradise.

The Journey of M. Pierre Vespuce to the West Indies represents an ambivalent effort to disabuse such fantasies, even as it caters to them. Pierre Vespuce, apprenticed to the hosiery trade but captivated by the romance of travel, discovers truly brutalizing (and brutalized) labor on board ship. To escape this slavery he swims ashore, is tormented by crabs, and finds no demand for his services among a native West Indian population already "civilized" by the abolition of slavery—that is, rendered corrupt and idle in imitation of Europeans (Fig. 6.7). The "countryside" now means not bedbugs but scorpions, not the common cold but dysentery. A fairy tale twist of events, however, puts Vespuce in the role of a prince having slain a dragon (actually, the menacing crocodile died of an apoplexy after greedily devouring Vespuce's hat). He is awarded a highly fecund "princess" of the native hierarchy and, if not half the kingdom, at least sufficient competence and influence in that hierarchy to save him from further physical effort or suffering. The conclusion, showing Vespuce lying in the shade of a tree by the shore ("having adopted the work habits of the colonist"), dreaming of further strokes of fortune, and occasionally

3. *Journal pour Rire,* January 12, February 9, March 16, April 13, and June 15, 1850 (150 drawings); also published, in truncated form (91 drawings), in *Petit Journal pour Rire,* nos. 223–226 (1860).
4. For the picnic as a scenario of courtship opportunities and corresponding power plays, see the amusing passage in Anthony Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her* (1864–1865), I, chap. 9.
5. E.g., Ragut's "Les Parisiens à la campagne" (*Le Charivari,* August 3, 1853) and Damourette's "Histoire d'une lorette" (*Journal pour Rire,* May 20 and 27, 1848).
6. *Journal pour Rire,* February 27, March 17 and 24, 1849; reproduced in Doré 1867, 17–26. The original has him request the wife to write that an uncle is sick.

Suite de l'HISTOIRE DE L'HOMME AUX CENT MILLE ÉCUS,

Imitation anglaise, par E. BOURGET, dessins de G. DORÉ.

Gravé par DELAROCHE, PONTENIER, POTHEY et SOTAIN.

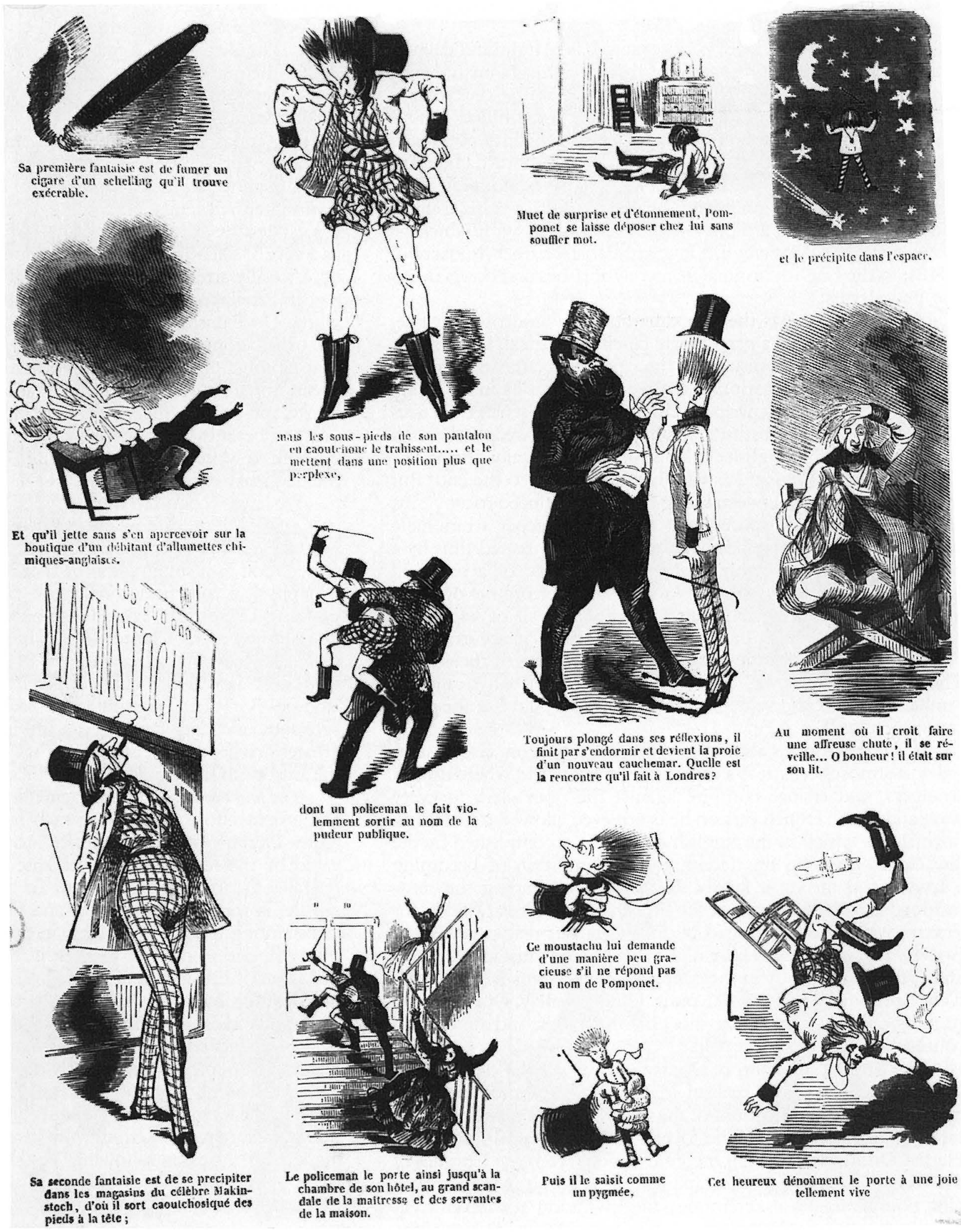
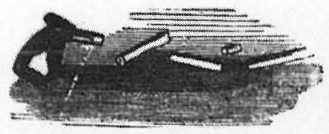


FIG. 6.5. Gustave Doré (drawings) and E. Bourget (text adaptation): *The Man with a Hundred Thousand Ecus* (1850).
An execrable shilling cigar, / which he throws away unwittingly in a match shop. / Rubberized from head to foot at the famous Mackintosh's, / but the trouser straps give way / and he is violently arrested for outrage to public decency. / Carried by the cop to his hotel room, causing great scandal. / Dumbfounded, / he falls asleep and has a nightmare. / The mustachioed gentleman challenges him to admit he is Pomponet, / seizes him like a pygmy, / and hurls him into space. / On the brink of a dreadful fall, he awakens. / The happy realization makes him so ecstatic / that he breaks his pipe, / resumes his striped trousers, / does his hair, / and goes out to ogle the English prudes, who



qu'il en casse sa pipe.



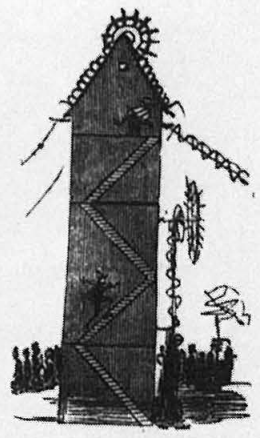
Puis il reprend avec enthousiasme son cher pantalon à raies;



Lorsqu'il est distrait de cette préoccupation par un courtaud de boutique, qui lui fait prendre à l'aide d'un volet une attitude peu agréable.



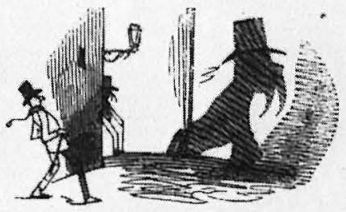
Pour éviter cette nouvelle rencontre, il préfère pénétrer d'une manière peu usitée chez un chimist droguist (pharmacien) pour lui demander son chemin.



C'est le moment d'une grande fête, Pomponet se réfugie dans une carcasse de charpente servant d'escalier à l'acrobate Diavolo, chargé d'aller en Mercure allumer le feu d'artifice.



et il rétablit l'ordre dans l'économie de sa coiffure,



O nouvelle inquiétude! dans l'ombre il lui semble prevoir la réalisation de son cauchemar.



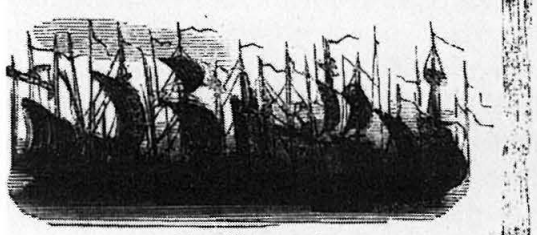
Pour réponse, ce pharmacien furieux franchit son comptoir et



Il se trouve face à face avec l'acrobate qui lui demande ce qu'il veut. Étourdi par cette question, Pomponet lui répond résolument qu'il veut lui acheter le droit de prendre sa place.



Après quoi, il sort jeter un coup d'œil d'homme vêtu sur les prudes anglaises, qui n'ont plus à lui dire, en le regardant :



C'est *là ta mise!*



s'élance à la poursuite



de cet insolent étranger,



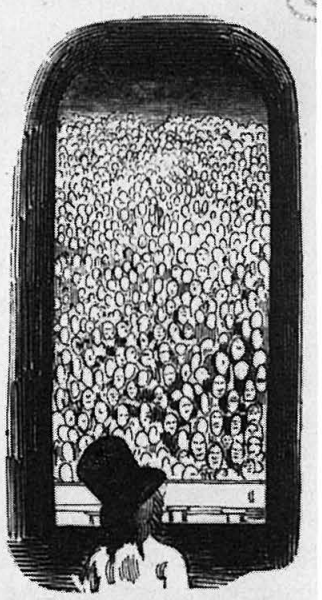
suivi de tous les gamins et curieux du quartier.



Pour échapper à l'étranger, Pomponet saute par-dessus une palissade,



et cherche un refuge dans le sein d'un fleuve faisant l'ornement de Comorn-Garden, le Tivoli de Londres.



Ce qui détermine davantage Pomponet, c'est qu'il a reconnu dans les premiers rangs des spectateurs la physionomie de son cauchemar perpétuel.

respond tersely, / "That's your outfit!" / [= That's the Thames!—pun]. / Surprised by a counter jumper, who leaves him sprawled over a shutter. / The nightmare returns in the dark, /to avoid which he makes an unusual entry at a chemist's to ask his way. / The furious chemist vaults over the counter and / chases / the insolent stranger, / followed by all the local street urchins. / Pomponet leaps over the fence and / takes refuge with a river god in Cremhorne Gardens / and hides in the scaffolding used by the acrobat Diavolo in the role of Mercury about to set off the fireworks. / Pomponet offers to buy the right to take his place, / having recognized in the front row of spectators the face of his perpetual nightmare.





FIG. 6.6. Félix Ygrec: "How the Young and Overly Gallant Aimé Bourdonnot, Herbal Druggist, Relaxed One Fine Sunday from the Fatigues of the Week" (1865).
Before he has finished eating, Aimé takes the blindfold in a game of blind man's buff. / Bangs into a wall—real fun! / Aimé knocks over a carelessly placed spirit lamp and starts a fire. / All flee. Aimé gets beaten with a pole, / pursued, arrested, and obliged to pay for all the burned hay. / The rest of the party has fled. Young Aimé calls in vain; night falls, Aimé is in distress. Good God! rabbits!!! / After many terrors, Bourdonnot finds his way out of the wood and meets his host in a fairground, / where he wins a huge porcelain vase. / On the way out, crack! he bangs his head on a chandelier. / Rush for the train, / no room below / or above. / He tries to get down again, but the train sets off and he is left perched on the stairway. / Obliged to accompany to the other end of Paris the ugliest among the least young of the ladies. / Here end his memoires.

regretting Paris and the old hosiery shop, is a kind of happy ending but hardly a realistic justification of emigration.

Other "emigration" strips of the period are unequivocally negative. In "The Journey of M. Tireliard to California" the hero is chased by a lion [*sic*], is swindled, and after other disasters returns to find his wife has eloped with a lover. Nearer home, in France's own colony of Algeria, "The Caravan of M. Biblioteau in Africa," ostensibly based on a six-hundred-franc package tour,[7] recounts a series of defeats: by, among others, a jealous Turkish husband who chases the tourist out of his harem, and various native animals, including a boar, which, he learns after slaying it accidentally, was tame and, as private property, reimbursable (like the cow the bourgeois hunter habitually shoots by mistake near home).

As the great emigration wave of the early 1850s subsided somewhat, the subject lost appeal for comic strip artists; but the fantasy of emigration persisted at a certain level, which one might term subliminal or unconscious. In *The Extraordinary and Amazing Journey of the Grosmatou Family,* what starts out as a simple trip to the seaside ends (and in a manner which the artist himself probably did not foresee) with the family's permanent implantation among cannibals. The story of Monsieur Grosmatou (which was continued through four issues of *L'Image*) is a projection of the historic and heroic, if accidental, global role of the bourgeoisie. Having made his fortune in spices, Grosmatou ("Big-Tomcat") decides grandiloquently to celebrate his thirty-fifth wedding anniversary with an excursion to Le Havre. The conven-

7. Tireliard: *Journal pour Rire,* March 31, 1849; and Biblioteau, *Journal pour Rire,* November–December 1849; both by Monta (Henri de Montaut). The latter strip, with its exoticized comic hunting theme, has been cited, along with Roubaud's "Scipio the African," as a possible source for Daudet's *Tartarin de Tarascon* (see Bernasconi 1972).



FIG. 6.7. J. Guesde (scenario) and Edmond Morin (drawings): *The Journey of M. Pierre Vespuce to the West Indies* (1851).
Swabbing the cabins. / Regrets for the old haberdasher's. / Abrupt departure from the ship, glad to have learned how to swim. / Drying in the sun. / Delicious sleep on the warm sand. / Less pleasant awakening. / In the French West Indies, he could find no work, all the [plantation] owners being busy taking their little Negroes to school.

tional lesser discomforts of the journey escalate (via bold attempts to rescue his wig, symbol of bourgeois respectability) into arrest and jailing on suspicion of smuggling. The family's innocence is recognized, but they are condemned to jail for indecent exposure—a particularly unjust and ironic punishment, given Madame Grosmatou's excessive prudery (mocked at various points in the narrative). Led by their son, mere child though he is, the family plots a violent revenge. This most unusual reaction is perhaps partly explicable by the date, 1867, when liberalization of the imperial regime promised numerous freedoms (among them, of the press), none of which were to be realized. The Grosmatous vow "sublime" vengeance on authority, "an infernal machine which will blow up all the customs officials of Le Havre," but the conspirators succeed only in getting stuck aboard a ship that wrecks, leaving them as sole survivors on an island inhabited by cannibals. They are saved from being eaten alive by the local king, who turns out to be a former clerk of Grosmatou. Like him, the newcomers quietly integrate as rulers, taking on the local costume and color (Fig. 6.8).

The overwhelming majority of the travel tales, as of comic strips touching on the dichotomy between city and country, deal with the fate of the urbanite in the countryside. The primarily urban audience was less interested in the reverse process, the experience of the rustic drawn to the city, which was of course also a major social phenomenon in itself. A rare illustration of this process becomes an entirely petty-bourgeois projection. Under the heading "A Moral Tale from the Countryside," *Chapelou; or, The Art of Achieving Happiness* shows the peasant lovers Jeannette and Chapelou, she eloping with a fancy urban cousin, he pursuing her, and both sucked into the maelstrom of city life, its temptations, corruptions, and punishments, before being finally restored to each other in a quite improbable and cynical happy ending. She loses her lover and "thus" repents; he inherits from an uncle; they renew their troth and return to their rustic origins (Fig. 6.9*j*. His dream is realized in the terms of Vespuce and others: family, status, and leisure. "Perfect happiness" means becoming the local mayor, growing fat, and spending the days fishing. And so what if the wife continues to deceive her husband on the sly?

As is always the case with escapist art forms, the manner of escape bears the distinct mark of the thing fled. In England, where there was no revolution and the repression was internalized, such marks are less visible than in France and Germany. They are scattered through Doré and Cham, however, and are very evident in what may be regarded as a final attempt—immediately following and, as it were, in line with Louis-Napoléon's coup d'état of December 1851—to exorcise the ghost of revolution: *Une Révolution pour de rire, conte fantastique, philosophique et stupide* (A Mock Revolution: A Fantastic, Philosophical, and Stupid Tale).

The tale is set, for safety, in the tiny German principality of Sixmilmen ("Six-Thousand-People"), whose town councillor, Mr.

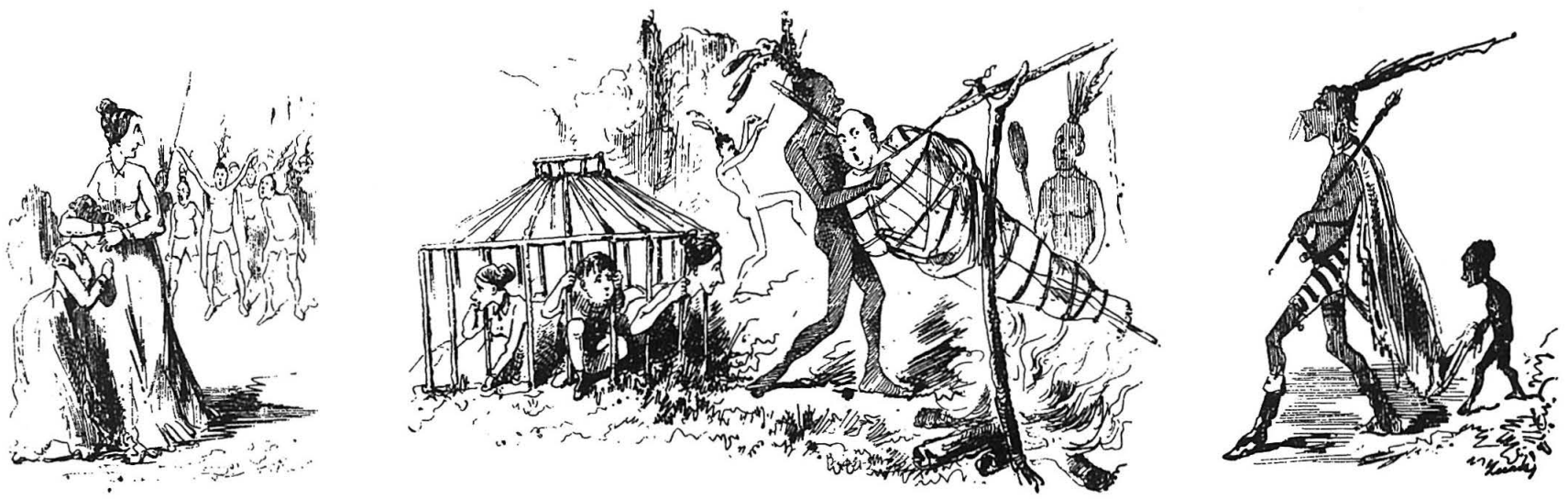


FIG. 6.8. *The Extraordinary and Amazing Journey of the Grosmatou Family* (1867).
Madame Grosmatou shields her daughter Ursule from the sight of the savages' primitive costume. / The natives prepare to roast M. Grosmatou for dinner— / which would have happened but for the arrival of King Chandel-Désis I, / who recognizes M. Grosmatou as his former boss. / Getting the local color. / Ursule marries King Chandel-Désis I. / M. Grosmatou becomes prime minister. Toto is content with the post of public official, with the right to challenge journalists to duels.

Gobman, is sent on a business mission. His subsequent adventures, which unfold in a highly concentrated Töpfferian crazy quilt, are sparked by a robbery, which in turn generates social panic, transvestism, bizarre medical cures, and outré police measures. The thief—or the theft—evidently stands for the idea of (socialist) revolution, which the property-owning classes regarded as institutionalized robbery; the social panic represents the paranoid response to it, spread by the "telegraph" of female gossip; the police incarnate governmental repression; and the "unconstitutional excesses" of rocks hurled through windows and of horrible demagogic harangues refer, of course, to revolutionary activity itself. The grave portent of the final vignettes—where the prince gathers his entire army of twelve hundred men as his general (who has all the air of an Italian comedy *capitano*) goes over to the rebels, who, led by top-hatted bourgeois figures, man the barricades (Fig. 6.10)—is defused by the final caption, placed beneath an unexplained view of galloping lancers and a picture of a balloon (the whole affair is hot air?): "This tale proves that one does not have to be stupid to say and do stupid things. It also proves a lot of other things, which I am not telling you because I do not know them myself. Look, and perhaps you will find; as for me, I have found nothing at all. —Scharles." This emphatic disclaimer, along with the effort to maintain the veneer of Töpfferian absurdity, is designed to absolve the author of all responsibility for what was potentially, at this date, a highly provocative piece. This revolution may be laughable ("pour de rire"), but the idea of revolution is not.

Recognizing the uselessness of struggle, Philipon once again resigned the magazine to political silence "until there should be freedom once more to depict contemporary history."[8] As a parting shot, while Scharles laughed at the fading possibility of revolution, Bertall laughed at the growing reality of censorship, imagining himself as St. Anthony besieged by the demons of temptation to do political caricatures, with cops lurking behind a rock ready to pounce on him.[9] As Victor Hugo wrote in *Napoléon le Petit* (1852): "The government feels itself to be hideous. It tolerates no portrait, above all, no mirror. Like the sea-eagle, it takes refuge in the darkness; if it were to be seen, it would die. It needs to survive. It will not be spoken of; it will have no tales told about it. It has imposed silence on the press in France."[10]

Yet even (especially?) without politics, caricature magazines prospered, as did the strictly social vices they limited themselves

8. Editorial, *Journal pour Rire,* December 5, 1851.
9. *Journal pour Rire,* April 16, 1852. Bertall refers to the severe decree of February 17, 1852 (see Collins 1959, 116).
10. Quoted in Roberts-Jones 1960, 25.



Touché de son repentir, et surtout de sa bêtise, le tribunal de simple police l'a rendu à la liberté.



Chapelou se précipite rue de Bréda, nº 4, et grimpe l'escalier quatre à quatre.



Sans voir un obstacle....



Il renverse l'obstacle...



C'était son ancienne fiancée...



Chapelou s'introduit chez elle... elle lui raconte une foule de malheurs impossibles auxquels elle n'a échappé que par une vertu incroyable... il gobe tout.



Comme Chapelou vient d'hériter de son oncle, et que Jeannette vient de perdre son protecteur, elle consent généreusement à lui donner sa main... et sa foi!



Chapelou se retire dans son village, devient gros, gras et maire; — sa femme le rend père de beaucoup d'enfants; — il atteint le parfait bonheur.

FIG. 6.9. Em. Lefils and Edmond Morin: *Chapelou; or, The Art of Achieving Happiness* (1851).
Touched by his repentance, and especially by his stupidity, the police set him free. / Chapelou rushes up the stairs. / Without seeing an obstacle, / which he bowls over. / It was his former fiancée. / Chapelou swallows all her tales of innocence. / Since he has just inherited from an uncle, while she has just lost her protector, she generously gives her hand—and faith! / Chaeplou retires to his village, becomes stout, fat, and mayor; his wife gives him lots of children. He attains perfect happiness.

to mocking. The actress-Lorette asks the caricaturist how much money he makes for making fun of women. "Four to five thousand [per annum: a tidy sum]" "Peuh! . . . We do better ourselves, making fun of men."[11]

In January 1853, Philipon, his business expanding rapidly, moved from the Aubert shop in the Place de la Bourse (Gabriel Aubert had died in 1847) to larger premises in the Rue Bergère. There he began production of *papier peints comiques:* rolls of wallpaper printed with the caricatures and comic strips that had appeared in his magazines, available in five colors—white, blue, green, rose, and buff—and recommended particularly for the decoration of country houses. (As a youth, Philipon had been employed as a bookkeeper in his father's wallpaper business in Lyons, so the idea would have come to him naturally.)[12]

Journal Amusant *and* Petit Journal pour Rire

The incidence of comic strips and the social interest of the *Journal pour Rire* now fell sharply. Further expansion and changes in the market, as well as lower production costs due to cheaper paper, allowed Philipon in 1856 to split his paper into two. The *Journal pour Rire,* which already in October 1851 had changed from a large, four-page newspaper to a smaller, eight-page format, gave birth to an even smaller, quarto magazine, the *Petit Journal pour Rire*. This new publication reprinted at various intervals most of the strips we have cited and other material from the parent paper; indeed, it was openly intended to satisfy the demand for reprints not otherwise available,[13] and at a much cheaper price (ten centimes, as opposed to forty-five centimes for the *Journal pour Rire*) to forestall competitors at the lower price, which was now standard for magazine and book installments. Nadar, busy as he was with his photographic studio[14] and his lithographic portrait gallery, the Panthéon Nadar, was appointed editor of the *Petit Journal pour Rire,* and, in the absence of Doré (who had moved on to

11. *Journal pour Rire,* May 14, 1852.
12. See Cuno 1983, 347.
13. See, for example, an advertisement for the new magazine in *Journal Amusant,* July 4, 1857, p. 8.
14. According to McCauley (1983, 355), Nadar's photography, started in 1854 as a sideline to his caricature and soon to become a major source of income, was never as interesting to him as caricature and ballooning.



FIG. 6.10. Scharles: *A Mock Revolution* (1852).
"Unconstitutional excesses are committed. / Shares sink, heads ferment. / Horrible local demagogues stir up the people. / At which a deputation of worthies seeks out the prince, / who, in turn, convokes his ministers. / The general in charge of the twelve hundred soldiers of the principality passes over to the side of the rebels, / who, having nothing to fear, swear to defend themselves to the death."

higher spheres as an illustrator of literary classics, though his earlier strips continued to be reprinted), a new artist was brought in, Marcelin, who was later to achieve fame as founder and illustrator of the *Vie Parisienne*.

The new journal, which became a model for later developments in cheap comics, was even more thoroughly pictorial, with each page filled with drawings, leaving at most a narrow filet of text varying between a quarter and a sixth of the page. The page layouts of the *Journal pour Rire* were completely broken down, and the distribution of the separate scenes of the narratives and series over much smaller pages (facilitated in the planning by the addition of four-digit inventory numbers) meant that a single comic strip narrative could dominate six out of the magazine's eight pages over several successive or nearly successive issues. News never got in the way, for Philipon's journals had absolved themselves of the pressure to respond to current events (the *Petit Journal pour Rire* is not dated, only numbered). A drawback of the small size, however, was that *Journal pour Rire* stories couched in very large vignettes could not be reprinted at all; those of Doré, who preferred small scenes, presented no problem.

The *Journal pour Rire* itself continued at the old price under a new title, the *Journal Amusant* (beginning January 5, 1856). At first it carried some nonhumorous, *Illustration*-style topical illustrations and fashion engravings; in 1858, still excluded from political caricature, it introduced the full front-page *charge,* by Nadar and Riou, of cultural notabilities. The Italian war of 1859, like the earlier Crimean War, produced types and scenes that effectively propagandized for French militarism. Yet attempts at serious, continuous social-institutional satire, in the manner of *Macaire* and the *Lorettes*, did not last long;[15] Baric's series "Peasants" (1856–1858) is very tame stuff indeed. Nadar, who left the *Petit Journal pour Rire* for the *Journal Amusant* in February 1858, was not the man to give the revamped publication a positive new direction. More and more preoccupied with photography and ballooning, he had to be supervised and pushed to meet deadlines by Philipon, who constantly complained at his tardiness. The *Journal Amusant* survived without a well-defined personality or many comic strips of note until, in the 1860s, Daumier and Cham and, in the 1870s and 1880s, Petit (see Chapter 7) began to give it some shape. A growing emphasis on elite social gatherings and fashions in clothing, thanks primarily to Marcelin, was logical enough in a magazine from the same Philipon stable that had produced two important Parisian fashion magazines. This upper-class orientation distinguishes it from its parent, and even more from its humble sibling, the *Petit Journal pour Rire,* and brings it closer to the aristocratic (or pseudoaristocratic), semicaricatural, and semisatirical *Vie Parisienne,* founded by Marcelin in 1863, which seems to epitomize the luxuriousness and frivolity of the Second Empire. The split of the *Journal pour Rire* into two magazines with different class orientations, then, signals the new social stratification within the middle and lower-middle classes.

15. The series "Emotions et Tribulations de la Famille Gogo," by Marcelin and Philipon, and "Avocats et Plaideurs" by Carlo Gripp, both from 1858, are much inferior to Daumier's *Macaire* and *Lawyers*.

CHAPTER 7

BOURGEOIS VERSUS PEASANT:

The "Histoires campagnardes" of Léonce Petit, 1872–1882





The hiatus in comic strip production from about 1853 to the late 1860s, which coincides with a general decline in the quality of caricature (even in Daumier), may be partly explained by a lessening of social-critical energy following the establishment of the Second Empire. The genre's real revival in France had to await the advent of the Third Republic, which, arising from the wreckage of the Franco-Prussian war and the Commune of 1870–1871, faced the task of national reconciliation—a major aspect of which involved the winning, by republican Paris, of the largely aristocrat-dominated, Bonapartist countryside. The "Histoires campagnardes" of Léonce Petit constitute a major hitherto untapped cultural expression and instrument of the struggle between bourgeois townsfolk and the peasantry, as well as the most coherent and socially revealing corpus of comic strips from this period of French history.

The history of landscape painting and scenes from peasant life, which became major genres of art from the Renaissance on, should be read in terms of a changing relationship between the countryside and the city. As mercantile and then capitalist economies developed, towns and cities grew; these subjected first the immediately surrounding peasantry and then, with improved communications, remoter corners of the realm. The landscape genre, which arose in Reformation Europe, was perfected in 17th-century Holland, with its flourishing merchant society. After a renaissance in early-19th-century Britain, then in the throes of industrialization, it entered a new phase at mid century in a rapidly industrializing France, merging into peasant painting on a larger scale than ever before and overwhelming the then-dominant modes of mythological, historical, and religious painting.[1]

Certain limited parallels to Petit's work existed in Busch's Germany (see Chapter 11). In England, however, there was no equivalent visualization of peasant life. Landscape painting itself,

1. See Herbert 1970.

after a brief resurgence with the Pre-Raphaelites, went into eclipse; in Ruskin's view, it was a genre "frivolous and justly despised."[2] Britain was by mid century an island of cities. And so the hunting frolics of Leech (not about the peasantry as such but rather about the country gentry) soon ceded pride of place in the pages of *Punch* to the drawing-room urbanities of Du Maurier. As a class critique, the nearest British caricatural equivalents to Petit's view of French peasants are James Sullivan's 1870s comic strip series *The British Working Man* and *The British Tradesman,* both of which deal with strictly urban phenomena.

Petit's work represents a unique comprehensive document relating both to actual conditions of peasant life and to prevalent urban attitudes about those conditions. His is, above all, an account of a social relationship: unlike the visual art and literature of the period, he is concerned with the peasantry not as a detached class whose primary, if not exclusive, form of struggle is with nature, but as a class forced into confrontation with an overwhelming "other nature": the economic pressures emanating from town and bourgeoisie.

The painting of this era, whether academic or impressionist, tends to show the peasant in harmony with his surroundings. The impressionists, and especially their leader, Camille Pissarro, tried to evolve a stylistic harmony of effects (of brushwork, of light) that would affirm a soft unity—less harsh, less labor oriented than that of Millet earlier; a harmony of people, whether petty bourgeois or peasant, with nature; a blending with the landscape not only of human forms but also of buildings and roadways. Precisely the study of Pissarro, who lived his working life in the country and was well placed to judge the peasantry, and who, of all the vanguard painters, was the most politically radical (he closely followed anarchist and socialist doctrines), reveals the process of harmonization at its most telling—and paradoxical.[3]

Pissarro's harmonization presupposes abstracting the real peasant from his habitat, and himself from real peasant existence. In his landscapes of the 1870s, figures and trees, peasant dwelling and factory merge into a peculiar unity of their own, encompassing horizon and sky. Nature functions as the social intermediary. In the 1880s, when the cities became aware of peasant discontent and miners' strikes (a great agricultural crisis started in 1879), Pissarro's peasants became larger, more dominant, more ideal; thus the peasant, though historically doomed, was henceforth to be officially honored, a trend that is particularly apparent in the Salon paintings of the late 1880s.

Literary practice, however, seems to flow in the opposite direction, toward a perpetuation of the most ancient and hostile stereotype of peasant character. In this aspect, never did naturalism in art differ so strongly from naturalism in literature. French writing—especially novels—about peasant life in the 1870s and early 1880s shows the peasantry to be uniformly depraved, an attitude that is confirmed in popular historiography (such as Bonnemère's *Histoire des paysans* [1857; 2d ed., 1874], a supposed source of certain incidents in Zola).[4] Michelet is one of the few historians who views the peasant with real sympathy, as oppressed by a coalition of external forces that ultimately bring about his internal corruption. Even Zola himself, in *La Terre* (published in 1886, some years after the last of Petit's series), sees the avarice of the peasantry as innate, a gangrene that grows from within, inherited from the past; no longer is it the product of present capitalist pressures, such as he had delineated so forcefully two years earlier in *Germinal.*

Petit's recognition of the forces oppressing the peasant—ambivalent, incomplete, and admixed with old stereotypes as it is—stands out, I believe, as unique in the cultural spectrum of the age. Its quality has much to do with the medium he found: caricatural narrative (or comic strip), capable of a degree of critical analysis without appearing to take itself seriously, beyond the reach of the notoriously heavy-handed literary and art critics, flexible and free enough to convey the texture of very real social suffering under the guise of innocent fun and farce. The very limitations imposed on caricature for a general-audience magazine, moreover, facilitated moderation and balance; there was no place, in the journal for which Petit wrote and drew, for Zola's melodramatic episodes of physical and sexual brutality, any more than for his epic and tragic sweep. For Zola's exaggeration and distortion of the "reality" of peasant life fit within a pronounced aesthetic of tragedy and naturalism, both of which are foreign to the caricatural tradition.

In the 1840s, in the generation before Petit, when the Barbizon school reigned with its idyll of the peasant-in-nature before massive industrialization became a fait accompli, the gulf between town and country was considered necessary and essential. The mutual hostility of peasant and bourgeois is that of two worlds, two sets of values and ways of living that oppose and complement but do not necessarily interpenetrate, as they later will.

A typical caricatural example of bourgeois-peasant relations from the early period is Honoré Daumier's *Pastorales* of 1845–1846.[5] This series opens with the petty-bourgeois whippersnapper getting a bloody nose from a shepherdess he tries to coerce. Everywhere he goes in the countryside, the bourgeois meets enemies: his person is threatened by peasant-husbands, peasant-thieves, and even scarecrows; his recreation is spoiled by bull, ram, donkey, pigs, chickens, wind, and rain; his husbandry is frustrated by flood, rabbits, moles, and bugs; his peace of mind is destroyed by toads, gnats, and bees. He is threatened by his own farmdog, caught in his own wolf trap, and "accidentally" menaced by the scythe of his own peasant. The peasant is the spectral policeman of the guilty bourgeois conscience (Fig. 7.1).

The countryside is depicted as a foreign land, in which the bourgeois is (according to Daumier) obliged to show his passport to the gendarme. Yet at this early stage the conflict was occasional and seasonal, and required for solution—or evasion—only the withdrawal of the invading party. Under the Second Empire, however, the conflict is increasingly sensed as not merely occasional but essential and continual; and by the time of the Third Republic, when the bourgeoisie and its values have become entrenched everywhere, in village as well as small town, the conflict is envisaged as permanent civil war in the irrevocably changed structure of rural existence. This, then, is the world of Léonce Petit.

Petit, of peasant stock himself, arrived in Paris in about 1863 and soon made his mark in the caricature journals (and particularly the *Journal Amusant*) with extensive series he called "Les Bonnes Gens de province" (The Good Folk of the Provinces). These were single, "naively" drawn, populous scenes of village and small-town life, which garnered him a reputation as the "realistic" and humorous observer of rural mores. Such was Petit's success in this specialty—boosted by the quickening interest in peasants in the years 1869–1870, when the liberal empire allowed freer elections and more popular political participation—that he was able to add another, concurrent, series called "Mœurs champêtres" (Rural Customs), executed in a different, more Daumieresque style and in the new medium of lithography.

After publication of the magazine was suspended during the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune of 1870–1871, Petit returned to the *Journal Amusant* with a new format called "Histoires campagnardes" (Rustic Tales), true narratives now, with which he dominated the magazine in an unprecedented manner. In their sheer physical dimension they are a novel and impressive phenomenon of graphic journalism: thirty-six complete stories, totaling well over a thousand individual vignettes, they took pride of place in a major weekly magazine for a decade. Starting slowly in 1872, with stories run over two nonsuccessive issues, the "Histoires campagnardes" gradually gained momentum, with triple- and quadruple-issue stories often running successively. They appeared in a total of ninety-eight issues from 1872 to 1882—or in

2. Ruskin, writing in the *Athenaeum* of 1871; cited in Harper and Shikes 1980, 2.
3. See Harper and Shikes 1980; and, for a Marxist perspective on Pissarro as printmaker, Melot 1977.
4. See Robert 1952, 70ff.
5. See Herding 1979, particularly for good sections on hunting scenes and *villégiature,* or countryside vacationing.



FIG. 7.1. Honoré Daumier (1845).
"Oh! dammit, I think we've been pinched!"

one in every five—and occupied a total of 252 pages—or one in every sixteen: this in a journal predicated on variety and normally employing half a dozen or more different artists at a time.[6]

Petit also continued with at least fifty-two large-scale single cartoon drawings under the prewar series title "Les Bonnes Gens de province." The difference between the two series is striking, and not only in form, although of course the form facilitates the difference in intent. Where the "Bonnes Gens de province" appear as humorous, relatively mild renditions of a population viewed as quaint, passive, and dormant, the "Histoires campagnardes" are satirical, aggressive analyses of a restive, oppressed, and fractious society. In passing from the stasis of the single-scene format of the "Bonnes Gens" to the dynamic of the "Histoires campagnardes," Petit recognizes a development in the character of the French peasantry that the paintings of the period (especially in the 1880s) seek assiduously to deny: that the peasantry is no longer a discrete social entity, that it is now irrevocably, irreversibly, locked into the new bourgeois administrative machinery. In the 1870s, then, at the beginning of the Third Republic, Petit's peasant stands at the threshold of that great "modernization" process documented so massively by Eugen Weber over the period 1870–1914.

What historical circumstances determined that a broadly middle-class, middle- to low-brow Parisian magazine should devote pride of place for a decade to the theme of rustic and provincial life, especially to such a degree and on such a scale? The starting date for the "Histoires campagnardes"—in mid 1872, little more than a year after the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune had ended—tells us something. Nineteenth-century France was a peculiarly megacephalic land, with a disproportionate concentration of wealth and population in Paris, whereas other urban centers remained relatively backward and two-thirds of the country's inhabitants were classified as peasantry. The wars of 1870–1871 represented a turning point in the ever-developing relationship of the dominant center, Paris, to the rest of the country. Prevailing opinion in the countryside viewed Paris as having provoked and conducted a disastrous war; Paris had been guilty of the excesses of the Commune; Paris (or Versailles) had concluded a shameful peace. The country at large had rallied bravely to the cause of saving the fatherland; and indeed, as in 1848, rustic contingents had marched to the aid of Paris itself to help destroy the Reds. Thus Paris, discredited in the country at large, had every reason to respect, observe, listen to, and placate that other France; and the republicans in their shaky new government soon realized that the Republic's survival, even more than that of previous regimes, depended on building support over the country at large.

Napoleon III had won his plebiscites in the countryside. After 1871 political power was further disseminated away from Paris. Throughout the 1870s, the provinces—that is, the small towns and villages of France—were in a real sense dominant in the government. In each constituency, the senators of the upper house, which determined government policy, were chosen by an electoral college made up of delegates from the various councils. Each municipality or commune supplied one delegate, whatever

6. I have found one "Histoire campagnarde" in another journal (*Le Grelot,* October 12 and 19, November 9, 1873): "Comment on devient réactionnaire, ou les Palinodies d'Agenor Pistochard," about a village revolutionary who turns his coat and marries into the local nobility. (*Le Grelot* is notable for its struggles with the censorship in this decade.)

its population; thus Paris, with its two million inhabitants, and a tiny village of three hundred souls were given equal weight. This system was devised by (and for) the conservatives, for it favored the local aristocrats, notables, and priests, all monarchist or Bonapartist, who traditionally administered most rural towns and villages. Right-wing control of the Senate lasted only until the partial Senate elections of 1879, however, when that body came into the hands of the republicans—who already, since 1876, controlled the lower house, the Chamber of Deputies. One scholar, noting how the republicans had "somehow" infiltrated hundreds of small-town and village councils and wrested control from the traditional families and the conservatives, speaks of a "quiet village revolution."[7] This revolution was no accident, though; it was the result of painstaking educational and other propaganda efforts on the part of the republicans,[8] who sought every available means to reach the peasantry—building schools, roads, and railways and instituting agricultural and other social reforms—in a massive effort to "modernize" the life and mind of the peasant.

But even as they taught the peasantry their own, urban, values, the Parisian republican bourgeoisie also sought to inform themselves about peasant values in order to learn something of the real conditions and the beliefs, attitudes, and behavior prevailing in "the other France." The new roads and railways facilitated exchange in both directions: businessmen, tourists, intellectuals, writers, and artists (like Léonce Petit) flowed into the countryside from the city, as did industrial products and modern cultural artifacts (including, of course, the *Journal Amusant*). Peasants, migrant workers, domestic servants, students—the economically displaced and the upwardly mobile—streamed from the countryside to the cities, bringing their social attitudes and culture with them. Petit himself, born in a tiny village in the northwest, took a memory, a vision of his homeland, to Paris and refurbished it, we must assume, according to basically metropolitan, bourgeois criteria; but insofar as the *Journal Amusant* also reached the smaller provincial towns and the wealthier peasantry of France, as it did the French colonies and all of the francophone world, Petit also returned a new kind of self-image—a critical and admonitory one—to those who inspired this vision in the first place. This self-image the peasants (to varying degrees, depending on their educational level and, to whatever extent they felt morally identified, to either their shame or amusement) were invited to accept as true to their class. This very mechanism of cultural imperialism continues down to our day; yet the bias imposed by Petit on the rustic experience does not, I suggest, exclude acute criticism of the role played by the author's own class or its provincial equivalent, nor does it exclude sympathy for the predicament of the oppressed and struggling peasant—elements entirely lacking in painting and other "high-class" visual media.

Petit's critical stance is all the more remarkable in that, for most of the period in which he was publishing his "Histoires campagnardes," down to 1881, there was strict censorship. The authorities well remembered that the early days of the Republic and the Commune had been marked by an anarchy of popular expression, by "this vomit of caricature which continues to defile the city."[9]

We have spoken in general terms of "the countryside." It was of course far from homogeneous; in fact, its very lack of homogeneity was what distinguished it from the metropolis, which sought to render it uniform. Outside Paris, France was an interlock of provinces, departments, towns, communes, and villages, each with its own more or less distinct economic base, relative wealth, or standard of living, its own language or patois, and its own customs, all of which could vary from one department to the next or even one village to the next. We must first ask, therefore, whether Léonce Petit's stories are localized, and if so, where?

The series title and the phrasing of the advertisements give no clue that Petit seeks to convey more than a generalized or synthetic overview of French rural life. Although several stories are explicitly set in the northwestern maritime provinces of Brittany and Normandy, most could have taken place in almost any other province. Too sharp or continuous a focus on a particular province might have alienated readers whose roots or links lay elsewhere. This external need, however, was offset by Petit's natural tendency to draw on his personal experience of the region of his birth. (A similar combination of the generalized view with the particular focus may be found a little later in Zola's *La Terre,* set in the Beauce, and in Maupassant's short stories; and, a little earlier, in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary.* Flaubert and Maupassant, like Petit, reveal the specific characteristics of Normandy, the writers' native province, which are to be read as representative of French rural and provincial life as a whole.) In Petit, the localized references are three times to Normandy as a province, which is explicitly the setting for two stories, including one in which most of the characters have recognizably Norman family names; and three times to Brittany, the explicit locale of a story in which all the individual names are recognizably Breton.[10] In other stories the women's headdress and high coifs and the men's wide-brimmed hats reinforce the impression that much of the time the artist is picturing his home provinces—where wine must be imported, the normal drink is cider, and the economic staples are horses, pigs, and potatoes.

Brittany and Normandy were, moreover, of all French provinces, the most familiar and accessible to Parisian tourists. They were among the first provinces to have their urban centers linked by rail to Paris. (The first big trunkline in France, completed in 1843, connected Paris and Rouen; Le Havre was joined to the capital in 1848.) The coasts of Normandy and Brittany were therefore not too remote, an easy day's travel from Paris. They were geographically picturesque and culturally different as well, with ancient histories of political and cultural autonomy. Brittany, which against increasing odds still preserved its own Celtic language, was considered far from French. Not attached to France until the late 15th century, the province fascinated for its rebellious past and its present barbarism, piety, and poverty. And Normandy, less pious and less poor, indeed as industrially advanced as Brittany was backward, had produced the race that conquered England and colonized remote corners of Europe. Norman cathedrals and Breton menhirs were romantic tourist attractions; and Normandy also appealed to rich Parisians for its numerous fashionable seaside resorts.

Folklorists, intellectuals, and artists set about preserving the primitivism of Brittany. No Breton town was "Haussmannized." The process of modernization that was transforming other French provinces in the 1860s and '70s had by the 1880s hardly touched Brittany. Upper Brittany continued to vote clerical and legitimist long after the rest of the country (and Lower Brittany) had turned republican. Industrialists were reluctant to invest in Brittany because of its archaic social structure, so ill adapted to the world of the factory.

Brittany, then, was attractively archaic and picturesque—but that is not what interested Petit. The beautiful medieval fortifications, churches, and houses of Dinan, where Petit went to school, never figure in his stories. Apart from one story (his first, in 1872,

7. Wright 1960, 294.
8. These efforts included, one would assume, the press generally, despite the rather surprising conclusion of Robert (1952, 102) that the newspapers showed little interest in the peasantry except at election time.
9. Lethève 1961, 21.
10. Norman names: *Les Cousins du notaire* (*Journal Amusant,* nos. 1161–1163 [December 1878]); Breton names: *L'Election de Trougadec* (*Journal Amusant,* nos. 1287–1297 [1881]). Subsequent parenthetical references in this chapter identify specific *Journal Amusant* issues. Only one character, Hudon de la Bassoulaie, the *conseiller général* of the canton, is, with his upper-class partitive, evidently a "French" import; he loses out to the Breton rival.

    I exclude from the tally the atypical story published in 1884, which is not rustic but maritime and set initially in the Breton port of St. Malo. And one story takes place in the Auvergne, the characteristic heat and aridity of which render the hero's desire to bathe more credible. It was also a province familiar to the author: he was employed there as a registry clerk after leaving his native Brittany and before heading for Paris.



On examine la maison. C'est Julien qui l'a bâtie. Tante Véronique trouve qu'il va un peu loin.

FIG. 7.2. *How Julien Chickpeas Bungled His Marriage Prospects* (1873). The house is examined. Julien says he built it. Aunt Véronique thinks he's going too far.

nos. 827 and 830) that plays on the villagers' belief in ghosts, and another (1879, no. 1196) featuring their not unreasonable fear of wolves,[11] Petit's is a remarkably nonfolkloristic view of rural society. Although the "Histoires campagnardes" were advertised as being "composed in general after the personal memories of the author, and sometimes also from accounts taken during winter evening gatherings from the mouths of rustic narrators," traditional or folk tales are little in evidence. If present at all, they form an underlay and are thoroughly transformed in a contemporary spirit. The "rustic narrators" of the advertisement were in fact mere gossips, local scandalmongers motivated by social malice and class hostility, and not those repositories of ancient lore and timeless superstition beloved of ethnographers. Petit's jaundiced view is all the more remarkable when we consider the intensive, idealizing folkloristic and ethnographic investigation that was ongoing at the time of his "Histoires campagnardes" and published soon after: François Luzel on folktales and songs (1887) and Paul Sébillot (a childhood friend of Petit's) on traditions, superstitions, popular tales, and customs (1881–1886). An art-historical milestone exists for 1886 as well: it is the year Gauguin first arrived in Brittany. The arrival of Gauguin and the "School of Pont-Aven" painters who grouped around him also represents a climax in the touristic and cultural appropriation that had started over fifty years earlier.

Urban bourgeois culture demanded of its provinces a mythology of regeneration as a means of escape from its own corruption, a mythology served as much by the postimpressionist art of Gauguin as by the academic art of Jules Breton, Dagnan-Bouveret, or Jules Noel. Léonce Petit, however, with his comic and ugly vision of moral corruption, punctures this solemn mythology, which by now had reached maximum inflation in the prestigious annual Salons. Vanguard painting on the one hand and caricature on the other also offer interesting contrasts in stylistic regression: Gauguin's into coloristic, linear primitivism, designed to suggest purity and regeneration; Petit's into childish and grotesque simplifications and distortions redolent of moral degeneracy.

This degeneracy is the result of the great ongoing conflicts between the bourgeoisie and an independent (or once-independent), property-owning peasantry. The focus here, however, is not the metropolitan bourgeoisie but a mean-spirited provincial and rural bourgeoisie: the class directly in control of administering the small provincial towns; that somber-looking, exploitative bourgeoisie figured by Courbet in his *Funeral at Ornans;* a rapacious bourgeoisie, sustaining its expansion by means of growing legal and police bureaucracies.[12] Some of Petit's villages are situated quite close to a small town—as tiny Taden, where Petit was born, is to Dinan, a town of eight thousand, a mere four kilometers away. But the railways are nowhere in evidence, the stagecoaches seem to pass the villages by, and there are no tourists yet.[13] This would suggest that Petit is thinking not of Upper Brittany, with its coastal areas already filled with painters and seekers of the picturesque, but of inaccessible Lower Brittany.

Life in the villages is simple. Furniture and clothing are crude. The inns have stools rather than chairs; houses have minute windows to minimize the window tax,[14] and one suspects, although one never sees inside, that they have beaten earth floors (Fig. 7.2). The villagers have barely entered the cash economy, for payment is often in kind, but they are not demonstrably indigent, and they seem to be well above the universal poverty level set in Weber. Indeed, Petit does not try to arouse sympathy for the essential material poverty of rustic living. The villagers he depicts are mostly small (and a few larger) property holders, and they are

11. "In 1883, 1,316 wolves were killed in France, or official bounties paid for that many heads" (Weber 1976, 15).
12. The distinction between provincial or small-town and Parisian bourgeois as targets of satire and criticism, carefully maintained by writers such as Balzac and Flaubert, should also appear in French caricature generally. In England, a land of big cities rather than small towns, this distinction is less apparent.
13. In a posthumously published picaresque novel called *Les Comédiens malgré eux* (Paris, 1887), Petit evokes the naive and exaggerated delight of the inhabitants of a remote village when what they take to be a small theatrical troupe, such as normally passes them by, descends upon them for a picnic. The troupe is in reality a group of rich tourists, who are virtually forced to perform a play (the text of Racine's *Iphigénie* happens to be in the pocket of one of their number). Without understanding a word of it, but having paid generous entrance fees (from an egg to a pig), the rustics express the greatest satisfaction.
14. "Sixteen million peasants, including women and children, live in caves, of which most have only one opening, others only two and the most fortunate only three. Windows are to a house what the five senses are to the head" (Marx 1983, 316). Taxes were levied on the number and size of windows.

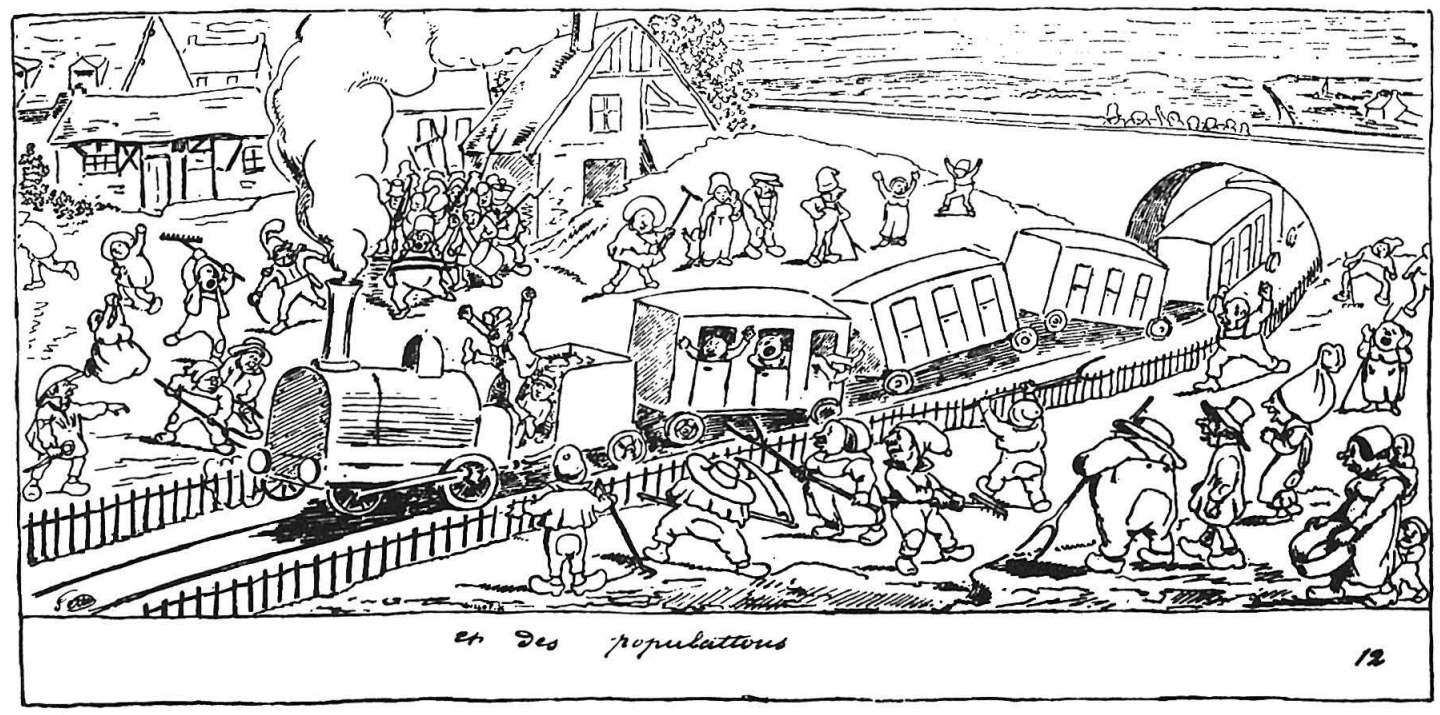


FIG. 7.3. *The Misadventures of M. Bêton* (1868). "[Agitation of] the people. / The travelers meanwhile are violently disturbed: the men swear, the women weep, the children scream. / And the engineer unwittingly renders his soul sister communicative."

imbued with vices peculiar to the propertied: that is, they represent the majority of French peasants, who were not as a class proletarianized as in England.[15]

In the small town the appearance of a newspaper is a major event, for by and large there is nothing to read, and the pictures on the walls of the village inns are few and paltry. When reading is necessary—of a legal summons, for instance (nos. 992–995)—the peasant is not deficient, but his attitude to schooling in general is, as we shall see, another matter.

The Petit peasant is partly literate and proto-civilized. He does not live entirely insulated by his tight little community, out of all contact with a larger world. True, he is suspicious of strangers, whom he regards as foreigners, and his village is his *patrie* (no. 908); but he nevertheless must constantly deal with representatives of a larger, urban, order. Petit is concerned with this class interaction, between village and town, between classes of different social weight and destiny. Complexities and nuances abound, and Petit has not erected a fixed, stereotypical village or villager, town or townsman, but is constantly shifting the terrain of their characteristics and the modality of their interaction. Population centers range considerably in size: in ascending order there is the *hameau,* or hamlet; the village; the commune (big enough to have a mayor); the canton (an administrative area defined as having a resident *juge de la paix*); the *bourg* (market town or large village with occasional markets, from which the term "bourgeois" derives); the *bourgade,* defined as an important or straggling village; the *gros bourg,* or medium-sized town, like Dinan; and at the very top, the *ville,* or large town, corresponding perhaps to the provincial Breton capital, Rennes, with its fifty thousand inhabitants.

Prelude: Bêton *and* Tringle

We have seen summarily how Daumier dealt with the urban invasion of the countryside. Petit's model, Rodolphe Töpffer (Petit was often called "the French Töpffer"), also depicted, in his comic strip novels of the 1830s and '40s, the discomfiture of urban types who find themselves (usually involuntarily) thrown upon the

15. According to a Grande Enquête Agricole (agricultural survey) of 1867, there were close to four million *propriétaires agricoles,* who worked the land themselves and employed others to do so, and close to a million *fermiers, métayers,* and *colons* who worked other people's land. Another million were classed as *journaliers,* wage earners who hired themselves out by the day but may have owned a little land of their own (Baudrillart 1885, 7).



FIG. 7.4. *M. Bêton* (1868).
[44] M. Bêton is carried away by the whirlwind of pleasure. / Filled with inner joy, hungry for new sensations, he offers Mlle. Crognonette a delicate supper. [45] Lord Bonjon, her protector, pursues the absconding pair. / At the height of his ecstasy, M. Bêton is seized by an iron hand, which lifts him up with colossal force. / Mlle Crognonette falls into the gutter and into a nervous fit, / M. Bêton is flung as by a hurricane down main sewer no. 204. [46] Meanwhile the engineer resists the sapper Balthazar, who wants to drag him to the altar. / M. Bêton wallows in something other than bliss. / Not comprehending how he can have fallen from the sidereal heights of a houri-peopled paradise to the very depths of the abyss, M. Bêton rages against destiny. / He is obliged to admit that his position is in no wise improving.



M. Tringle, étant sorti de la ferme, se réfugie dans une cabane dont la porte est ouverte et l'âtre allumé.



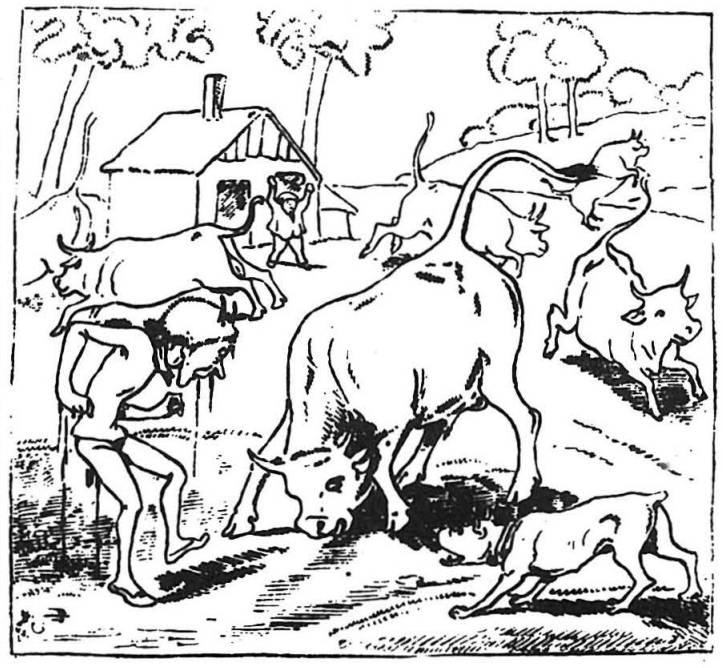
M. Tringle, poursuivi par tout le village, se réfugie dans une sombre mare couverte de nénuphars et de g.aïeuls.



M. Tringle essaye d'atteindre la hutte d'un berger.



Cette cabane se trouvant être celle d'un vieil usurier qui agonise en ce moment, M. Tringle est pris par le curé, le notaire et les assistants pour Satan en personne, venu pour enlever l'âme du moribond.



Mais il avait compté sans le taureau, qui, mis en émoi par la couleur rouge du costume, apparaît avec des intentions menaçantes.

FIG. 7.5. *M. Tringle* (1868).
M. Tringle seeks refuge in a hut / occupied by an old usurer who is at this moment dying. He is taken by the priest, the notary, and his assistants for Satan in person, come to carry off the dying man's soul. / Pursued by the whole village, M. Tringle takes refuge in a dark pond. / He makes for a shepherd's hut, / but is threatened by a bull roused by the red of his costume.

countryside. Petit's two early, prewar stories, conceived in direct imitation of Töpffer, already represent significant variations and expansions of an interaction adumbrated in Daumier and Töpffer. The hero of *M. Bêton* ("Mr. Booby"),[16] mysteriously languishing in his provincial existence as taxidermist to the Academy of Sciences of the small town of Valognes, on medical advice takes himself to Paris—complete with stuffed crocodile, paradoxical emblem of his pretensions to intellectual civilized life, which leads him into otherwise impermissible regressions. The railway train, too, is cast in a paradoxical role: the latest means of interurban transportation, the very purpose of which is to spare the bourgeois friction with the countryside, the train gets out of control, lurching about as in an animated cartoon, driving the animals to distraction and the peasants to armed defense. The scene of the peasants, armed with pitchforks, scythes, and rakes (Fig. 7.3), epitomizes the sense that town and country were in conflict over the very agency supposed to bring them together. But of course, urban interests decided where the railways should go.

The primary setting of *M. Bêton* is urban, though, where a series of adventures are interlaced in a very funny, Töpfferian emotional and physical frenzy replete with chases, misapprehensions, coincidences, and arrests. Suddenly precipitated from the ecstasy of the carnival to the horrors of the sewer (Fig. 7.4), the irresolute Bêton, pining "to fill the void of his existence," undergoes the polar conditions of the petty-bourgeois dream; as does, in a different way, the cop who, instead of arresting a jealousy-crazed locomotive driver disguised as a bearded lady, woos and determines to drag him/her to the altar. All innocently crazy stuff, *M. Bêton*—Töpfferian all the way from its graphic line, its montages, refrains, and emotional progressions, right down to finer points of format, frame, and caption—is, however, an anachronism.

The demand was now for greater realism in both form and content, to which *M. Tringle* represents a transition. Monsieur Tringle, the hero of a novelette by Champfleury (1867), which Petit immediately reduced to a comic strip in the *Journal Amusant,*[17] represents a more thorough, and semirealistic, urban inva-

16. *Les Mésaventures de M. Bêton* ran in twenty-eight issues of the *Hanneton,* for as long as that journal survived (March 1867–August 1868) before it suffered a "violent" death at the hands of the censor. The remaining ten pages of strips appear in the album version (Libraire Internationale, n.d., though advertised in *Journal Amusant* on November 28, 1868; now very rare).
17. Nos. 603–605, July 20 and 27, August 3, 1867.

sion of rustic mores. With its larger, fuller drawings, it begins to resemble the format of the "Histoires campagnardes." A socially ambitious petty functionary from the small town of Les Ilettes, Tringle disguises himself as a devil for a party at which he hopes to win the hostess's daughter, a rich heiress. Cloaked by his devil costume, he permits himself riotous behavior, systematically destroying the symbols of the bourgeois order—conduct otherwise totally taboo in his puritanical, petty-bourgeois life-style. Through a mixture of clumsiness, ill luck, and diabolical spirits, Tringle finds himself expelled from town as a would-be devil disruptive of urban decorum. Logically, though accidentally, Tringle flees to his "true habitat," the countryside (Fig. 7.5), where he is, no less logically, taken for a real devil; after being seized by a bull and carried about the fields, sowing destruction among young trees and crops, he is attacked by the terrified population. (This series of scenes is also encapsulated in the frontispiece to the novelette.)

Peasant and Police

In the "Histoires campagnardes," Petit aims for credibility. The narrative is relatively show, deliberate, and full, very much Petit's own. It can also be visually dull, lacking the crazy fantasy of *Bêton*. The artist has developed a flexible format ranging from small pictographic or close-up vignettes to often quite crowded, picturesquely panoramic, framed genre compositions that stretch the full width of the page in the manner of the earlier "Bonnes Gens de province" series. The graphic style ranges from the simplified contour, with relatively little exaggeration, to volumetric, shaded effects capable of suggesting "color," and spooky nocturnes. The captions, which also vary considerably in extent,[18] are descriptive in a straightforward way and generally eschew verbal wit or peculiarities that are not those of the characters. Use of archaisms and dialectal words and phrases is discreet.

The assault on rustic life is less farcical, less violent, less physical, less external than in the transitional *M. Tringle*. Petit is concerned with an internal invasion, with the country dweller's chafing at an alien but unavoidable presence, with the encystment of a superstructure of bourgeois authority in a traditional society recalcitrant to change. The bourgeois order sits upon the peasant like a formal suit of clothes that, however long worn, never fits. Indeed, the peasant invariably looks ridiculous and uncomfortable when, in order to cut a figure in town, he puts on petty-bourgeois garb. The conflict is primarily between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry; the other major social class, the rural and small-town aristocracy, is conspicuous by its absence. Members of this class, which Petit sensed was receding from the political and social scene, behave in a suicidal manner, rejecting new ideas and refusing to admit to their select society any people engaged in business or administration. In the "Bonnes Gens de province," for instance, the noble Monsieur Rabouteau des Essarts is ostracized because he married the granddaughter of a cloth merchant. The rustic arena is thus cleared of a once-dominant class, capable in times past of allying itself with the peasantry in their struggles against the bourgeoisie.

The role of the police is now to serve the bourgeoisie by disciplining the peasantry, repressing any radical inclinations—and picking off the most eligible of their womenfolk. Look at the fate of the brave, zealous, enterprising, and reasonably ambitious peasant Hercule Mathurin Piedagnel (no. 860). In order to earn the hand of the daughter of a social superior and minion of authority, the bailiff, Hercule volunteers for a whole slew of difficult (and often gruesome) agricultural tasks (Fig. 7.6), right down to the cleaning of the bailiff's privy (like his namesake of old in the Augean stables)—just to keep himself in "good odor" with the family. His fourteenth and ultimate labor is the most dangerous of all: campaigning for the bailiff's nephew, a veterinarian, as the radical candidate for the *conseil* in the general election. Inevitably, he gets into a fight with the police and spends three months in jail. (The government in Paris was, in 1873 when this story was published, still hostile to radicals and true republicans.) On his release, he returns home to request the hand of his beloved—only to find that she has married the police brigadier who had him jailed in the first place. Mathurin Piedagnel retires in disgust to the deep forest, where he takes up the marginal existence of charcoal cutter.

The police in Petit are always depicted wearing the goatee and bristling mustache sported by the emperor Louis-Napoléon himself, as if in honor of their model and as testimony to their Bonapartist and authoritarian spirit.[19] They are never caricatured—for good reason, for it was forbidden under the early Third Republic to show even a *garde-champêtre* (rural guard) in an unfavorable light. The emperor had vastly increased the size of the police force, improved its status and efficiency, and brought it into hitherto remote and unpoliced areas of the countryside.

The class enemy of the peasant is the bourgeoisie, represented by police and other authority figures and in ideas, values, and artifacts from an industrial civilization. We may start, as the comic strip so often does, with trivial-seeming objects. Much comedy turns on the peasants' inability to comprehend certain products symbolic of a civilization that, in its major manifestations (such as the railways), had not yet reached them. These artifacts come in peculiar, detached forms, such as iron baths, colonic irrigators, and false teeth. The choice of such objects, which also act as narrative catalysts, is not fortuitous: they all have to do with bodily hygiene, in which the bourgeoisie was reputed to be so wonderfully advanced and the peasantry notoriously deficient—the only liquid that touched the peasants' skins being their own sweat.[20]

The colonic irrigator (no. 1147), originally a groom's romantic gift to his bride, is treated first, by the little servant who steals it, in a religious-ritual sense (as an incense burner), and then, by the family tutor, in an artistic sense (as a cornet or "clyso-pump," from which he attempts to extract musical sounds). It then becomes quite literally the instrument through which the tutor's lady employer falls in love with him and marries him. The happy ending here, which unites two social classes in transition—the peasant-become-tutor and the widow of a parvenu tradesman—is less typical, however, than the outcome of *The Bath*. The bath is found in the attic by Oscar, an art student from Paris visiting his uncle. No one, not even the schoolmaster, can divine the use of this iron tub; only the uncle understands its function, for he remembers taking baths as a young student in Paris. The maid is appalled at the perversion of cooking oneself like a chicken in boiling water; and the rumor of an impending suicide sends shock waves through the village. Then the poorest, most indigent natives, fearing that they will be the primary victims of a charity soup in which some alien object has been boiled, decide to take action and empty the bath of its hot water—right over the heads of the police, arriving to investigate (Fig. 7.7). Oscar is saved from severe punishment only by his influential uncle, and when the bath is solemnly brought to court as material evidence, the public prosecutor, warning the young man against what he deigns to recognize as a *charge d'atelier* (studio joke), expels him from the area.

18. The excessive length of the captions in some of the later strips may have to do with the fact that Petit was also writing and illustrating novels at this time and perhaps had trouble maintaining the distinction between the genres.
19. "All the *sergents de ville* [police] at that time [later Second Empire] resembled the Emperor of the popular prints!" (Willette 1919, 20).
20. See Weber 1976, 149.

LES QUATORZE TRAVAUX DE MATHURIN PIEDAGNEL, — par Léonce Petit (suite).



31161

Mathurin s'efforce de se faire bien voir de madame Pourchasson, en lui fendant sa provision de bois pour l'hiver.



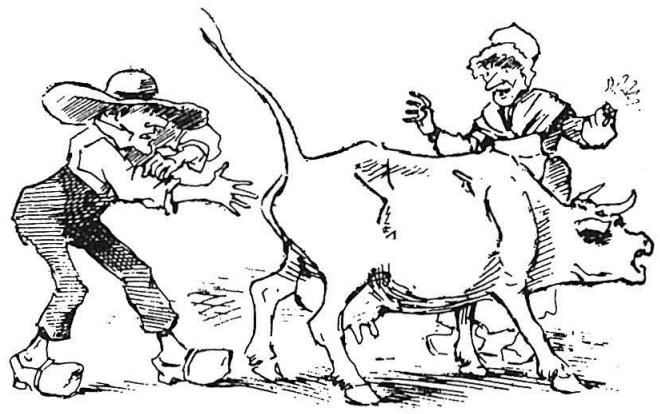
31162

Mathurin croit politique de défricher la lande de la Gatinière, appartenant au grand-père Pourchasson.



31163

Mathurin condescend à moudre du poivre chez le cousin Aristide Pourchasson, l'épicier du bourg.



3.164

Mathurin s'empresse d'assister dans ses couches la vache de la tante Perrine Pourchasson.



31165

Mathurin, ne reculant devant aucun service, écorche feu le cheval de Pourchasson l'oncle, et va vendre la peau.



31166

Mathurin tond le chien de la cousine Ursule Pourchasson.

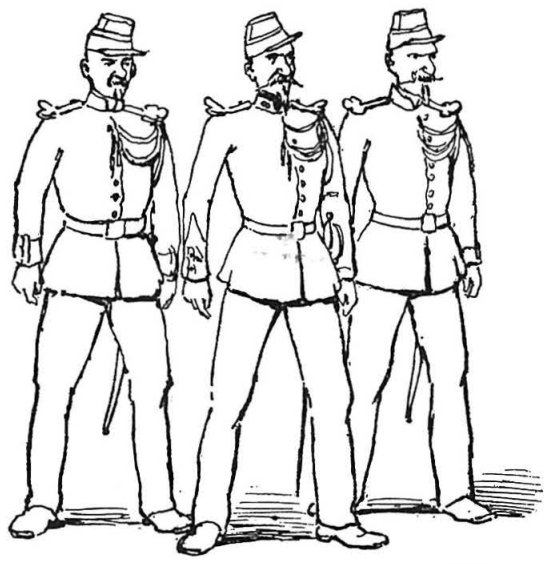


31167

Mathurin châtre les gorets de la tante Madeleine Pourchasson.

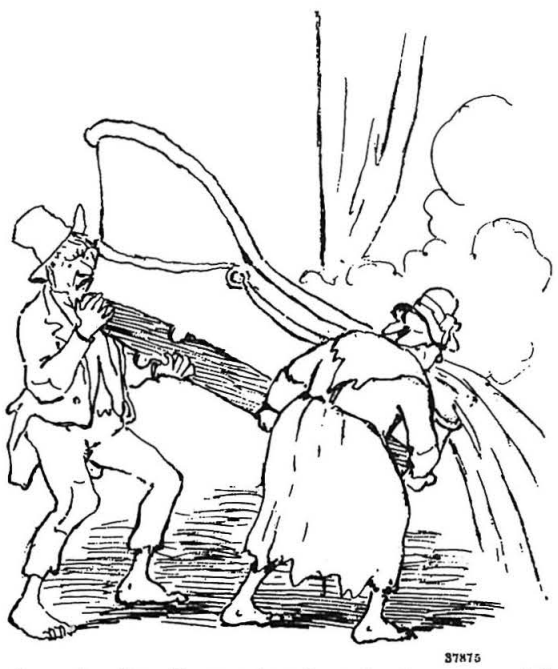
FIG. 7.6. *The Fourteen Labors of Mathurin Piedagnel* (1873). Mathurin cuts Madame Pourchasson's wood for the winter. / Breaks Grandpa Pourchasson's ground for him. / Grinds pepper for his cousin Aristide Pourchasson, the local grocer. / Helps Aunt Perrine's cow to calve. / And even flays Uncle Pourchasson's horse, and sells the skin. / He clips Cousin Ursule Pourchasson's dog. / He castrates Aunt Madeleine Pourchasson's piglets.

LA BAIGNOIRE, — par LÉONCE PETIT. (*SUITE ET FIN. — VOIR LES Nos* 1179, 1180, 1182.)



37873

Tout à coup les rangs pressés de cette foule s'ouvrirent pour donner passage à trois beaux hommes revêtus d'un uniforme cher à tous les cœurs vraiment français. C'étaient le brigadier et les gendarmes Poilu et Vachon, qui venaient pour savoir ce que tout cela signifiait.



37875

Comme deux Peaux-Rouges qui se glissent dans le camp ennemi, ils s'introduisaient dans la chambre où le bain fumait dans la baignoire. Puis enlevant énergiquement le récipient... vlan!... ils flanquaient le bain par la fenêtre,



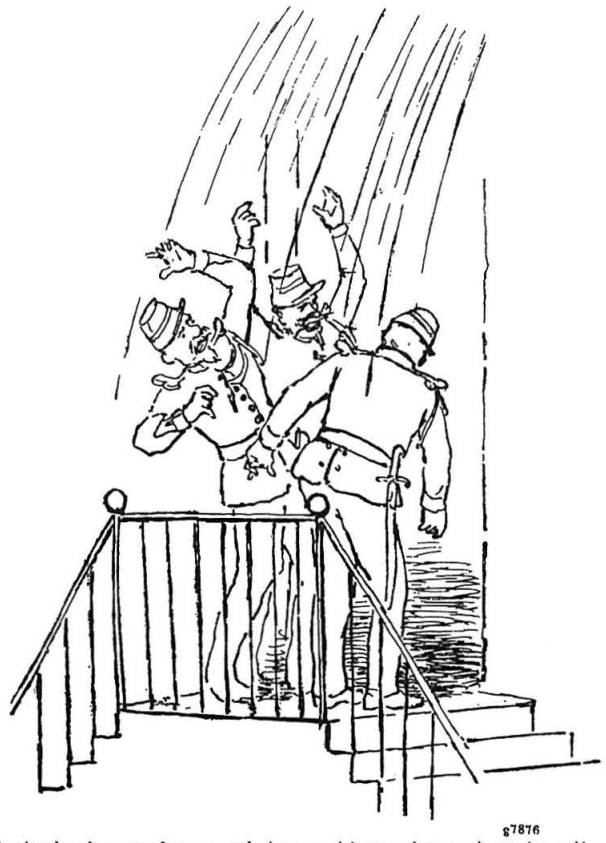
37877

Leur coup fait, les deux complices descendirent l'escalier quatre à quatre, s'esquivèrent par une porte de derrière et se sauvèrent à toutes jambes sans être vus.



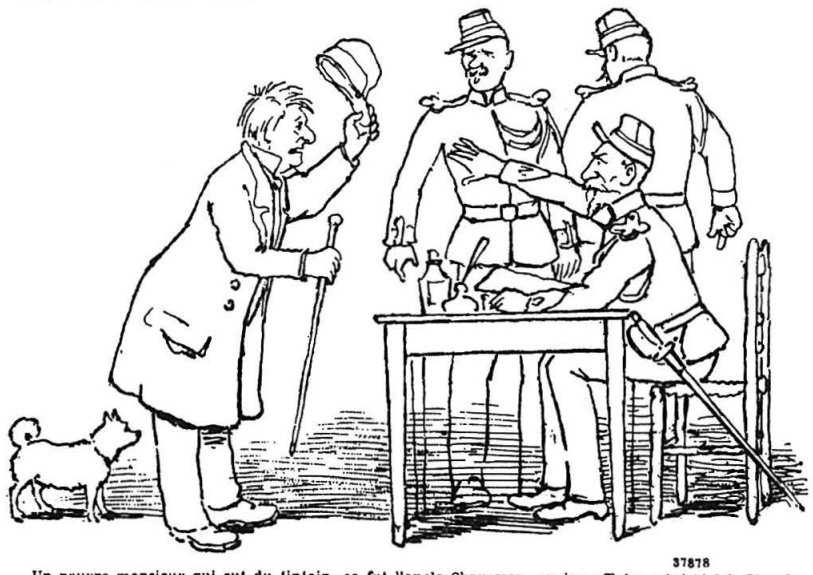
37874

Juste à ce moment le vieux Roquediou et la vieille Barthomeuf, croyant l'instant propice, quittaient leur cachette et montaient l'escalier à pas de loup.



37876

juste sur la tête des deux gendarmes et de leur supérieur, qui, poussés par leur zèle, montaient en ce moment le perron de la maison pour s'opposer à l'acte illégal qu'Oscar Chavasson était accusé de vouloir commettre.



37878

Un pauvre monsieur qui eut du tintoin, ce fut l'oncle Chavasson, ancien officier ministériel. L'oncle Chavasson, qui ne comprenait rien à l'aventure, passa l'après-midi de ce jour à parlementer avec les gendarmes. Ces militaires étaient rentrés furieux à la gendarmerie pour y chercher leurs carabines et revenir faire le siége en règle de la maison de l'ex-notaire. Mais tout d'abord le brigadier avait tenu à dresser procès-verbal de ce qui s'était passé.

FIG. 7.7. *The Bath* (1879).
Three fine men dressed in that universally admired uniform emerge from the crowd. / The two old peasants choose this moment to leap up the stairs. / Like Red Indians infiltrating the enemy camp, they slip into the room with the steaming bath, and whoosh! tip the water out of the window, / right on the heads of the two policemen and their officer. / Their deed done, the two accomplices flee. / Poor Uncle Chavasson, former ministerial official, spends the afternoon arguing with the police, who are furious after having returned to the house with guns to mount a regular siege.



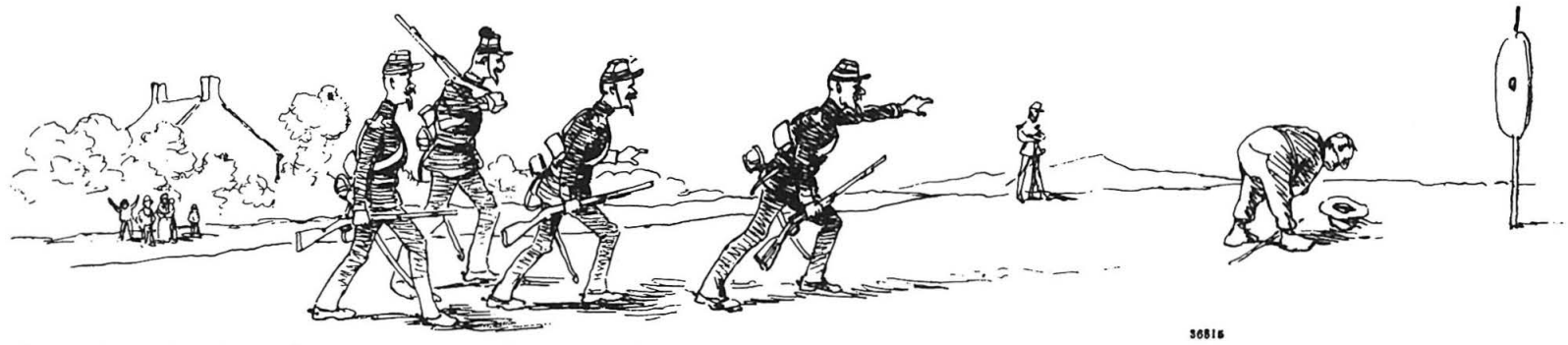
36813

Le père Miche, grand flâneur et grand paresseux depuis qu'il était devenu homme fort, assistait à cet exercice.



36814

L'idée lui vint tout à coup d'aller se planter devant la cible, en ayant soin toutefois de prendre une position telle que les balles ne pussent guère l'atteindre à l'œil. Il songeait à l'étonnement des gendarmes en voyant leurs balles s'aplatir sur sa peau; il s'imaginait que le capitaine, présent à l'affaire, ne pourrait manquer de faire son rapport au gouvernement; il se flattait de l'espoir de se voir donner une pension.



36815

Les gendarmes lui crièrent d'une voix impérieuse de se retirer, de circuler, etc. Mais le père Miche resta obstinément en place. Alors, croyant voir dans l'attitude du bonhomme une insulte à la gendarmerie, l'officier commanda aux gendarmes d'arrêter cet individu.



36816

Le père Miche, confiant dans sa force de rhinocéros, résista bravement lorsqu'on vint lui mettre la main au collet. Mais, cette fois, il eut affaire à des adversaires plus sérieux que les fier-à-bras de cabaret qu'il avait culbutés, et loin d'avoir le dessus, il reçut une râclée d'importance.



36817

Il fut, à la suite de cela, ignominieusement conduit en prison.

FIG. 7.8. *Père Miche; or, The Overweening Rhinoceros* (1878).
Père Miche, now a real layabout, watches the exercise. / He plants himself in front of the target, relishing the amazement of the police when they see their bullets flatten against his hide; they will report the miracle to the government and get him a pension. / Refusing to budge when summoned to do so, he is arrested. / He resists arrest and gets thoroughly beaten up / and ignominiously taken to prison.

The urban bath in a rustic world constituted a threat to the existing order, which only the law—police and judiciary—can restore. In the conflicts that Petit shows disrupting peasant life, politics in the wider, national, sense is generally absent, reflecting the dominant contemporary view (including that of Marx, and sustained by such modern authorities as Eugen Weber),[21] that political activity in the countryside was largely limited to the occasional election, when the peasants had to be persuaded to vote "correctly." Yet evidence exists to show that as French politics developed following the Second Empire, elections under the Third Republic began to be hotly contested. With the general economic decline after 1873—the countryside stricken by phylloxera, cattle disease, bad harvests, competition with American grain, and a general weakening of industry—the peasants came to see the ballot as a tool that might be used to their advantage.

21. For Marx, French peasants were not a class, because "identity of interests" had engendered in them "no community, no national bond, and no political organization" (Weber 1976, 245). The peasantry, unable to see itself or to function as a class, was an "inchoate addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes" (Marx 1983, 312). This well-known passage from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1850) was retained unmodified in the editions of 1869 and 1885, which presumably reflects Marx and Engels's understanding that the situation had not changed.



FIG. 7.9. *The Tribulations of Brother Fruitful* (1873).
[Mayor, rural guard, and police sergeant] add the greatest vitality to this little family party, / which ended very late with a Te Deum bawled out by Poulard so that the three neighboring communes could hear it. / But the following Sunday Brother Fruitful got his revenge, and Poulard, sharply scolded by the priest, made honorable amends publicly in church.

Petit actually devotes the bulk of his longest story by far, an altogether exceptional one reaching over ten issues and published at the start of the great agricultural crisis of 1881, to a Breton election campaign. In *The Election of Trougadec* (nos. 1287ff.), the peasantry become quite active in defense of a popular local candidate against a government appointee, without, however, stepping outside the legal channels for campaigning; here their tactics are limited to, on the one hand, disdainful acceptance of free libations dispensed by the unpopular candidate and, on the other, word-of-mouth support on behalf of the popular one. Graphically, the serenity of the countryside is emphasized; there is no real mass agitation, and communication is accomplished by lone individuals shouting to each other over great distances.[22]

The surveillance in Petit's villages is thorough; suspicion is the professional trademark. A foolish peasant National Guardsman who innocently pins to his breast a set of military dentures, thinking it is the decoration he has won, is jailed for playing a "seditious joke" (no. 1073). The judge's admonition epitomizes the attitude of authority toward any kind of odd behavior: "This will teach you to be funny at the expense of serious matters! Wit can be found anywhere; it's only good sense that is rare."

22. The archaic features of the campaign, where the press does not enter at all, are presumably typical of Brittany in 1881. Trougadec, removed from his judgeship through the chicanery of his political rival and administrative superior, instead of having recourse to the local press revenges himself by undertaking a one-man charivari against his enemy, thus continuing, in a new way and for a new political and personal purpose, an ancient custom designed to express collective hostility to an individual's social deviance. On the charivari, see Weber 1976, 399ff.

    Given the date this was published (1881), the story should reflect republican electoral successes of recent years, as well as the agricultural crisis. Petit seeks prudently to mitigate the implicit criticism of a "government candidate" by setting the story under the empire—Houdon is referred to as the "Imperial candidate," the only time Petit mentions the empire explicitly. Petit also depicted elections (and other political subjects) in his Salon paintings: *Un Candidat sur le champ de foire,* in 1874; *Arrestation en province,* in 1875, described in an 1881 review by Charles Leroy (see p. 173) as a "worthy pendant" to the preceding; and *La Grève des Mineurs,* in or before 1881.

LE GENDARME POULET, — par Léonce PETIT. (SUITE ET FIN.

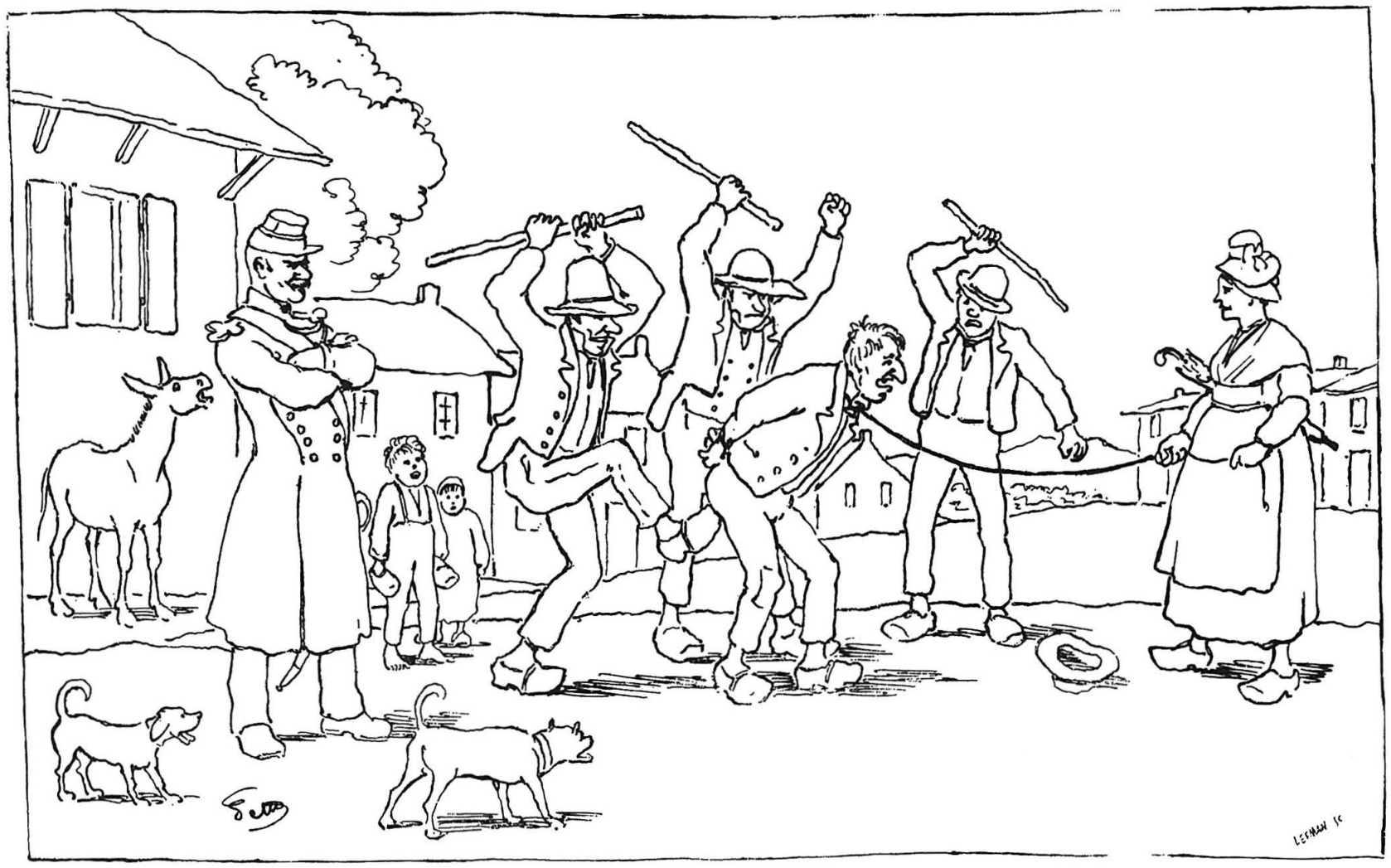


FIG. 7.10. *Policeman Poulet* (1880).
Policeman Poulard has the seasonal lunatic thoroughly beaten up, and thus cured.

Wit, the spice of urban intercourse, is social poison in the village, where it will inevitably be indulged at the expense of authority. The swineherd Antoine Gorou, who comes from depressed Lower Brittany and is exploited by a *galot* (French-speaking) farmer, his traditional enemy, is magically granted the very urban gift of wit, which he uses in tavern harangues against local government officials (no. 979). He is instantly denounced by the innkeeper, probably one of the ubiquitous government spies, and arrested. But he cunningly induces a political quarrel among his guards—a regular gendarme, a beadle, and a *garde-champêtre,* representing respectively the Bonapartist, Orleanist, and Henrician (legitimist) parties—who get into a fight, permitting him to escape. The lesson is that politics among the people can only lead to a breakdown in social discipline. Wit or oratory profit the peasant no more than the other essentially urban or bourgeois sources of power, including beauty and wealth, gifts also magically vouchsafed to Antoine Gorou but in this updated fairy tale earning him only the jealous hostility of his own class.

The most drastic confrontation with the police develops in the story of Père Miche, who, thanks to a childish prank and the stupidity of the local physician, is led to believe that his skin is as tough as a rhinoceros hide and that he is therefore endowed with that animal's allegedly ferocious character to boot. Absurd as the story is, this Ionescoan transformation acts as a telling metaphorical mask, stereotyping the peasant (and, by extension, the masses generally, as in Ionesco) not only as brutish and stupid, like the rhino, but also of redoubtable physical strength and courage. Père Miche, once a timid and hard-working gardener, begins in his fantasy of rhinoceroid invulnerability to loiter in the local pub, bragging, talking, and acting tough. This behavior causes his reputation to rise in the eyes of the local populace. Inevitably he comes into conflict with the police, whom the "overweening rhinoceros" actually seeks out on their own ground, during shooting practice (Fig. 7.8). In defiance of their bullets, he places his backside between the target and the rifles, expecting the bullets to bounce off him (an exploit designed to excite general admiration and perhaps even achieve the quintessential petty-bourgeois goal: a pension). Père Miche, however, ignores the police officers' orders to remove himself; taking his impudence as a calculated insult to their profession, the police beat him up when he resists arrest. He is jailed for two weeks, having been told that any attempt to explain himself will only make matters worse. Eventually Père Miche is released, and he becomes once again the model horticulturist, never having learned what really caused his own egregious folly. Here Petit is satirizing an attitude he partly shared—but only partly: that the peasant is by nature unteachable as well as stupid, undeserving of compassion or legal safeguard, and fit only to be jailed when his stupidity offends the social order.

Petit does not depict the police as invariably hostile to the peasantry. On two occasions they function as harmonious elements in the village community. In *The Tribulations of Brother Fruitful,* the whole hierarchy of lay authority—from the innkeeper and sacristan to mayor, rural guard, and police sergeant—prefer to join rather than repress the tavern revelry that so scandalizes the priest (Fig. 7.9). And, more important, *Policeman Poulet* uses a type that is otherwise totally foreign to the 19th-century cartoon and comic strip tradition, and thus to mainstream popular feeling: the cop who is truly the friend of the people. Gendarme Poulet is an archaic figure, a jack-of-all-trades. As a former shoemaker, he still provides the best cheap shoes available, plus he is clock winder, dog shaver, cat chaser, errand runner, tooth puller, and gastronomic cook; his family of ten children includes four boys itching to go into the military. The story turns on a single disciplinary lapse—Poulet's getting drunk and into a potentially fatal fight with a colleague—his subsequent punishment by the police sergeant and captain, and a defense mounted by a committee of notables. This feudal judicial setup, however, excludes the actual members of the community for which Poulet had done so many favors.

Thus far, the story (of 1880) belongs to a category of comic art that was becoming increasingly common in that decade: episodes from military life turning on questions of discipline (see

Chapter 8). Yet in *Policeman Poulet* a pivot exists that, although it may appear external to the story as outlined, is, I think, of great significance. The occasion of the two policemen's drunken fight was the annual trip to the asylum of a harmless and strictly seasonal lunatic, whom Poulet and his colleague escort. A full year later, long after the consequences of the gendarmes' fight have been successfully resolved, the lunatic is due to be institutionalized again, and now the otherwise pacific—not to say perfect—policeman Poulet suddenly gets into a fury; he blames the miserable peasant for his troubles of the previous year and then has the man's family beat him up within an inch of his life (Fig. 7.10). Although acting in an apparent spirit of callous, long-premeditated revenge upon an innocent and helpless victim, the cop has in fact worked a cure that, the miraculous component aside, corresponds to an old-fashioned attitude once shared by populace and physicians alike: that is, that violence, not humane institutionalization, was the proper remedy for insanity. We only discover the real symptoms of this man's lunacy at the very end. Once a year the peasant, otherwise a model of passive laboriousness, went on strike, feigning craziness to get a holiday. The social implications of this behavior in terms of ruling-class resistance to worker demands for shorter work hours, holidays, right to strike, and so forth are far-reaching, though probably far from Petit's conscious intention. (It is worth noting in passing that the 1880s was a period of severe industrial work stoppages, especially in the mines of northern France.)

Petit shows the peasantry as wholly unorganized, both in the traditional sense of clan or village solidarity, which is conspicuously absent in the "Histoires campagnardes" and was surely declining in reality, and in the modern political (party) sense; yet both kinds of solidarity, especially the political, may have existed (or survived) more widely than the otherwise comprehensive documentation in Weber suggests. Petit's satirical purpose is to emphasize peasant divisiveness and malice toward one another, for instance when the locals of Canisy-les-Gâteux ("Canisy-the Dotards") show *joie canaille* (vulgar joy) over the misfortune of a "neighbor and comrade" who is taken off to prison by the police for not paying his taxes.[23] The authorities certainly encouraged such divisiveness and discouraged collective expressions of sympathy for those in trouble with the law.

Under Napoleon III the much expanded regular police force took over the role of the National Guard and rural militia (*milice rurale*). The former, primarily an urban phenomenon, was disbanded in 1848 as an unreliable means of defending the new bourgeois order. There were, however, remnants of a National Guard–cum–rural militia, not mentioned by Weber and therefore presumably not prominent in rural areas, surviving from the emergency mobilization of the Franco-Prussian War, and Petit takes particular pleasure in ridiculing this pathetic shadow of the village's historic capacity to police itself.[24] The *milice rurale* also functioned as the fire brigade; indeed, this may have been the primary rationale for their continued existence in villages and small towns not having access to a properly equipped team of fire fighters. In Petit's *La Chique militaire* (1877, nos. 1067ff.), the *milice rurale* is a relic of a bygone age, as symbolized by the shako, a First Empire–period military hat, left to Nicaise Putois by his grand-uncle, by virtue of which he has become chief of his village's five-man militia unit. The story turns on the stupidity and vanity of Putois, who at an inspection is ironically congratulated by the captain of the gendarmerie on his hat as the epitome of "chic militaire." He takes the term to mean a decoration (perhaps French is not the mother tongue, or patois, of Putois?) which he and his men feel they have richly deserved and which, when it fails to arrive in the mail, they sally forth to fetch in town. While his subordinates celebrate in a tavern, Putois calls at the house of a police captain, where the maid, expecting a messenger from the dentist, mistakenly gives him a set of dentures. Putois parades around with the false teeth—a class of object the peasant had presumably never before set eyes upon—pinned to his breast, until he is arrested for theft. Explanations availing nothing, as usual, his "seditious joke" earns him four days in jail. Worse punishment awaits him on his return, however, for the notoriously stingy Putois is landed with a huge restaurant bill recklessly—and maliciously—run up by his troop, obliging him to sell his horse and cart and borrow from a notary. This, then, is the fate of the "rich" peasant (as Putois is described, being the owner of a few hundred francs' worth of movable property) foolish enough to aspire to essentially bourgeois honors: punished by the law, betrayed by his fellows, and finally, the ultimate humiliation, beaten up by his wife, who thereby ruins his shako. His reputation and symbol of office destroyed, Putois loses his position as militia captain—which may be just as well.

It is not only peasants who fall foul of the police, though they do remain the primary victims. Petit also adopts the familiar stereotype of the petty-bourgeois youth with more ambition than means who rashly courts an heiress. In the provincial world of Petit, it is Athanase Robiquet, a respectable young man from town, who courts the daughter of a wealthy village notary called Plantureux ("Copious"). In order to make an impressive showing despite his tiny stature and lack of equestrian skill, Robiquet hires an exceptionally large horse. The animal, a former police horse, proceeds to run completely out of control (very like the train in *M. Bêton*), causing damage all over the village. Peasants demand compensation, and the ever-suspicious police, recognizing the horse, accuse Robiquet of having stolen it. He is thrown into jail with the admonition, "A miserable runt not four feet five inches tall daring to ride the horse of an officer of the elite force of law and order? What are we coming to?" This impudence is his offense, the damage to peasant property forgotten. Robiquet, bound like a common criminal, is led back to town, running the gauntlet of the delighted, hostile peasants, who accuse him of being a Prussian spy and cravenly request that he be guillotined forthwith, which would be "a great consolation to honest folk." Monsieur Plantureux passes by in his cabriolet, sniffing politics behind the affair (Fig. 7.11). Needless to say, the proposed marriage is broken off. When explanations are belatedly heard and Robiquet released, the police brigadier, still unapologetic, repeats his disdain for the small *petty*-bourgeois man who dares to ride the big police horse, symbol of the *grand*-bourgeois order.

The class resentment expressed by the peasantry for the bourgeois interloper emerges even more emphatically in a children's cautionary tale that Petit wrote and illustrated around this time, called *Paul le désobéissant* (1878). The disobedient child Paul makes a solo ascent in a balloon and is carried into a neighboring canton. The balloon symbolizes (bourgeois) ambition, fantasy, adventure, to which (peasant) reality is hostile. In an attempt to stop the balloon, he throws out the anchor, which drags all over a village, causing all sorts of damage. The peasants arrive with threatening implements, seize Paul, demand compensatory money, which Paul does not have, and deliberate whether to shoot or hang him "to teach these whippersnappers from town to leave the peasants alone." More moderate counsel advises that, in view of his youth, he be handed over to the courts so that *they* may pass a death sentence on him. The rest of the story concerns the various humiliations he, a boy from a respectable family, suffers at the hands of the police and from angry, mocking, and armed peasants; it ends on a public spanking administered by Paul's father. Petit's message, apart from the overt inculcation of filial obedience, is that peasants are mean, vindictive, and murderous, and to fall foul of them is the worst of fates.

In the village microcosm of Petit's tales, the church is much less conspicuous than the police, and the role it does play is that of a waning power. Indeed, its absence is perhaps more remarkable than its presence; where present, it is usually defeated. And yet Brittany was known for its old-fashioned clericalism. Petit, however, depicts no religious ceremonies as such, and he entirely ignores the myth of the pious peasant in general, or the pious Breton in particular, showing no pardons, pilgrimages, or any of

23. *Bonnes Gens de province* (album of 1875, no. 10).

24. Cf. Maupassant's short story "Un Coup d'état," where the author expresses great contempt for the small-town militia (in *Oeuvres complètes,* edited by Louis Conard [Paris, 1909], 4:15).



FIG. 7.11. *The Misadventures of Athanase Robiquet* (1876). Athanase is brought back like a criminal, insulted by the locals, / rejected by his prospective father-in-law, / and released, with a scolding.

the religious customs beloved of the Salon painters.[25] Petit seems to agree with Marx that the smallholder who is "debtridden, at odds with society and with authority, driven beyond his own narrow limits, is naturally irreligious."[26]

Peasant piety comes only in the form of superstition, and it is confined to women, who offer novenas to exorcise the diabolical ghost—in one story, actually a peasant in disguise (no. 827). The devotion is really only to malicious gossip, though, the ferreting out and bruiting about of deviant behavior. The one time Petit depicts a church (in *The Pig Conciliator*) is on an occasion not religious but social, a means for erstwhile fiancés to publicly declare their estrangement (Fig. 7.12). In this scene the attitude of the villagers toward the sacred fabric is contemptuous, to say the least. Those not occupied in observing the symptoms of the quarrel are fleeing in their haste to be off to the tavern; others are engaged in urinating or defecating against the church wall—the only time Petit depicts humans performing such actions, which may tell us much about his feelings about the church and religion.

Petit sees rustic religious observance as highly degenerate. The sacred rites are transposed, in the only form the populace can still enjoy them, from church to tavern. To the chagrin of Brother Fruitful, a repressive, puritanical type, the village cantor, Poulard, shows off his voice to the local topers with tidbits of the mass, a performance impressive for its sheer volume alone: he first intones a *Calicem Salutaris* fit to make the windows rattle, then vociferates a *Veni Creator* that can be heard in the four corners of the *bourg,* ripostes with a *Vexilla Regis* loud enough to make the tiles jump off the roofs of the houses, and finally roars a *Te Deum* that registers in three neighboring communes—all accompanied by a chorus of drunks and vomiting. Police, mayor, sacristan, and others all condone, indeed contribute to, the scandal; and if a final, formalistic, victory appears to be with the church—the cantor has to make honorable amends before a sourly triumphant priest (see Fig. 7.9)—such victory as it is comes only after repeated defeats. Tacked on thus to round off a story published in 1873, when the conservative clerical interest was still entrenched in the government, the conclusion might well have been turned differently at the end of the decade, when the clericals' political decline was more evident.

25. In his novel *La Conversion de Monsieur Gervais* (Paris, 1881), Petit ridicules the penitentiary procession, the pardon, village piety, and the prudery of village life under clerical influence. In the "Bonnes Gens de province" drawing "Le Pardon de Saint-Gildas-des-Bois" (*Journal Amusant,* no. 542 [May 19, 1866]), piety is totally absent, the whole affair being reduced to Bruegelesque social festivities and commercial activities, which culminate in the essential climax to any feast day: a drunken riot.
26. Marx 1983, 317.



FIG. 7.12. *The Pig Conciliator* (1877).
The quarrel is noted by the whole parish.

Peasant and Education

The arena of struggle for village control, then, was not in the church, where attendance was declining (many parishes lacked a curé altogether),[27] but in the schools. Petit and his bourgeois, probably largely republican, urban audience, saw their interests served by the rapid expansion of free, compulsory lay education, in opposition to the rearguard action of the religious orders, who took the offensive throughout the periods of the Second Empire and conservative Republic. But even clerical Brittany experienced a decline in sacerdotal recruitment after 1876,[28] and a recession in the educational influence of the seminaries. Only one cleric is represented by Petit, the abbé Follavoine ("Oatgrass"), tutor to the sons of Madame Motte, and he makes a sorry showing. Pedantic, repressive, arrogant, with ecclesiastical connections, he is roundly defeated (*L'Aimable Précepteur* [The Amiable Tutor], 1876, nos. 1147ff.).

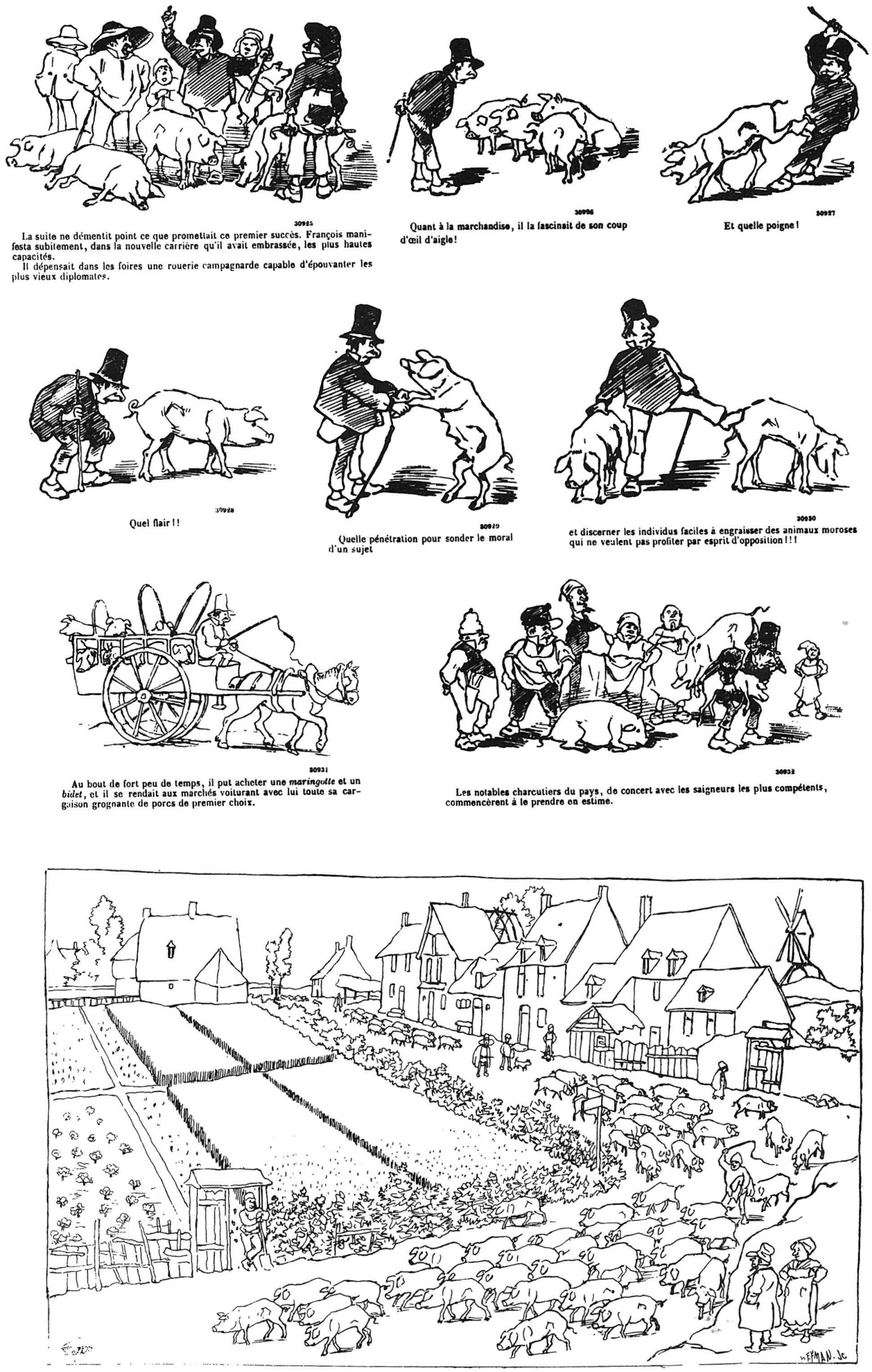
The son of a pious parent, or one too weak to do his share of work on the farm, or from a large family not requiring his manpower would normally be unloaded at the seminary. But success in a vocation now politically on the defensive depended on a special dedication, a special aptitude; this François Renaud, in *The Legend of the Pig Dealer,* did not possess. In the seminary, François's head is filled only with the grunting of the pigs from which he, the family swineherd, has been so cruelly separated. His behavior as a seminarist is reminiscent of a rapidly vanishing, and no doubt much regretted, breed of priest—one more concerned with improving the villagers' livestock than the state of their souls. When he finally throws his cassock to the nettles, lo! out of the priest manqué arises an agricultural capitalist: starting with a tiny piglet, he acquires bigger and bigger and more and more pigs, establishing command over the market by superior cunning, and over the pigs by a mixture of psychology, personal fascination, and corporal punishment (Fig. 7.13). Now a big pig farmer, a monopolist who has really cornered the market, *Monsieur* François Renaud has the esteem of his parents and the clergy from whom he defected. Getting into military supplies, he becomes rich and eventually is made a deputy. Petit here ironizes one of the great sustaining mythologies ("legends") of the bourgeoisie, that of little-guy-makes-good; at the same time he depicts the very process by which capitalism, giving priority to the cure of pigs over the cure of souls, turns a rural economy based on subsistence into an appanage of the metropolis, by means of specialization, monopolization, and the development of cash crops and national markets.

As inexorably the priesthood lost its prestige, the village curé found himself pressured on all sides, his authority contested, his position undermined, his knowledge and status superseded by those of the village schoolmaster. The struggle for secular education was going on all over France, but it was particularly intense in clerical Brittany. When Père Miche consults the schoolmaster for information about the rhinoceros, this "erudite man" pulls from his library—which must have appeared vast to the peasant eye and may indeed have been larger than that of the curé—the

27. In Zola's *La Terre,* for instance, the parishioners of Rognes refuse to repair the church and pay for a curé, preferring to borrow his services, when absolutely indispensable, from the neighboring village.

28. Delumeau 1969, 437.

FIG. 7.13. *The Legend of the Pig Dealer* (1872).
"François Renaud displays great knowledge and shocking peasant cunning in the pig market. / His eagle's eye fascinates the merchandise! / And what grasp of the matter! / And what a nose! / What moral penetration! / And ability to distinguish easily fattened individuals from the ornery ones!!! / Very soon he is able to buy a horse and cart to carry his grunting cargo of choice pigs to market. / The best butchers and slaughterers around develop a high regard for him. / His business booms. Seeing the highways filled with huge herds of pigs, people know that all this belongs to *Monsieur* François Renaud."



LES ANES DE SAINT-PARDOUX (suite), — par **Léonce PETIT.**



38523

Parfois, dans les beaux soirs, il se promenait dans la campagne à califourchon sur le sacristain, vieil ami qui consentait à le laisser monter sur son dos. Il arrivait ainsi sur la lande écartée où se dressait le *menhir*. Il évoquait le roi des *Korigans*, le suppliant de faire cesser le sortilége et de reprendre son don fatal. Le gnome se laissait voir quelquefois au sommet de la « pierre levée », mais il ne lui répondait que par des gestes ironiques, et l'instituteur levait des bras désespérés vers le ciel.



38498

D'autant plus que la nécessité le forçait par moments à se livrer à d'autres travaux auxquels il était peu familier, comme de porter du blé au moulin, le moudre,



38499

laver son linge,



38500

pétrir le pain, enfourner, etc., etc.



38501

Maintes fois il se mit à son bureau et prit la plume pour écrire à ses supérieurs et les informer de l'état des choses dans la commune.



38502

Mais ce qu'il avait à annoncer était si étrange, et les aveux qu'il avait à faire l'effrayaient tellement...



38503

qu'à chaque fois la plume lui tombait des mains avant qu'il eût rien écrit.

FIG. 7.14. *The Asses of Saint Pardoux* (1879).
Sometimes he [the teacher] rode into the countryside astride the sacristan, an old and obliging friend. He pleaded with the king of the korrigans to break the spell. The gnome appeared for a few moments but made only ironic gestures, leaving the teacher in despair. / Necessity obliged him to perform unfamiliar tasks like carrying the corn to the mill, / washing his linen, / kneading and baking the bread, etc., etc. / Many a time he prepared to write to his superiors about what had happened. / But it was all so strange, and frightening, / that each time, the pen fell from his hand before he had written anything.

Buffon of Youth, the latest (!) zoological authority. Père Miche can read; perhaps he learned to do so long ago at a religious school. That school, however, failed to develop his power of reason, fostering instead his superstitious instincts, which lead him to commit the outrageous follies against the police noted above. His son will go to a lay school and do better. Or will he?

By the year 1879, when the *Journal Amusant* published Petit's *Asses of Saint Pardoux,* the system of free, compulsory lay education was already established, but the peasants were still recalcitrant. "Bah," cry the farmers, "I never learned to read and write, and that never prevented me from feathering my nest." This attitude is transmitted to the children. Despairing over his "Boeotian youth," the schoolmaster dreams up a punishment: to change the children into the asses they seem to want mentally and spiritually to resemble. He is invested with shamanic powers—in itself a testimony to his new prestige in the village—by an authority higher than the church, the traditional repository (or usurper) of such powers. This anterior, superior authority resides (in Brittany, where the story is firmly located) in the supernatural korrigans, hairy, black, hunchbacked gnomes who inhabit the menhirs, savage monuments they created in ancient Celtic times. But the schoolmaster's plan does not work out: once changed into little asses for real, the children don't want to be changed back, and, under the terms of the shamanic powers granted by the king of the korrigans, it is only of their own free will that the little asses can regain human form. Here, of course, is the rationalist element in the fairy tale. When the parents, infuriated at their children's transformation, threaten the schoolmaster, he has no recourse but to turn them into asses also—which delights them as much as it did their offspring.

Here we stand at the edge of an ancient fantasy, nurtured from the moment man gained consciousness of the pain of making a living on this earth and of the possibility of easing that pain. The villagers, young and old, from mayor and curé down, love being asses simply because, freed of human oppression, they must no longer work. The idea that schooling or scientific preparation can represent an investment toward the elimination of the more arduous kinds of physical labor was not yet rooted in the popular rural mind. The whole asinine village dedicates itself to enjoying the carefree life. The boys are especially defiant in its defense now that they are no longer threatened with conscription, and the young she-asses are able to vent their natural skittishness with some rather daring anatomical display.

The schoolmaster, meanwhile, after consoling himself briefly with luxuries abandoned by the privileged class, and after appealing, in vain, for the korrigan to lift the spell, finds himself condemned to engage in certain arduous labors once performed for him by the villagers (Fig. 7.14). His trained intelligence does not, however, fail him in his desperation: he puts up posters advertising the impending purchase by the government of all available ass skins in order to make military drums. He first takes the mayor to one side, offering to share with him the proceeds of the sale of all the other villagers' skins if only he will consent to resume his human form. The schoolmaster makes the same proposition to every other villager in turn, singly. All accept, and the whole village is humanized again; but each individual, expecting to be the only beneficiary, together with the schoolmaster, of the sale of his fellows' skins, immediately turns against the perpetrator of the trick, and the schoolmaster, defeated by ignorance and selfishness, must flee for his life. Thus once again, Petit demonstrates the lack of solidarity, of fellow-feeling among peasants.

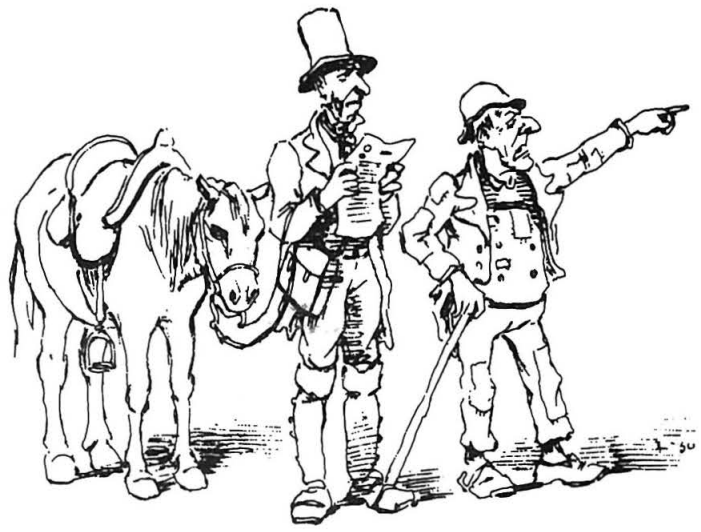
Resistance to education came not only from the peasantry in the *école communale* but also from the sons of the bourgeoisie in the small-town *collège*. The schoolmaster's rhetorical threat to turn the peasant children into real asses is paralleled, in *Une Vocation manquée* (A Missed Vocation, 1877, nos. 1102ff.), by the wealthy bourgeois Paturel's no less rhetorically intended threat to turn his son into a cobbler if his grades don't improve. As with the transformation of peasants into asses, that of the bourgeois child into a cobbler's apprentice proves counterproductive: the child loves the trade, to the despair—and social humiliation—of the father. He ostracizes his own son from the family, but to no avail. And the example of the one child leads to the defection of all the other pupils of the *collège,* all of whom prefer cobbling to Latin. Politely but firmly, they announce to the school principal their decision to abandon the academic life. A large-scale social regression is averted only when the principal threatens Paturel with a lawsuit if he doesn't remove his son from the cobbler's employ. Finally the son yields, finishes his studies, and becomes a notary.

Peasant Avarice, Peasant and the Law

As such stories show, while the peasantry resisted the modernization that would supposedly allow access to the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie was itself threatened with a relapse within the new generation into primitive thinking and behavior. Weber has amply described the difficulties that stood in the way of the modernizers who had to demonstrate, concretely, to the peasants that schooling and technology presented a unique opportunity for material improvement. The peasants as a group were hampered by what the urban elite (and Petit among them) saw as their sordid, soil-rooted avarice, which prevented them from sacrificing part of their children's labor, and perhaps a little property or cash, to send the young to school (we know that absenteeism was high at the new education system's early stages). But those urban critics with any social awareness at all knew that avarice was not a vice exclusive to the lower classes. Far from it. Nineteenth-century caricature and novels, quite apart from the homilies of the social critics, moralists, and philosophers, are rich testimony to the bourgeoisie's own perception of avarice as the very motor as well as scourge of capitalist society. Peasant avarice, however, was essentially different from bourgeois avarice: the former was petty, sordid, ridiculous, the latter imaginative, grandiloquent, sadistic, and vindictive—an instrument of social tyranny as well as a moral defect, in a way individual peasant avarice could never be.

This is the lesson of *L'Habit vert* (The Green Suit, 1873, nos. 899ff.). Here a *collégien* is subjected to fearful punishment by his father, a notary (of course), for one small act of carelessness: tearing the cloth of a public billiard table. He is forced to pay dearly for the cloth, by wearing a suit made from it; when he outgrows it, another is made, and when that one is outgrown, yet another is made from the inexhaustible bright green cloth. Thus for four years, by which time the poor boy, all the while the mockery of academic peers and (perhaps worse) street urchins, has developed a green complexion and taken to absinthe—his own form of absintheeism. The notary and his family repudiate the son, who is exiled to the colonies like a bankrupt or a common criminal.

The bourgeoisie presented to the peasantry a model of avarice that only the lucky few could hope to emulate. Few peasants could raise the sixty francs the notary pays for the billiard-table cloth. Their closer models came from, or were seen to come from, within their own class. One such model was Job Laderouille in *The Usurer,* whose very name connotes patient rapacity; although known to be as rich as Croesus, he dresses in rags, avoiding the company of the richer folk in order to live nearer to the small farmers he ruthlessly exploits. Job is the village usurer, trapping the indebted peasant by "generously" lending him money for a whole week without interest, then taking that interest at an exor-



34072
Un jour le vieux Job viendra, accompagné de Me Pourchasson, te chasser de chez toi,



34073
et t'envoyer chercher ton pain le long des grandes routes.



34074
Job Laderouille est toujours prêt... mon Dieu, oui... toujours prêt... à rendre service aux amis.



34075
Malgré les désagréments qu'il a eus à ce sujet... et il en a eu! Dieu le sait!



34076
Sa manie d'obliger prend toujours le dessus... mais elle le ruinera... oh oui!... elle le ruinera!

FIG. 7.15. *The Usurer* (1875).
The patience of usurer Job, who has you mercilessly evicted but is always ready to oblige.

bitant rate: 6 to 7 percent per week, or 350 percent per annum, over subsequent weeks, months, and even years. The peasant, caught in a spiral of interest payments, can never pay back the principal but continues hopelessly to deliver his payment in kind (in a society where cash is still scarce): animals and produce, which Job's wife then sells. All the while the usurer pretends that he is lending money out of the generosity of his heart—and indeed, at the very risk of his life, because against the will of his ferociously stingy wife, the same who is marketing the interest payments. Needless to say, the usurer gets full cooperation from the local bailiff, who summons and evicts those who fail to pay up.[29]

Petit knows that he has touched a raw nerve in the peasant predicament and for once apostrophizes the victim directly, with this conclusion (Fig. 7.15):

> Go, poor Potin, you're caught up in the wheels—all you possess will vanish, and unless you are lucky enough to escape through an inheritance, one day old Job will come, in the company of M. Pourchasson ["Mr. Chasem," the bailiff], to evict you from your home, and send you begging for bread along the highways. Job Laderouille is always ready . . . heavens yes . . . always ready . . . to render his friends a service. Despite the trouble he has had on these matters . . . and has he ever had trouble! God knows! His compulsion to oblige always gets the upper hand . . . and it will be the ruin of him . . . oh yes! . . . It will be the ruin of him!

Job's bourgeois model is easy to identify: he is the notary himself, who would add to his already very profitable services those of moneylender and usurer (as we have already seen in *La Chique militaire*). It was of course usury, encouraged by the lack of low-interest credit or a modern banking system, that turned so many small propertied farmers into landless wage laborers, prevented them from improving their land, and allowed the parvenu bourgeoisie to buy it up cheap. As Karl Marx noted, "The urban money-lender replaced the feudal lord, the mortgage replaced the feudal obligations attaching to the land, and bourgeois capital replaced aristocratic ownership of land."[30]

The notorious avarice of the peasant, then, derived in fact largely from an existence that in many parts of France, certainly in Brittany, had only recently moved from near or chronic starvation to mere poverty and subsistence living, and was just now beginning to evolve from poverty to a modicum of ease. Petit's typical peasant has built up his smallholding out of bits and pieces wrested from feudal landlords over the generations;[31] he is not poor by Weber's definition, but he nevertheless owns only one good *blouse* (smock),[32] which he keeps for best wear (not surpris-

29. "Breton fishermen called a certain bird *sergent* after the bailiff—sergent de justice—because it stole sardines from other smaller birds" (Weber 1976, 50).
30. Marx 1983, 315.
31. Zola describes the process in *La Terre* (1954, 31): "These Fouans [a family] had been born and bred in the same place for centuries like persistent, tenacious plants. . . . Former serfs . . . freed, . . . they became landowners, with perhaps an acre or two of land bought from their ruined lord and paid for ten times over with their blood and sweat. The long struggle had begun, and had gone on four hundred years with a desperate passion that was passed from father to son to hold and enlarge the property."
32. *Les Vingt-Cinq Blouses de J. Manivelle, Journal Amusant,* nos. 915ff. (1874). When he "magically" acquires a second *blouse* (or thinks he does), it is for his son; the third would be for his uncle, and the fourth for his best friend, the *garde-champêtre,* none of whom, by implication, owns a decent *blouse* at all.



FIG. 7.16. *The Victory of Madame Boucarante* (1876).
"Chabanou watched for his prey outside the Boucarante house. / At the usual hour, the ass appeared and adopted the proper posture for dropping his daily product. / Chabanou stood at the ready with his big shovel, when Madame Boucarante, in an inspired moment, deftly seized her husband's hat and intercepted the stuff at the orifice."

ingly, for it may have cost him all of four francs, the wages of two days' labor).

Just as billiards and shining new suits are symbols of bourgeois affluence—and simultaneously of bourgeois stinginess—so dung is the symbol of the peasant's earthbound existence, in which no waste can be permitted. The salvaging and application of animal manure were topics of lively discussion at this time, as agricultural methods became gradually modernized and greater use was made of fertilizer, both natural and artificial.[33] In a relatively prosperous province, the Beauce of Zola's *La Terre,* a woman who saves and spreads her own defecations is ridiculed and nicknamed Madame Caca, "Mrs. Shit."[34] Although she grows the best lettuce in the region, no one will buy it. In the world of Petit, this practice would have appeared less strange; and even though the artist does not tell us explicitly what value was attached to human droppings, we know from *The Victory of Madame Boucarante*[35] how richly animal droppings in general were prized. It appears—and we cannot doubt that this custom was widespread—that the communal or municipal streetsweeper actually acquired exclusive rights to sell the dung he picked up; and to judge by the size of the fee he paid (eight hundred francs a year—a figure that Petit had no reason to exaggerate), this dung must have been very valuable indeed.[36] The sweeper Chabonou's rights are contested by the notoriously miserly Madame Boucarante, who considered it her duty to offer a model of thrift to her tenants, despite the fact that, as Petit remarks, her tenants hardly needed lessons on that score. Whenever Madame Boucarante sets out to visit those tenants, on assback (no horse or cart for her), she picks up the droppings the ass, punctually and unfailingly, emits the moment he arrives in the street from his stable, which he refuses to sully in any way. The sweeper Chabonou (described, incidentally, as a "newcomer" from the proverbially grasping province of Auvergne) objects to this expropriation of his rights. The matter is adjudicated, and the judge rules, as the law requires, in favor of the sweeper. Next day, as Chabonou stands by the ass,

33. Brékilien 1966, 45 (with elaborate apologies to "delicate" readers for dealing with so indelicate a subject). The Bretons were notoriously inefficient in this area.
34. Zola 1954, 126. At the time, though, agronomists were actively recommending the use of human manure (Robert 1952, 112).
35. The name "Boucarante" may be composed of *bouse* (dung) and *carence* (scarcity).
36. In Savoy at about this time manure cost seven francs for thirty-six cubic feet (Weber 1976, 204n).

LA CHARRETTE A JOSON TOUZÉ, ou L'INCONVÉNIENT QU'IL PEUT Y AVOIR A GAGNER SON PROCÈS, — par Léonce Petit (suite et fin).



33099
Ils s'arrêtent pour boire une potée au cabaret de la Croix du Fresne.



33100
Touzé fait donner un picotin d'avoine à l'âne de Heurteloup, aubaine qui n'était pas échue depuis longtemps à la pauvre bête.



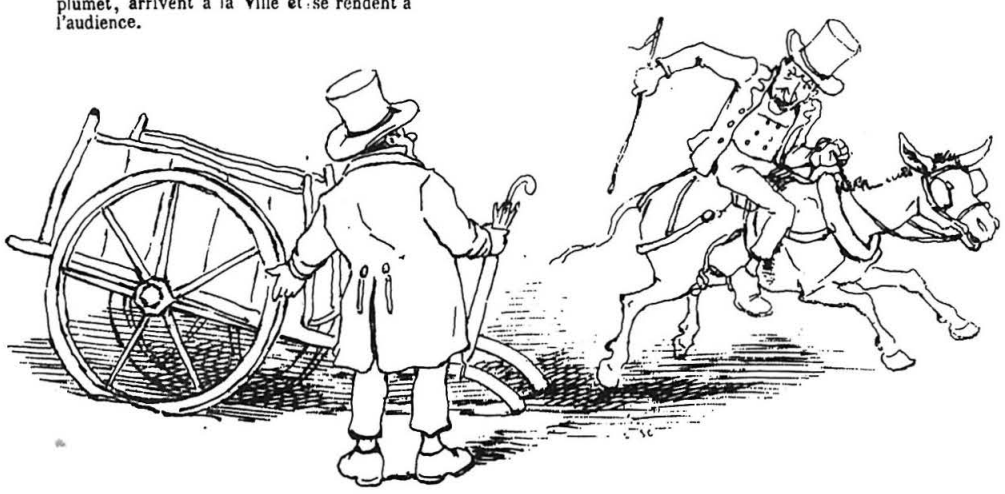
33101
Enfin, après force stations dans les auberges, les plaideurs, pourvus chacun d'un plumet, arrivent à la ville et se rendent à l'audience.



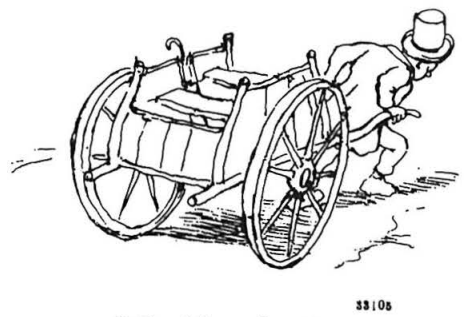
33102
On plaide. — Heurteloup, suivant son antique habitude, perd son procès.



33103



33104
Il faut maintenant retourner au village. Touzé veut atteler de nouveau l'âne de Heurteloup à sa voiture : « *Nenni*, dit » le grincheux Heurteloup, *vons nous-en chacun de not' côté. Je monte sur ma bête; toi, tire ta charrette; le premier qui » rencontre l'autre payera un pot à la Croix du Fresne.* »



33105
Et Touzé tira sa charrette.

FIN DE LA CHARRETTE A JOSON TOUZÉ.

FIG. 7.17. *Joson Touzé's Cart; or, The Disadvantage of Winning One's Lawsuit* (1874).
They stop for a drink. / Touzé gives Heurteloup's ass a feed of oats, a rare luxury for the poor beast. / After a round of the inns, the plaintiffs arrive at the court rather tipsy. / Heurteloup, as usual, loses the suit. / Time to return to the village. Touzé wants to harness Heurteloup's ass to his cart again. "No way," says the crabby Heurteloup. "Each man for hisself now. I ride; you pull yer cart; first to meet t'other pays a pot at the Croix du Fresne." / And Touzé pulled his cart.

shovel poised, Madame Boucarante quickly intercepts the droppings, before they hit the ground, with the hat she snatches from her husband's head (Fig. 7.16). The ass thenceforth trots about with a basket attached to his rump: victory of rich bourgeois over poor peasant, of cunning over the spirit of the law.

The world of Petit, like that of Balzac, is a litigious one peopled with legal functionaries of various kinds: bailiffs, notaries, tax collectors, lawyers, judges, and clerks, all of whom waxed fat on the peasant's fanaticism over petty property issues. The relatively wealthy province of Normandy was particularly notorious for its litigiousness, as the Auvergne was for its crude cunning. Petit's employment when a young man as a tax registrar in the Auvergne brought him face to face with the money and property troubles of the peasantry.

"From Justice, good Lord, deliver us" went the peasant's prayer;[37] but he nevertheless seemed to deliver himself up to it willingly enough. As litigation divided and weakened the peasantry, control by the bourgeoisie was facilitated. Indeed, the bourgeois culture depicts peasant defense of property rights as intensely individualistic and self-destructive. In Gottfried Keller's *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe* (Romeo and Juliet in the Village), a quarrel over an insignificant piece of land brings on a lawsuit that ruins both participants, morally as well as economically, and causes their children, who fall passionately in love with each other, to commit suicide. Peasants are not shown acting collectively, in defense of communal economic interests, although such interests had in the past lain at the root of much intercommunal rivalry, hostility, and actual fighting. Divided against each other, they are reduced to island-individuals, defending shrunken property rights against the waves of the new economic order. Those with little fight those with even less: "Peasant proprietors, with no vision beyond their commune, were more concerned to guard their own petty privileges against the rural proletariat than to envisage anything better for themselves."[38]

Joson Touzé's Cart; or, The Disadvantage of Winning One's Lawsuit is a parable of the folly of petty litigation, pitting Joson Touzé, who succeeds in everything—including his lawsuits—against his neighbor and rival Thomas Heurteloup, whose entire property has been devoured in legal fees. The quarrel is over a matter of prototypical triviality: the right of way through a cabbage patch. The day of the hearing, since Heurteloup has an ass

37. Quoted in Weber 1976, 50.
38. Cobban 1957, 219. For a jaundiced contemporary view, cf. Riehl 1854, 35ff.



FIG. 7.18. *Sabres Drawn!... At Twenty-five Paces* (1878). "Sometimes the old law clerk made a limping run at him; the other decamped at full speed. / When the fellow turned back panting, the peasant pursued him, / which caused the old man to return to the charge. / This went on all afternoon. Sometimes they just sat there, looking at each other."

but no cart and Touzé has a cart but his horse is sick, the two enemies find themselves cooperating, enjoying the drive together to town, conversing pleasantly, and stopping off for drinks. They arrive in court a little tipsy, arm in arm like the best of friends. Heurteloup loses the suit, as usual, and rides off on his ass, alone, leaving Touzé to pull his own cart (Fig. 7.17).

Equality before the law was the great shibboleth of the new bourgeois democracy. The law court, an urban mechanism miniaturized for rural purposes, was the fundamental bureaucratic formula for dealing with social disputes traditionally settled in a more informal fashion, whether amicably or by violence. The figure of the popular Judge Trougadec,[39] who sits the disputants down in his home and, over a pot of cider, discusses the matter in a paternal tête-à-tête, is now obsolescent. The increasing availability of notaries, lawyers, and law courts in small towns and rural areas discouraged the casual, but surely much speedier and cheaper, manner of settling differences. Yet the law—if not actually written, then at least applied in the bourgeoisie's own interests—did not serve the peasant, who, feeling cheated by the system, attacks it in the person of one of its lesser representatives. Boussuge, described by Petit in *Sabres Drawn! . . . At Twenty-five Paces* as a "rich" but brutal and rancorous peasant, blames an elderly, lame *greffier du juge de paix* (a clerk of the court experienced in legal matters) for giving him professional advice that allegedly ruined him. The story instances the three primary alternatives in the settling of disputes, each with its own historical and class associations: crude physical violence is no longer socially acceptable even in the countryside (Boussuge is dissuaded from beating up the old *greffier*);[40] the duel, although more civilized, is an anachronism, technically illegal, and an absurdity anyway among the lower classes (as Petit's story in fact demonstrates); and the law, the only modern solution, is a dead end that only makes peasants more quarrelsome. The ludicrous compromise on the rules of the duel, "sabers at twenty-five paces," between a coward and a lame old man, is guaranteed to produce neither physical harm nor result (Fig. 7.18). But the peasant gets his dues after all, in the old-fashioned style of a pummeling, when his witnesses, having egged Boussuge on all along and expecting payment for their afternoon's "work," extract their own "justice."

39. *L'Election de Trougadec, Journal Amusant,* nos. 1287ff. (1881), referred to above; and cf. *L'Audience de M. le Juge de Paix,* "Bonnes Gens de province," *Journal Amusant,* no. 642 (1868).

40. Cf. Baudrillart (1885, 471), commenting on the gentler habits of Normans and Bretons compared with the blood battles between villages fifty years earlier. In a strip by Loÿs ("Un Procès," *Monde Comique,* no. 311 [1884]), two neighbors who quarrel over seven sous "are very careful not to come to blows." But the outcome is far worse: the dog set by the one to frighten the other inflicts a tiny injury on his leg, which he much enlarges with a knife in order to get compensation in court. He receives two hundred francs, and remains lame for life.

COMME QUOI JULIEN DES POIS-CHICHES RATA SON MARIAGE, *CHRONIQUE RURALE,*
par Léonce Petit (suite).



31988
Tante Véronique a le pressentiment que Julien va dire des bêtises.



31989
On arrive devant l'étable aux cochons.
C'est lui qui a construit l'étable; — pas étonnant, puisqu'il a bien fait la maison.



31990
On admire les bêtes. Une portée des jeunes gorrets est surtout appréciée. On est déjà en train de calculer ce qu'ils pourront rapporter un jour, lorsque voilà notre imbécile qui recommence sa ritournelle : « C'est moi..., etc. »
Ah!!... épatement... demande d'explications... explications embrouillées... rupture.



31991
La famille Pousseux se retire absolument formalisée,



31992
et Julien des Pois-Chiches resta Gros-Jean comme devant.

FIG. 7.19. *How Julien Chickpeas Bungled His Marriage Prospects* (1873). Aunt Véronique fears the worst. / At the pigsty. Julien built it. / The beasts are admired, especially a new litter. Our imbecile begins his refrain again: "It's me who..., etc." Ah!!... Amazement... confused explanations... rupture. / The Pousseux family withdraws absolutely furious, / and Julien Chickpeas stays Big John as before.

Many of Petit's stories lie midway between the folk tale and the tall story. They usually redound to peasant stupidity and crude gullibility and often involve animals. *L'Oeuf d'ânesse* (The Egg of the She-Ass, 1874, nos. 906ff.), in which a petty-bourgeois barber tricks a yokel into exchanging all his cash for a "magic" egg from a unique race of oviparous Tarascon she-asses, must have roots in the trickster folk tradition.

Animals are omnipresent in the "Histoires campagnardes." A favorite horse is like (or more than) a member of the family; as spectators, farmyard birds are as interested as the villagers. Peasants actually lived (as they still do) in close physical proximity to their larger beasts, which were often quartered in the farmhouse itself and valued for their warmth in wintertime. The symbiosis of man and animal, so richly evoked in Zola (and Busch), also occurs in Petit. We even find it once in its most unspeakable form, which even Zola eschewed: Julien des Pois-Chiches ("Julien Chick-peas"), courting a superior person and advised to claim credit for having done everything around the farm (see Fig. 7.2.), goes so far as to claim he "made" an admirable new litter of piglets. It is left deliberately unclear whether the prospective in-laws, who immediately break off the marriage, are shocked at the stupidity of such a claim or at its possible veracity (Fig. 7.19).

Pigs became a primary economic factor in the Côtes du Nord from mid century, when the planting of potatoes increased. The porcine-featured François Renaud's profound, symbiotic sympathy for pigs enables him to master and trade in them. It is a pig that becomes the catalyst of a marriage between farmers whose courtship had been vitiated by professional rivalry; his pig rushing tempestuously to get at her particularly delicious swill is like a sexual act (*The Pig Conciliator*). Likewise, a frisky ass who "permits himself the greatest familiarities" with a very superior military mare precipitates, after momentarily arousing the wrath of the police, the happy union of church and law—as represented by the animals' respective owners, the priest's housekeeper and the police sergeant (*L'Ane de M. le Curé* [The Priest's Ass], 1876, nos. 1055ff.).

From such stories we are not meant to infer that the nuptial affairs of the peasantry were generally governed by "animal instinct." Far from it, for peasants were notoriously lacking in bourgeois-style sentiment. Marriage was contracted purely out of self-interest, never love. Affection was never shown in public. There was no equivalent in the Breton language for the simple French "je t'aime."[41] In Petit, courtship is a means of rising socially and economically; wives tend to dominate the household and to tyrannize wasteful, incompetent, or stupid husbands.

In an animal economy, the veterinarian was often a more important figure than the doctor, as Zola shows in *La Terre,* where the problematic birth of a calf is given priority over the simultaneous birth of a child. Petit's veterinarian is a superior being, intelligent, politically radical, and a courageous combatant of rustic superstition (no. 827). The three stories about health (nos. 886, 936, 1000)—in which great advances were made in the countryside at this time—ridicule the avarice, ignorance, and petty jealousies of health officials and appeal, indirectly, for greater professionalism. The defeat of the old-fashioned and corrupt incumbent *officiers de santé* (health officials) by a newly arrived, fully qualified *docteur en médecine* is another, and no doubt positive, signal of the peasant's incorporation into civilization.

Taken as a whole (and including many other picture-stories we have no space to consider here), Petit's "Histoires campagnardes" are about social atomization and the moral degeneration that occurs with the setting of peasant against peasant, or peasant against bourgeois. Petit's view is of course, like all individual views, only a partial one, but it acts as a necessary corrective to that of a major (Breton) social historian of the 19th-century Breton peasantry in our own time, whose professed holistic, impartial view is so far idealized as to appear downright false. Speaking of the 19th century generally, Yann Brékilien describes Breton peasant "mutualism," vis-à-vis the strife characteristic of cities, as follows: "It was the period of bitter social struggles . . . the proletarianization of the masses . . . cries of revolt. . . . In this world of hatred and oppression, Breton peasant civilization formed, as it were, an island where the activity of men was governed not by the idea of competition but by that of fraternal mutual help."[42]

This view merely repeats the nostalgia common among Petit's urban contemporaries, who were clearly motivated by both fear of the urban proletariat and their corresponding need to seek models of piety in a countryside they barely knew. Thus for Jules Lecoeur, in his big book of 1887 on the folklore of Normandy, the rural worker lived under worse material conditions than the urban worker but was better off physically and, more important, morally, above all because he enjoyed his arduous labors: "The good worker [the implication is that most workers are good] digs fast and well, is not bored with digging, and tells you with a smile that he loves his efforts [or pain—*peine*]." Lecoeur is quoting or paraphrasing Georges Sand in mid century, but things remained, in his view, happily unchanged. He applauds the survival of the rural sense of order, sobriety, and economy, the "rougher but more assured and happier" life that persisted, immune to the selfish, hedonistic ways of the urban worker corrupted by leisure and politics. Lecoeur's reactionary philosophical and ideological position is clear: his book opens with a protest against "blind faith [*sic*] in almighty human reason and science" and appeals for a return to the traditional world of magic or (the same thing) religion and ineradicable poverty.[43]

The disruption of peasant character and culture accompanying the transition out of this traditional world was largely ignored or denied by upper-class bourgeois culture. We have already noted how academic and vanguard painting continued to idealize and folklorize the peasant back into his supposed past. The critics who applauded this tendency either ignored Petit altogether or dealt only with the more neutral and safer aspects of his work (such as "Bonnes Gens de province"). Or else they simply distorted what he said. If anywhere, then, it was with this minor celebrity of the Salons that we should expect to find the critical vacuum surrounding the comic strip broken. Instead, there is only evasion or whitewash. Yet nowhere else in the 19th century do we find so overtly serious, coherent, and programmatic an effort, masked by so little gratuitous farce, to free a major social issue from bourgeois romantic illusions as that of Léonce Petit.

Petit the Man and His Critics

Léonce Petit looms too large in our survey for us to forego an opportunity for this biographical and critical postscript. The following information is compiled chiefly from documents and

41. Brékilien 1966, 155.
42. Ibid., 40.
43. Lecoeur 1887, 1, 252, and 331.

letters, reviews and obituaries preserved as clippings (that is, without note of their original location or dates), all kindly made available to me by a great-granddaughter of the artist, Madame Philippe Tattegrain. I use here a short obituary signed Firmin Javel; a longer one by Etienne Carjat in the *Croquis* (n.d.); a short review by Alfred Barbou, with portrait; a longer review by Charles Leroy headed "Propos artistiques," datable to 1881; and a note on the "Médaillon de Léonce Petit," by "Th. J.," of 1895.

Information on the status of Petit's mother's family comes from M. Vilbert, librarian of the Dinan town library, to whom I am also indebted for a copy of the Willette letter cited, written in St. Malo, July 1924, and addressed to Michael Geistdorfer.

Léonce-Justin-Aléxandre Petit was born a *fils de paysan* on May 14, 1839, in the tiny village of Taden, where his father evidently had some property. Petit *père* had, however, opened a wine shop and cabaret in the nearby town of Dinan, with a sign that emphasized his status, reading "*Monsieur* Petit, marchand de vins" (my stress). Upwardly mobile, he had married Julie Robiou, Léonce's mother, a woman of much higher social rank as we know from the witnesses listed on Léonce's birth certificate: Jean-François Robiou de la Tréhonnais, a noble with a military title, and Gabriel de Cadaran, a wealthy châtelain. The father's ambitions ensured to his son an excellent education, at first in the Petit Séminaire, then at the *collège* of Dinan, where Chateaubriand had also studied, and where Léonce formed a lifelong friendship with the ethnographer Paul Sébillot. At the law faculty of Rennes, on June 29, 1861, he gained the first part of his law degree; he had already been employed for seven months, locally no doubt, as a Surnuméraire de l'Enregistrement et des Domaines. His *licence* qualified him for the low-level ("7th class") administrative post at Bruines, department of Cantal (Aurillac, Auvergne office), in which he registered the local peasants' tax payments and other required procedures. Through the bars of his desk, according to Etienne Carjat, he "searched to the depths of their soul the types of good peasant who sullenly brought their obligatory mite to the public coffers." It was, says another obituarist, a good laboratory for the study of the rural classes. Petit relieved the boredom of his clerical duties by sketching the faces that passed before him. He may indeed have had many idle moments: one ex-employee of the Enregistrement told Charles Leroy that all he had learned was to play the clarinet and that in three years he had had nothing to register.

"Disgusted with stupid office life, rich in collections and sketches," he made the "great and fairy-tale" journey to Paris, where he continued his clerical duties, resigning from the Enregistrement in 1866 to study painting with the landscape artists Harpignies and, later, Feyen-Perrin. Carjat relates that it was in a cafe one evening between bocks, while skimming the *Journal Amusant,* that he became fired with the ambition to contribute to that journal. (Carjat gives the date for entry into the *Journal Amusant* as 1865, "Th. J." as a year later. 1866 is also the date implied by Vapereau. But a drawing by Petit appeared in the *Journal Amusant* as early as May 17, 1863 ("Une Fête de village en Normandie"), and by 1864 there are several in that journal.)

By 1866 he was well established at that paper, and contributed also to *L'Eclipse,* the *Monde Illustré,* the *Chronique Illustrée,* as well as the lesser and short-lived papers the *Bouffon,* the *Fronde,* and the *Hanneton.* He illustrated some novels and both wrote and illustrated a few of his own; he exhibited regularly at the Salon from 1868 to 1884, earning mild praise from critics for the truthfulness and naïveté of his compositions. He also did many drawings for ceramic ware, which survive.

He was modest and timid by nature, comfortable only in a small group. He and his friends would gather in the brasseries (his favorite being the Buffet Alsacien in the rue Jacob), where he regaled the assorted company with stories and songs. His friends admired his typical Breton physiognomy—his blond hair and beard, fresh complexion, red lips, and "periwinkle eyes sparkling with malice" behind glasses—and delighted in his stories of his homeland. According to Charles Leroy, it was during just such sociable sessions that he made sketches and actually designed sequences that subsequently appeared in the *Journal Amusant.*

Petit returned to his native Dinan for a few weeks each year. On one occasion (letter of September 18, 1868) he entertained Eugène Philipon, director of the *Journal Amusant,* showing him the town and selling him a painting. He remained attached to his homeland and co-founded, with Paul Sébillot as president, a Breton-Norman (probably more or less Free Masonic) literary and artistic club called La Pomme, which met annually in Paris. (In 1887 Leconte de Lisle was president.) It was this club that, in 1895, put up the only existing memorial to Petit, a simple plaque executed by a sculptor friend, Etienne Leroux, in a small street of Dinan that is also named after the artist.

The obituarists discovered few anecdotes about him, except concerning his aversion to games of all kinds and a "shameful passion" for plums. A private letter of fellow caricaturist and comic strip artist Adolphe Willette is most revealing of the special esteem in which he was held by those who knew him personally, and at the same time redolent of the comparative economic failure he, a highly productive and apparently popular illustrator, suffered. In 1924 Willette wrote to the mayor of Dinan, who had requested information on the artist, evidently quite forgotten forty years after his death, even in his hometown:

> Ah, Léonce Petit, there was a real artist who lived out his work: so that while he was drawing I heard him talking out loud and laughing and all . . . yes, talking to the characters who, at his bidding, came to his pen . . . Ah, he knew them, the peasant and small townsman, and as far as I am concerned I would not hesitate to put him on the level of the painter Millet, the delicious landscape painter. And this artist who allowed several generations to share his joys, a married man and a father, lived very poorly.
>
> [When Léonce Petit died, the *Figaro* followed its usual custom of asking for a personal memento ("autographe") to include in its exhibition of the week's events in the Salle des Dépêches. The director of the *Journal Amusant* unabashedly chose a letter in which the artist asked in humorous tones for a tiny cash advance of fifty francs, the price of a single drawing.]
>
> And yet tears do not come to me easily . . . It was not easy for us youngsters then. We young people, whatever is said nowadays, did not have an easy life and it is what rendered us all the more sensitive to so unjust and painful a situation as that suffered by older colleagues whom we esteemed, such as Grandville, Daumier, Edmond Morin, André Gill, Léonce Petit.

Willette also recalled how the *Charivari* administration sold rolls of journal caricatures in the form of wallpaper, for which the artists got nothing: "As a mere schoolboy, it was in the *cabinets* [toilets] that I first saw the drawings of Léonce Petit."

Petit was apparently "touching with his finger that celebrity which constitutes happiness" when he died, on August 18, 1884, aged fifty-five, after suffering for many years from very severe gout, which left him for long periods of time unproductive and miserable ("maussade et grincheux comme le dernier des huissiers," as Leroy puts it). His last Salon painting of 1884 was treated as that of a *peintre distingué,* and the obituaries, as well as the long 1881 review by Carjat, testify to the general respect he enjoyed among men of letters.

His funeral, however, was a sad affair, as briefly recounted by his old friend Paul Arène (Bayard 1900, 175). Only about thirty people were present at the house where he died in Avenue du Maine, Paris—among them, notably, Grévin the caricaturist. Toward the end only three friends and two family members were left. The funeral employees, alleging that the hour was late, had already departed. In the rain, the poet Prosper Marius and an un-

named medical student themselves undertook the task of lowering the coffin into the grave.

Petit's success may also be judged by the number of his followers in rustic series, which, without necessarily being narrative or satirical, are more or less inspired by him in style or content: Pépin, "Le Monde à vol d'oiseau" (*Vie Amusante* 1878–1879); L. Tinant, "La Vie des champs" and "La Vie champêtre," blatant Petit imitations (*La Caricature,* 1882ff.); L'Oiseau, "Mon Village" and "Les Villageois" (*La Caricature,* 1883ff.); Grévin, Paysanneries" (*Charivari,* 1884ff.); Loÿs, "A la campagne" (*La Caricature,* 1885–1887); and Lemouel, "Ma Petite Ville" (*La Caricature,* 1886–1889; and in album form, 1892).

Like so many modern critics faced with socially charged themes, Petit's contemporaries avoided dealing with content by shifting the discourse to the aesthetic arena. The obligatory labeling of Petit as "the French Töpffer" gives the obvious stylistic lineage while avoiding the question of differences in satiric intent. The more elevating comparison to Millet, that "glorifier of the peasants," is adduced by Etienne Carjat, who implies that Petit is more the "réaliste sincère." But he implies only; how could one directly accuse Millet, now firmly ensconced in the artistic pantheon (and the Louvre) as the last word on peasants, of lacking realism or sincerity? For Carjat, though, Petit's realism is a matter not of attitude but of degree of detail and documentation, since Petit, no less than Millet, sees the peasantry as essentially good ("bonnes têtes," "types de bons paysans"). Another comparison, also intended as flattering, this time with the classic anodyne painter of peasants from a safely bygone age, the 17th-century Fleming David Teniers, is made in an obituary by Barbou. Petit (fortunately) "found" Teniers after "looking for" Töpffer, whose characters tend to be crazy and are never simply good. With the characteristic snobbery of the art critic vis-à-vis caricature, Barbou blames the "masses" ("la foule," "le gros public") for understanding only half of Petit, the amusing (satirical?) side of his drawings, and ignoring the other half, which in any case is available only to the art connoisseurs, who recognize (here Barbou trots out the usual clichés) the "vigor of his talent, the sureness of his drawing, the variety and exactness of his compositions." No mention is made of social content, and Barbou concludes with a eulogy of Léonce Petit's personal character (which by implication also informs his work) as "jovial," "good humored," and "high-minded, frank-hearted, and generous-spirited."

Javel likewise insists that Petit's work was always "gay and honest." But he admits, almost inadvertently, that Petit was also haunted by "aggressive visions"—an assessment tempered by the addition of the phrase "which he transcribed naively." The concept of naïveté crops up repeatedly in the criticism (it is also stressed in the advertisements), right down to its superlative, "naiveté à outrance"; the connotations are, of course, with honesty and goodness. In his long obituary, Carjat, after praising Petit's "overflowing gaiety" and "open-hearted laughter," also recognizes implicitly a certain contradiction. The comparison with Töpffer is pointless, says Carjat, who prefers to call Petit the "Balzac des champs" and "the most modern and clairvoyant satirist imaginable." But against what does Petit direct his satire? Against a peasantry become ridiculous because of its prosperity! Clearly Carjat fails to see the class distinctions that Petit took such pains to draw, and speaks of fat bellies (which Petit in fact shows only on representatives of the bourgeois order, *notaire* and mayor for example) as if they were typical of a peasantry grown opulent since the Revolution of 1789. This confusion, joined to some vague sense that Petit is indeed puncturing a false, regressive myth about the desirability of peasants returning to a prerevolutionary past, underlies the following judgment: "He experiences a malicious joy in showing us the burgeoning paunch of the descendants of the old grass-eaters [of La Bruyère in the 17th century], lolling proudly amid [all the various livestock] which they can fatten without fear of excise or *gabelle* [salt tax]. This peasant son [Petit] seems to be saying with his pen and pencil to the young and old idiots who foolishly dream of a return to the ancien régime: Look at my characters! What would you do against them? They'd throw you, with a heave of their fork—and the help of universal suffrage—all the way to Coblenz!"

By far the longest, and the most conservatively distorted, appreciation of Petit appeared in December of the year he died, as part of a series of *camaïeux* (cameo portraits) dedicated chiefly to minor literary figures, by Léon Riotor (1901). Once again Petit is presented as the maker of "funny figures" dancing and weeping in the Teniers manner; he is not even a caricaturist, but the "faithful, if humorous, tracer of the peasants," the *bretonnant* who "preserves the veneration for usages and customs, respect for traditions." Riotor denies Petit's chief purpose outright: "The work of Léonce Petit embraces the healthy side of nature, and only that. . . . He failed to become the lash that ridicules, the showman who punishes by mockery. . . . He was too gay to think of making fun of anyone."

Finally, there is John Grand-Carteret, author of the big history of French caricature produced four years after Petit's death, in 1888. Grand-Carteret had surely followed the artist's work as it appeared in serial form in the *Journal Amusant,* and therefore had plenty of time to consider his verdict. His analysis, however, is as evasive and uncomprehending as the rest. After recognizing Petit's superiority over two contemporary caricaturists of the peasant scene, Baric and Humbert, insofar as his vision is so much more complete in terms of customs, types, and habits, the critic faults Petit for being "perhaps a little sad, a little monotonous, and, let us say it outright, a little cold, a little gray, and in need of being heightened by some good rambunctious scene [*quelque bonne scène de gais lurons*] (1888, 396). *Gais lurons* may be more literally translated as "jolly fellows," which suggests that Grand-Carteret wants jollity in its pure form, unvitiated by a strong admixture of bitterness. His final comment sets the seal on what Petit's work *should* be rather than what it is: "a true *berquinade* [children's book or puerile literature], a page from a simple and unpretentious past in the midst of the agitations of the day." How ironic, then, that one of the reasons one may adduce for the commercial failure of the "Histoires campagnardes" in album form (two volumes) is their unsuitability for children. (There was no second edition of either album; they are today extremely rare and are not listed in the American National Union Catalog or the British Library Catalog; copies exist in the B. N. Cabinet des Estampes.)

In the Introduction I noted the critical vacuum surrounding the comic strip; when criticism does, exceptionally, exist, as with Petit, it is woefully inadequate and downright wrong. We may conclude that there was no way the critics, with their ideological bias and idealizing tendencies, could bring even a "master's" comic strip into intelligent focus.

CHAPTER 8

FRANCE, 1867–1895

Proliferation and Cheap Magazines

Petit's achievement is all the more distinctive given the tendency in the 1870s and '80s toward socially flighty and brief, easily scanned, formulaic anecdotes—in effect, short illustrated jokes with little text (Fig. 8.1). The emphasis shifted to speed and variety (or profusion), permitting a degree of specialization and institutionalization in a downward broadening market. This process, which had matured by the 1880s, involved a growing number of cheap magazines, with different titles but similar in appearance and intent, and over a dozen different artists, all of whom more or less specialized in the comic strip. I list these magazines and artists here for bibliographic completeness rather than intrinsic interest, which is often limited or not apparent. At the new popular level (that is, excluding the more elite *Chat Noir*), perhaps only Caran d'Ache is outstanding, and the only major new theme (as opposed to mood) deals with the military. Stylistically, the comic strip expresses, for the first time since Doré, full self-awareness, and pioneers a whole series of graphic innovations. But with this outward gain there is an inward, imaginative loss; the wild craziness is gone, replaced (at best) by quaintness.

A continuing fall in production costs, together with liberalization of the press laws in 1867, facilitated the emergence of a number of new humorous and satirical journals, the first since the founding of the *Journal Amusant* and the *Petit Journal pour Rire* in 1856, and thus the first rivals to Philipon's weeklies. Many proved durable and able to survive the ever-vigilant censorship, and several based their appeal primarily on the comic strip, revived in the late 1860s after a virtual eclipse of fifteen years.

The forerunner of the "generation of 1867–1870," when some twenty new comic illustrated journals were founded, was the large-folio but cheap (ten centimes) Sunday *La Lune,* which lasted from 1865 to January 1868, when it was hit by the censorship; it returned from April 1868 to 1876 under the witty new name *L'Eclipse*. *La Lune* and *L'Eclipse* featured comic strips primarily by Gédéon (= G. Baril) but also by Albert Humbert, Félix Régamey, Pépin (= Eduard Guillaumin), and Crafty (= Victor Gérusez), whose "Drama Under an Umbrella" is a forerunner of the wordless picture-story.[1] *La Lune* was followed in 1867 by an eight-page, twenty-five-centime folio called *L'Image,* also appearing on Sundays, which from its fourth number started a series of lengthy stories (*Grosmatou* [see pp. 143–144]; *Le Carabinier et la cuisinière* [see Fig. 8.9]; *Turcotoquade*) that lasted until mid 1868, when the genre was allowed to peter out. The *Hanneton,* under the same ownership as *La Lune* and *L'Eclipse,* ran Léonce Petit's *M. Bêton* from March 1867 to May 1868; on August 10, 1868, however, the magazine announced that it had been "struck with a violent death at the 6th Court of Summary Jurisdiction."

After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, during which most regular journalism was suspended, a new phenomenon emerged. The folio-sized papers of the prewar era were succeeded by a smaller, cheaper, almost wholly pictorial format, the ten-centime quarto, typified by the *Monde Comique,*[2] the earliest rival of the *Petit Journal pour Rire*. Not only was the *Monde Comique* one of the first to carry a regular colored front page, but it also institutionalized the comic strip at lower price and artistic levels; in content as well as price, then, it evidently appealed to the lower classes. The *Monde Comique* for 1874–1875 carries nine comic strips, and the incidence rises thereafter until by the early 1880s every second or third issue carried one. The strips are of a new type—shorter, often confined to a single magazine issue, but dominating that issue absolutely by filling all seven editorial pages (the eighth page was for advertisements). Figure 8.1 is a typical example. By the mid 1880s the magazine had more pages of comic strips than of other graphics, and it continued thus to its end in 1898.

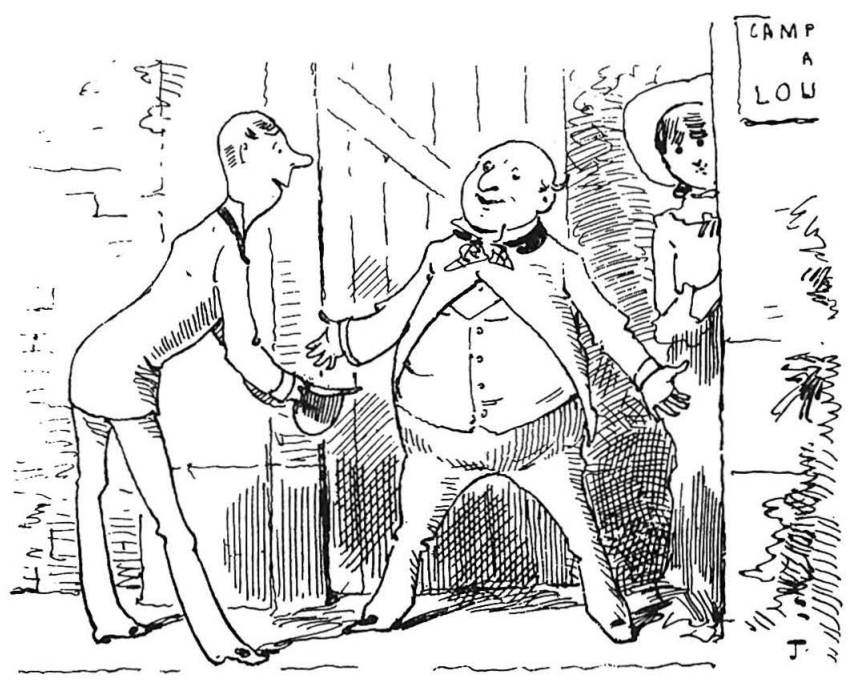
The *Vie Amusante,* subtitled "Revue satirique, drôlatique et illustrée" (1876–1891), in the same format as the *Monde Comique,* started with back pages by the illustrious Grévin and comic strips that continued at a high rate (about one in every other issue), the lion's share falling to Pépin, with Jean Quidam in second place. Quidam also did a series of large drawings of rustic scenes viewed from above, "Le Monde à vol d'oiseau" (1878–

1. *La Lune,* November 3, 1867; reproduced in Roberts-Jones 1960, fig. 4, and copied in *C. H. Ross's Variety Paper,* November 2, 1887, p. 116.
2. The magazine, which is undated, started in 1869 at five centimes for four quarter-pages, with seventy-five issues in fifteen months up to 1870, and some comic strips by Gédéon, Humbert, and others. After suspension, it returned in October 1872 with a "second series," in slightly smaller format but with eight pages, priced at ten centimes.

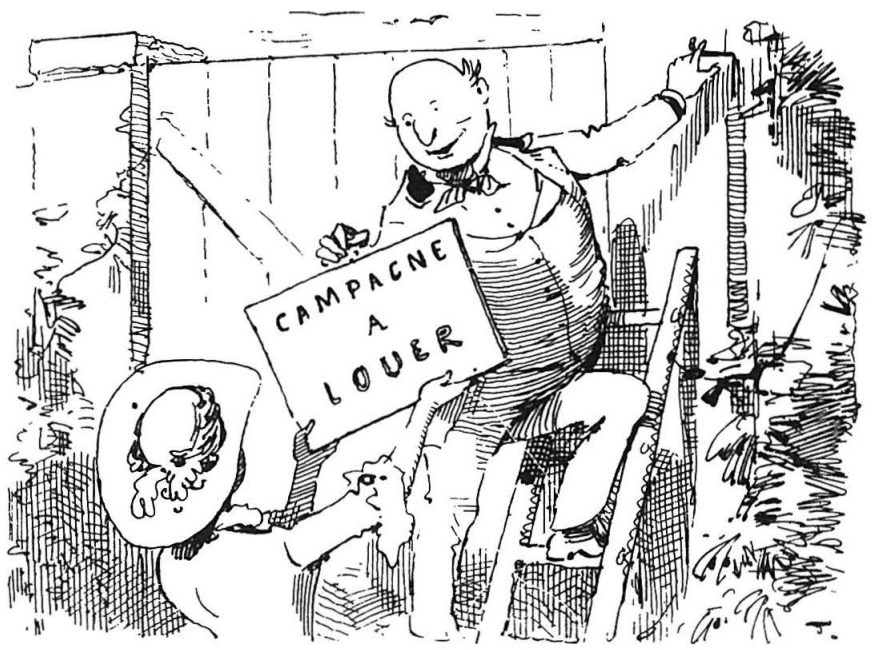


CAMPAGNE A LOUER

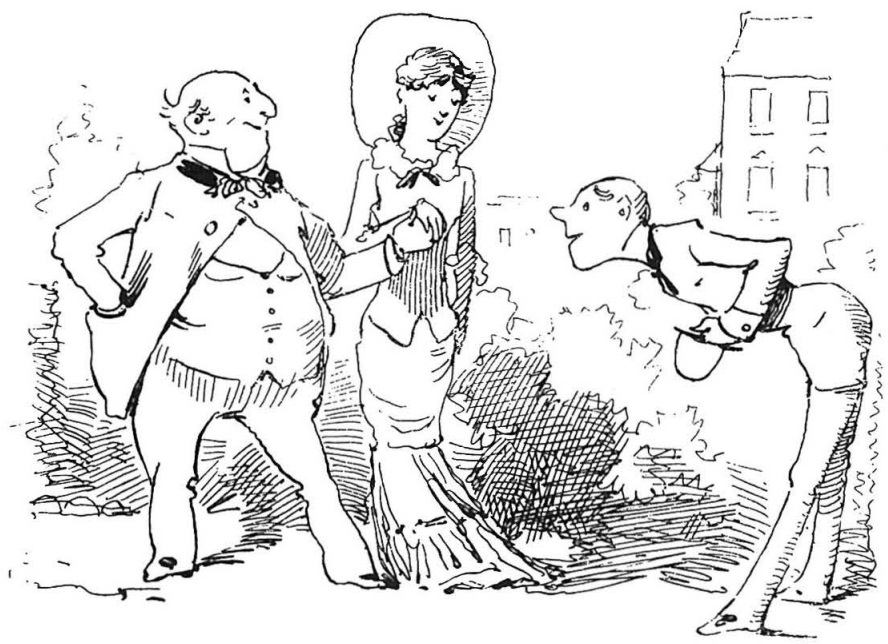
M. Tripolard, propriétaire à Potigny-sur-Bièvre, se dit avec douleur que sa fille Adèle, nature sensible, est en âge de convoler, et qu'il n'y a plus de partis pour elle dans la localité. Où et comment pêcher un mari ?



Bientôt, un chaland — Parisien très chic — demande à voir la campagne.



L'aimable enfant, avec une ingéniosité au-dessus de son âge (trente-deux ans et demi), songe alors aux étrangers qui passent quelquefois, en quête d'une campagne à louer. Le truc de l'écriteau est trouvé ! Les visiteurs célibataires n'auront qu'à se bien tenir. (*voir la suite page* 6).



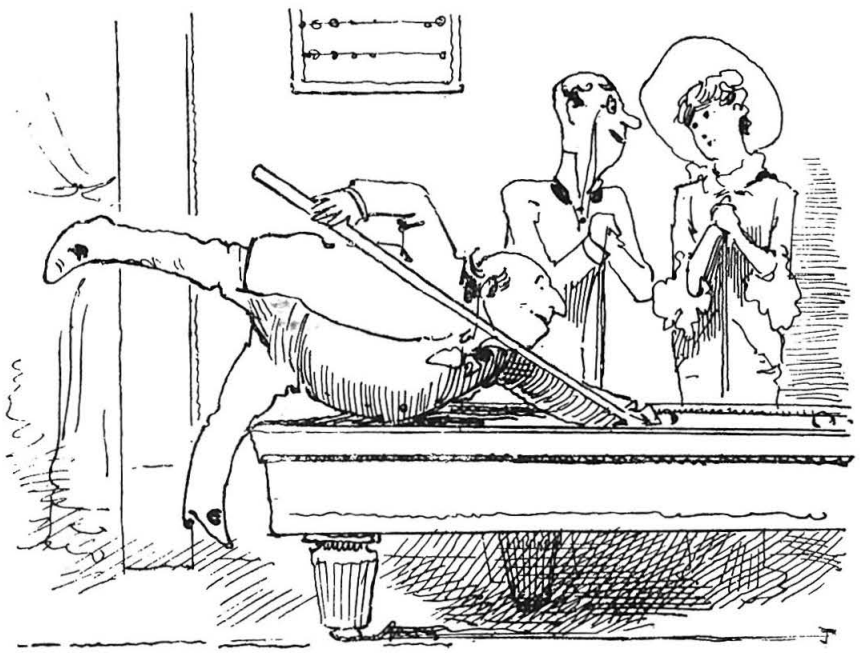
— Avant toute chose, mossieu, permettez-moi de vous présenter mon Adèle, — un ange ! (*A suivre*).

FIG. 8.1. Trick: "Lodgings to Let" (1881/83).
M. Tripolard is worried about his daughter Adèle's being left on the shelf. / With an ingenuity beyond her years (32½) she thinks of putting up a sign: "Lodgings to Let." / Soon a client—a very chic Parisian—asks to see them. / "First let me introduce you to Adèle—an angel!" / After which the chic Parisian is invited to dinner. A game of billiards... and flirtation. / The Machiavellian father pretends to leave them alone to continue the flirtation, / which reaches its paroxysm. Sudden entry of father. / "Sir, you'll marry Adèle!" "Marry her? I am married already!" "Married! And you court my daughter!" "Your daughter? I thought she was your wife!"..... The Tripolard lodgings are still to let: Notice to single men.

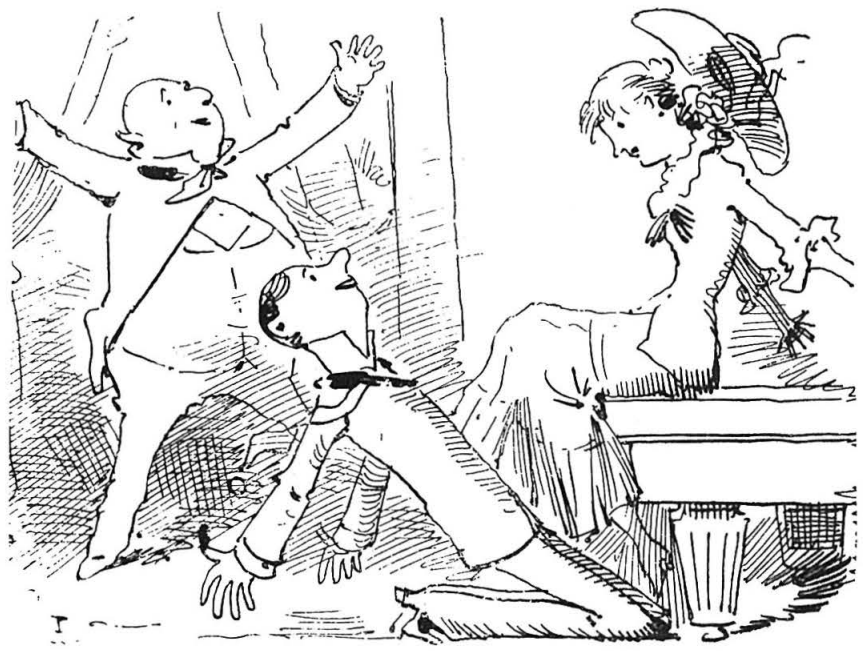
1879). In the early 1880s the magazine followed the trend, led by Caran d'Ache, toward military cartoons and strips. In 1882 Albert Robida was doing the front page, and soon a variety of comic strip artists joined the fray. The incidence of Caran d'Ache in both the *Vie Amusante* and the *Monde Comique,* the plethora of comic strips generally, and not least the heavy borrowing (from 1887)[3] from the same foreign sources as yet a third journal, *La Caricature,* founded and dominated by Robida, suggest a very close relationship among the three journals.

Demand outstripped supply, and to reduce costs these journals copied heavily—and confusingly—from one another, from *La Caricature* (1880–1899), and from the short-lived *Vie Militaire* (1883–1884). Most of the *Monde Comique* strips were reprinted elsewhere, and from 1884 it took most if not all of its

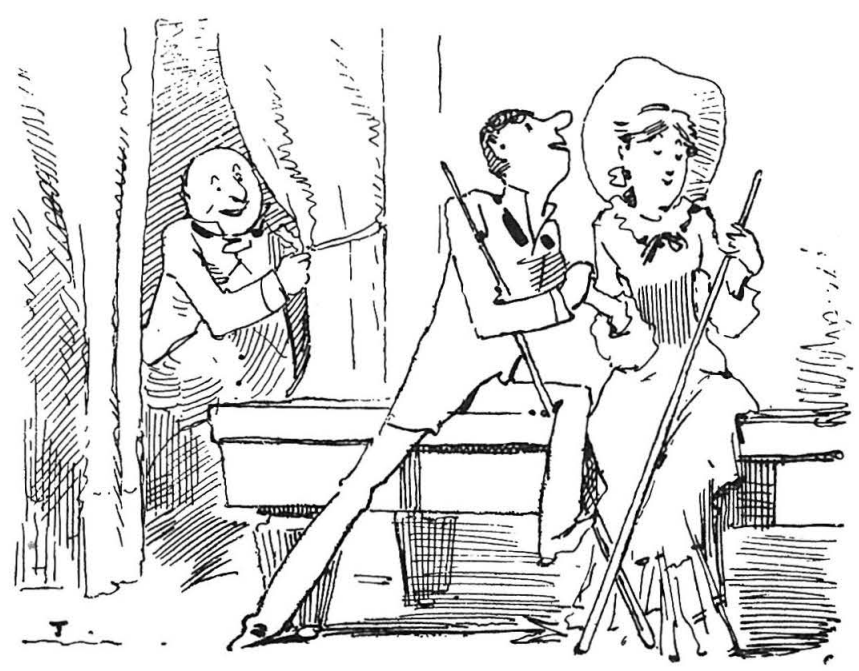
3. I have not seen the volumes for 1888 and 1889, which are not in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.



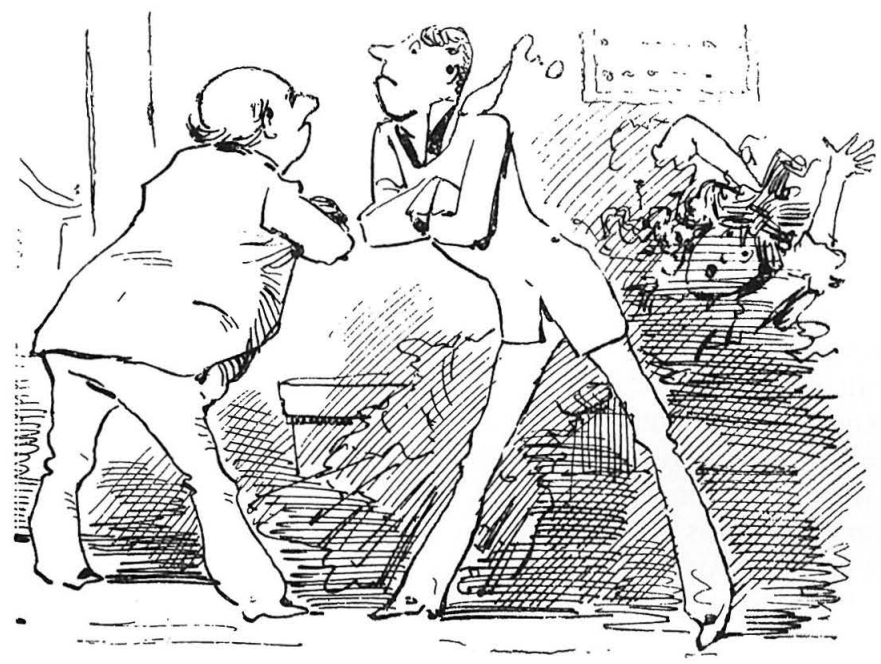
Après la présentation, le Parisien chic est invité à dîner. On causera campagne au dessert. En attendant, on ébauche une partie de billard... et de flirtation.



La flirtation est à son paroxysme. Entrée subite du papa machiavélique. Adèle croit devoir s'évanouir



Le papa machiavélique fait semblant de s'absenter un instant. Sous sa surveillance dissimulée, la flirtation continue. *(Voir la suite page 6.)*



— Mossieu, vous épouserez Adèle!
— L'épouser? Je suis marié!
— Marié! et vous courtisez ma fille!
— Votre fille? Je la croyais votre femme!

. . . . . .

La campagne Tripolard est encore à louer : Avis aux célibataires.

comic strip material from *La Caricature* of the preceding year. Borrowing on this scale must have been by mutual agreement (or the result of common ownership), but I have found no public admission or explanation of the phenomenon. In 1878–1879 the *Vie Amusante* and the *Monde Comique* became virtually identical in content. Several strips appeared in three different magazines within two years, and I found two ("Une Partie de pêche" and "A la recherche d'un logement," both by Lemot) in five different places (1869–1878). This repetition suggests that by the last quarter of the century the cheaper magazines were no longer carefully preserved; rather than being considered of historic interest (they are generally not dated), they were quickly scanned, discarded, and forgotten. The supersession of the longer story run over several issues by the short, one-issue, strip, typically with about a dozen scenes, also corresponds to this basic change of reading habit; it did not, however, affect the entire comic magazine market: Petit's long narratives in the *Journal Amusant,* for example, clearly relied on preservation of back issues.

La Caricature also featured the comic strip prominently, but this is not the sole interest of the magazine. A medium-priced (thirty, then forty centimes) small folio, it called itself "politique, satirique, drôlatique, prophétique, atmosphérique et littéraire"—the last three epithets well merited. "Prophetic" and "atmospheric" refer to Robida's taste for futuristic science-fiction designs relating to communication and transportation, for which work, published in separate albums, he is best known.[4] His projection of 20th-century armored and aerial warfare (October 1883) is horribly accurate. The early years of *La Caricature* are interesting primarily as cultural and literary criticism, particularly with regard to the naturalist movement. Robida developed something of an ob-

4. For a listing and sampling, see Robida 1980.

session with Zola, and particularly *Nana*. Many of the issues of *La Caricature* are written and illustrated entirely by Robida, whose forte was theme issues and centerspreads; but he left the comic strips largely to others: Quidam, Trick (= Gabriel Liquier, who also signed as "Track" and "Trock"), Draner (= Jules Renard), Loÿs (= Louis Morin), Gino, and Caran d'Ache, whose first comic strip for the magazine ran in December 1882 and who also provided military sketches. In 1886, having lent or sold so much material to other magazines, *La Caricature* itself apparently ran a little short of French strips and started an occasional series, variously called "Le Crayon des autres," or "L'Esprit des autres" (The Pencil of Others or The Wit of Others), credited to German, American, and English journals. From the late 1880s the lineup of the most frequent contributors of comic strips included Sorel, Maximilien Radiguet, Oscar Lamouche, and the especially fertile Godefroy (pseudonym of Auguste Viollier), who also did much work for the *Chat Noir*. The latter, a chapter in itself, represents *La Caricature*'s primary competitor in terms of comic strips in a folio magazine. By 1892, however, Robida had stopped drawing for his magazine, and the comic strips taper off in both quantity and quality.

Caran d'Ache and the New Style of the 1880s

With the comic strip's abbreviated length, now restricted to one issue (in the *Monde Comique* and its imitators) or one large page (in the *Chat Noir*), went an abbreviated style, deriving to some degree from Busch, and crystallized in Caran d'Ache, Döes, Loÿs, and Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen. The relatively realistic, volumetric, shaded, and often untidy style inherited from the 1850s yields in the 1880s to a sprightly, curt, carefully crafted line in the manner of Busch. Although each vignette looks as if it could have been knocked off in seconds, it was in fact the outcome of gradual refinement and tightening—in the case of Caran d'Ache, of many successive overlaid tracings. Photomechanical reproduction preserved the impression of spontaneity.

The style is self-consciously bravura, with a hard-flowing contour more arbitrary and more mannered than Busch's but able, like Busch's, to arrest an action with geometric clarity in the most difficult foreshortening. By around 1890, following a general graphic development in Europe that may be termed pre–art nouveau, line tends to become independent of form, as action becomes independent of narrative. Solid blacks and whites begin to prevail, and the black silhouette drawing, used from time to time throughout the century for variety and contrast, becomes integrated and commonplace (in Germany as well as France) under the stimuli of optical toys and Chinese shadow plays—like that of Caran d'Ache's Napoleonic epic presented in 1886 at the Chat Noir cabaret. Artists who resist the new style, such as Fernand Fau, look positively old-fashioned. Institutionalized as a major genre of journal illustration and caricature, the comic strip begins to look both casual and tough, confident that the form and graphic style are amusing in themselves, irrespective of the subject matter, which when it is not simply banal often tends consciously to the quaint, indecisive, ambiguous, and morally obscure or oblique. The comic strip, in a word, acquires a certain autonomy, stylistically and as a genre, parallel to (and influenced by) that assumed by painting in the ages of impressionism, postimpressionism, and symbolism. Like painting, like poetry, the comic strip attains self-sufficiency and a certain purity by a process of abstraction and elimination: of shading, of background, of rational connections between scenes, of gridlike frames and layouts, and finally of text. The influence of oriental art is pervasive, occasionally overt.[5]

In the 1880s, then, the wordless strip becomes common, especially with Caran d'Ache, who introduced it via Germany into France in 1881, and with Willette in the *Chat Noir* from 1882. Like symbolist poetry, like impressionist painting, the action flows in an open, atmospheric rather than closed, perspectival space; the grid of boxes that rationalized and compartmentalized time, as the grid of linear perspective did space, has been discarded.

"Caran d'Ache" (from the Russian for "pencil") was born Emmanuel Poiré in Moscow in 1859, the grandson of a French Napoleonic officer wounded and left for dead during the Moscow campaign of 1812. Arriving in France in 1876 to reclaim his nationality, he entered, after a short period of military training, the ministry of war, where he stayed for four years with the rank of corporal. He was therefore in a good position to know the military from the inside and underneath when he launched into journal illustration in 1881.[6] As a critic of military mentality and behavior he is more amused than shocked, more the ironist than the satirist. The ambivalence of one who "merged the *boulevardier* into the *grognard* [Napoleonic veteran]"[7] is more evident in his comic strips about sentries than in his military illustrations in general, which show him as shrilly chauvinistic, anti-German, and pro-Russian (Russia was then moving into economic and military alliance with France). After some illustrations of 1888–1889 showing disillusionment with archmilitarist General Boulanger[8] (see below), his chauvinism led him into violent anti-Dreyfusism and anti-Semitism. With his skill in drawing horses in motion and his love of military uniforms, parades, and armaments, which he displayed in several leading French magazines, he became known as France's foremost military illustrator. And after he launched his epic Napoleonic Chinese shadow play in 1886 at the Chat Noir cabaret, which was visited by royalty and other bigwigs, the famous academic military painter Meissonier saluted him as one of the "grands" of the art.[9]

Because he was self-taught, his style varied at first but soon settled into something coldly swaggering, with a highly disciplined but often arbitrary linear rhetoric that might in itself be termed militaristic. Early characterizations of his style as producing, like the parade ground, "not men, but jointed marionettes,"[10] and of "the nullity of contour" as perfection itself[11] recognize elements of dehumanization new to caricature. Apart from the group of military strips that is here our focus, Caran d'Ache executed a wide array of hard-to-characterize narrative subjects embracing traditional as well as hitherto taboo topics of a sexual,

5. As in Steinlen's "Leou-Lea, le Papillon et la Rose-Thé, fable japonaise" (*Chat Noir,* April 12, 1884), and Godefroy's *Mésaventure d'un critique à Yeddo* (*Chat Noir,* January 28, 1888), which features a Chinese protagonist, a decorated Chinese vase, and drawing in a somewhat Chinese style, with free-floating vignettes. Several comic strips are set in the Orient, even if not "Chinese" in style.
6. His first strip, the wordless "Un Festin de Balthasar," signed Caran d'Ache, appeared June 21, 1881, in the theatrical weekly *Tout Paris* (January–June 1881), of which he was principal illustrator. He then passed to the *Chronique parisienne,* where he signed several strips, executed in a Grévin-like style, "Poiré" (October–December 1881). He did his first military scenes for the *Chat Noir* in January and March 1883, and his first comic strip there is dated December 9, 1882. His first strip for the daily *Figaro* in the series that would become known as the "Mondays of Caran d'Ache" appeared December 16, 1895 (not in the year 1896, as is stated in the literature).
7. Brisson 1900, 4.
8. "Les Voyages extraordinaires du brav' général Boulanger," *L'Illustration,* October 10, 1888, 282–283, and "Le Boulangeorama," ibid., February 16, 1889, pp. 138–139.
9. Caran d'Ache 1979, 8.
10. Brisson 1900, 15.
11. Bayard 1900, 282.

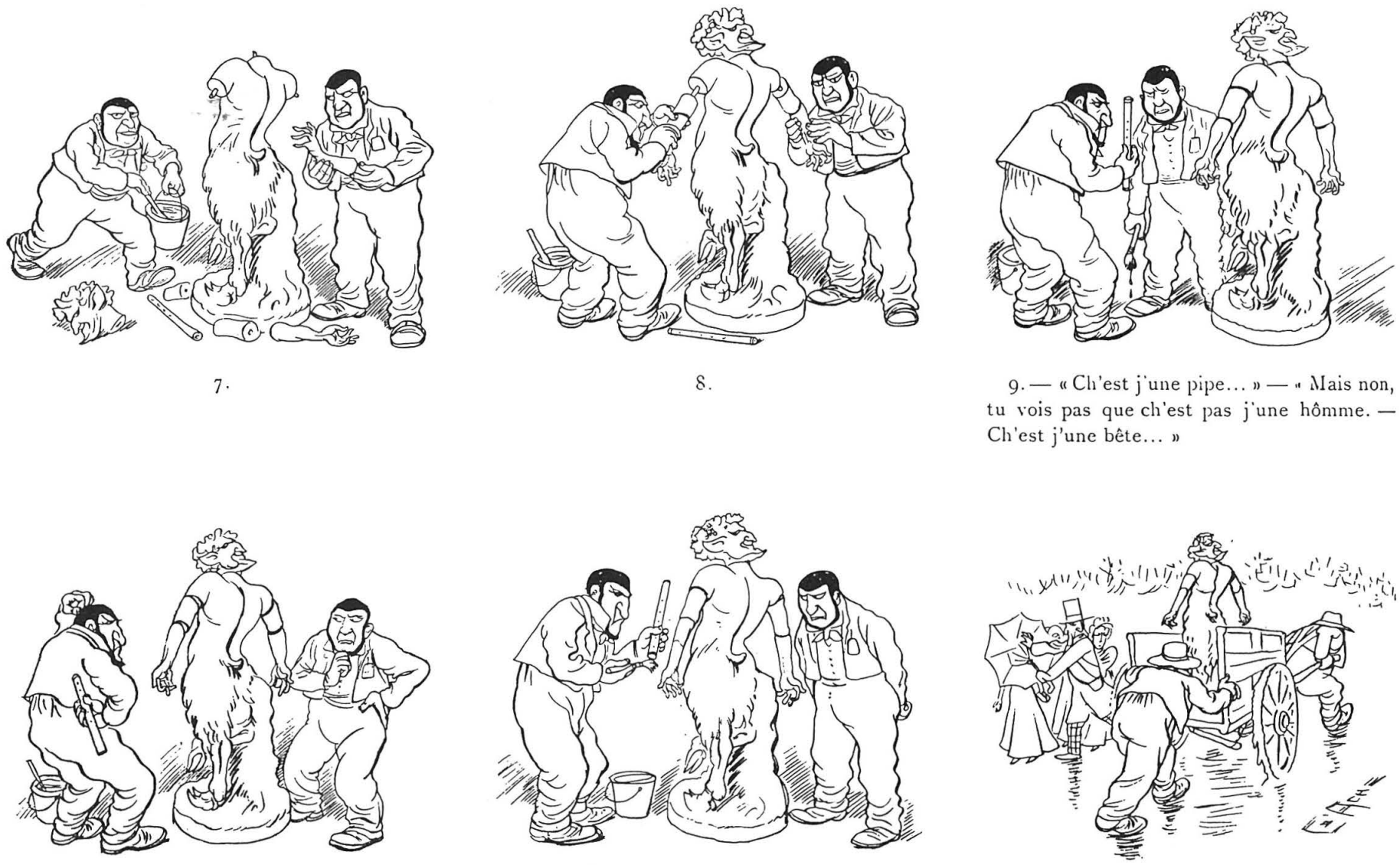


FIG. 8.2. Caran d'Ache: "The Faun with the Flute—Submission to the Sculpture Salon" (before 1898).
"[7]... [8]... [9] 'It's a pipe.' 'No, you can see it ain't a man, it's an animal.' [10] 'An animal? Then it must go on behind... Oh damn, where is its behind?' [11] 'I think it must be over here.' [12] 'There we are! Off we go!'"

homosexual, and scatological nature (see, for example, Fig. 8.2). His very first strip was about diarrhea.

The mood in Caran d'Ache is often laconic, cynical, and morally evasive, setting up a tension between emphatic, self-important line and foolish, trivial, or uneventful content. The most celebrated example of the latter is "Cow Watching a Train Go By," which repeats over and over the same rather uninteresting design, varying only in the slow, mechanical sideways movement of the animal's jaw and the even slower movement of her eyes:[12] it is a fragment of film animation. In Caran d'Ache, the whimsical concept is rendered in a line anything but whimsical, the peculiar incident is given a perverse resonance, and gratuitous cruelty escalates into the most macabre ritual of execution. What kind of a metaphor for the Parisian cabby's notoriously reckless driving is the totally unmotivated massacre of his defenseless client (Fig. 8.3), contrived with such manic, geometric precision? Or is this class warfare *à outrance,* backed by the mob?

Caran d'Ache was by the 1890s famous like no caricaturist since Cham. In that decade he published half a dozen albums of collected strips and became known for his weekly "lundis" (or Mondays) in the daily *Figaro* and his numerous contributions to the lavish monthly *Figaro Illustré*. Here, as in the *Illustration* newsweekly (from 1892), he pioneered the current-(political)-event comic strip. The *Figaro* brought him an upper-class readership, and he was fervently admired by the likes of Tsar Alexander III. But after the 1890s his comic strip production declined. Soured by his failure to become a painter and disillusioned by lack of official recognition (he yearned for a cross of the Légion d'Honneur), from 1902 he devoted himself to a series of massive woodcut illustrations on anti-English and anti-Semitic subjects for *L'Assiette au beurre,* and from 1903 on he dedicated himself to the design of children's static animal toys.

Without attempting a complete survey of his work in comic strips, which spills beyond our chronological limits, I would characterize it as that of a gifted artist unable to make moral discriminations, meandering as it does over the social scene with no philosophical purchase on it. His attitude is summed up in the title of one of his comic strip albums, *C'est à prendre ou à laisser* (Take It or Leave It). Caran d'Ache's lack of direction is the dilemma of 20th-century art, which while honing its technical skills lost its social and political base.

12. Reproduced in Caran d'Ache 1979, among others.

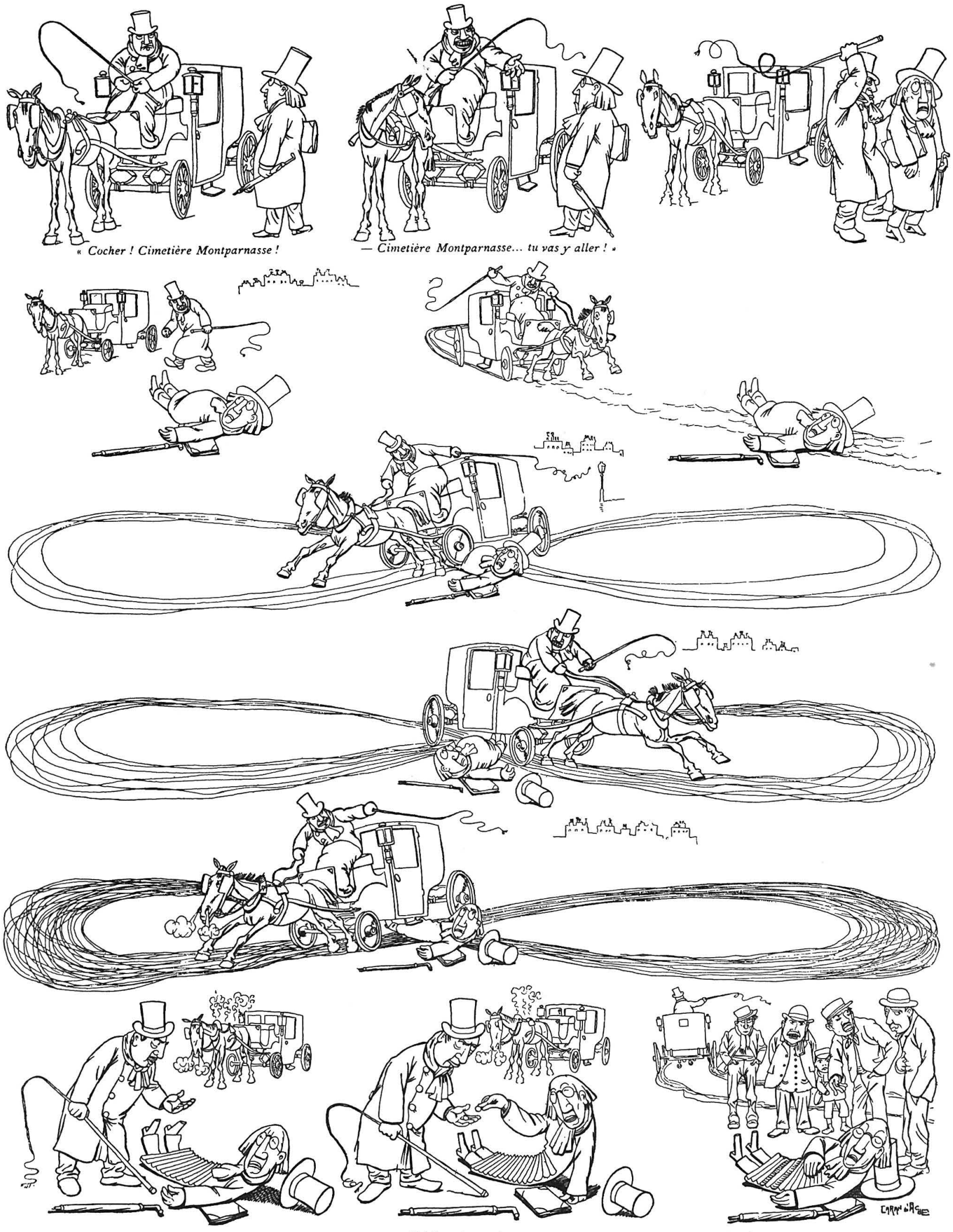


FIG. 8.3. Caran d'Ache: "Paying by the Distance" (1890).
"'Cabbie! Montparnasse cemetery!' / 'You'll get there!' . . . 'Now, pay the fare.' / 'Here's one franc fifty, but you don't get a tip.' / The crowd: 'Go on, cheat!'"

In the 1880s French militarism, smarting from defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, was resurgent. It found a leader and symbol in Georges Ernest Boulanger, who as inspector of infantry in 1882–1884 and minister of war in 1886–1887 instituted a wide array of army reforms that affected discipline, ceremonial, accoutrements, weaponry, and living conditions generally. By 1886 Boulanger had become a romantic cult figure with a huge popular following, especially among the petty bourgeoisie, who saw in him a savior who would take revenge on Germany and recover the ravished provinces. Handsome and charismatic, he incarnated a whole history of French military glory, having fought, suffered wounds, and been decorated in all the major campaigns since the Crimean War—in Algeria, Italy, Vietnam, and the Franco-Prussian War. "Boulangism" was fostered by an outpouring of propaganda in the press and in all imaginable media, including songs, broadsheets, photographs, crockery, gingerbread, and soap. He was marketed, one might say, like Ally Sloper in England, only to infinitely more menacing political effect, for he was expected to pull off a Napoleonic-style military coup d'état against the Republic. But by 1889 it was all over, Boulangism dead, its leader banished.

French caricature had always paid its patriotic dues in time of war and kept a benign eye on the brave and plucky common French soldier in time of peace. Gilbert Randon, for example, had made a specialty of military types. But the comic strip, more skeptical, remained largely silent. A decade after the disaster of 1870–1871, for which both the army hierarchy and Emperor Napoleon III were blamed, the comic strip finally broke its silence: it began to voice in subtle, covert (and sometimes not so covert) tones the deep resentment felt by the lower classes, who bore the brunt of conscription, theoretically universal since 1872 but in practice offering exemption to the better off. The lower classes saw in the oppressions of army life a caricatural reflection of their own existence in civilian society.

Boulanger's reforms succeeded in improving not only military discipline and efficiency but also the common soldier's basic living conditions. Yet although the army's "image" improved, old fears and prejudices lingered. The strips do not imitate the crude, chauvinistic, and militaristic character of most Boulangist propaganda that appealed to the same lower-class, petty-bourgeois audiences, but they do exploit some of the conditions, material and psychological, that served Boulanger and the Boulanger myth.

Although it essentially focused opposition on successive unstable, anticlerical republican governments, Boulangism indirectly served these same governments by substituting a national military ethic for the ultramontane religious one (of patriotism for the pope). Such an ethic helped bridge the gaps between opposing philosophies, classes, and estates and between civilian and soldier. As the common people were militarized, so the army was to be democratized and, as Boulanger insisted, treated in a civilized way; military service was to become universal but also more humane.

Many French illustrated magazines of the 1880s show a marked increase in military subjects, and in November 1883 a specialized magazine was started, called the *Vie Militaire*. A relatively expensive (sixty-centime), lavishly illustrated weekly, the *Vie Militaire* was designed to link civilian and military life and was directed toward the educated officer class. It was not a comic magazine as such; Guy de Maupassant wrote short stories for it, for instance, and its acceptance of the comic strip merely betokens the (upward) broadening market of that genre. The magazine immediately became a showcase for the budding talents of Caran d'Ache, one of whose strips about sentries appeared in the first issue; he ended up giving the magazine fourteen comic strips during its life span of thirty-one issues.

The military strip of the 1880s deals with the sordid underside of military life and as such has little of the panache of Caran d'Ache's and others' nonnarrative military illustrations. The strip seeks out the incongruities and conflicts in the interaction of simple soldier and military authority, and of the psychologically merging military and civilian states. The petty-bourgeois or lower-class audience identified with the raw recruit—to an extent, the audience *was* that recruit—rather than with the officer. Although some strips are set sympathetically within the officer's milieu, in general the officer was the oppressor, the recruit the victim.

The common soldier's life is presented as one of deprivation, harassment, and punishment for a variety of petty and imagined offenses. These offenses are the organic product of military discipline, combined with the instinct to oppose it and recover, even if only momentarily, a simulacrum of the pleasures of civilian life. The recruit is a prisoner making constant more-or-less real, more-or-less symbolic attempts at escape and then being punished for his efforts, often enough by military jail sentences. Occasionally he exacts a transitory revenge.

The condition of the recruit is crystallized in the sentry on guard duty. Caran d'Ache, who features him several times in this role, makes him an abstract black or white silhouette; hunchbacked, with a cape over his pack (which Boulanger abolished for sentry duty),[13] he is a miserable cipher of humanity, attached to the minimal abstraction of human shelter, that parody of the cramped space that served the lower classes as a home—the sentry box (Fig. 8.4). No bigger than and shaped much like a coffin, it is a narrow space, before which the sentry narrowly paces, silently (the strips are usually wordless), like a prisoner in cellular isolation or a caged animal. The empty geometric contour of the sentry box is an emblem of social confinement, of the narrowing of space, and life. This box, moreover, like boxes in Busch, functions as a trap—as the sentry discovers, for instance, when "anarchist" kids push it over on him; or, conversely, as a means of exposure—such as when a sentry is rash enough to try to make love in it.[14]

The sentry's life is one of boredom measured with absolute chronological precision. The comic strip, hitherto predicated on hyperactivity or constant, purposive action, now deals with boredom or meaningless motion. Caran d'Ache, with his expertise in the slow, analytic extrusion of insignificant movement and incident, watches the sentry pace up and down, beating his arms to fend off the cold—as far as his bayonet allows, which is not very far (Fig. 8.5); indeed, his bayonet is like a shackle. The only distractions are petting a passing dog, blowing his nose, and watching the clock—until he is replaced by an identical twin in an identical pose in an identical mood. This is perpetual, mechanical motion, the wheel (of the magic lantern, which certainly influenced these simple silhouettes) come full circle. Enforced silence increases the isolation in this wordless strip; officially, it is supposed to add to the sentry's watchfulness, although there is nothing or little to watch. The Germans are a long way off, and his head is blinkered in his hood anyway. He is in fact not the watcher but the watched—watched by the cartoonist, of course, with relative sympathy, but beyond that, and with no sympathy at all, by Authority. The soldier is under constant supervision, like the prisoner in the new model prison, the factory worker, the schoolboy.[15]

The isolation is broken by insignificant incidents and objects, which tantalize the sentry with visions of the outside world. If he allows himself to be distracted by them, he is punished. With his invisible eyes the sentry follows the slow movement of a kite; the kite falls; his rifle butt jabs the portly belly of an officer, equally rapt by the kite and equally to blame for the harmless but symbolic collision of the ranks, the polarity of which is conveyed by

13. Harding 1971, 74.
14. *Vie Militaire,* February 2, 1884; and Fau, "La Guérite," *Chat Noir,* October 9, 1886.
15. See Foucault 1979. Satire on the craziness of military discipline was not, of course, new; cf. Cham's *Les Tâtonnements de Jean Bidoux dans la carrière militaire* (Paris, n.d.).

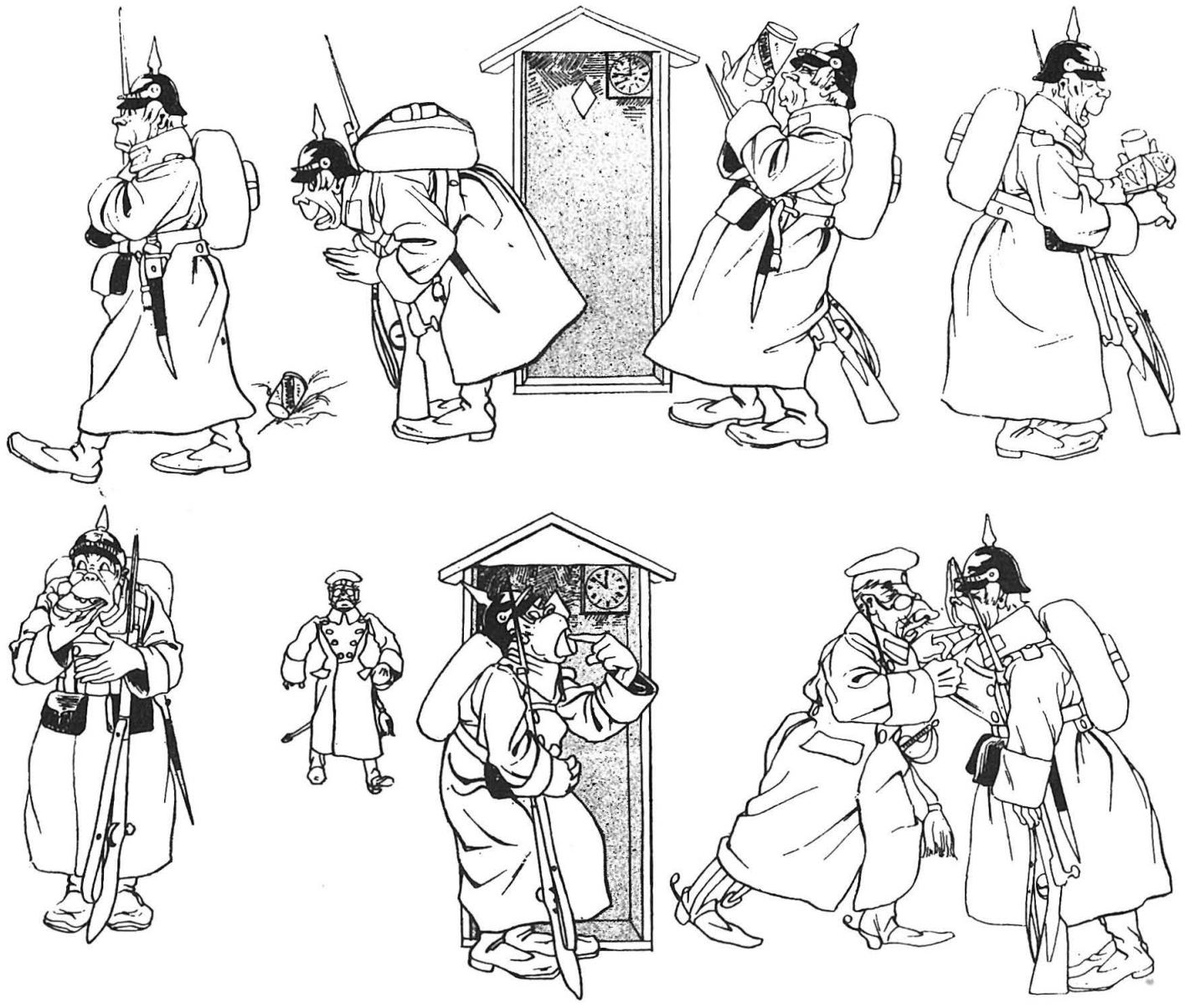


FIG. 8.4. Döes: "Interrupted Meal" (1888). **La Collation interrompue, par Does.**

the contrast of their black and white costumes. As he is bawled out the sentry crumples in terror, then freezes into a shape as rigid and inhuman as his box (Fig. 8.6). He is faceless throughout. The kite, which bears a human face, symbolizes the free-floating pleasures of the outside world, as does, in another strip, the balloon which a boy ties secretly to the pacing sentry's bayonet. But the soldier cannot accept what in the civilian world would be regarded as a friendly trick, even a peace offering. Having imbibed the military ethic, he perceives the gesture as an insult.[16]

The solace of the sentry is the reminder or promise of other worlds, of past and future pleasures: bits of food, which he seizes eagerly, like a caged animal or prisoner, but guiltily as well; the glance or touch of a passing girl (the two motifs are also combined, when the girl brings the food). He is denied these essentials and punished for aspiring to or hoarding them. At the approach of the officer, he swallows the can whole—but the officer knows, makes him cough the can up, and kicks him back into his box (see Fig. 8.4). True, what we see here are German soldiers, caricatured as brutes; but they stand for military discipline anywhere.

As Foucault has shown, the 19th-century jail sought to oversee, to super-vise the prisoner; to control his every move, constantly; to possess him, body and soul. The army imposed a gamut of disciplinary refinements to the same end. Parade-ground drill was only the gymnastic-aesthetic apotheosis of the principle of total control, and submission to authority—inculcated at all times, both on and off duty—became crystallized in that ultimate

16. "Une Mauvaise Farce," reproduced in Caran d'Ache 1979.

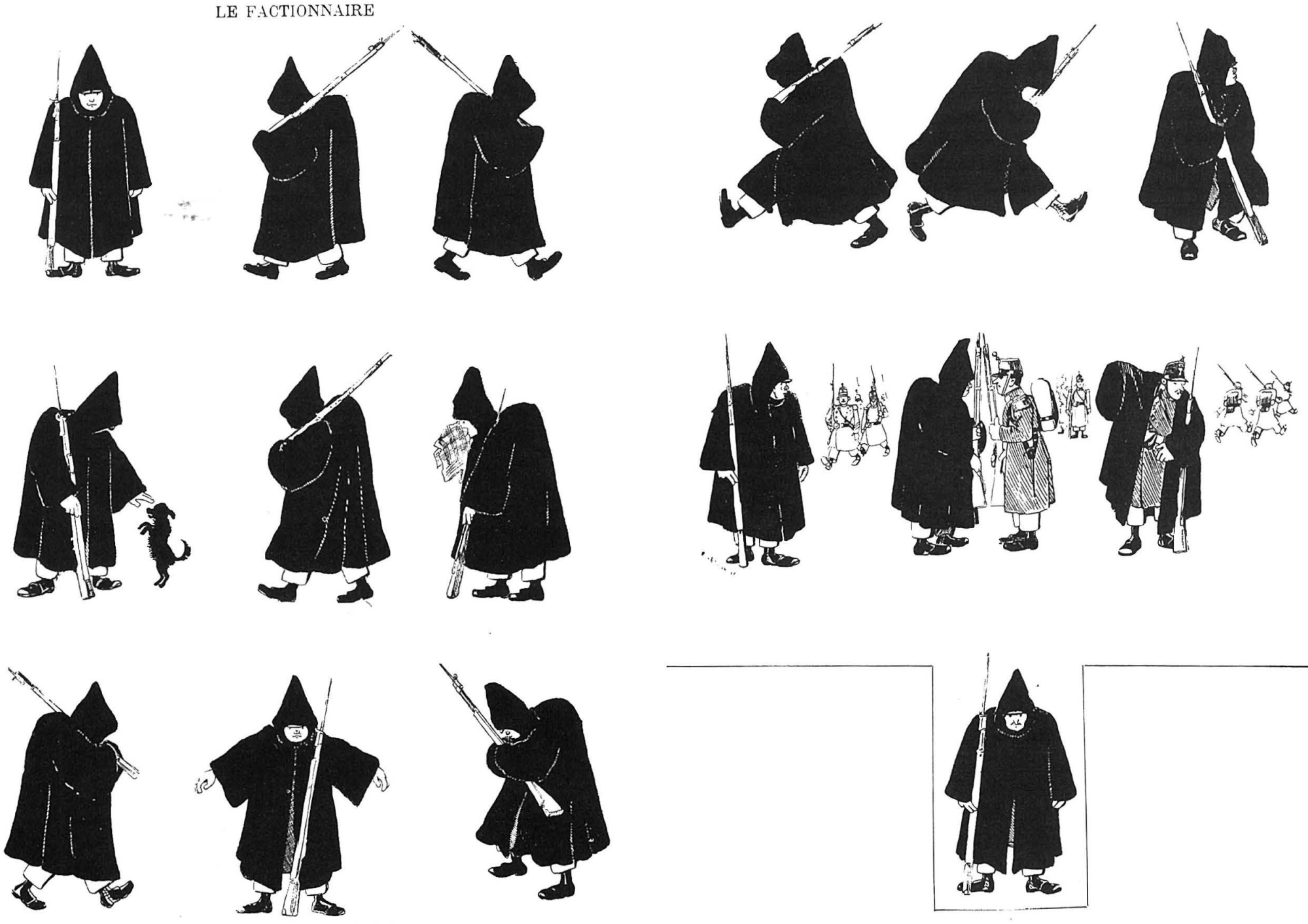


FIG. 8.5. Caran d'Ache: "The Sentry" (1885).

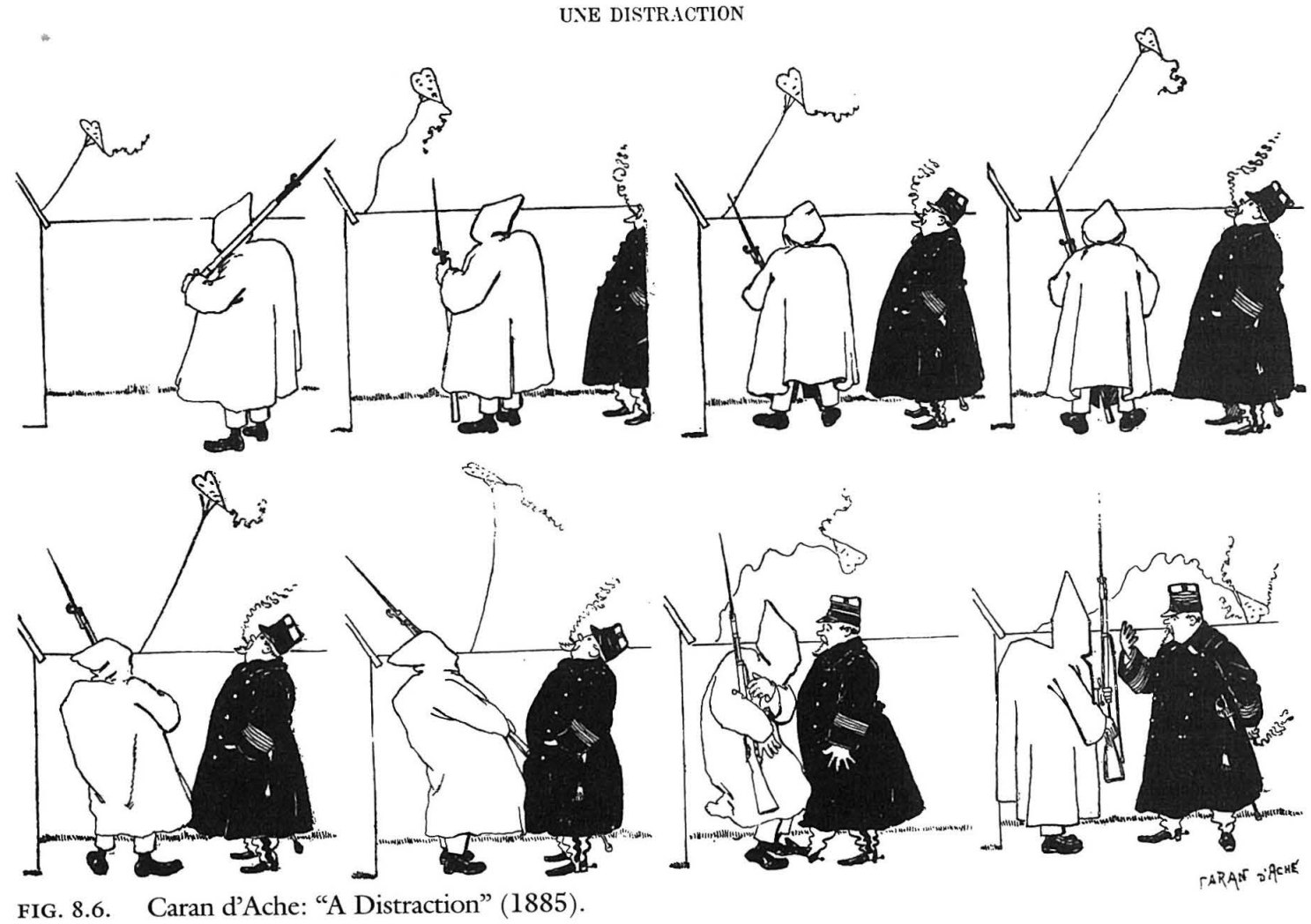


FIG. 8.6. Caran d'Ache: "A Distraction" (1885).



FIG. 8.7. Caran d'Ache: "[No Accounting for] Tastes and Colors" (1886).

military reflex: the salute. This reflex precipitates the sexual humiliation of the soldier who is "saluted" by his girl—with a slap on the face. The salute is the denial of individuality, of free will.[17]

"He's taught us to wear our cap at the right angle," was the homage Crimean veteran Marshal Canrobert paid Boulanger.[18] Military cap and salute are fetishized as playthings in the hands of the officer corps, whose entire hierarchy in turn (no less than seven or eight grades) is involved in reducing the cap to perfection (Fig. 8.7; see also Fig. 8.11). But this military quest for perfection only masks a capricious authoritarianism based on the concept "Might is Right," for each officer, ascending in grade, imposes his own view of the correct angle of cap or salute, until finally the full weight of the army, incarnated in the general, crushes the cap over the recruit's eyes, crumpling the hitherto erect automaton. Even in his least aggressive style, Caran d'Ache charts the "fine art" of military discipline as microscopic tyranny.

If corrective military discipline in the French army of the 1880s is epitomized by caps, salutes, sentry boxes, deprivation of food, and occasional spells in the brig, and that of the 17th century (judging from Callot's *Misères*) by the lash, gallows, wheel, and fire, we must applaud the humanitarian advance. Now vestiges of ancient brutality—which Cham already noted at mid century with respect to the British—tend to be projected onto the Germans. The dog that the French sentry would merely have hurled away is knifed through the belly by Major von Giffle; in the process he falls in the mud, and when a superior discovers a dirty button on his uniform, he is summarily shot.[19] In France, in

17. *Vie Militaire,* March 29, 1884.
18. Harding 1971, 74.
19. "Horrible Drame," *Vie Militaire,* January 12, 1884; cf. Godefroy, *Chat Noir,* October 1, 1887.

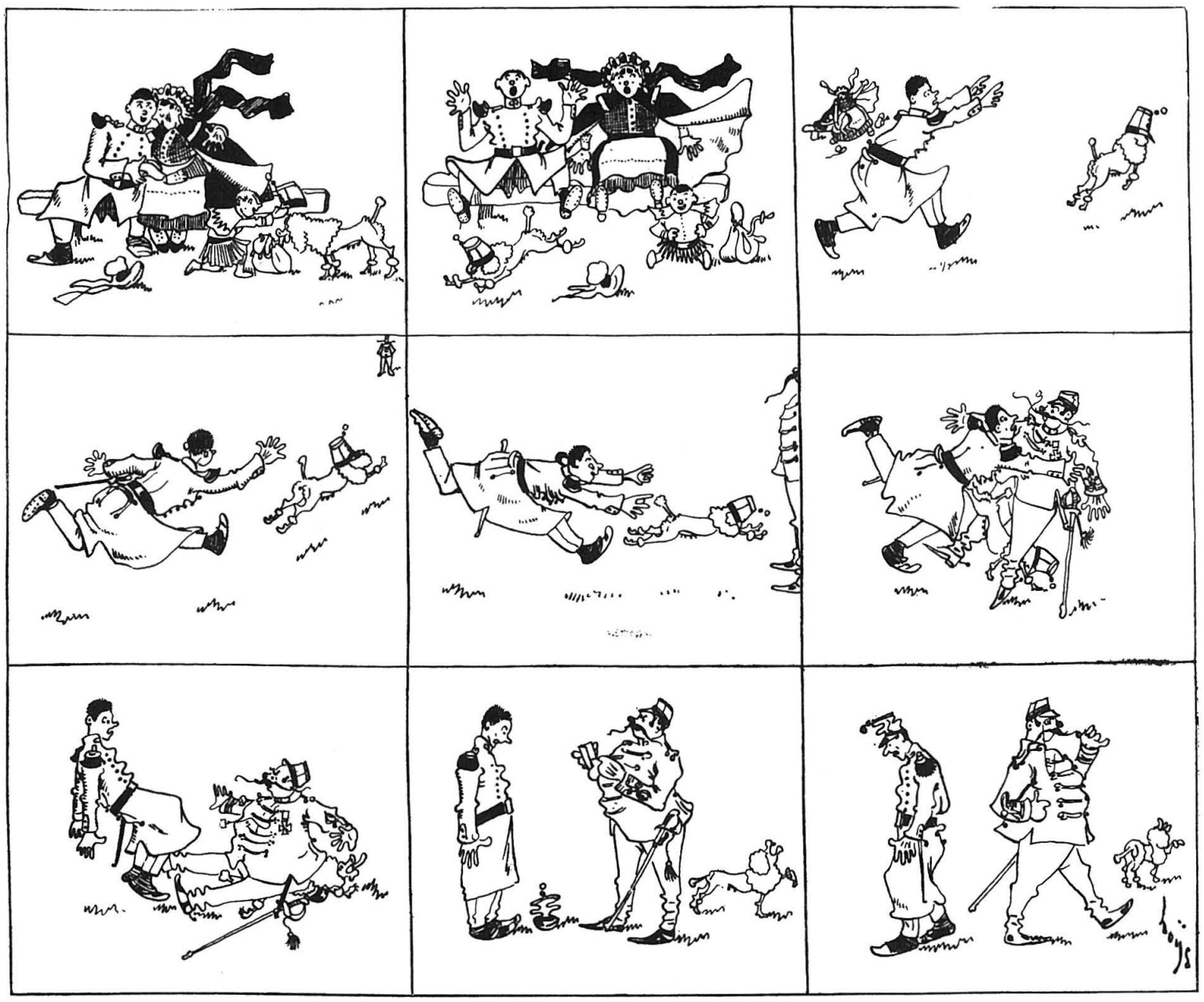


FIG. 8.8. Loÿs: "Love's Labors Lost" (1886).

contrast, the desecration or mutilation of the sacred uniform (characteristically the result of an attempt to make love) ends simply in a short jail sentence. (Other motifs of humiliation in this group of strips resemble those in Busch: soldiers getting their backsides stuck in dough, their shakos glued to their heads by children and so on.)

The risk the soldier takes when he tries to make love during sentry duty is not only that he will be punished when the girl's presence is discovered but also that the superior officer will seize the girl as a prize. Off duty, however, the soldier is featured as the irresistible lover, especially when walking in the park, where his natural target is the nursemaid with her charge. Was there in reality a high incidence of courtship and marriage between soldiers and nurses (including wet nurses) that might explain this persistent stereotype in graphic humor? The large corps of young, single female servants, confined in watchful bourgeois households and left with little opportunity to seek matches of their own, would be naturally drawn to the often-idle garrison roaming the parks and streets. The youthful corporal Caran d'Ache himself is described as "beau comme le jour" and the inspirer of fatal passions in nursemaids of the Jardin des Tuileries.[20] There is, at any rate, a satisfying symbolism in the union of professional protector and professional nurturer, which institutionalizes polar and complementary sexual roles at the popular, biological base. Assured of its self-perpetuation, the army will provide the necessary demographic defense against fertile, expanding Prussia. In "Love's Labors Lost" the soldier demonstrates his paternal as well as amorous prowess by using the nurse's infant charge as a means of access to the nurse, whose fatness promises fruitfulness. Her acceptance of his subsequent amorous gesture toward her is echoed by the child's putting on the soldier's hat, which signals his acceptance of a military father. But then the child puts the hat on the dog, which runs off with it, and the soldier in chase of both collides with a superior officer—of course—and gets booked. The nursemaid, meanwhile, has disappeared (Fig. 8.8).

In the park, the target is the nursemaid; in the home, it is the cook, a type also freighted with nurturance symbolism. The disciplinarian mistress of the household plays the role of the superior officer who scotches and punishes the soldier's amorous ambitions; and the kitchen cupboard becomes the equivalent of the sentry box, where the soldier hides, is trapped, and then is discovered.[21] In a curious early reversal of this stereotypical situation, in a longer story called *The Loves of a Carabineer and a Cook; or, Virtue is Never Rewarded,* the mistress of the house, Miss Sarah Pudding, takes the soldier from the cook. The catalyst for her love is one of his tall, shiny military boots, which, carelessly served up by the cook in a soup, is hailed by Miss Pudding as a new and exotic vegetable. She traces it to its equally tall and splendid owner and, stripping him of his second boot, weeps into it her desperate love. Sexual substitute to her, to the adjutant, however, the boots are a symbol of military order, and he sets about extracting from his subordinate an explanation for the "desertion of his boots." Indeed, the situation so alarms the adjutant that he suffers an apoplexy and dies (Fig. 8.9). The carabineer is arrested for voluntary homicide and jailed, only to be heroically sprung by Miss Pudding and reunited with her—at which pregnant moment the story is, alas, suspended. A pair of military boots was a potent symbol; in a later strip, a beggar beats up a cop in order to rob him of this sartorial prize, which, gleaming like gold or a religious object, qualifies him to compete in the social dance.[22]

The conspicuous mustache is another sexually potent military symbol. In one rare victory, a jilted rustic lover courageously singes it off with a burning stick;[23] more typically, however, the mustachioed military man wins. The mere fingering and twirling

20. Brisson 1900, 4.
21. E.g., "L'Armoire," *Chat Noir,* January 30, 1886. A similar story by Komar, "Prervannay idyll," appears in *Strekoza,* no. 15 (1884).
22. Döes, "A propos de bottes," *Chat Noir,* October 18, 1890.
23. Loÿs, "Histoire d'une moustache," *Caricature,* August 2, 1884.

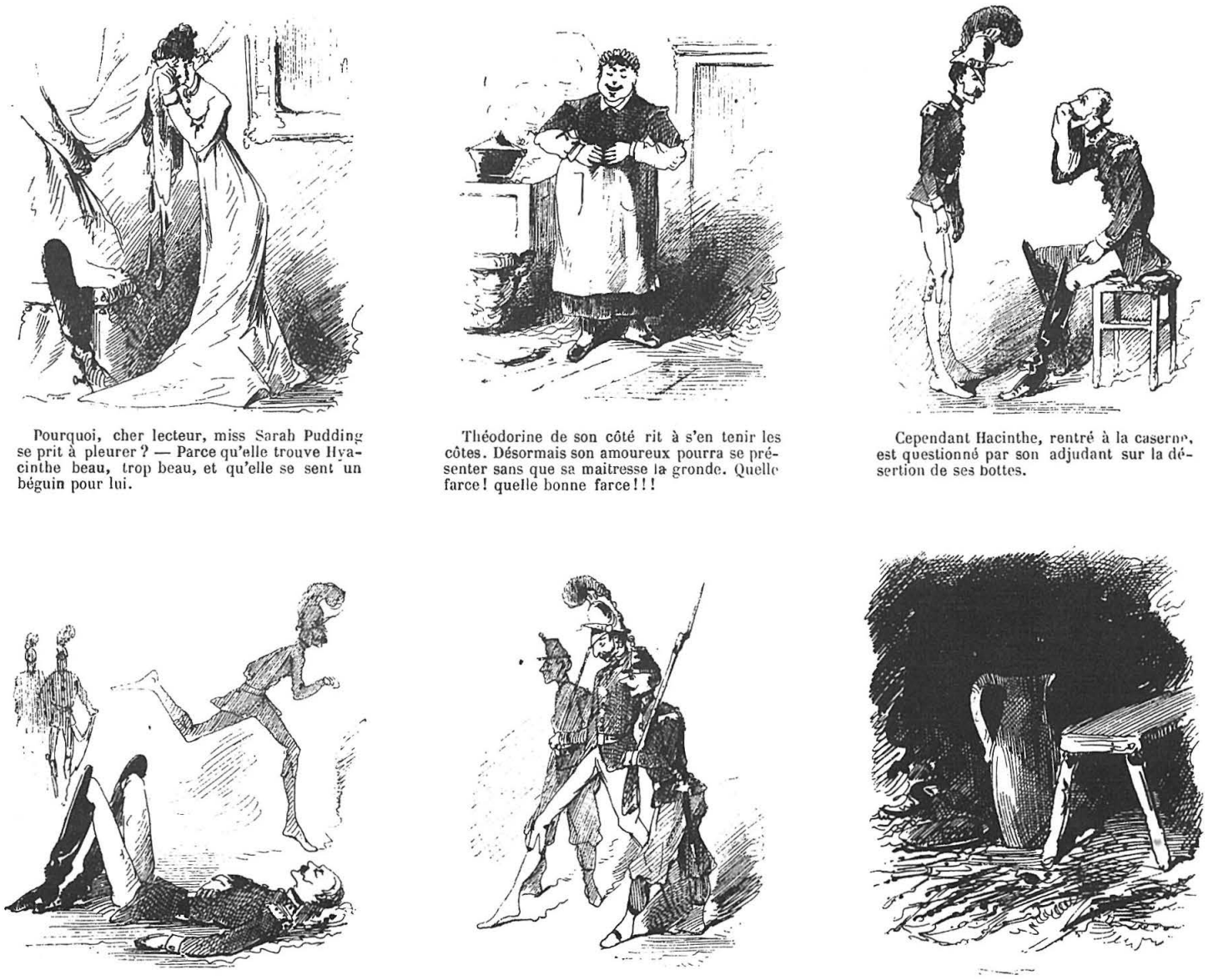


FIG. 8.9. Valère Morland: *The Loves of a Carabineer and a Cook; or, Virtue Is Never Rewarded* (1867).
Miss Sarah Pudding weeps for the beauty of Hyacinthe. / Theodorine laughs uproariously to think that her lover can now visit her with impunity. What a joke! / Meanwhile Hyacinthe, back in his barracks, is questioned about the desertion of his boots. / The truth is out in a moment; the overzealous adjutant has a stroke. Having lost his boots, Hyacinthe loses his head and flees. / Arrested for voluntary homicide of a superior, / he is thrown into jail to await judgment by a military court.

of this phallic antenna conveys menace, domination, the savoring of triumph (see Fig. 8.8). In another Loÿs strip, the mustache is the primary attribute of the officer who, having seized a girl from her rustic lover, impregnates her and then abandons her with their child. The shamed girl's angry parents, at whose feet she lays the child, happily welcome the first lover, who generously agrees to take mother and baby. But then the mustachioed military braggadocio reappears, leaving the twice-jilted peasant with only one option: suicide (Fig. 8.10).

Christophe: Le Sapeur Camember

In the course of the 1890s antimilitarism grew apace with the socialist, anarchist, and pacifist movements. Books published in 1887–1890 revealing the inhuman violence of military prisons—which the comic strips had casually accepted as a normal part of military discipline—created a serious scandal. Then in 1894 the Dreyfus affair erupted. By the end of the century caricature was dedicated increasingly to attacking militarism and military abuses, with many magazines specially started for that purpose.[24]

In this context, *Sapper Camember* appeared as an attempt to neutralize an increasingly charged topic. The embodiment of the benign, foolish soldier, he was the creation of the schoolmaster Georges Colomb, who, under the name Christophe, in March 1889 launched *Le Petit Français Illustré,* a cheap (ten-centime) weekly subtitled "Journal des Ecoliers et Ecolières" (Magazine for

24. Lethève 1961, 98–100.



FIG. 8.10. Loÿs: "Villein Is Always Wrong" (1884).

Schoolboys and Schoolgirls), the first French children's magazine to carry a regular comic strip. Christophe's strips were outwardly uniform, composed of eight equal, framed scenes on a single page and with ample text. After some *histoires sans paroles* (stories without words) in the German manner, Christophe started, on August 31, *La Famille Fenouillard,* which at first concerned the little adventures of a bourgeois family visiting the great Paris Exhibition and then was developed to embrace unexpected and exotic perils all over the world. On January 4, 1890, Christophe added another serial, *The Tricks of Sapper Camember,* which continued until September 12, 1896, to a total of over fifty one-page episodes or jokes (there was more continuity later on). It was then published as an oblong album, like *La Famille Fenouillard,* which had reached this format three years before. A third serial, *Vie et mésaventures du savant Cosinus* (Life and Misfortunes of Scientist Cosinus), about an absent-minded scientist and inspired by Töpffer's *Dr. Festus,* ran 1893–1896, becoming as an album *L'Idée fixe du savant Cosinus*. And from 1894 a fourth serial ran, *Les Malices de Plick et Plock,* intended, with its *Fliegende Blätter*–type gnomes, for younger children. At times, then, Christophe was drawing three different series simultaneously—and no doubt adding considerably to his income.

Christophe's style is briskly realistic and neatly contoured; he uses few graphic tricks and regular framing. Graphically unadventurous, even monotonous, he is easy to read and altogether reminiscent of contemporary vanguard Imagerie d'Epinal. One can understand that such a style should be regarded as having "perfected what was to be for a long time the format of the European [children's] picture story."[25] It was also suited for coloring by hand. The lack of physical action in *Sapper Camember,* compared with *La Famille Fenouillard,* throws the emphasis on the verbal component. It is part of Christophe's didactic design to raise his young readers' literary skills and appeal to their curiosity about language, its charms and pitfalls. The prolixity of the captions also tends to submerge the debt Christophe owes to Töpffer.

The album edition adds prefatory text and strips on the sapper's childhood and location in history.[26] He was born on February 29, 1844, so that although nominally twenty-six years old in 1870, when the strips are set, he has had only five birthdays—a comic calendrical justification, as it were, for his characterization, which is in many ways childlike. The end of the Second Empire serves as the historical setting ostensibly so that the hero's head might be ornamented with a great busby (*bonnet à poil*); yet certainly this "last echo of the Grande Armée" serves also to link the great military tradition of the first Napoleon with that which "died" (to be reborn) in 1870.

The son of a cobbler, Camember resists education and is conscripted into the army, where he is designated a sapper because of his beard. (Boulanger encouraged beards for all ranks.) Camem-

25. Edward François, cited in Couperie 1967, 11.

26. *Sapper Camember* reached its twenty-eighth edition in 1958. I refer to the tenth, published by Armand Colin, of 1920. Quotations, pp. 209, 34, and 157. For the author in general, see Caradec 1956, where he is recorded as insisting that Camember was based on a real-life *sapeur* (p. 128).

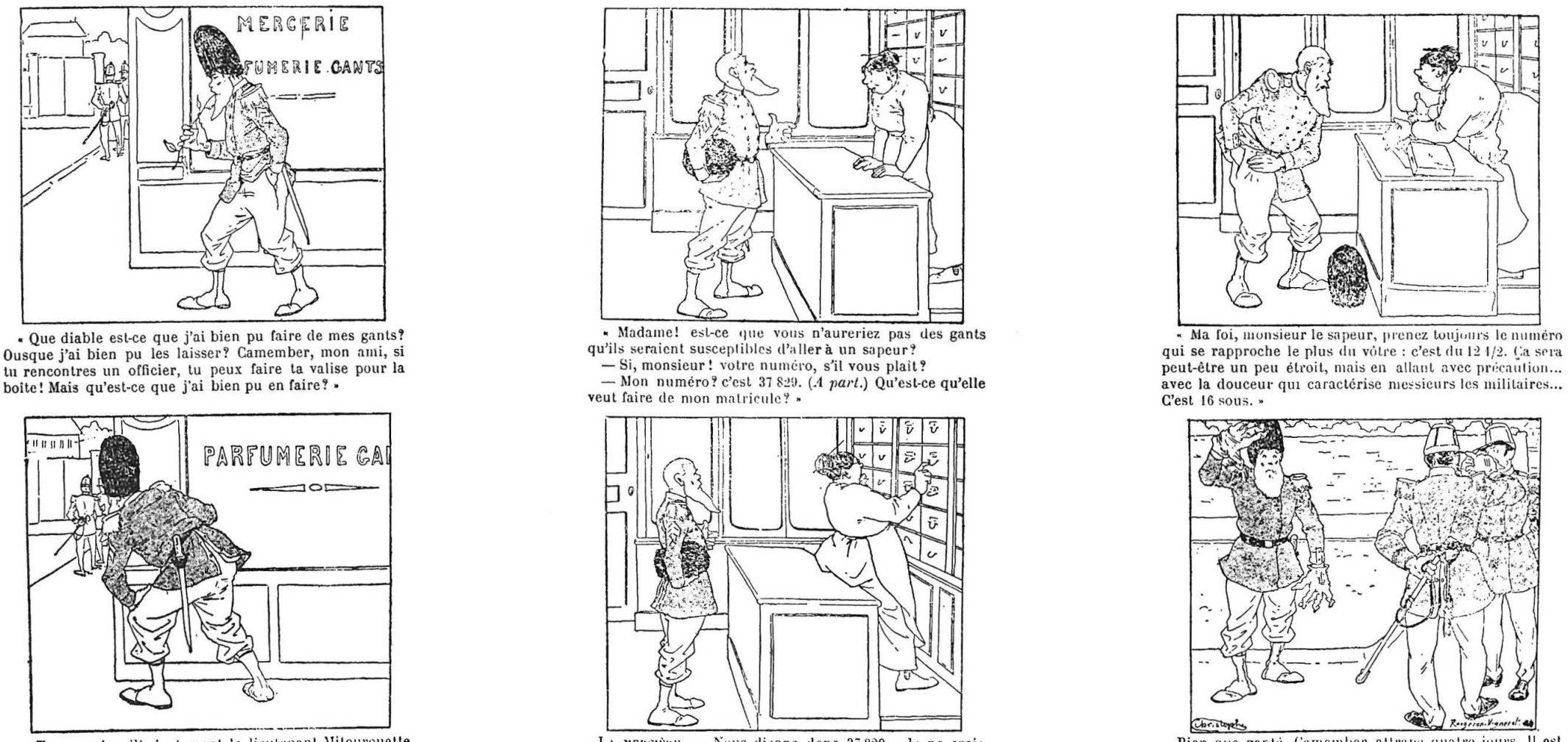


FIG. 8.11. Christophe: *The Tricks of Sapper Camember* (1893). "Fatal Mistake."
"What can I have done with my gloves? Camember, if you meet an officer, it's the brig for you!" / "That's it! There's Lieutenant Mitourette and Captain Brizard, and only ten minutes to go to roll call!... Camember, if you haven't found your gloves three minutes from now...." / "Madame you don't have gloves likely to fit a sapper?" "Surely Sir! Your number [*numéro,* or size], please?" "My number? 37,829. (aside) What does she want with my registration number?" / Haberdasher: "You said 37,829.... I don't seem to have that size!" Camember: "Have a good look-see, Madame, because if you don't find it, for sure I'll be in the brig in two shakes of a stick, and painlessly!" / "Well, sapper, just take the nearest size—12½. It will be a bit on the tight side, but with that famous military delicacy.... That'll be 16 sous." But Captain Brizard gives Camember four days. "What an eye, huh, the captain, seeing right off that the gloves weren't mine!"

ber remains in the lowest rank and unpromotable; he is apparently illiterate, which, although likely enough in mid century when half of France was unlettered, was quite a rarity by century's end. He represents the military primitive, at whom the better-educated child (reader of the *Petit Français illustré*) could smile in condescension—and whose ineducability served as a warning.

Camember is still the traditional victim of military discipline, but now deservedly so. When he gets four days in the brig for wearing the wrong size gloves (Fig. 8.11), his nemesis is not so much the "civilian relapse" as his excessive zeal to carry out orders to the letter. This propensity grows from the simple seed of peasant ignorance of the wiles of metaphor, but in the fertile soil of military mindlessness it flourishes into exotic blooms of error—and is always, instantly and inevitably, punished. It is the logical fruit of the army's inculcation: that orders should be obeyed blindly, that is, literally, even when they seem nonsensical; and that such obedience should lead to trouble and punishment, because therein lies the life cycle of army existence. After going to jail for the umpteenth time for his good intentions, Camember confides to Mademoiselle Victoire, the colonel's housekeeper (in an episode aptly titled "Camember, Victim of a Metaphor"): "They say passive obedience is the basis of order. Well! It's not true. Seeing that when the sapper obeys, he gets jailed. From now on, I won't obey, that's definite." (Or, on a similar occasion: "I'll only obey orders I'm not given.") The continuation of the strip depends, of course, on Camember's inability to act on this realization.

Christophe's strips are didactic in the narrower sense, designed to teach children the difference between apparent and real logic, between language and reality. In the gap between the two lies humor. Military "reality"—both in fact and as interpreted through military language—is the only reality Camember knows. Told by his parents that they have been officially informed of his death, he goes to his colonel to inquire, humbly, whether the information is true. His language is a parody of military-bureaucratic jargon, which, by seeking to impose itself through the use of ponderous words and constructions, lends itself to crude, comic imitation by underlings, petty officials, social upstarts, and children. Much of the wit of the strip lies in Camember's picturesque malapropisms, elaborate redundancies, and tortured syntax. He says

"avec vélocipède" for "avec vélocité," the standard military for "vite," or quickly; and he is capable of real mouthfuls: "A reiterative reason, but that it is not to be considered insubsequential, and that positively stupefactions me with overwhelmment"—amusing negative models for children trying to master vocabulary and syntax. Moreover, Camember is also the social primitive in the outside world, into which he makes the occasional foray. In a fancy restaurant, for instance, he is mystified by the pyramidally folded napkins and by the toothpicks, which he tries to eat.

But there are other dimensions to Camember. He is also the clown, concealing cunning behind stupidity and walking the fine line between them. And the eternal victim even finds his own dupe, in the raw recruit Cancrelat (*cancre* meaning "dunce"), who looks up to the bearded veteran like a father and is the butt of a series of jokes, some of them chestnuts, that Camember plays on him—on the pretext of doing him a good turn. Here again, the tricks tend to turn on verbal ambiguities. Like the apparent folly of the court jester, then, Camember's folly may be viewed as ultimately subversive of the real intentions of his superiors and the proper functioning of the military machine. Included here are medical officers, whom Camember in effect, semiconsciously, outwits by misinterpreting their prescriptions, cheap and simple though they are. (The presence of the military doctors also testifies to the army's new concern, following Boulanger's reforms, for the health of the common soldier.)

In the strip too, military society is a caricature of civilian society. Camember is not merely a soldier; he is the personal manservant and jack-of-all-trades to the colonel, gallantly extending his helping hand also to the colonel's wife and their housekeeper-cook, Mademoiselle Victoire. He is a nostalgic, almost feudal image of the faithful, versatile household retainer (if he messes up, it is the heart that counts), but at a time of increasing working-class militance.

To complete the ideology of the piece, Camember must get married in the end. His generous paternal instinct first manifests itself during a tour of duty in Algeria, where he adopts a native orphan. Naming him Victorin, he entrusts the boy to Mademoiselle Victoire when called to fight in the impending war against Germany; before leaving, he proposes marriage. Hitherto, the relationship of Camember and the housekeeper had been one of cordial cooperation in practical tasks; no erotic games or even physical contact was possible in a children's strip. Indeed, it is some time before Mademoiselle Victoire even gets to know his first name, which he playfully makes her guess, with the clue that it begins with an *F*. "Fictor? . . . Fincent?" "No—Ephraim!"

Mademoiselle Victoire speaks French with a strong German accent and, although her origin is not specified, she must come from Alsace-Lorraine, the provinces taken by Germany in the war. The subtitle of the collected edition was "Natural, Truthful and Compilatory History of a Sapper Who Bore the Ax and the Apron." The marriage of Camember and Mademoiselle Victoire therefore represents not only that union of protector and nurturer we have already identified as a subcategory of the military strip but also the much desired reincorporation of the ravished provinces, an interpretation confirmed by the name Victoire.

In fighting the Germans and saving the colonel's life (a locus classicus of the popular literature), Camember proves that valor has nothing to do with intelligence; and in marrying Mademoiselle Victoire and giving her "eight sons at the last count" and a promise of more, "enough to fill a complete squadron on a war footing," he proves that virility has nothing to do with intelligence either. Camember is not only the common soldier whose simplemindedness we may mock; he is also the embodiment of the patriotic courage and fruitfulness that will restore the position of France vis-à-vis her enemy.

The critique of military discipline that lower-class readers, conscripts, and ex-conscripts would have recognized, gratefully, in the strips of the cheap comic magazines is, as it were, neutralized in Christophe's stereotype of the benignly simple soldier who never questions hierarchy. Like his female counterpart, the stupid servant-girl Bécassine—who, also designed to appeal to upper-class children's sense of social superiority, was shortly to follow Camember as a children's classic—*Sapper Camember* points to class attitudes of the 20th- rather than the 19th-century comic strip.

CHAPTER 9

CHAT NOIR

Cabaret and Magazine

The "artistic cabaret" of Montmartre developed out of a combination of the informal popular entertainment of the *café-concerts* or *café-chantants,* which, with their raucous, often satirical songs, had flourished since the later years of the Second Empire, and the cafés where vanguard artists—the impressionists, who met at the Café Guerbois, for example—congregated to exchange ideas, plot their system of cultural resistance, and build their citadel against the bourgeoisie. Montmartre, a still-rural area on a hill overlooking the capital, was far enough from the metropolitan hub to offer a substantially lower cost of living. It had been attracting artists since the 1840s, and it was there that, in 1881, some former members of a Left Bank coterie calling themselves the Hydropathes opened the first "cabaret artistique." Their leader, Rodolphe Salis, then twenty-nine years old, the son of a brandy maker of Châtellerault, began when parental support dried up to sell his father's liquor from his studio, which he set up as a pub—the Chat Noir. Here "poets, painters, sculptors, citharists and other troubadours publish[ed] their elucubrations, and motley poets cast into the winds of publicity their intimate hurricanes."[1] The declared aim, initially, was to attract not a regular bourgeois clientele but "iconoclasts, travelers, anarchists, Neo-Caledonians [i.e., deported criminals, communards], print-sellers, and others." The locale, described by the owner as "Dantesque, Shakespearean, a terrible spot," was capable of holding forty comfortably, a hundred when necessary. The decoration was original, with 17th-century furniture and medieval lamps and weaponry. The attraction was, above all, the informal entertainment offered, to begin with, every Friday night. The performers were not paid, and any amateur could offer his services; but the best-known performer was a professional familiar from the Parisian *café-concert* scene, Jules Jouy, who had collaborated on the radical, labor-oriented newspapers *Parti ouvrier* and *Cri du peuple* and who sang of the social and political realities of the day.

The journal of the Chat Noir, which started on January 14, 1882 (large folio, four pages, fifteen centimes), was originally conceived as a kind of prospectus for the cabaret, inaugurated November 18 the previous year, but it soon assumed independent life in word and image. Edited by ex-Hydropathe president Emile Goudeau and directed by cabaret owner Salis, it was put together at odd moments on the premises of the cabaret. It was very much a house journal, given to in-group jokes and self-parody, editors and regular contributors forming a close-knit group of friends who indulged in frequent mutual dedications of verse and graphics and constant more-or-less flattering allusions to one another.

The Chat Noir cabaret, together with its magazine, billed as the "Organe des intérêts de Montmartre," set out from the start to construct itself as the center and source of the romantic-bohemian legend of Montmartre, with a self-consciously and comically exaggerated vanguard mentality. The Chat Noir was the essence and heart of Montmartre, the "cradle of humanity, the navel of the universe, the suckling breast of the world" (in allusion to the breast-shaped hill on which Montmartre stood). Montmartre was, by incontrovertible ethnographic, philological, and archeological proof, the most ancient town in the world, and also the most beautiful, rich, and flourishing. Founded by a coterie to amuse a coterie, the Chat Noir also set itself the goal of interpreting Paris for the Montmartrois, and Montmartre for the Parisians.

In the first number of the *Chat Noir,* Salis showed Puss-in-Boots turning a camera on the various foolish animals of the outside world. Yet the true symbol of the *Chat Noir* was no aristocratic Puss-in-Boots. The regular masthead drawing by Henri Pille, carried from first issue to last, shows a scrawny alley cat, the spectral genius of an inhospitable wasteland relieved only by equally scrawny windmills (Fig. 9.1). One of these, the Moulin de la Galette, is the same that gave the name to the restaurant and dance ground joyfully immortalized by Renoir in 1876; here, however, it is seen as a ghostly relic of the past, fit neither for milling nor for dancing but only for nightmares. This penumbra was the social margin occupied by Montmartre, with its special mix of struggling artists, poor craftsmen, old communards, vagrants, prostitutes, and lesbians.

Salis himself had radical sympathies. He had earlier founded a "still-born red journal" called the *Citoyen*. In 1882 the *Chat Noir* was one of the few magazines in Paris capable of stating, brutally, that the workers would applaud the guillotining of the bosses, and rightly so (February 4). Tiret-Bognet, in his cartoons, sided even more unequivocally than Zola with the striking miners (March 11).

1. *Chat Noir,* April 22, 1882. Henceforth all unattributed citations in the text are for this magazine, with issue date given in parentheses.



FIG. 9.1. *Chat Noir,* first issue, January 14, 1882.

The *Chat Noir* profited in both the political and the moral domain from the recent (July 1881) relaxation of censorship and applauded the emergence of a true republic, rid at last of conservative control. On March 18, 1882, a special supplement appeared containing a serious drawing (his last work) by André Gill, a friend of Salis's and perhaps the most famous and most censored political caricaturist of the preceding generation, now struggling with poverty and insanity. In this drawing, Gill hailed the Republic as the springtime pubescence of a young girl proudly showing her budding breasts: "Ça pousse! Vive la République"—an unambiguous assertion of the new political and moral freedom within which the magazine moved.

After 1882, apart from the odd cartoon by Tiret-Bognet, the magazine began to abandon its outspoken radical-socialist defense of the lower classes, revealing an underlayer of anarchist philosophy and attitudes mixed with chauvinist revanchism. The main enemy in the cartoons of Salis, Caran d'Ache, and their ilk was Bismarck and Prussian militarism, with British imperialism a poor second. On January 13, 1883, the magazine proudly announced that it had been banned in Germany. But although political chauvinism infects the *Chat Noir* comic strips from time to time, it is as a major manifestation of cultural anarchism that they command our attention.

The anarchism of the *Chat Noir* was, in a magazine designed to entertain, of a humorous, satirical, and fantastic nature. Its cultural politics hinged on a cordial detestation of Zola's brand of naturalism and social evangelism (a hostility shared by the other major caricature magazine founded at this time, Robida's *La Caricature*). The philosophy of the *Chat Noir* became that of Willette's Pierrot: social irresponsibility. It delighted in clowning and *fumisterie,* or hoaxing, acting out in the real (or real-literary) world the tradition of the art-student prank. The *Chat Noir* wanted to confuse and provoke everyone, whatever their political alignment. Its first major spoof was both a publicity stunt and an attack on Zola. Within a few months of its founding, the journal announced the death of Rodolphe Salis. The cabaret was actually closed, draped in black, and a coffin set inside; a funeral was announced and held. An obituary (April 22) revealed the dread truth: seized with literary ambition, Salis had spent a month on a naturalist novel called *Bredouille* (Jabber). On realizing that his novel was none other than (Zola's) *Pot-Bouille*—which Goudeau had been parodying in the magazine and which Zola had supposedly stolen from *him*—Salis had decided to commit suicide.

The *Chat Noir* played other, less credible but more portentous, jokes as well, such as announcing (on October 28 and November 2, 1882) a coup d'état, the execution of the republican hero Gambetta, the jailing of Salis, and the suppression of all journals except the *Vie Parisienne*. A new anti-Prussian French government was set up, with Salis as minister of war and Willette as minister of fine arts, as a reproach to the gray, do-nothing policies of President Grévy. Soon thereafter, the long-suffering worker was shown shoveling out all the politicians (January 27, 1883). The restoration of the monarchy in Montmartre was announced, and the monarchist General Duc d'Aumale was (along with Sarah Bernhardt) mock-featured as an editor of the magazine.

But the Chat Noir cabaret was also able to attract the radical left opposition, to judge from the list of celebrities in attendance at the inauguration of the new premises on June 27, 1885: Georges Clemenceau, Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau, and Henri Rochefort, as well as the literary vanguard, including Guy de Maupassant (briefly listed as an editor of the magazine), Joris-Karl Huysmans, Catulle Mendès, Antonin Proust, Ernest Renan, and Etienne Carjat.

Anticlericalism, a major strand of anarchist philosophy, entered the magazine primarily through Adolphe Willette. He had enjoyed a *succès de scandale* in the Salon of 1883 with a highly ambiguous painting (a sketch of which was published in the *Chat Noir* of May 19, 1883) of the Bad Thief on his cross being pas-

sionately embraced by a girl who looked like a combination of gypsy and good-hearted Montmartre prostitute. The painting depicted Montmartre's embrace with sin, in outright defiance of the orthodox Christianity represented by the church of the Sacré-Coeur, recently built above Montmartre as a gaudy, luxurious symbol of renascent clericalism. The Sacré-Coeur stood, as Willette put it, planted between the Moulin de la Galette and the Moulin Rouge like Jesus between the two thieves.[2] In early 1884 (January 19), Willette published an even more provocative mingling of sacred and profane. Under the title "Notre-Dame de la Galette," a prostitute stands before the shadowy figure of a cupid crucified on an enormous cross. She exposes her breast and a heart emblazoned with a radiant twenty-franc piece—her going price. The caption reads "Oh! le Sacré-Coeur!"[3] Venal love is the new religion (as Zola's *Nana* had also demonstrated), the prostitute its priestess and martyr. Willette's sense of the truly tragic plight of the prostitute emerges in a third drawing, which became the most famous of all. Entitled "Les Petits Oiseaux meurent les pattes en l'air" (Little Birds Die Paws Up), it shows a young girl lying in the snow, smiling in death, her pretty stockinged legs sticking up vertically like those of the dead bird beside her, while above her the huge ghostly head of her predator, a cat, hungrily looms.[4]

Willette's last drawing appeared on May 2, 1885; he had finally tired of contributing drawings for free and enriching Salis, whom he came to detest as a rapacious entrepreneur who ripped off his artists. At the same time, the cabaret entered a new phase. A long-simmering conflict with the "Alphonses," the local pimps of the Boulevard Rochechouart, had led to a fight that involved Salis directly and left one of his waiters dead. Moreover, with the cabaret's increasing popularity, the premises had become too small. Salis therefore decided to move. The old locale was taken over by Aristide Bruant, who had built up his reputation as a singer at the Chat Noir, and he now established there a cabaret of his own, the Mirliton. From 1890 Bruant became furiously popular and, through the posters of Toulouse-Lautrec and Steinlen, known to the graphic vanguard.

In the new, spacious quarters in the Rue Victor Massé there was room on the first floor to install another kind of entertainment, which was to prove tremendously attractive and make Salis's fortune for a decade: the Chinese shadow theater of Henri Rivière. The popularity of this kind of theater was then at its zenith in Europe, and its subgenre of magic lantern show heavily influenced the increasingly contour- and black-and-white-conscious comic strip. The best-remembered Chinese shadow play produced at the Chat Noir was the *épopée napoléonienne* (Napoleonic epic), a big (mock-)patriotic epic designed by Caran d'Ache and presented with a burlesque commentary, intoned by Salis, satirizing the haut-bourgeois audience.

In its graphics, the *Chat Noir* magazine seems to have reached or passed its peak before the 1885 move and the shift in emphasis to Chinese shadow theater. (Indeed, the strips already constituted a sort of shadow theater in themselves.) Willette left to work for the *Courrier Français* and even founded his own short-lived journal, the *Pierrot*. Steinlen supplied comic strips of decreasing interest until 1890, having reached his peak with the cat stories and the series "Contes à Sara," which ended in 1887. Thereafter the *Chat Noir* ran mechanically farcical conventional strips often reminiscent of the *Fliegende Blätter*. The magic of the early years degenerated into the tepid and pointless, relieved only briefly by the surrealism of Verbeck. Circulation declined, and in 1895 the magazine folded.

The amateurish, spontaneous, casual, and noncommercial air of the early *Chat Noir* had much to do with the fact that Salis did not (in the early days) pay his contributors in cash or kind; only the editor, Emile Goudeau, was given free drinks in compensation for his labors. How Salis got away with this remains a mystery. It is true that the income from advertisements remained low, the small advertising section often filled largely with self-promotional notices and advertisements for strictly local enterprises such as the Cirque Fernando; yet the original printing of 1,100 soon swelled to 12,000, and then, by 1885, to 15,000.[5] Most of the *Chat Noir* artists were genuinely poor, however; only Salis grew rich.

But Salis was, for many years at any rate, admired, liked, and perhaps even loved. He incarnated the anarchic, satiric spirit of the *Chat Noir* (Willette dubbed him "Rodolphe Malice"), and this passed from him into the comic strips. In a portrait of November 3, 1883, he is eulogized in his multiple roles of publican, orator, painter, journalist, collector, father, and *fumiste* (hoaxer). Dressed as a Louis XIII–era robber, he harangued people from behind the counter where, together with his attractive red-haired wife, he personally pulled the bocks. He also had a captivating little daughter, Sara (to whom Steinlen would dedicate a series and album of comic strips). As a public performer Salis's appeal lay in the apparent contempt in which he held his clientele (much like Lenny Bruce in our own day) and in his real oratorical and histrionic gifts. He also wrote a regular column of commentary in burlesqued archaic French. Although the strips of Willette and Steinlen remain more symbolist than realist and lack Salis's satirical topicality, their aggressiveness and irresponsibility, as well as their flashes of lyricism and pathos, may well owe something to the personal styles of Salis and other performers at the Chat Noir, including the great Aristide Bruant.

Willette and Pierrot

Willette's entry into the *Chat Noir,* after some desultory work for other papers, was, despite the lack of pay, a liberation. He immediately found the style, genre, and subject that would give him the required freedom of expression. He remembered the first encounter with Salis gratefully: "Salis asked for a drawing, gratis and unpaid, for the *Chat Noir* but gave me the freedom to think and do as I pleased. It was for me an almost totally new joy, and the drawing I gave him showed it. Immediately Salis and the *Chat Noir* editors baptized me Pierrot, for they already foresaw the success that provoked such laughter when, the following week in the eleventh issue, there appeared 'Pierrot fumiste,' without the usual caption. It was the black Pierrot, which people were pleased to call, subsequently, 'the *Pierrot noir* [black Pierrot] *of Willette*.'"[6] To the very end of his life Willette defended the priority and originality of his conception against the old accusation of Huysmans that he had stolen the idea of a *Pierrot noir* from poster artist Jules Chéret, who himself had taken it from the real-life costume of an American acrobatic-mime troupe, the Hanlon Lee Brothers. Willette's transformation was not limited to appearance; Pierrot had not only black coat, knee breeches, and slippers but also a black-tinged soul full of an original "tendresse et fantaisie."[7]

Willette's black Pierrot was an innovation not only in the iconographic history of that figure but also as a feature of graphic

2. Brisson 1900, 147.
3. Reproduced in Willette 1919, 96–97.
4. Reproduced in ibid., 89.
5. These are figures given in the magazine, and may be treated with some skepticism. On July 28, 1883 (p. 50), *Chat Noir* claimed fifty thousand readers. Mariel Oberthür, director of the Musée de Montmartre, who has written an inaccessible dissertation on the Chat Noir, tells me she has evidence that Salis did pay his artists (from the start?). For the cabaret and magazine in general, see Oberthür 1981.
6. Willette 1926, "Preface"; cf. Hugounet 1889, 218ff.
7. Cheret's illustrations to L. Hennique and J.-K. Huysmans's *Pierrot sceptique: Pantomime* (1881), show a Pierrot in black tights and tails but lack Willette's nervousness of contour.

art, caricature, and comic strip. In the course of the 1880s, brash and unnaturalistic contrasts of solid blacks and whites, prefigurements of art nouveau, began to transform graphic art. Willette stands at an early phase of this development. His Pierrot runs the gamut of expressive mimic postures and gestures, a lissome, solid black form on an all-white stage discharging with semaphoric clarity the hectic emotional language of his mercurial character. This language is of course borrowed, in the first instance, from the theater; but the geometric stylizations and foreshortenings, the linear acrobatics and explosions, are very much Willette's own. The ever-mobile facial expression undergoes a set of abbreviations and elisions that may be likened in effect to the mime's masklike greasepaint: "The makeup that covers him will be the hermetic curtain behind which one will try to see the man. On his familiar face of wrinkles, themselves distracting the scrutinizer, only the black features of his eyebrows, fluttering over the sockets of the piercing eyes, and the mouth a blood-red line like the edge of a Moroccan executioner's yataghan, will twitch in a grimace."[8] Willette was dubbed the "Deburau of the Pencil" (with allusion to a famous mime),[9] and his Pierrot constitutes the spirit of pantomime as defined by Baudelaire: the "quintessence of comedy . . . the pure comic element, purged and concentrated."[10]

For Willette, the antics of his Pierrot were the protest of the spirit against the physical stultification brought on by contemporary education, which sought to destroy body language by atrophying children's left hands in the name of good breeding, as the Chinese did the feet of little girls. Since his youth, the cinema had done much to reinstate the value of gesture, "man's first language . . . more eloquent than the word."[11] Willette is, with Toulouse-Lautrec and Beardsley (both of whom worked some years later), one of the great masters of expressive gesture, and recent attempts to disparage his achievements are incomprehensible.[12]

Willette benefited at the outset from the Gillot process, permitting direct photolithographic reproduction of his pen drawings, which preserved their vitality and a nervousness of contour that made editors (apart from Salis) nervous in turn. His style was too free for the directors of most journals, who, as Willette loudly complained, preferred the slick (*léchage*) to the licentious (*lâchage*).[13]

Like Steinlen, Willette used black and white to symbolically differentiate and polarize. White meant innocence and hope: when Pierrot appears in his traditional blousy, big-buttoned white suit, as in "Two Pages of Love" and "The Romance of the Rose" (see Figs. 9.3 and 9.9), it is to enhance the innocence of his character and the pathos of his fate. In "Picciola / My Rose Tree Is Dead" (see Fig. 9.7), he starts as a child, innocent by definition and therefore in white; at the end he is left a mourning adult, in his customary black suit. A similar change in costume takes place in "It Is a White Tale, It Is a Black Tale" (see Fig. 9.2). The symbolism also gained an actual social dimension: outside the coal merchant's house in the Rue Antoinette, where Willette rented a modest apartment, the artist hung a zinc cut-out sign lettered AU NOIR ET AU BLANC, showing the white man (Pierrot-Willette), carrying a coal sack, shaking hands with the black man (the coal merchant), carrying a flour sack, as a "symbolic image" of the harmony that should unite the different classes of society.[14]

Another of Willette's claims to originality lay in his initially presenting his Pierrot "without the usual caption." This omission, however, which seemed to befit the purely physical and farcical nature of Pierrot's first pantomimes, soon began to cause readers discomfort. As the artist developed his art, his narrative structure became increasingly capricious, compacted, and indeterminate, and could dissolve altogether in an ambiguous hodgepodge of symbolist fragments (for example, "Frissons de Pierrot" [Pierrot's Thrills], November 11, 1882). Unused to puzzling over meanings and connections that might or might not be there, readers demanded some kind of commentary. On December 30, 1882, the editors apologized, taking refuge behind the artist's recalcitrance. "And he refuses [to provide texts], O terrible subscribers, because they would injure the look of the sheet of drawings. An artistic question." Willette's silence was that of a true Pierrot, a mime who hailed from the silent planet, the moon.

But Willette himself vacillated on this question, and his next Pierrot appeared in an unconnected series of vignettes called "Pierrot s'amuse" (Pierrot Has Fun, March 3, 1883). A brief comment on the back page mocks the reader for his incomprehension, for demanding a narrative when none is intended: "Comprenez-vous l'écriture Pierrotglyphique?" Thereafter, Willette alternated between sequences with and without commentary; when it was provided, the commentary was always printed on a separate page, thus preserving in the drawings a certain pristine autonomy of silence. The impressive graphic sonnets on the rose-ideal (see "The Romance of the Rose" and "Picciola"; Figs. 9.9 and 9.7) have no text, the addition of which would have narrowed meanings intended to remain evocatively diffuse. Full commentaries for two other "philosophical" strips, however ("Two Pages of Love" and "White Tale, Black Tale"; Figs. 9.3 and 9.2), with more complex and more socially realistic settings, function to supply certain (minor) clarifications and bridges but otherwise merely display Willette's mediocre literary skills.

Like Goya, Willette established a shifting, ambivalent relationship between picture and text (caption), which reflected the artist's own ambivalence via-à-vis his material. In Goya and Willette the commentary can be evasive, oblique, oddly allusive, provocative, or vexing, rather than truly explanatory. There is perhaps only one sequence that both demands and receives a satisfactory textual explanation. This was Willette's last picture-story, entitled "Le Double Crime des Fourneaux" (January 3, 1885), a series of fragmentary sketches on a misty gray ground, mysterious and dreamlike. The text, by Fernand Fau, treats the drawings like the memory of a dream, casting Pierrot-Willette and Henri Rivière (another regular contributor) together in "hidden" enmity around a gratuitous surrealistic murder.

The more sophisticated critic, sympathetic to symbolism and its vagaries of logic, would have seen Willette's narrative method as conducive, not to a story as such, but to a kind of simultaneity of effect featuring a rapid succession of emotional states. One critic, thinking perhaps of "By the Light of the Moon" (see Fig. 9.8), with its rapid transitions from stupor, through astonishment and erotic frenzy, to destructive fury, wrote: "Each drawing is a poem, several drawings form the cantos of the same poem, the whole work, or part of the work, gives the same series of sensations. Mix the lot up, destroy the chronological order—which would, however, seem primary in a draftsman who appears to follow a chronicle—it is still the whole of life on view. Watch as they pass by, gaiety, lassitude, anger, satire, goodness, courage: man himself!"[15]

In Willette, each single captionless drawing strives also for a certain autonomy of moment—like a phrase or image in symbolist poetry, such as Mallarmé's, where the sequence of events is ambiguous and excessively compacted, and time fragmented. Willette's strips use chronological connectors or dividers in a fluid way. He invented certain peculiar devices to separate the vignettes or alternatively left the intervening space open and fitted the vi-

8. Hugounet 1889, 222–223.
9. Béraldi 1892, 12:293.
10. Baudelaire 1964, 161.
11. Willette 1919, 125.
12. Storey (1978, 120–121) speaks of his "deliberate vagueness and tenuity of outline" and "the effeminately sensitive, bloodless figure." Worse, Lehmann (1967, 216) finds Willette's Pierrot a sentimental, tottering type fit only for the drawing room piano. He was also put off by the "sloppy" texts, which are of course quite ancillary to the graphics.
13. Willette 1919, n.p.
14. Brisson 1900, 157. An etched reproduction can be found in Beuve 1909, 24–25. The sign was included in the Exposition de l'Enseigne, held November 1902 in the Hôtel de Ville, where it won a first prize.
15. Riotor 1903, 297.

gnettes loosely together so as to suggest a continuous flow of time between them. (Steinlen does this too; see, for example, Fig. 9.19.) In the open-space arrangement, elements from one scene are carried over virtually into the neighboring scene, to the side or below; in a few instances, the addition of a grayish background increases the sense that time itself has become fogged. In a comparable kind of elision, Willette uses as a divider a realistic scenic element, a lamppost or a tree, for example, in a manner reminiscent of the single-setting narrative of early Renaissance painting; or he might use a semirealistic, abstract, or metaphorical element, such as the repeated giant candle in "Pierrot fumiste chez Dinah Samuel" (May 6, 1882) or, successively, the flower, bar of music, owl in a tree, and moon in "L'Age d'or" (The Golden Age, September 23, 1882). Here the successive transformation of the divider seems to enact its own parallel symbolic gloss; this becomes quite evident in "By the Light of the Moon" (see Fig. 9.8), where it changes from lily to sunflower to budding rose before finally withering into a thistle stalk, on which Pierrot's erotic fantasy dissolves and rides away.

Steinlen, who joined the magazine some two years after Willette, also adopted the new silent mode but, remaining always more dramatist than poet, had no difficulty in rendering his stories sufficiently explicit to deter demands for texts. Movement in Steinlen is, to a degree, more rational and physical than psychological or emotional (as in Willette) and is mapped at a slower, more even pace, with a precinematographic (and post-Muybridge/Marey) scientific exactitude.

There developed some dispute over who deserved the honor for having pioneered the silent strip, the *histoire sans paroles,* which became a trademark of the *Chat Noir.* In his late autobiographical lectures, Willette plaintively contested the priority of the Germans (Busch and the *Fliegende Blätter*) in this matter, appealing directly to his public to check the dates. There are, however, several captionless stories by Wilhelm Busch and other *Fliegende Blätter* artists (and even the odd French one) from the 1860s; and Willette certainly knew of Busch (though not necessarily his silent strips) by 1871, when he discovered them, to his great delight, in Kassel. He "understood [Busch] without knowing any German, from the pictures alone." He cites in particular "W. Buch's" recently published story of a drunken crow (*Hans Huckebein*), which had "the clarity of a child's laughter"; and he refers to Steinlen's own (highly abbreviated) version of it for the *Chat Noir,* which eliminated Busch's text (in imitation, one infers, of Willette himself), as "his [Steinlen's] first success in Montmartre."[16]

After he had built up his reputation for other kinds of graphics, cartoons, illustrations, and paintings, Willette remembered the response to his wordless picture-stories for the *Chat Noir* as demonstrations of public "illiteracy" in reading pictures. "'No good, we can't understand you: you are so obscure! The devil! You can't make literature in art,' cry the gentlemen and ladies for whom an illustrated journal is the adjunct of the café or the dentist's waiting room." People are simply too lazy to "discover the sense of a thoughtful drawing. At eight years, I was the shame of my family because I couldn't read! I was given Images d'Epinal in the hope that the desire to understand the sense would force me to spell out the captions. . . . Bah! I understood without the help of the text."[17]

The transformation of Pedrolino, the foolish, rustic valet used by the Commedia dell'Arte as a foil and dupe for the crafty, urban Arlecchino, into a richly nuanced Pierrot independent of the other Commedia types was the great achievement of the mime J.-B.-G. Deburau. Incarnating Pierrot at the Théâtre des Funambules during the July monarchy, Deburau struck Gautier as "the most perfect actor who ever lived."[18] By mid century, the figure of Pierrot was a major literary property outside the theater, most notably in the work of Théodore de Banville (author of *Odes funambulesques* and *Pauvres saltimbanques*), to whom Willette dedicated his first rendition of the character. Pierrot had also been a primary iconographic theme for Gavarni (*L'Ecole des Pierrots*).

By the 1880s, Pierrot had become important to the poetic idiom of the new symbolist movement. Deburau, the "godparent of the multifarious Pierrots who gradually found their way into Romantic, Decadent and Symbolist literature"[19] (and, we may add, the art of Willette, who, although he cannot have seen the mime, mentions him in his memoirs), had already transformed the figure from the traditional naïf into the neurasthenic pariah, from the slapstick clown into the psychological sophisticate capable of a sinister and debonair cruelty.

For Banville, Baudelaire, and perhaps also Daumier in mid century, as later for Picasso (like Willette, a Montmartrois), Pierrot and his ilk personified the artist. The life of the circus clown, squalid, pathetic, and lonely, was a metaphor of artistic destiny; the artist as social outcast identified with Gautier's Pierrot: "the ancient slave, the modern proletarian, the pariah, the passive and disinherited being."[20]

In introducing his Pierrot in April 1882, Willette was riding the crest of a wave of symbolist, more or less neurotic Pierrots that invaded Salon, music hall, circus, and theater. In the summer of 1881, the twenty-one-year-old Paul Margueritte, a nephew of Mallarmé, opened a crude theater starring a "subtle, neurotic, cruel and ingenuous Pierrot, uniting in himself all contrasts, a veritable physical Proteus, a bit sadistic, willingly drunken, and perfectly villainous."[21] That same year, Léon Hennique and Huysmans wrote the pantomine apotheosizing the decadent Pierrot, *Pierrot sceptique,* and in 1883 Sarah Bernhardt performed the *Pierrot assassin* of Jean Richepin at the Trocadéro. In the circus, the "lugubrious farce and sinister buffoonery" of the Hanlon Lee Brothers was all the rage; in poetry, there was the macabre Pierrot of occasional *Chat Noir* contributor Paul Verlaine (published in 1882, although written in 1868).

The emphasis in the fin-de-siècle Pierrot seems to have been on his neuroticism, violence, and cruelty, but this is very much softened in Willette's version. Pierrot may strike fearsome blows, but he never kills or maims; his violence is of a slapstick kind, passionate, as he is, and generally nonsexual. He is perhaps more victim than victimizer, and capable at times of altruism and romantic love. He is of course ever the archindividualist: an egoistic trickster, an anarchist beholden to no authority but himself. But he spares his own kind. He may mock a poor old tramp by farting at him with the tramp's own recorder, but it is the landlord, the bourgeois, and the cop whom he bashes on the head (see Figs. 9.11, 9.12, and 9.13).[22] The rich philosophical nuances Pierrot acquired in his literary transformations, and in particular through the poetry of Jules Laforgue (which Willette could not have known), tend to become submerged in his crazy physical energy. But narrative complexities or ambiguities there certainly are, and these are what set Willette apart within the tradition of the comic strip, which had usually aimed for immediate comprehensibility.

Willette's own version of Pierrot's origin, as recounted in "It Is a White Tale, It Is a Black Tale," a title that well expresses Pierrot's moral duality, is half supernatural and half social. Through a perfectly transparent symbolic framework, Pierrot's destiny is revealed as akin to that of so many earthling children in hard-hearted, overpopulated Paris: he is abandoned by his frivolous mother, naked, in midwinter, at the Gate of Paradise. Paradise is now inhabited by, if not actually the creation of, the bourgeoisie:

16. Willette 1919, 132. Willette here seems to be confusing Steinlen's first published strip, "Le Corbeau et le chat" (February 23, 1884), with his "Horrible fin de Bazouge" (April 11, 1885; see Fig. 15.16), which is about a drunken crow and directly inspired by Busch's *Hans Huckebein.*
17. Willette, in *Maîtres Humoristes* (1907–1908). The preface cited here is missing in some copies of this work.
18. Storey 1978, 93.
19. Ibid., 94.
20. Ibid., 109.
21. Ibid., 117–118.
22. In Mélandri's *Les Pierrots: Fantaisie en vers* (Paris, n.d. [ca. 1885]), illustrated by Willette, Pierrot plays tricks on three guardians of order, bourgeois, concierge, and cop, in turn. Hugounet (1889, 221) explains the black suit as the "bourgeoisification" of Pierrot, who in his white *blouse* had represented the people; but this interpretation is contrary to Willette's consistently anti-bourgeois characterization of the figure, who harbors black designs against the established order.

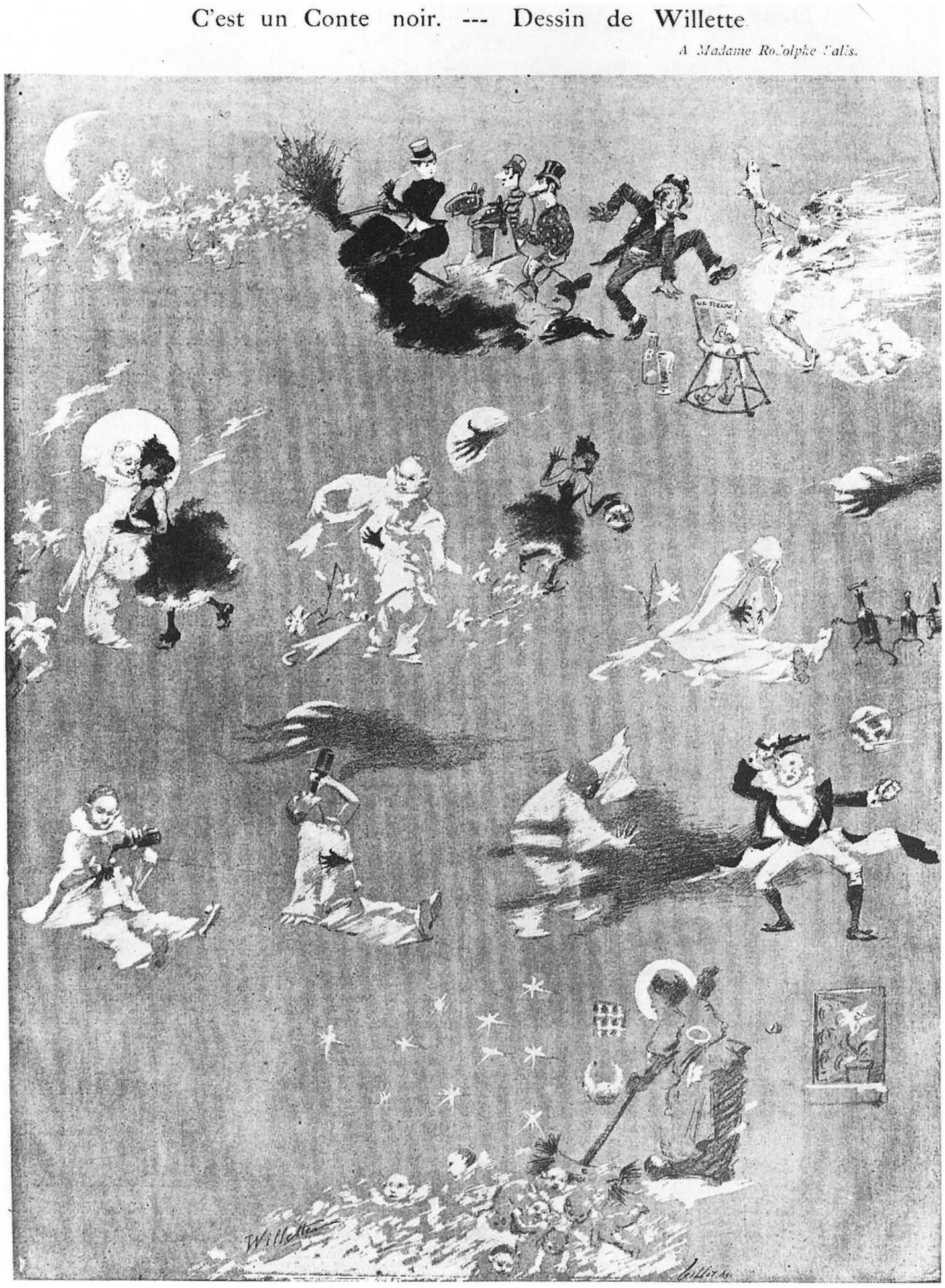


FIG. 9.2. Adolphe Willette: "It Is a Black Tale" (1884).

at the gate, Saint Peter the concierge and his comrade Saint Joseph are cozily celebrating Christmas with the customary libations when they are disturbed by wicked little devils of street urchins pulling at the bell. In investigating this seasonal practical joke (which is no joke, of course, but masks the urgency of the social issue), the holy doorman discovers the baby and, in the proper spirit of bourgeois religious charity, takes him in, baptizes him Pierrot, and adopts him. When the time comes for the child to leave Paradise (i.e., protected childhood) and go out into the world, Saint Peter admonishes him not to allow the devil's black hand to taint his white robe. But (and here begins the second half, the "Black Tale"; Fig. 9.2) Pierrot is heedless, falls in with blacks (bad, pleasure-loving people), and is left indelibly imprinted by the black glove of a cocotte (prostitute). He weeps over his sin, by which his tutelary planet, the moon, is also marked, in the form of the same black handprint. He takes to the bottle, becomes gray/drunk (*gris* in French means both), then black, and acquires his characteristic costume: the black coat with flying tails of worldly vice, over the white Pierrot suit of his primitive innocence. The background, meanwhile, is gray, like the real world—a mixture of white and black, good and bad. So Pierrot joins all the other wicked little devils who ring Saint Peter's doorbell. But the holy doorman has learned his lesson and now pitilessly sweeps away all the babies abandoned on his doorstep at Christmastime. (So much for bourgeois-religious charity, which proves to be a relative, one-chance-only affair.)

Pierrot's primary vice is irresponsibility. Far from heartless (in fact, his heart is his undoing), he is, however, thoughtless. This trait reveals its most tragic consequences in the field of love, at which he plays as one plays a guitar. In "Two Pages of Love," he plays with the love (as represented, literally: with the love-child) of an innocent young girl, lulling her into a false confi-



FIG. 9.3. Adolphe Willette: "Two Pages of Love" (1885).

dence. While she sleeps, he recklessly absconds with the cherub, leaving her desolated at losing what she can lose only once. Pierrot transports the child to his lunar dream world, corrupts him, and then (Fig. 9.3) leaves him in the gutter, naked and defenseless, a miniature alcoholic, while Pierrot retires periodically to his own triple lunacy (the oblivion of alcoholic stupors). A low-class girl who has also been cheated discovers the child and brings it to her protector "Alphonse" (or pimp). The Alphonse, whose evil behavior is, unlike Pierrot's, calculated and materialistic, rewards his woman's humanitarian instinct with threats and blows; but then, recognizing a good investment opportunity, he hypocritically nurtures the poor infant, planning to give it training in prostitution. Ultimately, however, he throws them both, the poor woman and her emaciated, weeping child, onto the street once more, where they are spurned by the law and the hypocritical bourgeois. Willette's symbolic procedure here allows for more than one simultaneous, and not mutually contradictory, interpretation: the child may represent the child prostitute, controlled by a brutal pimp;[23] but it also, I think, symbolizes the adoptive

23. The commentary tries to clarify the motivation for Alphonse's appearing to change his mind, and deciding to care for the infant after all: "[Il] voulut bien adopter le môme, se proposant de lui apprendre le métier, rapport qu'il avait horreur des feignantes." The *métier* (profession) that Alphonse proposes to teach him would be that of male pimp, since the child is male; the feminine form *feignantes* (idle females), which he professes to abominate, suggests the female child prostitute managed by the pimp.

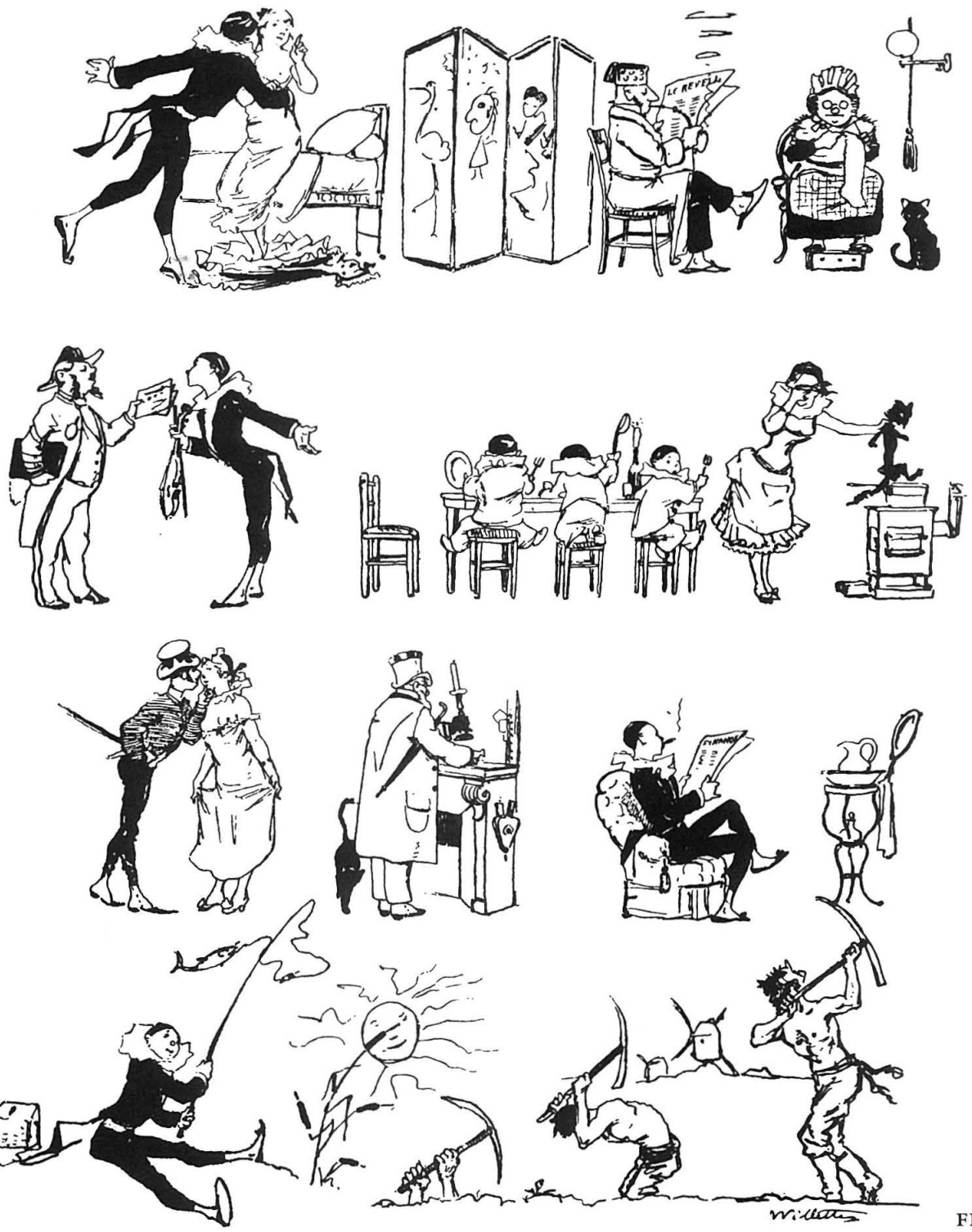


FIG. 9.4. Adolphe Willette: "Happiness Surpasses Riches" (1883).

mother's relapse into a prostitution she had tried to abandon before finding her love again and foolishly offering it (in the form of a love-child, as before) to her former exploiter. And there is surely a broader significance to this scene, in the way bourgeois and police turn their back on the pair: no longer a prostitute plying her trade, she is now an abandoned mother with her pathetic child, appealing in vain for help.

Re-enter (white) Pierrot strolling by, an emblem of insouciance with his pipe and upturned gaze. He immediately recognizes his old playmate–cum–adoptive son, and they fly into each other's arms, embracing passionately. But Pierrot pays dearly for the generous resurgence of his old instinct, for he is brutally knifed by the evil Alphonse, jealous not of a love he never knew but of his economic investment.[24] Pierrot is left dead on the bloodied pavement, the cherub still clinging to him.

Such is his tragic encounter with the criminal underworld of Montmartre. But Pierrot's amorous frivolity also leads him, in "Happiness Surpasses Riches" (Fig. 9.4), to subject himself to the Parisian bourgeois world of marriage. This is a classic story, here exquisitely miniaturized, a four-stanza/scene sonnet of seduction, enforced marriage, impoverished family life, and dispossession followed by corrupt expedients. The wife finds a lover, and Pierrot a carefree existence, still in poverty (his true métier anyway), but an existence at least, and at the expense of other people's labor. One macabre detail stamps the story with the trademark of the *Chat Noir:* the Pierrot family's poverty is symbolized by the sacrifice to the frying pan of the anguished cat.[25]

Pierrot scorns the comforts and threats of religion. He is, like his creator, an anticlerical. In a debonair satire on the fundamentalist, not to say demonic, concept of evil and the Catholic rituals of confession, repentance, and absolution, Willette introduces Pierrot's lover Pierrette. On the eve of Good Friday Pierrette is assailed by horror at her wicked life with Pierrot (the moon, symbol of her lunacy, is crossed by bars in the shape of a crucifix) and by comic Bosch-like demons, including a bat-winged butcher with a cherub spiked on his trident. She thereupon confesses sins so horrible that the cat's hair stands on end, the pig bolts his trough, and the black-hooded inquisitor-confessor himself runs off in terror. She repents (Fig. 9.5) to angelic music, but the new Magdalene, adopting the traditional pose of religious iconography (which she should know, since she probably worked as an artist's model), enrages her lover. Repenting her repentance, she is reunited in pleasure with her Pierrot, as Montmartre defiantly awakens to another day, another music, and another life, signaled by a cheekily waving, snook-cocking offspring.

We have already noted Willette's "sacrilegious" allegories. Religious imagery and symbolism in various unorthodox contexts loom large in the *Chat Noir,* reminding us that anticlericalism

24. In the 1926 album reproducing this strip, a *bas-de-page* vignette gives the essence of "Les Petits Oiseaux meurent la patte en l'air" (see p. 000, above), suggesting that Alphonse is like a cat battening on helpless victims.

25. This is not the only time the magazine's totem animal is sacrificed: an innkeeper, at a loss for what to serve the terrible Salis, cooks the cat and wins praise for his culinary art ("Conte en vieux français," May 16, 1885).

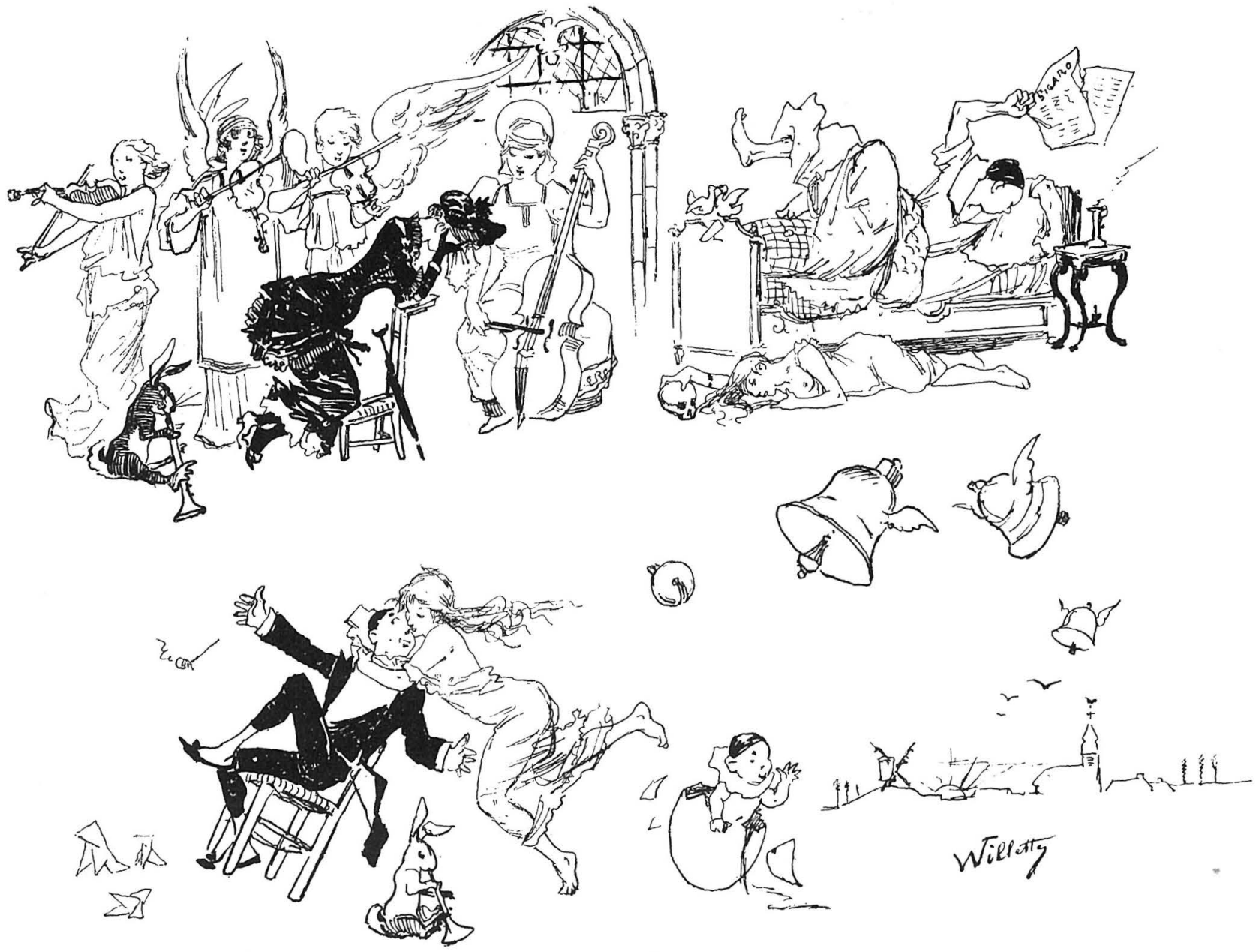


FIG. 9.5. Adolphe Willette: "Tomorrow Is Good Friday" (1883).



FIG. 9.6. Adolphe Willette: "Pierrot on a Visit to God" (1882).



FIG. 9.7. Adolphe Willette: "Picciola" (1883).

battled not just the remnants of the old religion but a powerful neo-orthodox resurgence at the end of the century, in which the various literary and artistic movements participated. In the 1890s, symbolism sought an accommodation with orthodox religion and spawned new forms of more or less religious mysticism; but in the 1880s it often stood, as in the *Chat Noir,* in direct opposition to religion. The magazine fancied itself an object of old-fashioned persecution: an obtuse, obese monk who happens on a copy of the *Chat Noir* in the street consigns it ritually to the flames, from which Beelzebub himself is summoned to seize the monk and carry him bound before his master—*Chat Noir* proprietor Rodolphe Salis. The holy figures are no match for Salis-Beelzebub.[26] Elsewhere (November 1, 1884), he exposes his diabolical nature to Saint Nicholas, debauches him, switches costumes, and leaves him with a sin-laden scowl and a cocotte on his knee, to the lament of the angels. Better yet, transported to heaven by an angel who appears to him out of a smoky stove, Pierrot debauches God the Father himself (Fig. 9.6). This "corruption" required no special effort, for in God's bourgeois transformation as the boss a little seasonal tippling was apparently part of the heavenly order. When Pierrot arrives, God is already in a festive mood, presiding over a bird on an "altar" laden with bottles and the living cock of Saint Peter; to one side the Virgin Mary opens another flask, and on the other side the infant Jesus (evidently not the beneficiary of a Jesuit education) licks his plate. The setting is entirely bourgeois, complete with the lily of the Annunciation and the crown of thorns neatly preserved under glass globes and a picture of Napoleon on the wall. Sunrise finds Pierrot lying blotto, with only the cat for company, to be swept out (of his dream?) by Saint Peter, the surliest of porters.

The impious, demonic Pierrot enters his full social dimension in large paintings executed by Willette at this time. In his enormously popular *Enfin, v'la le choléra,*[27] conceived in reference to the great European cholera epidemic of 1883–1885, Pierrot rejoices, along with undertakers and lumpen types, in the plague—which may also be symbolically interpreted as a plague of irresponsibility over all France. In the *Parce Domine,* a huge painting that came to incarnate the spirit of Montmartre and was solemnly inducted into the procession to the new Chat Noir premises at the Rue Victor Massé, Pierrot is the suicidal Pied Piper leading pleasure-crazed humanity in a dance of doom.[28] This painting exacted a heavy price from the artist: executed without "the slightest sketch or guide," in a frenzy of overwork that brought on prostration and sickness, it was refused at the Salon and, although bought by Salis for "all of" Fr 250, left the artist destitute, expelled for arrears of rent, his furniture sold off.

Pierrot does actually commit suicide once, although not in a narrative strip. In a full-page single drawing (June 2, 1883) he is shown lying dead in the street, pistol in hand, while the fantasies and vices that can no longer sustain him callously and cheerfully pass him by.

Pierrot the victimizer is also a victim; the idealist, he becomes the pathetic victim of his idealism. This is best represented in two related strips about his love for a rose. In an incident based on a

26. Untitled strip of October 31, 1885, by Heidbrinck.
27. Reproduced in the *Chat Noir* of August 4, 1883, it was issued in a *tirage à part* of ninety thousand and offered for sale again on June 28, 1884, in a ten-centime supplement. Reproduced in Willette 1919, 152.
28. Reproduced in Crespelle 1966, 152 (fig. 246); see Oberthür 1981.



FIG. 9.8. Adolphe Willette: "By the Light of the Moon" (1882).



FIG. 9.9. Adolphe Willette: "The Romance of the Rose" (1883).

vividly remembered childhood trauma,[29] he is the artist, the dreamer, the lover, nurturing with snaillike patience the image of his rose: his art, his dream, his love (Fig. 9.7). But woman, triune object of his desires, frivolously cuts off the blooming head of Pierrot's rose and offers it to a filthy, snuffling pig. He is further humiliated by a passing dandy[30] who casually strikes a surviving bud with his stick, and a laborer who runs over the root with a wheelbarrow full of garbage. Pierrot is left mourning the pathetic relic of his aspirations, ruined by a triple social contempt: that of woman, of bourgeois, and of worker.[31] And what does woman really want from the adoring male? Not roses, not artistic homage, but (according to "L'Age d'Or," September 23, 1882) base gold—at the price of the donor's life.

For Willette, the famous folk song "Au Clair de la lune" (By the Light of the Moon; Fig. 9.8) is about a crisis of creative impotence: "ma chandelle est morte, je n'ai plus de feu . . . [my candle is dead, my fire is out]." Slumped over his dead candle, Pierrot is revived by his muse; she brings him a vision of an alluring maiden, who tantalizes him with her striptease and nakedness. His ecstasy turns to self-destructive fury, however, as the vision contemptuously dissolves.

Actively pursuing his rose-ideal, Pierrot suffers a romantic martyrdom (Fig. 9.9). Here the rose herself resists him, punishing the infant ambition to scale and possess her with the nature-given weapon of her thorns: "Röslein wehrte sich und stach . . . [little rose fought back and stabbed]" (Goethe). Little Pierrot seizes the only weapon to hand, an umbrella, and impetuously cuts down her whose resistance has aroused his hatred. A fatal gesture, for the rose has more than thorns to defend her: she has the bee, her natural mate and occupant, whose rapier—wielded by a creature grown nightmarishly equal in size to Pierrot—is more than a match for his umbrella.[32]

Pierrot, artist and idealist, is also necessarily impecunious. He dreams of riches; yet his poverty and his dreams are exploited by that ancient scheme that grows fat on fantasies of instant wealth: the lottery (illegal in France as a state enterprise since 1836). In "Pierrot a gagné le gros lot" (Pierrot Hits the Jackpot, March 21, 1884), our hero, deserving for once on account of his having given alms to a beggarwoman (his fairy godmother in disguise), wins the big prize; just when he is digging a hole to hide it, however, ill luck—in the form of the black cat, a thieving, streaking shadow in the night—snatches it away from him.

His dream of the rich man's life, of dining in the Immense Hotel, turns into a nightmare (Fig. 9.10). He suffers the social

29. Willette cordially detested the "stupid and wicked" education he received in that "prison" of a Dijon lycée. On one occasion he was given a rose, only to have it snatched from him and crushed underfoot by a teaching assistant. From that day on he glimpsed a new kind of Pierrot, one who would have pity on roses (Willette 1919, 48–49, 126).
30. Identified as an "affreux moderniste" in the 1926 edition.
31. But later, in the version he put in his own magazine, *Pierrot* (October 26, 1888), it is the very grimy and swarthy worker, perhaps a miner, naked to the waist and armed with a rifle, who as representative of "the people" and sole repository of "heat and lead" consoles Pierrot in his grief over the death of his rose tree.
32. This battle was deemed by Willette a quintessence of Pierrot's nature, for he used it as the title-page vignette of his *Pauvre Pierrot* anthology.



Pierrot au " Immense Hôtel ", par Willette.

FIG. 9.10. Adolphe Willette: "Pierrot at the Immense Hotel" (1884).

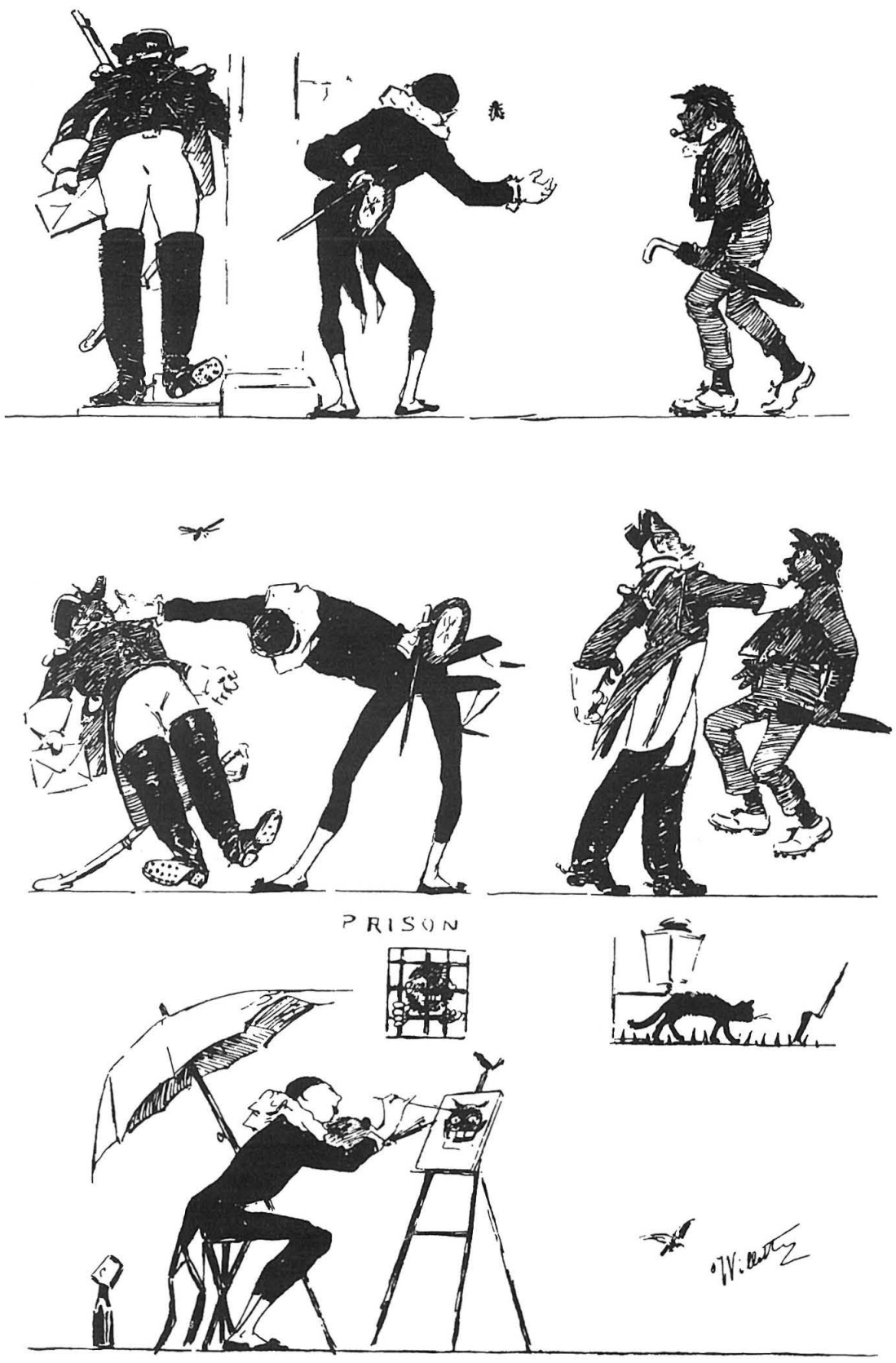
humiliation of any lower-class person who trespasses into realms above his station, at the hands of the lackeys of the rich who like to vent their own petty power and frustrations upon the poor and weak. In Willette's Immense Hotel the waiters take the guise of *esprits frappeurs* (rapping, or séance, spirits) who with disembodied hands pull the chair out from under Pierrot as he sits down. All-too-corporeal waiters inflict the most painful physical humiliations on him, bashing the plate of food in his face and pouring scalding coffee down his neck. Unable to pay his enormous bill, he is sadistically beaten up and hurled into the night.

Trickster himself, Pierrot was never so cruel. He acts out of his impetuous, childlike nature, precipitating accidents out of recklessness, playing jokes out of fun, not malice. If he farts in the face of an old beggar with a recorder, it is not as a calculated humiliation; the beggar is more friend than enemy (March 18, 1882). "Pierrot Trickster" is the title of this strip, his debut in the magazine, as in his next escapade, where it is, however, a traditional enemy onto whom the punishment is "accidentally" displaced (Fig. 9.11). Pierrot chases his nemesis the cat, who has stolen his dinner, and recklessly slams not the cat, who escapes, but his landlord as he sits peacefully reading the paper, and with such force that the man's head is flattened into the shape of the shovel that hit him. The now shovel-headed landlord uses the same weapon with like force on an equally innocent party, his wife or maid, who has the misfortune to be entering at that moment with his breakfast.

Pierrot, as an embodiment of the principle of chance, reveals the arbitrary and mechanical way that justice operates. He flails



FIG. 9.11. Adolphe Willette: "Pierrot Trickster" (1882).



PIERROT ET LA MOUCHE

FIG. 9.12. Adolphe Willette: "Pierrot and the Fly" (1882).

around him at random and releases a chain of accidents (Fig. 9.12). He swats at a fly and hits a cop, who arrests the nearest bystander, a worker. Pierrot the artist then reproduces in paint this man's diabolical grimace, visible through the prison bars, with an egotistic if not sadistic insouciance: the artist is not responsible for whatever misfortune he may unwittingly precipitate; he is responsible only to his art. He is as indifferent to human suffering as the black cat who delicately picks his way through the broken glass on the prison wall.

Then there is the trickster tricked: Pierrot is frustrated in his designs on a pretty feminine bundle who, by a magic which is very much that of stage pantomime, turns out to be, undressed, no more than a broom topped by a milliner's plaster head. Pierrot then espies another, more real femininity attached to a boring bourgeois lump (Fig. 9.13), squashes the man's hat over his eyes with the well-aimed blow of a well-prepared fist, and makes off with her, the very flounces of her skirt yielding in squirming compliance with his passionate embrace.

Here as elsewhere, Pierrot acts out a dictionary definition of the cherished bohemian-vanguardist principle, "épater le bourgeois": flummox, flabbergast, *flatten* the bourgeoisie. Do it gratuitously and *with style*.

In November 1884 Willette joined at its inception the *Courrier Français*. This weekly, edited by Jules Roque, was a novel concept in journalism; claiming to be a broad cultural review, but heavily illustrated and twice the size of the *Chat Noir* (at about the same price of twenty centimes), it was well capitalized by the large cough drop manufacturer Géraudel, which put in frequent, large advertisements ("144 million sold" in 1886). With its massive campaign of striking, risqué posters by Jules Chéret, the *Courrier* probably had a much larger readership than the regular caricature magazines. (On March 13, 1887, it printed an incomplete list of 997 Parisian cafés that subscribed to the paper.)

Willette did a number of anticapitalist cartoons, miscellaneous drawings,[33] comic strips partly reprinted from the *Chat Noir,* and regular centerspreads and comic strips that are outright advertisements for Géraudel pastilles (for example, "Histoire d'un Rhume," October and December 1886). He also did a large decorative panel called "Advertising Is the Mother of Journalism" for the Géraudel model factory at Sainte-Ménéhoud. With all the advertisements, open and concealed, for Géraudel in the form of cartoons, comic strips, and straight illustrations, and the many drawings and Chéret posters praising commercial advertising as a social practice (typically represented as a maiden in sexy undress inviting the public to the carnival of pleasure), the *Courrier Français* stands as a prime ideological instrument, for which cough drops and art were equivalent and mutually supportive commercial commodities. In March 1891 the Elysée Montmartre sponsored an exhibition of twelve hundred original drawings from the magazine, constituting perhaps the first public exhibition of comic strips. Advertising and other art were conceived not only as agencies of pleasure, but also as pioneers of the new freedom of speech. The magazine had frequent run-ins with the censorship over sexually provocative items in the paper as well as over Chéret's posters, which finally, from 1891, had to be reproduced as a supplement to the paper, with the note "Not to Be Posted." At this time the *Courrier Français* was waging a regular campaign against the "laws against indecency," but by now the incidence of comic strips had fallen off. Many Willette Pierrot strips from the *Chat Noir* were reprinted in 1893; other noted contributors included Steinlen, with a few strips; Forain, with some brutal and sexually perverse cartoons; Louis Legrand, a regular; and occasionally Toulouse-Lautrec.

Willette left the *Courrier Français* temporarily in mid 1888 (replaced by Forain) to found, in direct rivalry to the *Chat Noir,* his own magazine, which was, however, a little smaller and appeared a day earlier (Friday). He called it, as one might expect, the *Pierrot;* Emile Goudeau, formerly of the *Chat Noir,* was chief editor. Willette filled the front page with his erotic, revanchist, anti-Semitic, and anti-English cartoons and the third page with strips reprinted from the *Chat Noir* and scribbles about nothing in particular. He evidently got some financing from Chlorol-Marye ("cures bad breath, toothache, and pimples on the face"), but the paper soon failed (by September 20, 1889), bankrupting the artist and entangling him in lawsuits for two years.

Willette was also active as a painter of decorative, allegorical panels for inns and *café-concerts*. By the early years of the 20th century his reputation stood high enough for him to be referred to as the Watteau of popular life, and as a potential Rubens of the modern palaces of popular entertainment.[34] In 1906 he was given the cross of the Légion d'Honneur—belated compensation, we are told, for all the calumny deflected on him from the Salis cabaret, which in its later years took much abuse.[35]

33. See, for example, Willette 1901.
34. Delas [ca. 1906], 15.
35. Detouche 1906, 62. For Willette in general, see also Roger (1911) and the obituary by Guibert (1926).

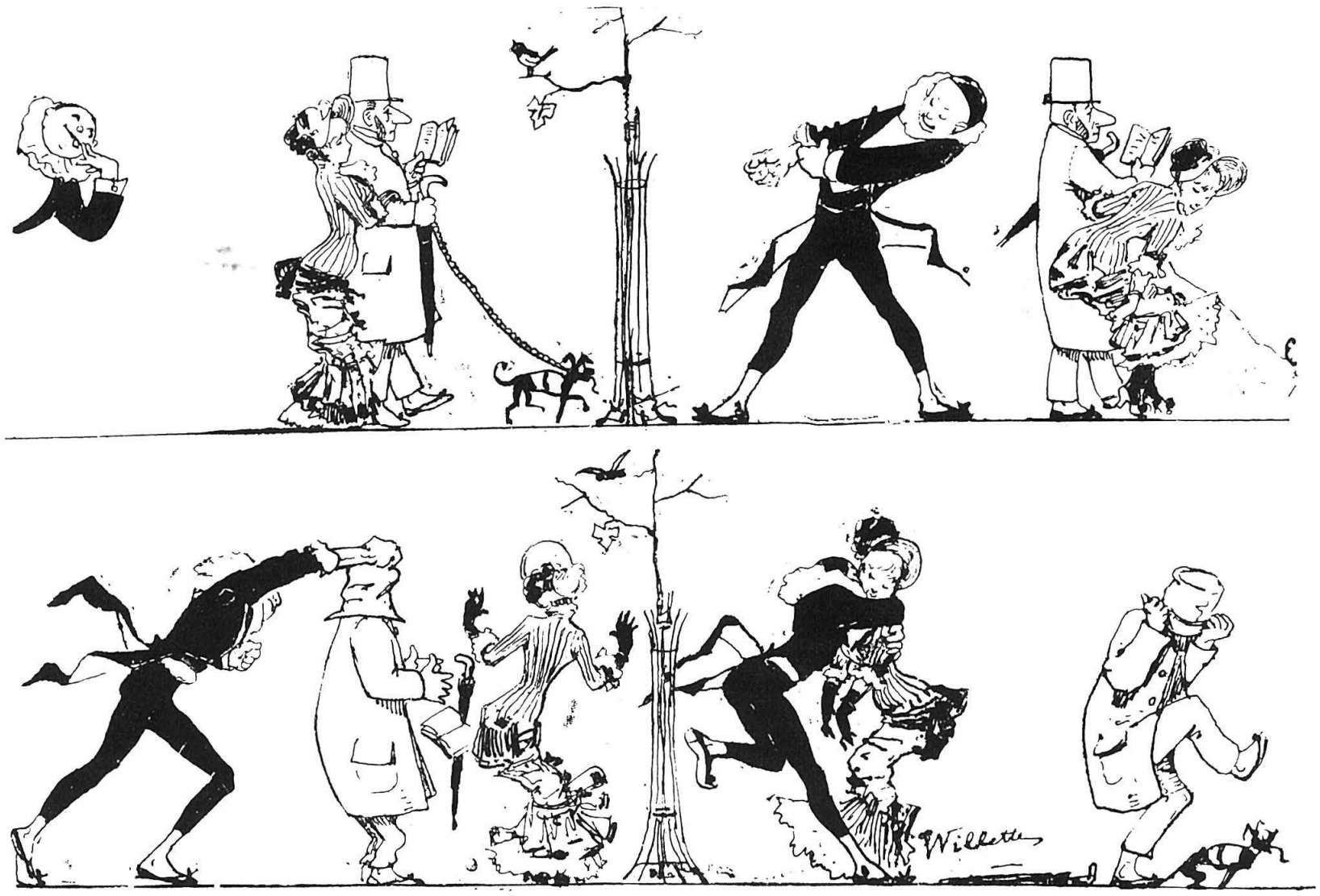


FIG. 9.13. Adolphe Willette: "Pierrot in Love" (1882).

Steinlen and the Cat

The name of his cabaret and magazine came naturally to Salis, and from several sources: the famous short story of Edgar Allen Poe, whose works he had illustrated; the use made of the animal by writers affected by Poe, notably Baudelaire, whose sonnet "Les Chats" from the *Fleurs du mal* was featured in the first issue of the *Chat Noir;* and the painting *Olympia* (1865) by Baudelaire's close friend Manet, which, with its bewitched cat, "riveted" and "hypnotized" Willette when first exhibited.[36] Shortly before he joined the *Chat Noir,* Willette had sent to the Salon of 1882 a painting called *La Paire d'amis,* showing a courtesan in a white corset accompanied by a black cat. Refused by the Salon, Willette's stray cat was picked up by Salis and given a home in the cabaret, where it was visible from the street;[37] it was also the subject of Pille's masthead drawing (see above).

There was a real-life mascot, too, salvaged by Salis from the top of a lamppost. Known as "Maigriou, Chat des Chats," his "chanson glorieuse" was to be heard in "his" palace, le Palais de Maigriou—that is, the cabaret. The cat emblem was used everywhere. Willette designed the sign that hung outside the cabaret, a golden-eyed cat perched in a sickle-shaped silver moon cut out of sheet metal (see Fig. 9.23). It soon brought good luck to the Chat Noir: the bothersome neighboring grocer, whose sign the cat overshadowed, was furious, and later was taken to jail. The proscenium of the shadow theater in the Rue Victor Massé was crowned by a winged cat atop a globe, cuffing the beak of a goose—which evidently represented the philistine bourgeoisie. Around 1895, when the name of the Chat Noir was used to promote a traveling show, Steinlen did a poster of a "haloed, hieratic, and byzantine cat, of enormous proportions, raising above the crowd its fantastic, emaciated silhouette."[38] The success of Steinlen's poster for a popular brand of milk depicting his daughter Colette avidly watching cats drink milk, has much to do with the cat cult issuing from Salis's cabaret and magazine. Steinlen personally, in life as in art, identified with cats, much as Willette did with Pierrots. At his home in the Rue Caulaincourt, known as "Cat's Cottage," all the cats of the area were welcome to join the hens, pigeons, rabbits, guinea fowl, peacocks, and a crocodile named Gustave.

The Chat Noir mascot is the polysemous Baudelairean cat, symbolic of the poetic mind—cool, deep, analytical, discreet, unpredictable. In Willette he is the shadowy, detached ironic background observer; in Steinlen he is the protagonist. For Baudelaire, as for Steinlen in a different way, the cat was also an object of poetic contemplation, aesthetically and psychologically fascinating like woman, elastic in form, magnetically and electrically charged. Baudelaire's cat, one of a long line of philosophical felines reaching from E.T.A. Hoffmann to Gottfried Keller, is mysteriously knowing, seraphic and strange, mystical and magical, dangerously sensual and morally indifferent.

Steinlen's cat, although magical and powerful in its own way, is more vulnerable, the world he acts in more cruel. His world also, as in so many *Chat Noir* strips, resolves itself in a nonverbal pantomime, silently; it is thus in keeping with Baudelaire's idea that the power and mystery of the cat reside in the way it seeks and represents silence. This silence also connotes the life of raw instinct acted out in a social-Darwinian world: Steinlen's cat, subject to the unspoken law of the jungle, becomes both predator and prey, victimizer and victim, oppressor and oppressed, trickster and tricked. Like Pierrot, he is individualistic, egotistic, irresponsible, amoral, and anarchistic. And his adventures, like Pierrot's,

36. Willette 1919, 12.
37. Ibid., 119.
38. Steinlen 1973, 6ff.



FIG. 9.14. T.-A. Steinlen: "Black Cat" (1884).

are metaphors for basic varieties of social nature and interaction. But Pierrot can, if he chooses, escape back to the moon, and on earth he enjoys an apparently assured material existence. The cats of Steinlen, like the human outcasts he later rendered in print and paint and for which he was to become famous, are engaged in a basic struggle for existence. They compete, in play or earnest, with other, similar, animals—other cats, large birds, and human infants. Although they too function as metaphor and myth, their existence seems generally to have a more concrete, material basis than Pierrot's.

Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen (1859–1923), born and educated in Lausanne, Switzerland, worked for a while as a designer in his uncle's wallpaper factory in Mülhausen. Much affected by Zola's *Assommoir,* he moved to Paris in 1881. His cats in the *Chat Noir* brought him fame "from one day to the next,"[39] the first success of a long career in the course of which he produced a great quantity of prints (perhaps ten thousand), including cartoons, illustrations, and posters. He also did many paintings. He became, after Willette, the major bulwark of the *Chat Noir,* providing between February 23, 1884 (when his first strip was published), and 1887 twenty full-page stories, and many more down to 1890.

Within a month of Willette's account of the "black and white" origin of his Pierrot, Steinlen too, in "White Cat, Black Cat," took a double page to account for the origin and dual character and destiny of his protagonist, mingling—again like Willette, against a gray background suggestive of a twilit, hybrid world—the supernatural and the familiar, the serious and the whimsical. He thereby sets up other comparable polarities: black, male, aggressive, and diabolical against white, female, fearful, and innocent.

Originally, in this Just So story, the two cats were both tabbies. The female leaves the "womb" of the warm basket for the winter snow outside, attracted by what she takes for human company and an offer of human affection. Alas, the figure against which she rubs is a snowman, which collapses on her. Having learned her first lesson in human deception, the cat returns, frightened and white with snow, to the basket. Her male companion follows a different, diabolical, instinct into the outside world (Fig.

39. Marguery 1928.

9.14). Drawn on the broom of a lunar deity masquerading as a giant snowman into a circle of nocturnal demons, a comic witches' Sabbath, he finally returns, down the chimney, to the basket and the white female, spooked.

The cat's fascination rests on the fact that, unlike the dog, it is essentially solitary, the degree of its attachment and adaptation to human society and environments always in doubt. Its behavior and misbehavior in an often alien human world could be analogized with the human individual's struggle against his fellow beings and social norms. Steinlen's anthropomorphic tendency is usually masked by the premise that he is the scientific observer of actual, typical animal behavior. Champfleury, in his 1869 book *Les Chats* (for which Manet provided a famous frontispiece and poster), gives us a comparable anthropomorphic mixture of zoology and folklore, fact and fancy. But Champfleury does not deal with the disturbing idea that this self-sufficient creature can be tragically, self-destructively maladapted to civilization.

Steinlen emphatically demonstrates that the cat, universally regarded as the most sagacious and cautious of animals, is in fact capable of rash and clumsy behavior; that, whether appearing to be playing or actually preying, it allows curiosity or passion to get it into big trouble. The dictum "Curiosity killed the cat"—not so much a zoological observation as a proverb warning people to mind their own business—is illustrated, at the most innocent level, by a kitten getting progressively entangled in a ball of wool, until it has become a ball of wool itself.[40] More seriously, and in another masterful observation of feline body language, Steinlen's kitten plays with the smoke of a cigar and then the cigar itself, getting painfully burned in the process (see Fig. 15.17).[41] (This warning, in a series dedicated to Salis's little daughter Sara, has a precursor in the famous *Struwwelpeter,* where the cat itself admonishes the little girl not to play with matches.)

40. Reproduced in Steinlen 1913, 172. Also in Steinlen 1978, 130, where it stands as one of two otherwise unremarked and overwhelmed representatives of the genre that first brought Steinlen fame; this huge catalog contains an excellent selection of the rest of Steinlen's oeuvre and a large number of comparative historical photographs.
41. Variants of the theme, which became quite popular, reached as far as Russia, where the kitten gets stung by a wasp and pierced by a needle ("Playfulness Punished," *Budilnik,* no. 34 [1885]: 407).

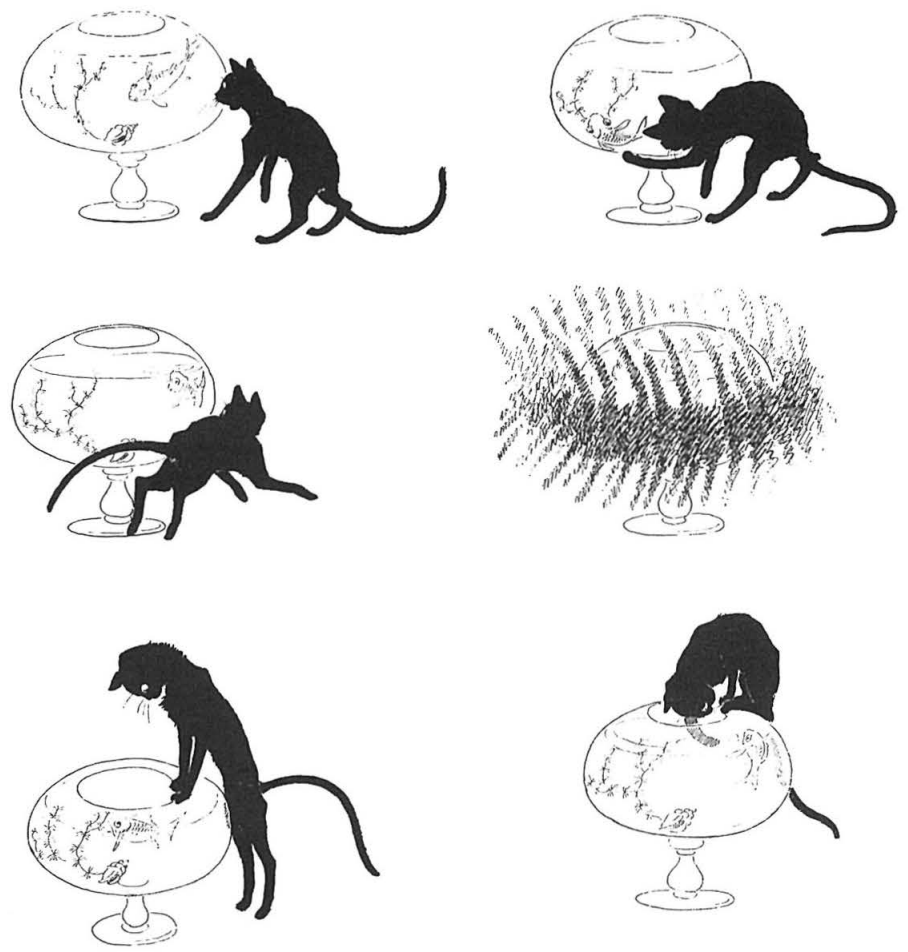


FIG. 9.15. T.-A. Steinlen: "Horrible End to a Goldfish" (1884).

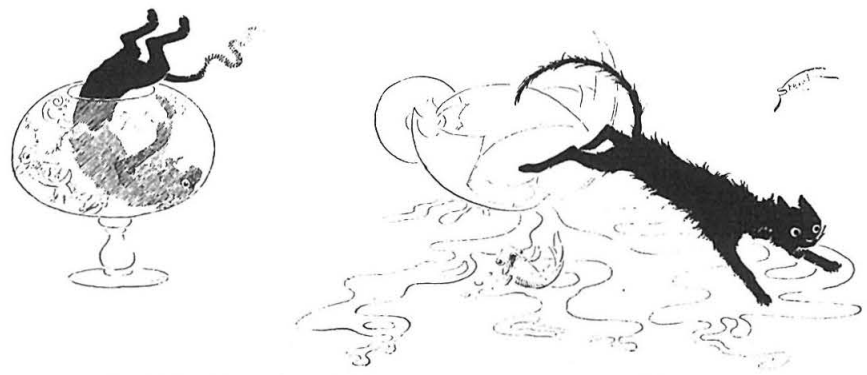


FIG. 9.16. T.-A. Steinlen: "The Milkpail" (1885).



La Boîte au Lait. Dessin de Steinlen.

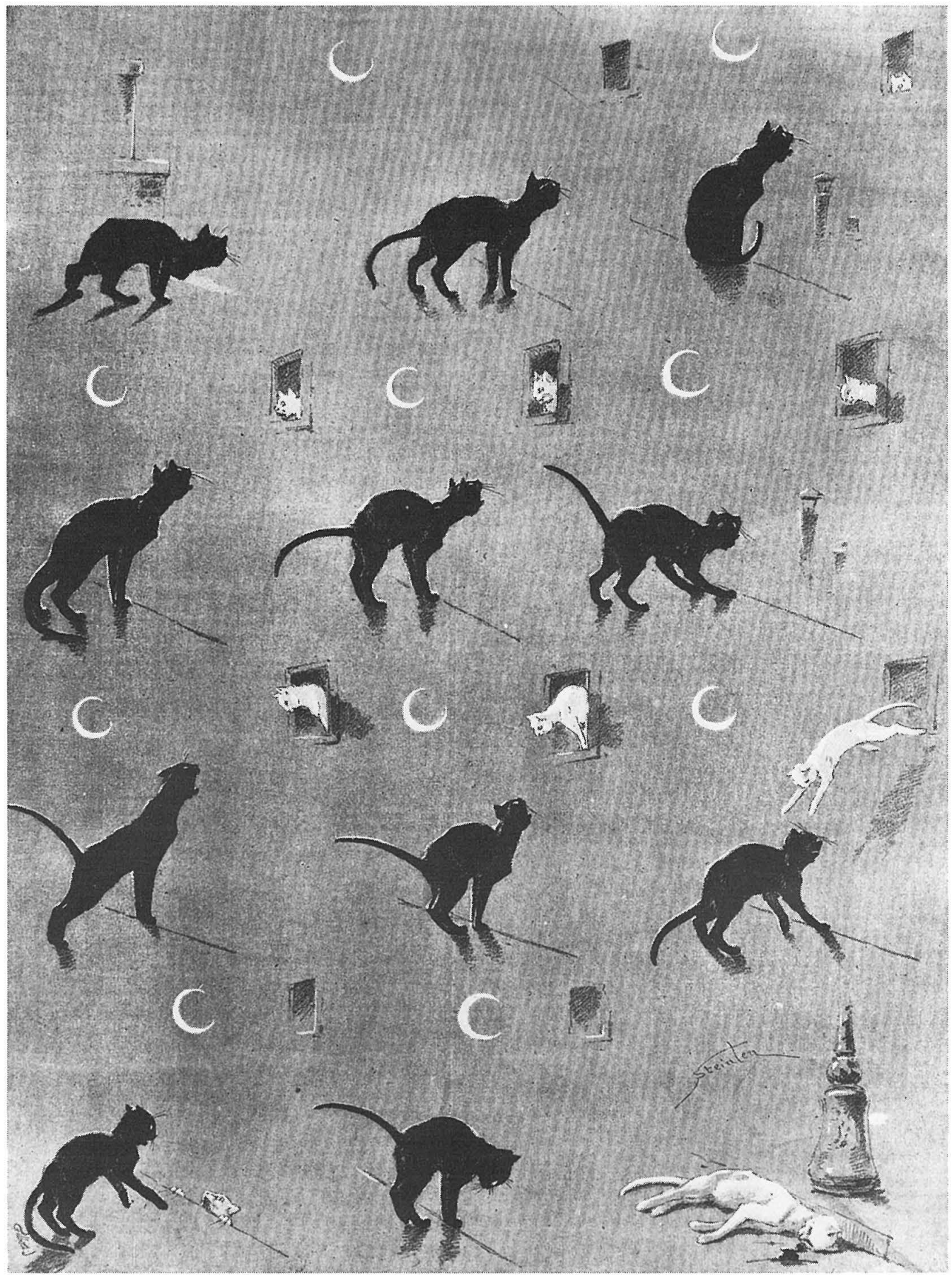


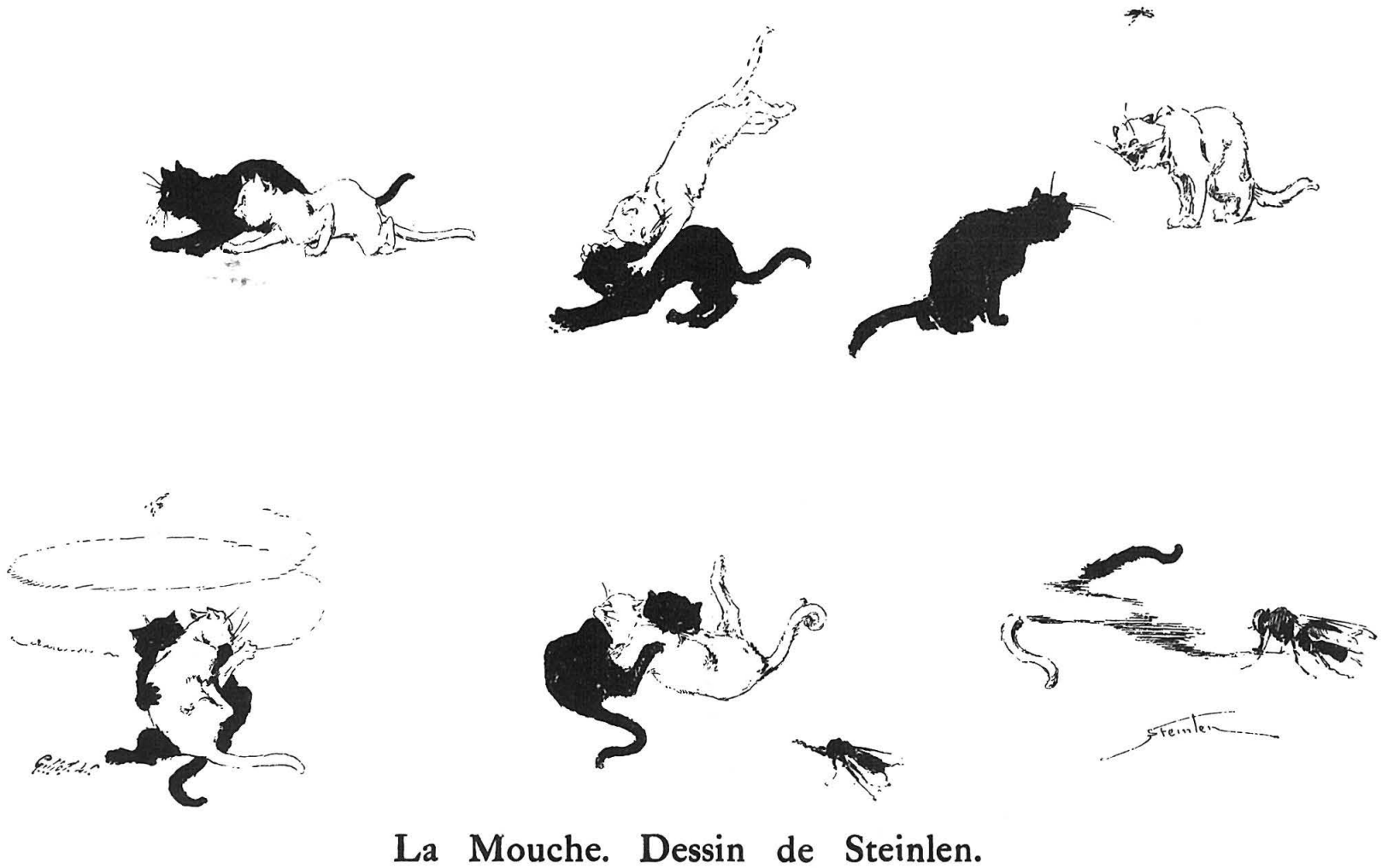
FIG. 9.17. T.-A. Steinlen: "Idyll" (1885).

Champfleury drew extensive parallels between child and cat or kitten in his chapter in *Les Chats* on the childhood of cats, where he notes that the cat represents both the animal in the child and the child in the human adult. With certain domestic animals, as with children, it is often hard to tell whether one is observing a biological survival instinct or "simple" curiosity—exploration for food and prey as opposed to exploration as play, with no immediate practical purpose. Either way lies danger of a more or less serious kind. The inquisitive cat that falls into a pail of cream (March 5, 1887) suffers discomfort, perhaps humiliation (and incidentally, insofar as he is transformed from black to white, a temporary personality change); the cat that falls into a goldfish bowl and breaks it suffers terror—and loses the goldfish as well (Fig. 9.15).

The kitten wanting to play with (or practice stalking?) a guinea pig ("Le Chat et le cochon d'Inde," July 11, 1885) is left to contemplate the ridiculous sight of the foolish creature trying to hide in a tin much too small for it and getting stuck. The story seems, on this ending, "philosophically" inconclusive; the kitten, though attentive, does not take advantage of the situation. But a little earlier, Steinlen showed the most extreme and terrible outcome of such clumsiness (Fig. 9.16).[42] The cat (no kitten here) gets its head stuck in a milkpail, and suffers the egregious stupidity of a young rustic girl who happens by. Steinlen certainly had a taste for the gruesome: another strip ("dedicated to the lady who was surprised that rabbits have no entrails") ends on a rabbit that has cut its belly open on a nail, its guts endlessly trailing, watched by a reflective cat—pondering, perhaps, the fate it has escaped.[43]

42. In his *Des Chats: Images sans paroles* anthology, Steinlen places our Fig. 9.16, under the title "Le Chat à deux queues," immediately following the cat and guinea pig strip, suggesting (as we do here) that the former is a premonition of the dire consequences realized fully in the latter.

43. "Le Clou vengeur," August 2, 1884; reproduced in *Steinlen* 1978, 127.



La Mouche. Dessin de Steinlen.

FIG. 9.18. T.-A. Steinlen: "The Fly" (1885).



Histoire d'un Chat, d'un Chien et d'une Pie, par Steinlen.

FIG. 9.19. T.-A. Steinlen: "Story of a Cat, a Dog, and a Magpie" (1884).



FIG. 9.20. T.-A. Steinlen: "The Most Vexed of the Three" (1885).

There are, indeed, dangers lurking everywhere. The hunting instinct on a rooftop leads to a fall that, but for a fluke, would have been fatal (March 29, 1884); the mating instinct on a rooftop leads to a fall that *is* fatal, encapsulating a whole pessimistic philosophy of love (Fig. 9.17). The starting point might have been Manet's illustration to Champfleury's *Chats,* showing the black male in a rooftop rendezvous with a white female. A uniform dark gray ground conveys a misty night; with no more indications of setting than a shadowy chimney, the faint line of the rooftop ledge, a window in the house across an invisible street, and the tutelar moon, the stark black and white forms enact a simple tragedy. Slowly, first silently, then loudly,[44] the black tom incites the female, a mere face in the distant window, to make the downward leap; she fails by inches, and the tom stands at the ledge, slightly backed off, unable or unwilling, or simply too paralyzed with fear, to stretch out the necessary paw to lift the female to safety. Thus do we abandon to their fate those whose amorous audacity we have provoked. Never did Steinlen's feline body language render commentary more superfluous.

44. Champfleury, along no doubt with many contemporaries, believed that cats possessed an oral language in which certain sounds corresponded to certain concepts, as in human languages; he also credited a theory giving to the cat six more consonants, hence more words, than the dog. See the chapter "Langage des chats," in Champfleury 1869, 181ff.



Épisode de la Guerre de Chine. --- Dessin de Steinlen.

FIG. 9.21. T.-A. Steinlen: "Episode from the Chinese War" (1884).

The primary relation between cats—or humans—in this social-Darwinian world is competition. As with children and as in business and the workplace, the transition from playful cooperation to mortal hostility, real or apparent, can be abrupt. The occasion may be as trivial as the pursuit of a fly (Fig. 9.18). The logic here is again stretched to a macabre extreme, and the outcome, though fantastic, is metaphorically true-to-social-predatory-life: the cats, one black, the other white, devour each other down to the tail, leaving their intended victim, the fly, to feast on their blood. It is a variation on the old theme of the World Upside Down, exemplified also—and in a much milder fashion akin to the *Fliegende Blätter*—in such Steinlen strips as "Le Clou vengeur" (The Avenging Nail, August 2, 1884), where the mouse scores a symbolic victory over the cat by biting his tail from the shelter of a barrel, or "Le Chat et la grenouille" (The Cat and the Frog, September 20, 1884), where the frog makes a mockery of the cat, ultimately provoking him to a humiliating dunking.

In the fantasy World Upside Down, a tiny bird may attack the cat. In the more realistic Steinlen, however, the bird is large and aggressive—a crow—and it does not so much attack as tease the innocent cat, innocent because sleepy, amorous, hygienic, and white. The crow, young but ugly, vicious, and black, tweaks the cat by the tail. The ensuing pursuit into a tree ends in humiliation for the cat, largely because in the bird's environment it is at a disadvantage. The crow crows his victory as the cat slinks off.[45] In a comparable strip, however (Fig. 9.19), both combatants lose. The struggle involves a dog's bone, over which the black cat, the original thief, and the large magpie, the counter-thief, end up inflicting severe damage on each other—while the dog pacifically recovers his property. A similar story has two monkeys pull each other's tails off in a fight for a carrot, and others show mice escaping as cats quarrel among themselves:[46] old fable motifs with familiar social meanings, warning of the dire consequences of naked competition.

Steinlen developed a special role for cats in relation to children. From infancy on, the child learns social control—its possibilities and responsibilities—by playing with small animals. Cats in particular, being less docile than dogs, teach the limits of the human instinct to dominate. "Le Méchant Dada" (The Naughty Hobby-Horse, September 19, 1885) is a charming, closely observed, and comparatively eventless strip of seven similar designs tracking the attempts and ultimate failure of the toddler to ride a cat, which takes evasive action. The whole could not be lower in key, but it nonetheless illustrates the child's drive for power. This drive also takes the form of simple egotism and selfishness. In other strips the infant punishes the cat's natural and sympathetic desire to share the child's toy or food.[47] Yet to seek to share what is possessed by another, often stronger, species is an instinct, animal, human, and social; failing voluntary cooperation, ruse may be applied and alliances sought. This modus vivendi, which is taught in a thousand ways by the school of life, also seems to be innate. To avoid sharing with the dog, which paws him from the front, the child hides the slab of bread and butter behind his back, where the cat sidles up to lick off the butter, leaving the dog with the bread (Fig. 9.20). Such motifs, common enough in children's illustration and cartoons, have an innocent air, and the average reader would not on a conscious level relate them to the Darwinian world of competition for survival. But if one takes the comic strips and the social environment as a whole, the implications are inescapable.

Animal and child both obey jungle law, which justifies behavior otherwise regarded as criminal. The childish prank, a petty de-

45. Crow and cat: "Le Corbeau et le chat," February 23, 1884, Steinlen's first contribution to *Chat Noir*.

46. Monkeys and carrot: September 5, 1885. Mice escape: October 17 and November 28, 1885.

47. "Le Méchant Dada" is also included in *Contes à Sara*. Infant, cat, and toy: February 5, 1887. Food: January 1, 1887.



Ce coquin de Polichinelle *(Suite)*, dessin de Steinlen

FIG. 9.22. T.-A. Steinlen: "That Rascal Punch" (1886).



Au clair de la Lune (Drame sombre), par Steinlen.

FIG. 9.23. T.-A. Steinlen: "By the Light of the Moon" (1884).



FIG. 9.24. T.-A. Steinlen: "What Befell a Little Girl" (1885).

fiance and assertion of power by the weak, seems to be instinctive and may grow into outright criminality. The power first tested in relation to domestic animals will eventually be turned on adults, in a socially consequential and usually destructive way. Steinlen, like Busch before him, shows children compensating for physical inferiority through superior numbers, willpower, and ingenuity. Subject to the animal instinct to rob an orchard, and subsequently to just (and mild enough) punishment by a shepherd–cum–*garde champêtre,* Steinlen's Buschian urchins take a cruel and quite disporportionate revenge: using the pathetic cart in which the shepherd lives like a dog, they push him over a cliff into the lake.[48] The urchins' instinct for mischief can have serious social consequences as well. Pelting snowballs randomly at a passing coach, they cause a disastrous accident, and soon stupid cops have arrested and jailed the victim, the coachman (January 22, 1887). The pranks of Willette's Pierrot stood, by an old tradition, beyond moral sanction; the pranks of Steinlen's urchins are morally indefensible but nonetheless natural and reveal how easily, in practice, "natural" social law is turned topsy-turvy.

The most cruel of childish pranks become justified when the "higher" principles of patriotism, racism, and imperialism are at stake. In the 1880s France seized Vietnam from Chinese influence. Steinlen shows two young French soldiers in China playing tricks of escalating viciousness on a helpless but ipso facto ridiculous Chinaman, pulling his pigtail, getting him drunk and stupefied, roasting his dog, and finally carving the French flag and the words "Vive la France" on his chest (Fig. 9.21). Their emblem, the black cat of France, triumphs over his opposite number, the ugly Chinese dog, by eating his entrails.[49]

Steinlen's cats also function as a superior, supernatural, and suprasocial agent of justice in an unjust world. Blending Poe with Punch, Steinlen casts the black cat as at once victim, symbol, and nemesis of the criminal instinct. Punch, in a Pierrot-like trickster role, gratuitously steals a cat from an old hag and hides the animal in a packing case, accidentally killing it after the old hag remonstrates with him. Returning with the police, who search Punch's abode in vain, she turns into a wild cat herself and has to be carried off, foaming. But when Punch, insouciant as ever, opens his packing case, the cat jumps out, a huge, grinning, bristling Poe-like ghost that scares his killer out of his wits (Fig. 9.22).

The black cat, symbol of a drinking establishment, logically becomes a nightmarish symbol of retribution to the drunkard, who apostrophizes him until he descends from his sickle moon and throttles the rummy with his spiky medieval tail (Fig. 9.23). The black cat also appears, specifically as avatar of vengeance for the oppressed, in a nightmarish fairy tale in which a little girl, having captured two birds, is swallowed alive by a monstrous cat. The birds thankfully escape (Fig. 9.24).

Both as symbol of instinctive criminality and as a judgment on human folly, the cat acquires perhaps its most sinister role as the thief of an ear that a distracted barber has accidentally cut off a customer. The whole town joins in to chase after the cat, and the mutilated man is left, unshaven and unkempt, raging at both barber and black cat. The open-ended, emotionally laden ending to the strip is all the more eloquent for its wordlessness.[50]

By 1887, when he stopped doing cat stories—indeed, already after the 1885 departure from the *Chat Noir* of Willette, who must have been a welcome stimulus to him—Steinlen's narrative strips were declining in quantity and quality. Other, much inferior, artists took up the slack with poor *Fliegende Blätter* imitations, erotica, and trivia. Thenceforth Steinlen's themes of social

48. "Les Tribulations du berger Laubépin," in *Chat Noir,* October 4, 1884, and *Contes à Sara.*

49. The appalling racism of this sequence may be offset by an even more gruesome rendition of the reverse situation from the same milieu: Willette's Negro triumphantly holds up the severed head of an explorer armed with a rifle, whom he has killed with an arrow, to the exhortation, "You are right, son of Cham! kill the explorers—we have no pity for vagrants back home!" (penultimate plate in Willette 1901).

50. "L'Epouvantable Sinistre du Quartier Latin," June 14, 1884.

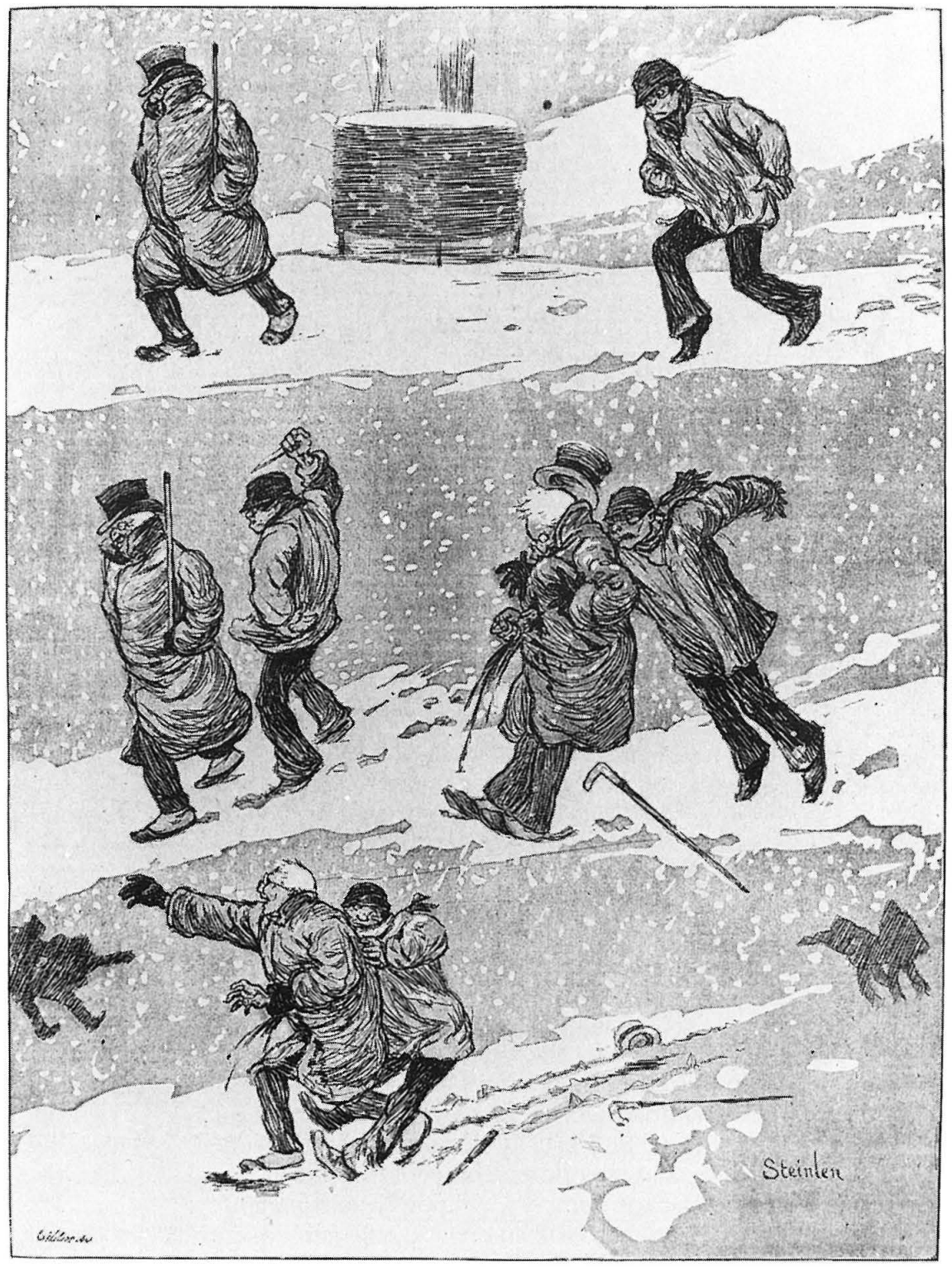


FIG. 9.25. T.-A. Steinlen: "Pinched!!!" (1887).

Pincé!!! dessin de Steinlen.

competition, deception, clumsiness, accidents, the macabre, and the scatological survive only in generalized and diluted form.

In 1890 Steinlen abandoned narrative, and the *Chat Noir,* to dedicate himself largely to that rich iconography of the poor and oppressed for which he has achieved lasting renown. But he continued to draw and paint the cats that had become his trademark, for the posters of a milk manufacturer and his own pleasure. In 1894 he had a one-man show, but Salis, who had presumably paid for them, refused to lend the cat drawings for exhibition. In 1897–1898 two albums of his *Chat Noir* strips, one large and one small, were published.[51] But now, as a contributor to politically engaged socialist and anarchist magazines, Steinlen could no longer treat human struggle, suffering, and exploitation, or its animal analogues, with the moral ambivalence or relative detachment of his *Chat Noir* period. The serious philosophical undertow of his narrative strips surfaced openly in large, powerful, self-sufficient images, the humanitarian purpose of which would only be undermined by the whimsical and anecdotal or by formalistic overconcern with movement for its own sake. At this point in its development, then, by the fin de siècle, the comic strip form had become an impediment to serious, radical political comment.

Other Chat Noir *Themes: Criminals, Beggars, Scatology*

Never was the feeling stronger or more widespread than in the late 19th century that law and religion had failed in their mission to repress in the adult the childish and animal instinct to beg and steal. Serious food riots erupted, born of anger, hunger, and socialist agitation, which only the anarchist press chose to publicize.[52] Theft of food by animals and children, which in the comic strip (apart from Busch) looks relatively innocent, had its real-life counterpart in the desperate behavior of the poor. No one doubted any longer the connection between poverty and crime; only their causes were in dispute.

The 1880s were experienced as a massive crisis in national health; many Frenchmen, appalled by the statistics of alcoholism, prostitution, venereal disease, vagrancy, mental illness, suicide,

51. Steinlen [1897].

52. I owe this observation to Robin Roslak.



FIG. 9.26. Henri Rivière: "The Widow's Mite" (1886).

and crimes of violence of all kinds, feared irreversible national degeneracy.[53] A new social type appeared: the so-called Apache, who committed brutal murder in the street in broad daylight, as casually as Pierrot made love. (The pimp who murders Willette's Pierrot is an Apache.) Criminologists engaged in an intense debate on the roles of heredity and milieu, of bad genes and bad conditions, and anarchism produced a philosophy that justified violence.

The anarchist's distrust of the police and sympathy for criminals and beggars lead readily to the representation of inversions of justice. The arrest of the victim instead of the culprit is a recurrent theme of *Chat Noir* strips. But the innocent are not merely arrested; they are criminally mistreated. Ferdinand Lunel's "Un Grand Criminel" (January 16, 1892; based on a Folies-Bergère skit) shows police interrogating and savagely beating a perfectly innocent but obviously poor and probably homeless bystander. Cartoons and comic strips about street crime and muggings become quite common at the fin de siècle, often showing (in France, not in Germany) the police as useless and stupid. When the honest citizen is entrapped and mugged, the police stand idly by—if they do not actually drag him off to jail.[54]

One solution is self-help. Steinlen shows how the intended victim turns the tables and calmly shoots in the head the man who is about to knife him (March 12, 1887). As an ironic afterthought, he completes the reversal of roles: stripping his would-be murderer of his clothes, he leaves him lying naked in the snow and nonchalantly walks off—a symbolic rather than practical gesture, of course, since the bourgeois can have no need of such rags. Ever ready with the gruesome twist, Steinlen also shows the murderer "caught in the act" (Fig. 9.25): he plunges his knife and hand clear through the body of his victim, but the latter, an elderly man withal, seizes the wrist projecting from his gushing belly and forces his assailant to drop his knife, thus gaining time for help to arrive.

The closely related social phenomena of crime and beggary exercised legislators, social critics, and intellectuals alike. (Witness, for example, the Sherlock Holmes stories, which began to appear regularly from 1891.) Criminals supposedly posed as beggars (as did police spies, like Victor Hugo's Inspector Javert), and beggars were increasingly suspected of being frauds. In a strip with the Darwinian—and English—title "Struggle for Life,"[55] beggars are shown miraculously recovering the use of limbs when they fight for a coin or, quite fantastically, fall in love. Cripples were experienced as funny in themselves. A young beggar, apparently born without arms, joyously receives a coin that allows him to eat a meal of spaghetti, yet he gets himself so helplessly wrapped up in the noodles, like a mummy, that the delighted restaurateur turns him into a sandwich man, a walking advertisement for his locale (March 6, 1886). The artist, Eugène Lemouel, probably had no sense of being cruel; indeed, he may have taken the idea from the stage, for although caricature from this time dis-

53. See Nye 1984.

54. Steinlen, December 7, 1889, and January 4, 1890; Uzès, "Parisiens, dormez en paix!" July 10, 1886; Fernand Fau, April 30, 1887.

55. "Struggle for Life," *Chat Noir,* November 12, 1892; copy in *Illustrated Bits,* January 7, 1893. Cf. Heidbrinck, "Faîtes l'aumône," October 8, 1887; and Döes, April 25, 1891.

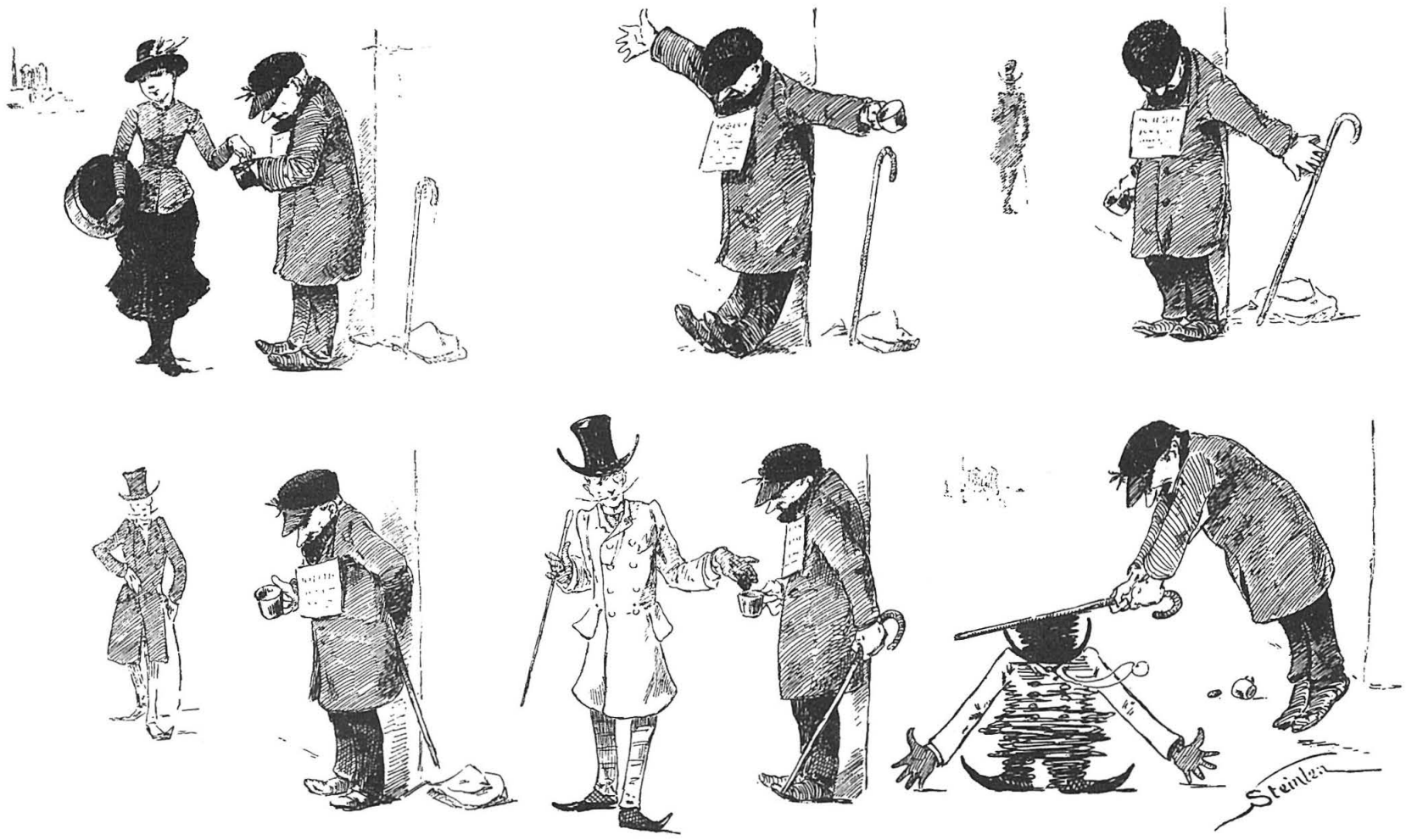


FIG. 9.27. T.-A. Steinlen: "Can You Spare a Dime?" (1885).

plays a decadent, even sadistic pleasure in depicting horribly mutilated people, it no doubt represents but a pale reflection of what went on in music halls and circuses. A genuinely legless man strapped to a trolley gets into a fight for a coin with a genuinely armless man and crashes, spewing teeth and blood, into a lamppost (Fig. 9.26). Broadly sympathetic as it was to the outcast and underdog, the *Chat Noir* was capable of a quite irrational hostility to the beggar and of pity and fearful contempt for the poor.

We have already noted how Pierrot debonairly uses the beggar's own recorder to fart at him. In this instance, after cringing with disgust, the beggar recovers his stoic dignity and continues playing, unbowed by the insult, which is no more to him, perhaps, than the shadow of the eternal black cat as it leaps across the street. Interest in beggars (as a form of social excrement) and in scatology go together. One of Steinlen's tricksters, a child, collects excrement deposited at a decent distance by the dog of a blind musician beggar and puts it in the man's bowl. The beggar reaches for his takings, and the dog gets the punishment, with the boy nowhere in sight ("Virtue Is Always Rewarded," April 5, 1884)—a metaphor of how the poor, one might say, take shit. Outright robbery of the beggar also occurs: the concierge drives away the musician playing in a courtyard just at the moment when people throw down their coins, which the concierge then appropriates for himself (November 9, 1889).

On only one occasion does Steinlen show the beggar as capable of a violent reaction. Malevolent tricksters, a child and a *midinette* (milliner's assistant) successively mock the beggar's blindness by putting stones in his cup; finally, provoked beyond endurance, he strikes in (blind) rage at the next passerby—a gentleman who has given him a real coin—slamming him into a concertina shape (Fig. 9.27).

Other taboos were broken at this time as well, notably those of a scatological kind. In 1892 a new kind of music hall performer arrived: the Pétomane (*péter* meaning "to fart"). In the Moulin Rouge and other famous places he delivered odorless imitations of the "timid little fart of the young girl, the round fart of the mason, the bride on her wedding night, a dressmaker tearing calico," and so forth.[56] His fame—and a healthy income—endured for eight years.

The Pétomane was depicted in a comic strip under this name by Radiguet (August 27, 1892), rather unfairly, as performing an unwelcome, odorous serenade to a couple making love on a sofa. If this was socially acceptable entertainment, and funny, it should not be surprising to find Döes and others telling scatological anecdotes.[57] No other visual art form (not even music hall?) could have accommodated such agonies of constipation and diarrhea and the leaving of smelly piles on a host's master-bedroom floor when the WC is occupied (see Fig. 15.37). Artists warmed to the graphic challenge of representing certain kinds of pain and smell. Base biological urges could be quasi-redeemed by female innocence: beatific, wreathed in the odor of sanctity, the "angel" leaves a latrine that literally explodes with her relief (or the noise or smell?), effectively deterring the gentleman who was pursuing her.[58] We find the theme crossed with that of the childish trick when a patriotic French butcher, from behind a fence, deftly switches the turds just deposited by a German soldier (occupying Alsace-Lorraine, no doubt) for the entrails of a hare he has just disemboweled. Straightening, turning, and catching sight of them, the soldier dies of shock.[59]

The comic strip thus partakes of the sensibility of the new symbolist poetry, which played synaesthetically on smells of all kinds. The olfactory senses were also becoming the object of scientific study, especially in relation to sexuality, in both animals and humans.[60] In the comic strip, as one would expect, the emphasis is on the unpleasant smell, the excremental—and nowhere but in the France of Zola was this possible.

56. Nohain and Caradec 1967, 26.
57. E.g., Döes's revenge of the latrine cleaner, "Mes Etrennes, Monsieur," November 5, 1892.
58. Döes, "Ange pur, ange radieux," October 10, 1891.
59. Döes, "Untimely Substitution," June 2, 1888.
60. See Kern 1975, chap. 5.

CHAPTER 10

GERMANY: 1848 AND THE AFTERSHOCK

Sweet and holy censorship!
Let me follow in thy step,
Like a child in leading strings
That to thy hand so closely clings![1]

Thus read the motto of *Mephistopheles,* a magazine founded in Hamburg in January 1847 on the model of the *Charivari.* It succumbed within eighteen issues to the censor whose protection it had satirically invoked, was revived in April of that revolutionary year 1848, was forbidden in Prussia, and lasted until June 1852 when, disgusted with the state of Germany, its publishers declared their intention to emigrate to America. *Leuchtkugeln* (meaning "fireballs" or "flares"), subtitled "Marginalia to the History of the Present," was founded in Munich in 1848, formally imitating the *Fliegende Blätter,* and expired under the censorship on May 1, 1851, after suffering the *Racheblitzen* (thunderbolts of revenge) of having twelve of its issues seized and seeing its editor twice arraigned for blasphemy and insult to monarchy.[2]

Many other of the numerous satirical illustrated journals founded in the aftermath of 1848 suffered a similar fate. *Leuchtkugeln* projected a disreputable, proletarian image and favored popular art forms: children's primers; silhouettes; primitive, wooden, puppetlike figures; and imitations of the crudest Bilderbogen. This "democratic" style informs many of the sporadic strips, to which the painter Kaulbach, then known as "Red Kaulbach" because of his socialist sympathies and famous for his powerful illustrations to Goethe's *Reineke Fuchs,* contributed. *Leuchtkugeln* targeted the aristocracy, clericalism, and militarism as well as the paranoid persecution of revolutionaries by German governments.[3]

Meanwhile, just one humorous illustrated magazine survived and throve by means of stringent self-censorship: the *Fliegende Blätter* (Broadsheets). Founded in 1844 in Munich by Caspar Braun, the painter and illustrator, and Friedrich Schneider, the writer and publisher-bookseller, the *Fliegende* (as it was popularly called) was formally modeled on *Punch* with regard to the integration of text and illustration but, unlike *Punch,* studiously avoided the topical issues of the hour—so successfully that even today it is hard to assign dates to the numbered but undated weekly issues.[4]

When the 1848 revolutions burst the bonds of censorship, the *Fliegende* opened up a little too, although it never joined in the storm of caricatural abuse that broke over Lola Montez, whose ascendancy over the Bavarian king Louis I was a primary cause of the revolutionary agitation in Munich and of the king's abdication in March. The *Fliegende,* after poking its head cautiously out of the trenches, withdrew when the censorship cracked down again. Most writers have stressed (and more recently censured) the magazine's political timidity, to which it owed its commercial success, having by 1850 garnered a circulation of twenty thousand.[5] But the *Fliegende* was not entirely uncritical in the years of the revolutionary aftershock, 1848–1853. By means of the comic strip and serialized stock characters, rather than the single cartoon, it touched base from time to time with popular resentments against authority, and, at least partly because of their narrative form, certain strips and serials of the *Fliegende,* acting cumulatively, in a slow, dull undertow of protest and resistance, rose now and then to convey glimmers of real satire.

1. "Süsse, heilige Zensur, / Lass mich geh'n auf deiner Spur, / Leite mich an deiner Hand, / Wie ein Kind am Gangelband!"
2. *Mephistopheles* (Hamburg), October 3, 1850.
3. See, for example, the expedition of the soldiers Hops and Mops against the republicans of Rummeldorf, described with reproductions by Grand-Carteret (1885, 128–130).
4. All dates cited should therefore be considered approximate, but will not be far wrong. Appearing at first "two or three times a month," from no. 60 it became a regular weekly, with biannual volumes of twenty-four issues. Cf. Bernhard 1979, 215; and Dangl 1938. The magazine is referenced henceforth as *FB*.
5. Kirchner 1962, 141–142.

> So deeply poisoned is officialdom that its more noble members do not even deny that faith and loyalty are absent from its ranks, and that the long habit of lies and deceit and secrecy has killed the very capacity to be open, straight, and true.[6]
>
> He [the bureaucrat] is the most easy-going [*gemütlich*] of the great corporation that has spun its thick web with ever tighter and heavier threads over the whole holy German empire, and under the honorable name "civil servant" or "official" concentrates itself in a fast knot, the forcible loosening of which might be not unlike a revolution.[7]

The humor in the *Fliegende Blätter* could hardly have been other than generally benign, considering the social identity of one of its founding and chief continuing contributors, Franz von Pocci. This nobleman was a high official at the courts of the Bavarian kings Louis I and Maximilian II, and since 1830 had served as master of ceremonies at court, a sort of minister of culture and entertainment. A versatile dilettante in many branches of written and graphic popular art, a composer of songs, plays, almanacs, operettas, caricatures, puppet-theater pieces, children's books; a man who, always in the center of Munich cultural life, knew everyone, Pocci was the licensed court jester. If he "lashed the power and prestige-hungry . . . , poured his mockery over the clever Herr Professors and scholars, the title- and decoration-chasers, the officials and upper aristocracy" with their sick, petty ambition, he did so in privately circulated caricatures, which never caused offense. For Pocci was also "charming, harmless, never injurious."[8] Himself a civil servant, a kind of superior bureaucrat, Pocci was known to engage in self-persiflage, while in his introduction to *Der Staatshämorrhoidarius* he warned against reading specific individuals into the satire.

He certainly did not resemble the squat Staatshämorrhoidarius physically; long and dry like a Töpffer figure, he liked to refer to himself as Monsieur le Maigre. He featured himself in unpublished sketches for a picture story à la Töpffer,[9] an artist who, at least indirectly, must have inspired Pocci's pictorial narratives for the *Fliegende,* however stylistically unlike the work of Töpffer these may be.

The revolutions of 1848 were directed against an administrative apparatus dominated by an aristocracy that hung over Germany like a pall. This peculiarly German bureaucracy elicited, under the euphonious series name *Der Staatshämorrhoidarius,* a type of social cartoon that has no exact English or French counterpart. Here we have the archetypal German bureaucrat, who stands at the center of the *Fliegende Blätter* in its early years and, with fluctuations determined by the political moment, continues down to 1856.[10]

As a major recurrent stock German caricature figure—at this early period when any kind of stock figure is a rarity—the Staatshämorrhoidarius may be compared with Daumier-Philipon's mighty entrepreneur Robert Macaire, but unlike Macaire, who presides majestically over large, regular, full-page lithographic designs, the German bureaucrat is small enough (so to speak) to fit the comic strip format and, like the true bureaucrat, is available to the public on an irregular basis. Also unlike Macaire, the Staatshämorrhoidarius is graphically nondescript and psychically torpid. An emanation of the bureaucratic slime, his ponderous body and obtuse features do not tend to variety, and expressions of pleasure or dismay are the exception. He lacks not only the theatrical panache of a Macaire but even the egregious pomposity of Daumier-Monnier's mentally and physically inert, prototypically bourgeois Joseph Prudhomme (whom one imagines to be also some kind of civil servant). Indeed, as a type, the Staatshämorrhoidarius is not really suited to continuous humorous exploitation at all, and it took an especially German comic grimness to cast him as a cartoon figure. He cracks no jokes himself, allows for few at his expense, and although he proves to have ambition, he is (both literally and metaphorically) short-sighted and short-statured. The tiny lenses on his spectacles are also those of his creator, Pocci, who respects the narrow limits placed on satire in Germany. In short, he is boring.

Yet we must deal with him, for like boring people in the real world, he has character and can be unwittingly funny. His world is bounded by office desk and chair and engulfed in paper. Not paper symbolizing real power, like the share certificates promising financial and industrial miracles that Macaire brandishes, but petty, amorphous, juridical pulp, in which the Staatshämorrhoidarius clothes himself and on which he feeds, like a beetle on a dungheap.

This metaphor comes close to realization in one of his all-too-rare demonstrations of fantasy, when he acquires a rural property, a farm as a vacation asylum and as a means of voter qualification. He tries to fatten his emaciated livestock with protocols and documents, which only causes them to sicken further. In a burst of real creativity he invents a new kind of compost heap, which rises so high that it serves as a lookout tower. Its various layers are plaster, peat or wood ash, backlog protocols (*Retardatsacten*), various types of excrement, unused reports (*Referatsacten*), dung salt, used match sticks, and so forth. The inventor is recognized by membership in various agricultural societies and solemnly crowned for Services to Dung Making (pp. 63–69). All of which, quite apart from the secondary satire on petty-bourgeois ambitions in agricultural science, is a conceptually potent image of the honor paid to bureaucratic shit.

The Staatshämorrhoidarius's workplace is no Dickensian Circumlocution Office where aristocratic idleness reigns. His unremitting dedication to work is a parody of the otherwise much-admired middle-class work ethic: he is like the German scholar who sacrifices real living for books.[11] Sent on a hydropathic cure for his gastritis, swelling paunch, and of course hemorrhoids, brought on by a sedentary life of overwork, he naturally brings his backlog with him, which becomes a handy substitute for the wool blankets the hotel fails to provide. The very process of the cure requires no abatement in his rhythm of work but merely strengthens him for further labors (Fig. 10.1).

On only one occasion does he break out of this stereotype into the complementary one of the idle bureaucrat, but here a small political barb is concealed: the centerpiece of a day (in 1853; p. 82) spent doing nothing is the official's complacent observation from his window of the arrest of citizens for wearing "polizeiwidrige Hüte" (hats offensive to the police, because reminiscent of those worn by revolutionaries). It goes without saying that the Staatshämorrhoidarius represents political conservatism and opportunism, but he has not escaped the upheavals entirely un-

6. *Illustrirte Zeitung* (Leipzig), preface to vol. 11 (July–December 1848).
7. Introduction to Pocci's *Staatshämorrhoidarius* ([1857] 1979).
8. Wolter 1925, 10, 12.
9. "Histoire de Monsieur Spinat," eleven numbered drawings; reproduced in ibid., 31–36. The intention to publish is suggested by the elaboration of the title with date, 1845, which is that of Pocci's first comic strip in the *Fliegende.*
10. He first appears in the eighth issue (1845), shows up another ten times down to early 1848, is submerged by the eruptions of that year, resurfaces with the political reaction of 1853, and shambles on intermittently, with fifteen or so more appearances down to 1856, culminating in an album the following year. In the *Fliegende Blätter* the episodes contain typically from eight to thirteen scenes run over two to three pages per issue, but never continuously from issue to issue.

    The 1979 edition (to which reference is made) contains 122 drawings spread over as many pages, so that the comic strip effect is lost. About two-thirds of the original drawings were included in the album, which sought to provide narrative coherence by adding an episode of the bureaucrat's birth and youth, eliminating certain incidents, and rearranging the ending. The captions have also been changed.
11. Cf. the strip "Life of the German Scholar," *FB* 8, no. 178 (1848): 74–75.



FIG. 10.1. Franz von Pocci: *Der Staatshämorrhoidarius* [1845].
Hydropathic cure for a nervous system shattered by overwork. The continuing daily flow of dossiers takes the place of woolen blankets and induces the necessary early-morning sweating. / Comfortably working on reports in the cold hip bath. / Cold shower. / Reading the *Allgemeine Zeitung* in the cold river. / Drying off; feeling good and a walk round the room. / So strengthened by the cold water cure that he is able to carry the heaviest portfolios with ease.

scathed: when he reappears in 1853, he is referred to as having been arrested twice, first as a reactionary, then as a liberal.[12]

For the *Fliegende* to render the circumstances of these arrests might have been to court danger, for the aesthetic problem of the Staatshämorrhoidarius is also a political one for the magazine, whose range of activity is officially circumscribed. The bureaucrat's superiors officially reprimand him for undertaking unseemly, if medically prescribed, horseback riding; so Pocci's superiors at court would have reproved him for alluding to any real administrative procedure or abuse. The *Fliegende* tried to fend off such reproof in advance by having the Staatshämorrhoidarius write a letter of complaint to the journal, threatening a libel suit and seizure of the artists according to article 405 of the criminal code.[13]

Chiefly concerned with pushing papers in the abstract, the bureaucrat (who is no humble clerk) becomes responsible just once for the "real" trial of a "real" criminal. But, taking two steps back for every one forward, Pocci makes the crime as petty—and strictly nonpolitical—as the paperwork it engenders is large, and the trial itself fizzles out; after an absurd interrogation of a suspect apparently picked up at random, and eighteen months of inquiry, the procedure is indefinitely adjourned. Meanwhile, the accused has escaped from jail (pp. 42–49). Have we here a whispered criticism of judicial procedure still possible in 1846, that is, before the revolution and consequent repression? Unremarkable in itself, the incident stands in contrast to the numerous *Fliegende Blätter* cartoons that play off the (feigned) stupidity of the peasant or worker against the severe correctitude of the law.

The weakness in the characterization of the Staatshämorrhoidarius is that of a "weak character" and has to do with the "safe" restriction of his primary relationship to paperwork. Except for the trial cited, we never see the human victims of bureaucracy, which would have lent the situation a dangerous social reality. The purpose of his life is to promote bureaucracy as well as himself. The expected promotion of the Staatshämorrhoidarius and his decoration with the Staatshämorrhoidariusverdienstorden

12. His "revolutionary" activity is significantly omitted from the 1856 album: briefly a *Freicorpsmann,* he participates in a disturbance but is hit on the head with a stone and taken home unconscious. He returns to his desk and files, but collapses when he hears that he has come under suspicion of being a radical (*FB,* no. 155 [ca. May 1848]: 86–87).
13. Letter dated December 10, 1846 (*FB* 3, no. 172, p. 190). He makes another complaint in a letter dated February 29, 1847 (no. 84, p. 94), where he threatens to sue the readers as well.



Ein verdächtiges Individuum – vermuthlich ein Zeitungsschreiber – wird von den Dscheremets arretirt.



Vorläufig polizeiliches Verhör.



Der Kadi-Staatshämorrhoidarius leitet das summarische Prozeß-Verfahren ein.



Fortsetzung des summarischen Prozeßverfahrens.



Nun beginnt die eigentliche Special-Untersuchung.



Schluß des Protokolls, wobei dem Inquisiten eröffnet wird, daß ihm die Appellation an den Kadaskier freistehe.

FIG. 10.2. Franz von Pocci: *Der Staatshämorrhoidarius* [1856].
He begins his official career in Turkey with the following procedures: A suspicious individual—presumably a journalist—is arrested by the Jeremets [police]. / Provisional police hearing. / Summary legal proceeding. / Continuation of summary legal proceeding. / Now begins the actual special examination. / End of the protocol, whereby it is vouchsafed to the accused that he is free to appeal to the Kadaskier [military judge].

(Order of Merit) takes place as a matter of course. Immediately following this elevation, the official escapes to the mountains to avoid the cholera, in fulfillment of his duty to preserve from harm an essential link in the chain of service to the state.

In the penultimate (book) episode, Pocci finds a potentially more expressive satirical mask. The Staatshämorrhoidarius, like many Germans of the 1850s, decides to emigrate (officially, he gets a one-year leave of absence)—to Turkey. As the beturbaned judicial adviser to the sultan he introduces and supervises what the captions describe as regular (that is, German) legal procedures, but the pictures show the stereotypical Turkish barbarism of capricious flogging, hanging, and impaling alive (Fig. 10.2).[14] Thus Pocci follows an old allegorical tradition, letting oriental barbarism cover for oppressions closer to home. Yet the author hastily leaves the scene of impalement, to assure the "beloved reader and viewer" that the whole Turkish episode is merely the sick, phantasmagoric delusion of the Staatshämorrhoidarius, whose true destiny is to be immortalized in a bronze statue and rousing eulogy—on which the book ends. This official coronation of the immortality and ubiquity of state-hemorrhoidal bureaucracy has, of course, its own satirical point, and a passage in the mock eulogy testifies to a faint, lingering nostalgia for the revolutionary alternative: "All storms have passed him unaltered by, and he goes forth rejuvenated from revolutions." Many people who had no relish for revolutions had cause to regret the rejuvenation of the German bureaucracy.

14. The whole issue in which this episode (*FB* 24, no. 574 [1856]: 169) appeared is set in Turkey, whither the magazine was supposedly forced to flee after being several times confiscated in Munich. There was presumably some real trouble with the censorship at this time. A drawing shows the reader forced to take a bitter draught of "Press Law" from a Turk.



FIG. 10.3. Johann Detmold (text) and Adolf Schrödter (drawings), attr.: *New Zig-zag Travels Through Germany of Baron Beisele and His Court Tutor Dr. Eisele* [1848].
"Berlin: New Wrangelian Street-cleaning Machine."

Beisele and Eisele *and Political Tourism*

The other major recurrent stock figures of the early *Fliegende Blätter* period appear in the more numerous and politically weightier *Zig-zag Travels Through Germany of Baron Beisele and His Court Tutor Dr. Eisele*. Unsigned like *Der Staatshämorrhoidarius,* this series is attributable to Adolf Schrödter and Johann Detmold, better remembered as the authors of *Piepmeyer* (see below). *Beisele and Eisele* is not a comic strip but a very loose narrative of largish, separate cartoons, seldom with more than two or three and often only one drawing to a page. Both the bland, stocky young baron and his elderly, bald, sharp-nosed, and thin tutor are lacking in independent character;[15] observers to whom things happen, they never make things happen—just like the *Fliegende Blätter* itself. As characters they are pretexts for ironic, satirical, or simply amused glimpses into odd local customs, the political import of which is to show, in all its richness and variety as well as some of its problems, "Germany as a whole." In other words, the aristocrat and his middle-class tutor act as potential unifiers across the omnipresent frontiers of the thirty-six independent states, at a time when unification of Germany was the primary political agenda. The focus is on urban and political centers rather than on rural or touristic areas. The seemingly trivial observation, such as Vienna's scandalous display of corsets in shop windows, gains significance from Austria's being considered here as part of a potential greater Germany.

German liberals believed that in a united Germany there would be less need for police repression. The customs barriers where Beisele and Eisele (and, no doubt, the *Fliegende* itself) are harassed would simply disappear, as would all kinds of incomprehensible petty local regulations. In Weimar, the pair go to jail for calling a daughter of the *Bürgerstand* (upper bourgeoisie) "Fräulein" instead of "Mamsell"; in Berlin they are arrested for smoking in the streets (something that must have happened to visitors in reality). When the events of March 1848 oblige the travelers to return home, the old baron immediately sends them out again in the uniform-cum-disguise of the Freicorps of Beiselingen to report on the achievements of the revolution. The death of the (now disappeared) Staatshämorrhoidarius should have been among these, but Beisele and Eisele are shocked to find him alive and well in Munich, under the guise of a "Munich democrat maker" (*FB,* v. 8, p. 12). In Berlin again, at the height of the disturbances, the pair are caught up in the "new Wrangelian street-cleaning machine" (Fig. 10.3)—a large formation of General Wrangel's troops who crushed the revolution there. With Berlin in a declared state of siege, all visitors must surrender their arms; Beisele and Eisele have none to surrender, so the police cut off their coattails instead.

Here as elsewhere we can detect veiled self-criticism of the political passivity incarnated not only in the two characters of Eisele and Beisele but also in the *Fliegende Blätter* itself, which did not dare take up ideological arms on behalf of the revolution, despite a cautious initial sympathy. The well-established magazine actually stood to gain from the return to "order" and stricter policing of journalism, as well as from the elimination of economic

15. A court decision, however (see below), revealed them as recognizable caricatures of an Abbé Ponceau and his pupil.



FIG. 10.4. Alfred Rethel: *Also a Dance of Death, V* (1849).



FIG. 10.5. "A Surprise" (1847).

O mein Gott! jetzt gäb' ich kein Tropfen Blut, so bin ich erschrocken. Sie — meine Herren — hier im Schmutz? das ist denn doch ein schlechter Witz, die Leute so zu erschrecken! —

„Alle Wetter! was geht das Sie an, wo wir uns befinden? Es gefällt uns hier, und wir fühlen uns schon lange recht behaglich dadrinnen. Also was Witz? Such' Sie anderswo Witz und nicht bei uns!"

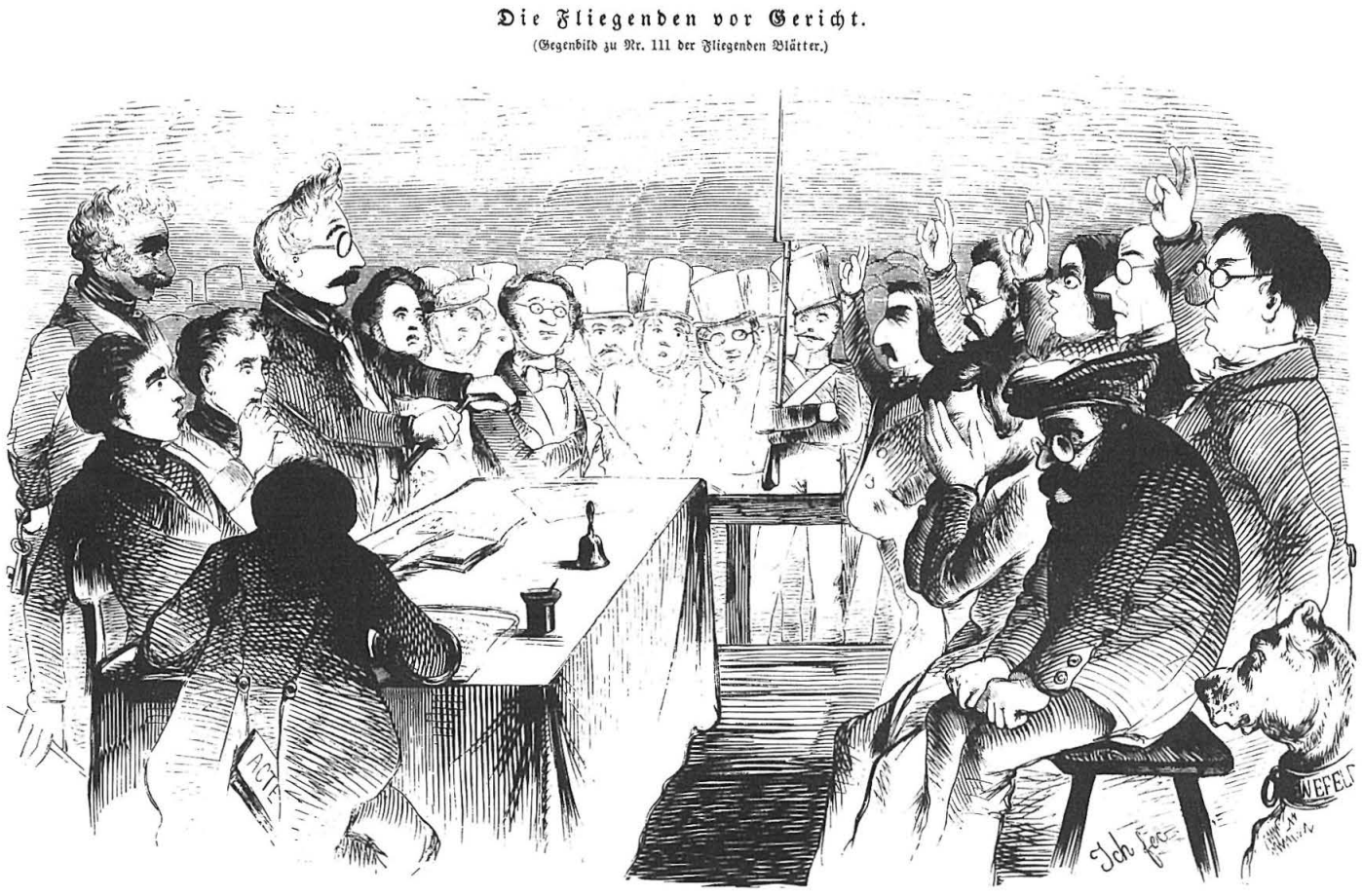


FIG. 10.6. "The Fliegende [Blätter] in Court" (1847).

barriers, which would help protect its copyright and facilitate its distribution throughout Germany.[16] It was loath to represent the revolution as a physical struggle. No German magazine, in fact, published anything to compare with Alfred Rethel's powerful *Totentanz* (Dance of Death) woodcut series, which presents an outright counterrevolutionary viewpoint, culminating in a "Death on the Barricades" that crosses Delacroix with Dürer (Fig. 10.4).[17]

Having suffered the loss of their coattails, then, Beisele and Eisele prudently lay low for over a year, resurfacing in 1850 with some new travels. These soon taper off, however, continuing only sporadically and in lackluster fashion until 1855.[18] A similar fate overtook *Der Staatshämorrhoidarius*.

Before Wilhelm Busch, an artist capable of giving the magazine a real graphic-satiric identity, came along, the *Fliegende Blätter* sought to create a social-satiric identity by means of such type-figures. In this they succeeded, and the Staatshämorrhoidarius and Beisele and Eisele all became broadly associated with the magazine as its representatives and in some sense even as its owners and editors. In northern Germany, one magazine offered Eisele and Beisele "guest appearances" in honor of their pan-German celebrity.[19] The status of the three characters can best be gauged from the run-in the *Fliegende* had in 1847 with another illustrated paper, the *Illustrirte Zeitung,* founded two years earlier by the publisher Brockhaus in Leipzig in imitation of the *Illustrated London News* and *L'Illustration*. Although primarily a news magazine like its models, it also carried caricatures—designed to appeal particularly to youth—and therefore constituted something of a competitor to the *Fliegende Blätter*. The *Fliegende* attacked its rival for using illustrations copied from abroad, knowing that although some of its facsimiles of woodblocks originally made for English and French magazines were paid for and therefore legal, other material, especially in the domain of caricature, was taken without authorization. (In its early years, the *Illustrirte Zeitung* used, among copies of strictly documentary engravings, bootlegged caricatures by Grandville, Cruikshank, and, notably, Cham.)

In 1847 the *Fliegende Blätter* ran a full back-page cartoon showing a lovely young lady trying to revive an emaciated elderly coquette clothed in rags; the caption read: "How the Leipzig Illustrirte Zeitung is cheaply clothed [via France] and fed with the leftovers of the rich French cuisine, to prevent it from dying of starvation." The *Illustrirte Zeitung* must have counterattacked with (threats of) a libel suit, for the following week's *Fliegende Blätter* shows Beisele and Eisele, well enough known by now not to be identified by name, awakened in the middle of the night by the "fearful" apparition of the *Illustrirte Zeitung*—again depicted as the hag-coquette—threatening them (that is, the *Fliegende Blätter*) with a crude household implement. Later the pair are shocked to encounter the rival magazine in the guise of a gaudy prostitute-cum-dancer. These cartoons initiate a series called "Sketches in the Life of a Prematurely Aged Woman,"[20] which ends with a portrait of a criminal preferring *any* punishment to having the *Illustrirte Zeitung* read aloud to him.

The *Illustrirte Zeitung* counterattacked with its own graphic war (Fig. 10.5): a poster features Beisele and Eisele being ridden like circus horses by editor (and perhaps author-originator) Caspar Braun (Jewish, bearded, bespectacled), with a text vilifying Braun's editorial practices. Under the poster an old peasant woman, shocked to see the same pair, in diminutive form, lying like rats in the dirt beneath a gutter pipe, scolds them for their bad, frightening joke. Beisele and Eisele respond angrily, telling her that they like it in the dirt and if she wants jokes she could go elsewhere to find them.

16. In July 1851 (*FB* 13, p. 168) the *Fliegende* complained of "miserable" copies being peddled in Prussia and Württemberg, and published on the back page a dire *Warnung vor Nachdruck* (warning against reproduction).
17. Executed by March 1849 in six woodcuts and quickly reaching 4,500 copies in a total of three editions. *Auch ein Totentanz* was also gathered together on a huge, single sheet—a most uncomic strip. Politically conservative and moderate organizations helped to distribute it among the people and soldiers. See Ponten 1911, 128.
18. The *New Travels* started in vol. 11 (nos. 263 and 264) and reached eight issues in the twelfth (six-month) volume. An attempt was made, probably about 1849, to publish the series as a separate volume. An album in the Germanisches National Museum, Nuremberg, in oblong (*Piepmeyer*) format and credited to Schrödter and Detmold, is entitled *Ein Ausflug ins Hauptquartier: Neuestes aus unseren Erlebnissen* (An Excursion to Headquarters: Our Latest Experiences) and consists of ten line lithographs with manuscript captions glued in, beginning: "The beloved travelers Baron Beisele and his mentor Eisele, who had disappeared for a considerable time, and who were therefore believed to have gone under in the general shipwreck of German gemütlichkeit, have just shown up again. . . . We left them last in Berlin and picked up their adventures there." They are shown being very badly treated by the Berlin authorities, which is probably why the album was never published: they get beaten up, savagely arrested, interrogated, accused as subversives, and condemned to be shot as spies. They are finally rescued by none other than Piepmeyer himself (pls. 8 and 9).

    Vischer (1882, 113) credits the authorship of Eisele and Beisele to *FB* artist and editor Casper Braun (alone).
19. *Mephistopheles* (Hamburg), March 21, April 11, and May 2, 1847.
20. *FB* 5 (1847): 88, 99, and 112.



FIG. 10.7. *Herr Grashueber's March to Schleswig-Holstein* [1848].
Arrested as a poacher. / Mercilessly dragged off to jail, lamenting German unity. / Reads in jail the latest news from the theater of war. / In silent fury, suffers the confiscation of his weapons by his wife.

An attempt at reconciliation failed, and the *Illustrirte* ran a cartoon celebrating the (actual?) arraignment of the *Fliegende Blätter* for indecency. Then the *Illustrirte Zeitung* rendered its own final courtroom verdict (Fig. 10.6): *Fliegende* editors Braun and Schneider must admit that their accusations of piracy are unjustified and, furthermore, that they have translated the abbé Ponceau and his pupil into Eisele and Beisele, rolled them in the dirt, and thus poisoned innocent hearts by picture and text. Beisele and Eisele (with the Staatshämorrhoidarius) swear to the truth of this, the two travelers proclaiming that they were personally innocent and led into bad company. The court-decreed punishment is that Braun and Schneider be excluded from good society and condemned to live in a bog until they die of boredom.[21]

In 1848 the *Fliegende Blätter* adopted a broadly liberal position, accepting the revolutions as a means of enacting political reforms, of strengthening the federal diet, and of proceeding toward German unification as peacefully as possible. It opposed the spirit of military adventurism shared alike by radicals, who saw a foreign war as a means of consolidating revolutionary gains (on the Jacobin model), and conservatives, who saw it as a means of Prussifying Germany.

This unholy alliance of Left and Right led, in March 1848, to the ill-fated attempt promoted by the federal diet to annex Schleswig-Holstein, which for centuries had been ruled by Denmark. In *Herr Grashueber's March to Schleswig-Holstein* the bourgeois Grashueber, his pan-German fanaticism whipped up by the press, is shown defying his family and, after secretly training and equipping himself, taking off for the war. On the way (Fig. 10.7), he is mistakenly arrested and jailed for poaching; he thus learns about the Schleswig-Holstein affair from his prison cell. Upon his release he returns home, where his wife quickly disarms him to prevent further escapades. The same issue of the *Fliegende* contains cartoons mocking the military exercises of elderly bourgeois, children, and working men's associations; and a sequence ridiculing the idea of incorporating even the tiniest independent states in a unified military policy presents the principality of Flachsenfinger, which, obligated by the federal diet to produce troops, has to drill its army with one soldier sitting on the shoulders of another, so small is its territory.[22]

The childishness, vanity, and erotic attraction (no less) of the new German militarism was allegorized in a wordless sequence premonitory of German history down to our own times, *The Saber* (Fig. 10.8). The huge weapon is given to a child (the infant Germany), for whom it becomes a dangerous real toy and fetish.

21. *Illustrirte Zeitung,* September 4 and 25, October 2, 1847.
22. *FB* 7 (1848): 14–15.



FIG. 10.8. *The Saber* [1848].

As a grown man and paterfamilias he undertakes his entire social round with his inseparable saber at the salute, even embracing it in the conjugal bed. He of course becomes the leader of the local militia, and even as he sickens, dies, and is buried, he continues to clutch his military fetish.

Reacting to rather than trying to act upon political events as a true satirical journal would do, eschewing representation of the physical violence of the revolution in order to denounce the escalation of rhetorical violence, the *Fliegende* tried to stake out a middle-of-the-road, supposedly extrapartisan approach; recognizing that the interests of the extremes were irreconcilable, it accordingly condemned them both. The bourgeoisie has always managed to lament both the sufferings and the successes of revolutionaries; before 1848, the *Fliegende* actively deplored the jailing of political dissidents; after 1848, it merely watched as revolutionaries went to jail or into exile and, in a series called "Pictures from a Soldier's Life"[23] showing harmless interactions between billeted soldiers and civilians in both town and country, made its peace with the military.

The often tragic fate of the political exiles—and tens of thousands were, like Marx, driven abroad, a majority to the United States—was dissipated into the *Fate of a Genius,*[24] an extensive allegorical sequence that "proved" that genius, which is as precious, innocent, and mysterious as love (it is, in fact, represented as a winged Cupid), is spurned by representatives of various social classes and types, including the arts, all of which are dedicated to self-interest and material gain. In the final drawing, the Man of Common Sense offers to ship the genius to "free America, for there's no future in Germany." The reality of "free America" was scenic but wild, inhospitable and undevelopable; this the famous emigrant of prose fiction, Martin Chuzzlewit, discovered, and it was confirmed in the *Fliegende* by "The Emigrants, or Wonderful Travels and Adventures of Messrs. Barnabas Wühlhuber and Casimir Heulmaier in America." These caricatures of revolutionaries (*wühlen* means "to agitate," *heulen* "to howl"), perhaps by Pocci, constitute a quasi-narrative series (twenty cartoons in 1849–1850, with innovative verse quatrains), at the end of which the heroes run into Beisele and Eisele, who recommend that they return to Germany because "the whole German pre-March [1848] Gemüthlichkeit is back again."[25]

The remark was intended ironically, of course; the *Fliegende* was aware of the discomforts of repression and registered the effect of governmental restrictions on ordinary bourgeois life and

23. *FB* 13 (1851).
24. Twenty-six drawings run over five issues, *FB* 8 (1848): 142–143, 149–150, 156–157, 167, 183.
25. *FB,* no. 258 (1850): 144; cf. no. 263, p. 184.



FIG. 10.9. Carl Stauber: *Pleasure Trip of Herr Blaumeier and His Wife Nanni* [1852]. Kurhessen. Crossing the Hessian frontier / the passengers exchange forboding looks. / And shut their mouths. / "What is this? Is no one allowed to speak here?" "Speak you can, but say the truth and you get locked up." / "We can tell you are from Bavaria; people look different where we come from." / The poor peasant looks oddly melted down. / A walk in Kassel. / In Kassel the music has to be read off note by note, otherwise the harmony is shot to pieces, but it's still a Turkish harmony.

pleasures in the *Pleasure Trip of Herr Blaumeier and His Wife Nanni,* by far the longest story of the whole period, with about two hundred drawings running through twenty-two issues over more than twelve months (from late 1851 to late 1852). Graphically, the small, sprightly vignettes, signed by Carl Stauber,[26] are a marked improvement on *Beisele and Eisele,* and although also conventionally structured as a tour of the peculiar customs and historical curiosities of various German towns, conceptually the sequence has better continuity. The protagonists are now identified as Bavarians, and their experiences of a Prussified Germany are much more subjectively convincing and detailed than are those of the Prussians Beisele and Eisele. The incidental physical discomforts of tourism (insect pests, bad or peculiar food and drink, leaky coaches), the financial extortions (having constantly to tip, being overcharged and cheated), and the boredom of being stuck in sleepy little towns are interlaced with real political harassment, much of it petty and bureaucratic, all of it symbolic. In Erfurt (Prussian Saxony) the Blaumeiers anger the police by wearing hats associated with the radical Hecker, which they are required to exchange for *Pickelhauben* (spiked Prussian military helmets); in the Stuttgart Hofgarten, Nanni is not allowed to carry a shawl on her arm; in Sachsenhausen, the pair are thrown into the middle of the street for crossing a bridge on the wrong side. Kurhessen is worse (Fig. 10.9): the state of Hesse-Kassel, after a brief period of liberal reform, was in the throes of reaction, and the Blaumeiers find militarization and indigence, as well as hatred of Bavarians on account of a diplomatic quarrel of the moment. As soon as their origin is discovered, they are roughed up and kicked out of the hotel by the other guests. No lawyer can be found to defend them because all lawyers, the whole judiciary in fact, are in jail. "Being jailed is a matter of honor"—and those who aren't in jail have their mouths padlocked. When Herr Blaumeier gladly escapes, after paying a hotel bill that has been doubled because he is Bavarian, his mouth too is padlocked. Nuremberg is no better, with its miasma of police surveillance, fear of plots, and sinister whispering campaigns in which a single word—"Mazzini," "Hecker," "Russians," "French," "revolution," "war," "bankruptcy," "starvation"—could lead to a denunciation.

26. According to Hollweck (1973, 21), this prolific artist did about nine thousand drawings for the *Fliegende,* specializing in peasants of Upper Bavaria. *Blaumeier* is cited as among his best work.



FIG. 10.10. Carl Stauber (?): *Travel Memoirs. Odd Pages from the Diary of Baron Blitz-Blitz-Hasenstein auf Rittwitz* [1850].
If this miserable, vulgar goat continues to insult the foreign emissary, he must excuse himself willy-nilly. / The goat begins to be afraid of me. A strange protector—not Prussian style at all! / Aunt and cousin hear the nocturnal battle between me and the goat. / Finally I grabbed the monster and threw it to the ground. / Whereupon it withdrew shamefacedly from further persecution.

This was, however, only one kind of experience. Another reminds us that the outward calm of the postrevolutionary era, however police-ridden, did facilitate travel for pleasure and health, and that tourism generally became a means of sublimating real political and social fears into the mere annoyance of petty discomforts and expenses. These minor vexations are the sole topic of Stauber's overtly depoliticized and narratively rather disjunct *Trip to the Spa* (1851). The medically prescribed annual pilgrimage to the health spa was viewed by the humorist primarily in terms of financial and psychological wear and tear—the day-to-day urban experience transplanted.

The easy-going, pleasure-loving Bavarians tended to see the rest of Germany, especially Prussia, as an assortment of grim police states. Presumably the rest of Germany agreed sufficiently to buy the *Fliegende Blätter*'s view. The Munich-based magazine projected its hostility toward Prussia still further in what is effectively a reversal of the terms of the Blaumeier story: instead of Bavarians visiting Prussia, Prussians visit Bavaria or, more precisely, the Bavarian alps. In the *Travel Memoirs. Odd Pages from the Diary of Baron Blitz-Blitz-Hasenstein auf Rittwitz* (eighty-six drawings over five successive issues, 1850, probably authored by Stauber), an aristocratic family, identified as Prussian not only by their name but also by their dialect, behave rather like today's stereotypical American tourists abroad, viewing the scenery with hyperbolic admiration ("pyramidalisch-monströser jottvollungeheurer Anblick [ginormous-supercolossal-fantabulous-monstrous view]") and the quaint local customs with amused condescension. They also, like Americans, want better and more police and see the mountains as raw material for technological development: "When Bavaria becomes Prussian, railways must be built all over the Alps."

The instrument of retribution for this genial arrogance is the countryside itself—slippery mountain slopes and hostile animals; the native peasants, however, remain passive. Like Busch's modest clerk Balduin Bählamm later (see p. 277), the Prussian baron tries to woo a rustic maiden who is protected by a goat, which butts him repeatedly, targeting various parts of his body (Fig. 10.10). Unlike in Busch, however, the rustic maiden, in the absence of her lover who may have jilted her, is receptive enough, and she accepts the Prussian's help in writing a letter to the lover. The story peters out in an intrigue over this letter and its delivery. Stauber's "Trip to Bad Kissingen,"[27] a later effort in the misfortunes-of-travel genre, lacks even the minimal political interest of the Bavarian-Prussian enmity.

The European-wide phenomenon of more or less realistic comic travel strips that marked the post-1848 tourist boom supersedes the Töpfferian fantasy travel tale, as can be measured by the *Fliegende*'s single, curtailed, tale of the fantastic sort: *Tailor Lapp and His Apprentice Pips,* by Carl Reinhardt.[28] The spirit of Töpffer echoes here in the graphic line, types, postures, and verbal refrains. *Tailor Lapp* has, as in Töpffer, no easily identifiable social theme, and is from the start a crazy quilt of adventures. After the tailor's apprentice Pips delivers a suit to a stranger without payment, for which he gets himself (literally) ironed out by his master, the pair set off in pursuit of the delinquent. In a fast-paced, multistranded intercut narrative, the consequent adventures suck in an ever-expanding cast of unsuspecting characters and fan out in a pileup of frenzies, chases, impossible exploits, and comic accidents, coincidental encounters, jumping to conclusions and out of windows, and snowballing of small causes into big effects down to a general mobilization—at which point the story was, despite the promise "to be continued," suddenly suspended when the revolution supervened with more urgent issues.

We do, fortunately, know the remaining two-thirds of the tale from the children's book edition first published in 1851, and it sustains the same breakneck vein. Indeed, Reinhardt seems to be out to transcend Töpffer in absurdism: butcher and tailor, nearly drowned in a cave as suspected forgers, are inadvertently saved by a professor of geology; a train on a viaduct knocks tailor and his horse flying so that they fall down the chimneys of the butcher's and professor's houses, respectively; the tailor, whom the butcher aims to smoke like a ham, escapes by fleeing over the rooftop, whence he descries his debtor; he chases the defaulter (his smoke-black silhouette making him a figure out of a magic lantern show) up and down, both in and outside a six-story building, until he ends up being chased himself by conjoined parties he had unwittingly injured earlier. The chase continues on board a ship bound for America; the ship wrecks, however, leaving the tailor to ride the waves atop a herring barrel—in which (reminiscence of Töpffer's *Vieux Bois?*) his enemy the debtor has also sought refuge. The

27. Eight issues in *FB* 29–30 (1858), abruptly terminated.
28. Forty-five drawings, *FB* 8 (1848), no. 171, pp. 22–23, and no. 172, pp. 26–28. This story was published in its entirety (133 drawings) in 1851, under the title *Schneider Lapp und sein Lehrjunge Pips: Eine drollige Geschichte für Kinder.* It went through two more editions: 1860 (copy in Frankfurt University Library, Hobrecken Collection), and 1875.

    Töpffer as master of the picture-story may have gone into rather sudden eclipse in the early 1850s, to judge from his unavailability: the Franco-German Kessmann edition of 1846 (see Chapter 2) is not listed in the book-trade manuals after 1852. An article on Töpffer, with portrait, in the *Pfennig Magazine* for March 29, 1855 (p. 97), mentions only his prose fiction and landscape drawings. There was no new German edition of Töpffer's picture-stories until that of Paul Neff in Stuttgart, 1887.



Der Meiſter läuft nach ſeinem Hauſe, wo ſeine Frau in Ohnmacht fällt, als ſie ihn erblickt. Wie er hierauf zu Pips in die Werkſtätte kömmt,



ſpringt dieſer vor Schreck mit allen Geſellen in den Brunnen. Als ſich Meiſter Lapp im Spiegel ſieht, ſpringt er vor Entſetzen gleichfalls in den Brunnen, da dieſer aber ganz voll Schneider ſteckt, hat er keinen Platz mehr darin. Der Meiſter ſieht ſeinen Advokaten und fragt ihn, was da zu thun ſei. Dieſer fällt vor Schreck um.



Darauf läuft der Meiſter auf das Gericht, um ſich zu beklagen, daß Alles vor ihm davon läuft. Das Gericht ergreift aber bei ſeinem Anblick ebenfalls die Flucht.

FIG. 10.11. Carl Reinhardt: *Tailor Lapp and His Apprentice Pips* [1848/1851].
Master Lapp rushes home, / where his wife faints at the sight of him. / When he arrives in the workshop / Pips and all the other apprentices, terrified, jump into the well. / When Master Lapp catches sight of himself in the mirror, he also leaps in horror / into the well, which being already full of tailors, has no room for him. / Seeing his lawyer, Lapp asks his advice. The lawyer falls over in shock. / Master Lapp runs to the courtroom to complain that everyone is running away from him. But the court also flees at the sight of him; / likewise the commander of the civic guard, with all his men. / When he turns in his despair to the town, it too runs away. / Finally Master Lapp runs away from himself in a rage.

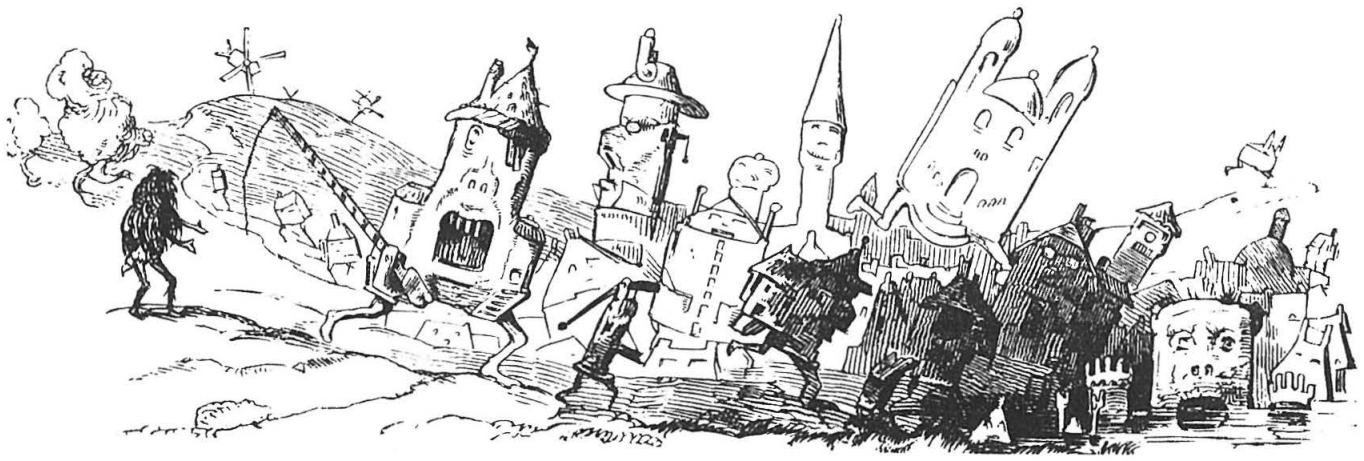
hilarious bartering of herrings for clothing between the foreign gentleman inside and the starving tailor outside, protracted over months and then years, is Töpffer miniaturized and equaled.

The tailor is thrown on shore, into a crowd gathered, coincidentally, to make good their claim on him for damages, but they flee in terror, taking the hairy monster Lapp for a spook. All who encounter him flee likewise, including his former apprentice, Pips, who has meanwhile acquired the tailor's abandoned wife and business. All the terrified apprentices jump down a well, and Lapp, fleeing his own reflection, attempts to follow, but there is no more room. When he appeals to the law to remedy this cruel ostracism, lawyer, court officials, police—the whole town—flee in a surrealistic crescendo, until Lapp (again) flees from himself (or his shadow) and disappears, leaving only the totem animal of his trade, the goat, to wonder at his fate (Fig. 10.11).

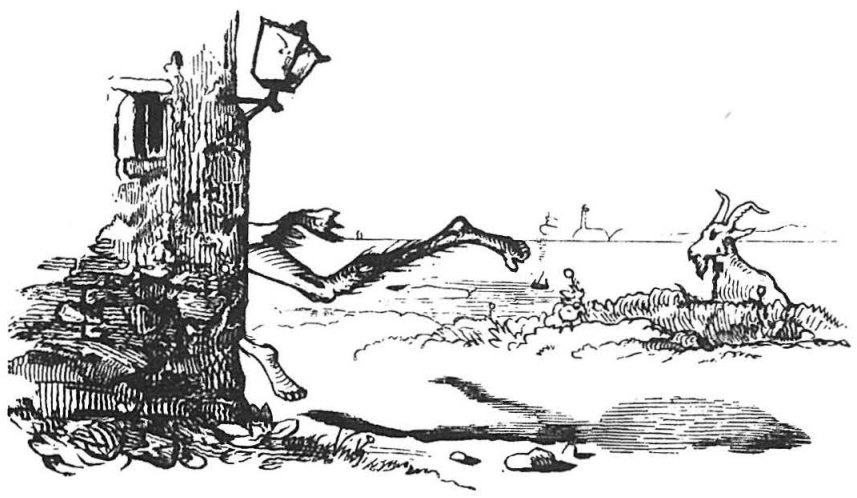
The social cast of the story reveals, vis-à-vis Töpffer, a significant downward trend: small shopkeepers and artisans are depicted rather than gentlemen of leisure; the outward motivation of all the carrying-on is "petty pecuniary": no more is at stake than the value of a suit of clothes, a broken window, a horse's tail, some pots and pans. But Reinhardt uses philosophical underpinnings similar to Töpffer's, still showing humanity at the mercy of fate, coincidence, and unbridled passions.



Er hofft beim Stadtcommandanten Hülfe zu finden, dieser aber ergreift mit sammt seiner Mannschaft das Hasenpanier.



Meister Lapp wendet sich in seiner Verzweiflung an die Stadt, die ganze Stadt läuft aber davon.



Endlich geräth der Meister in Wuth und läuft vor sich selbst davon.

Deeds and Opinions of Deputy Piepmeyer

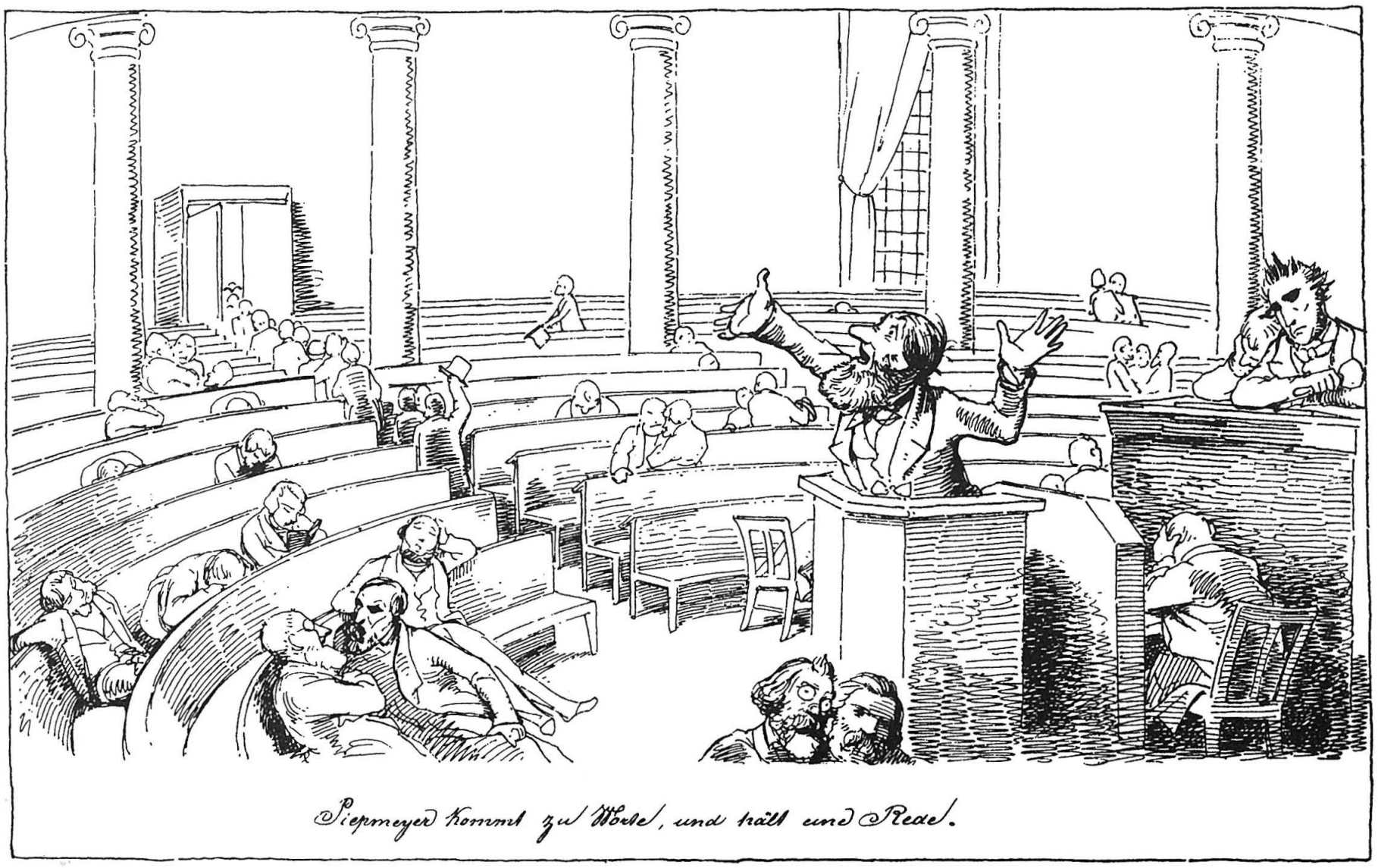
The principal Töpffer imitation in Germany would have been both politically and formally unsuited to the *Fliegende Blätter.* This was the *Deeds and Opinions of Herr Piepmeyer, Deputy to the National Constituent Assembly in Frankfurt am Main,* with scenario by Johann Detmold and drawings by Adolf Schrödter, published in Frankfurt in six installments, probably in March–April 1849, toward the end of the sessions of the so-called Frankfurt Parliament. This parliament, Germany's first, arose immediately out of the March 1848 revolutions and was designed to create a liberal constitution in a united Germany.

Piepmeyer's immediate inspiration was surely Töpffer's *Story of Albert,* his last and most political work, published a few years earlier and with a similarly antidemocratic purpose. There are also touches of Töpffer's parvenu Monsieur Jabot and the parliamentary satire of *Pencil.* The imitation extends from the choice of oblong album format with one, two, or three drawings per page (totaling about ninety drawings on forty-nine pages, thus roughly Töpffer's favored length) to the framing of the scenes and the use of manuscript captions of variable size, all rendered in the easy autolithographic method pioneered by Töpffer and suited to the limited, expensive edition. The primary intended audience would have been restricted to the 586 deputies of the parliament and other politically aware bourgeois liberals, a far smaller circle than the readership of the *Fliegende Blätter.*

Schrödter's basic linear style, too, is akin to Töpffer's: simple, loose, and abbreviated, especially in some pungent facial expressions, many of which are thumbnail portraits of real deputies. The general effect, however, is much less spartan. Detmold and Schrödter also exploit certain Töpfferian narrative tricks, notably the refrainlike repetition of ironic phrases and motifs and little series of reflective poses; yet the Töpfferian device of subplots remains embryonic and adds little.

The effort to broaden the definition of this new German social phenomenon, the parliamentary deputy, as a new kind of upstart by means of stereotypical social vignettes is not very successful.[29] Piepmeyer's extracurricular gambling at Homburg (where a

29. One such vignette (pl. 6), where Piepmeyer rents a room "recommended for its beautiful view" (from a tiny mansard window ten foot above the floor), is evidently inspired by Daumier's *Landlords and Tenants* series (Delteil 1904, no. 1601).



Piepmeyer kommt zu Wort, und hält eine Rede.



In einsamen Stunden ist Piepmeyer sich in mimischen Darstellungen, die namentlich den Fall beziehen, wenn einmal Soldaten in das Sitzungslokal der National-Versammlung eindrängen.





In welcher Weise Piepmeyer sich die Stadt denkt, welche ihm das Vaterland einst errichten wird.



Piepmeyer redet im demokratischen Vereine seines Wohn- und Wahlortes und berichtet über das was die National-Versammlung bereits Alles für Deutschlands Grösse und Wohlfahrt gethan. Sie habe Schleswig für Deutschland erworben und nur Oestreich dafür weggegeben, das doch nie gut deutsch gesinnt gewesen, und auf die Besinnung komme doch am Ende Alles an. Sie habe die ausländischen Orden verboten, da man ja einheimische genug habe, und sich daher wohl gegen fremdes Fabrikat schützen dürfe. (Bravo von Seiten eines schutzzöllnerischen Abgeordneten.) — Sie habe den "Adel als Stand" abgeschafft, damit der gute und alte Adel endlich zur rechten Geltung gelange und sich nicht mehr über neugebackenen Adel zu ärgern brauche, — ausserdem habe sie noch mancherlei Andere gethan, was der Raum hier einzeln aufzuführen verbietet.

FIG. 10.12. Johann Detmold (text) and Adolf Schrödter (drawings): *Deeds and Opinions of Deputy Piepmeyer* [1849].
[27] Piepmeyer takes his turn to make a speech. [30] Piepmeyer spends solitary hours practicing attitudes to conjure up what would happen if soldiers forced their way into the halls of the National Assembly. / How Piepmeyer imagines the statue which the fatherland will erect in his honor. [34] Piepmeyer reports to the Democratic Club of his hometown and electoral district on the achievements of the National Assembly to date: having exchanged Schleswig for Austria, which wasn't very German anyway; forbidden foreign decorations; done away with the "*Nobility as an Order,*" so that the good old nobility might be protected from the upstarts; and much else, which space forbids listing here.

casino had recently been added to the famous spa) leads to a promising encounter with a "supposed Russian princess" who, however, involves the deputy in nothing worse than a shopping spree—for which he pays; it then occurs to him that this might be a nice casus belli with Russia and he determines to raise the matter in the parliament.

Piepmeyer, older than Albert, is a mature upper-middle-class type historically representative of the Frankfurt Parliament, which was composed of judges, lawyers, higher officials, teachers, merchants, and industrialists, with a tiny minority of artisans (four) and one peasant.[30] The fact that Piepmeyer has been elected by constituents of his hometown Democratic Club only renders him less responsible and more hypocritical. He reports to his electors periodically, boasting of his and the parliament's achievements on their behalf when in fact he has been selfishly wasting time, maneuvering behind the scenes, and "working" only by delivering belated and irrelevant speeches. This is the burden of the satire: how revolutionary aspirations are frittered away in trivial, idle, and boring debate.

The author, Johann Detmold, who was himself a deputy from Hannover (his is among the eighteen portraits of leading deputies that Piepmeyer buys as a souvenir [plate 9]), gives free rein to his own disillusionment with the parliament from late 1848 when its powerlessness became evident, having failed over Schleswig-Holstein and suffered, on September 18, an armed attack by masses including thousands of artisans. This attack, which was repulsed by Austrian and Prussian troops, acted like the bloody June days in Paris as a catalyst of terror for the middle classes all over Europe, shifting them to the right. Detmold and Schrödter, however, were no more able than the *Fliegende Blätter* to face the specter of popular revolutionary violence. There are only two allusions in the whole album, both indirect, to the street fighting that was endemic all over Germany at this time. First, in the "innocent" form of a group of very small children who have collectively donned the uniform of the occupying Prussian garrison (plate 38), which Piepmeyer reads as an allegory of future Prussian military domination. Second, in the much-distanced form of a small, crudely sketched engraving of rebel barricades suffering an artillery bombardment, in a shop window next to hero portraits of four generals credited with such action (plate 29): Cavaignac, against the June insurrection in Paris; Wrangel, against the Berliners and Danes; Jellacic, against the Hungarian nationalists; and Windischgraetz, against the Czechs and Viennese—as a result of which last the Frankfurt deputy of the Left, Robert Blum, was shot to death.

The sight of these images (if we may class children playing soldiers as a form of imagery) drives Piepmeyer to the right—after much opportunistic oscillation, depending on whom he

30. Carr 1981, 44.

talks to, what he reads, and which way he senses the wind to be blowing. Although he continues to flirt with the lower classes, he finally throws in his lot with the majority opinion for a hereditary empire and becomes part of the parliamentary delegation sent to offer the crown to the king of Prussia. Like Albert's, Piepmeyer's motives are strictly personal, social, and at one point commercial; they are not based on any real political principles. He hopes for a high position in the new imperial administration, as minister for the navy or army, or in the diplomatic corps, for which he trains by learning French and dancing. His final act of transformation into a ministerial figure before leaving for Berlin on April 1, when the story ends, is to shave off the beard he had grown as a radical credential, the progress of which figures as a caustic, Töpfferian refrain. A bushy beard, a dented parliamentary hat, empty posturing and speechifying (Fig. 10.12, Plate 27), flirting with a waitress "to sound out popular opinion"—these are the disguises and subterfuges of the radical impostor.

Johann Detmold, lawyer, comic author, art critic, and former friend of Heine and "the people," moved to the right himself, and eventually to a rich wife and a ministerial post; here he surely uses Piepmeyer as a form of cynical self-persiflage.[31] But the degree to which he is hostile to the revolution and the lower classes generally is partly unconscious. It is significant that the hometown Democratic Club elector, with whose trivial letter of complaint Piepmeyer annoys the parliament and the reader (two pages of dense text here interrupt the pictorial narrative), is a shoemaker. This is the only reference in the book to the artisan class, which played such an important role in the revolution. The artisans' very real militance, based on the most concrete economic grievances owing to pressures from industrialization—which particularly affected the clothing trades—is shrunk in dimension to an absurd encounter between a lone shoemaker and a policeman's dog. Piepmeyer's hometown Democratic Club, to which he returns in order to boast of his achievements, is composed of rough and seedy-looking malcontents (Fig. 10.12, Plate 30); the laborers to whom he promises a Ministry of Work look stupefied, if not stupid.

Detmold has eliminated all sense that the revolution and the parliament were responses to really oppressive social conditions and concrete popular demands. The idea that substantive social and political issues were being debated in Frankfurt (and all over Germany), even if incoherently, as might be expected among people without a parliamentary tradition, is ridiculed in advance by the array of books displayed in the office of the Popular Economic Commission (plate 22). The subject headings range from the anachronistically metaphysical ("The Immortality of the Soul") to the absurdly petty ("Improvements to Scissors"), the numerous volumes on such topics lying next to an empty section headed "On the German Imperial Constitution"—which was of course the primary agenda of the parliament. Such tactics seek to trivialize the efforts of German intellectuals, a traditionally apolitical class, to come to grips with social and political issues.

Insofar as there is no counterweight to Piepmeyer, no good deputy to contrast with the bad, Piepmeyer is posited as the representative representative. To show him trying to join the commission so that he may promote his scheme to create a German "national drink" unified out of wine, beer, and brandy is, in effect, to imply that the deputies as a body were motivated by personal economic interest, not social conscience—unless it simply mocks the very idea of German unity. When Detmold and Schrödter depict the deputies collectively as bored, distracted, or merely absent during Piepmeyer's tedious speeches (see Fig. 10.12, Plate 34), they mean to characterize the behavior and inner feelings engendered by the parliamentary proceedings as a whole. But this was not just the authors' view: it was evidently a basic self-image acceptable to many of the liberal bourgeoisie, to judge by the success of *Piepmeyer;* and it was also the judgment of the conservative historians writing in the succeeding period, for whom "the liberals of 1848–49 were unpractical doctrinaires who wasted valuable time discussing the Fundamental Rights of the German People for six months where men of action would have boldly cut the Gordian knot of the German problem."[32]

Like Töpffer's *Albert, Piepmeyer* is a reactionary polemic against democratic struggle at a time of revolutionary ferment. In the development of the comic strip in Germany it is a mere curiosity, testifying (like *Tailor Lapp*) to Töpffer's momentary appeal in that land. The future lay in a different direction, one pointed to by the mild formal and social realism of *Der Staatshämorrhoidarius, Beisele and Eisele,* and *Herr Blaumeier.*

31. This observation is made by Bruno Kaiser in his afterword to the 1961 Berlin edition of *Piepmeyer.* The last hotel tout (pl. 36) uses the following arguments in favor of Piepmeyer's lodging at the Landsberg inn (where the center-right political clubs met under the leadership of Dahlmann and Droysen): the lack of (doctrinal) constraints; cheapness and comfort; location in the middle of the town; and popularity among gentlemen from Hannover, which was Detmold's (and, given the context, presumably Piepmeyer's) home state. This is the only hint as to Piepmeyer's geographical origin.

32. Cited in Carr 1981, 57. There were other—now very rare—albums with a political purpose similar to *Piepmeyer*: Theodor Hosemann's *Herr Fischer als Deputirter zur preußischen National-Versammlung* (Berlin, 1848), with eight plates, described by Klaus Mlynek (Busch 1982, 116 [143]) as a "caricatural series of pictures on the arrogance of many deputies." Misdating it to 1847, Mlynek sees it as a precursor to *Piepmeyer,* which is wrongly interpreted as "revealing joy and hope with respect to political developments." Another, anonymous album exists (copy in the Germanisches National Museum, Nuremberg), entitled *Bilder aus dem Leben eines berühmten Staatsmannes* (Rodelheim, n.d. [1848/1849?]) with six very crude and scratchy lithographs, about one Bassermann, *Unterstaatssecretair* in Dessau, who visits various parties and people assuring them of his ability to bring happiness and freedom to Germany. Piltz (1980, 163) mentions Friedrich Pecht's *Ätzblätter aus dem Frankfurter Parlament,* inspired by "reactionary malice." We deal with Henry Ritter's *Politischer Struwwelpeter* below.

CHAPTER 11

WILHELM BUSCH

The Bilderbogen and Early Work. Darwin, Animals, and Conflict Between Species

> Man (the worker) feels that he is acting freely only in his animal functions—eating, drinking, procreating . . . while in his human functions he feels himself nothing more than an animal. What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal.[1]

In the year 1859, when Busch started to publish his picture-stories both as Bilderbogen and in the *Fliegende Blätter,* two landmarks of modern thought made their public appearance: Karl Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* and Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*. The first lays the basis for a scientific explanation of social conflict, the second for that of biological struggle. For Marx and Engels, however, the two struggles were akin.[2] As Engels said in his speech at Marx's funeral, "Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history."[3]

The concept of physical conflict and struggle is a cornerstone of Busch's work. Although it is doubtful that he knew anything of Marx, he was a declared Darwinist and went around with a copy of Darwin in his pocket. His work is a compendium of conflict, real, aborted, and renounced, transposed to the surfaces and interstices of daily living. Thus the macro-conflict of nature and society is miniaturized into a myriad of micro-conflicts embracing a variety of classes of men, women, children, animals, and even objects; these are naturalized and universalized as part of a social evolution that entered a decisive phase over the second half of the 19th century, when industrial capitalism made its headlong advance in Germany. Many of the middle and lower classes, excluded from direct participation in German political life and rendered both mildly fatalist and vaguely hopeful by the popularization of Darwin's thought (by Ernst Haeckel and others), accepted internecine struggle as an ineluctable principle of social relations. Busch, like many philosophers, scientists, and moralists of the age, sought in this struggle the underlying mechanism and explanation of the universe.

The full title of Darwin's book is *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. The use of the word "races," which appears unfortunate in the light of subsequent "social-Darwinist" and racist perversions of Darwin's theories, evoked from the start human peoples and classes, although Darwin limited his discussion to nonhuman species. Darwin, more than any other single figure, shaped and sharpened the predisposition of Busch and his audience toward a view of the world as dominated by conflict between species, variations of species, and individuals.

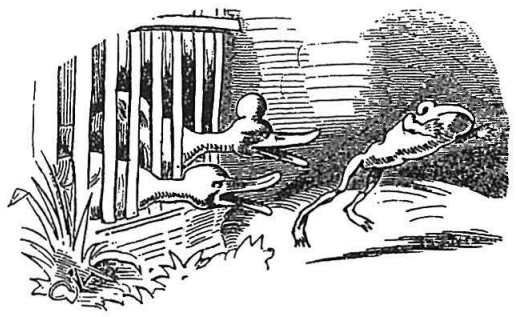
This predisposition was formed not only by the various strands of pre-Darwinist evolutionary thinking but also by the ancient and ever-evolving sense that whereas human consciousness continuously gained in transcendence over animal consciousness, human and animal remained highly interdependent and retained fundamental identities of appearance, character, and function. Fable, art, and especially the traditions of caricature and popular imagery have relied on and sought to confirm this interdependence and identity. Cartoon inconography has always used animal symbolism; and the broadsheet tradition from the 16th century, when European-wide conflicts and challenges to ancient authority became endemic, evolved a format for systematically expressing social flux by means of inverted human, animal, and human/animal relationships.

This format, which appears in numerous interrelated guises in most European cultures (including that of Russia), is called in English Topsy-Turvy World, or World Upside Down (WUD).[4] WUD imagines "impossible" reversals of the power relations that exist between those whom nature or society has designated as, respectively, strong or weak in the various animal and human domains. Relations may also be reversed, at a nonsensical level, between human and object. The WUD broadsheet format, which

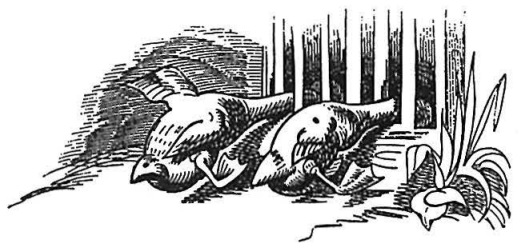
1. Marx 1983, 137. See also Wehler 1975, 179–180.
2. See, for example, Kelly 1981.
3. Marx 1983, 69.
4. This idea is discussed in depth in Kunzle 1978.



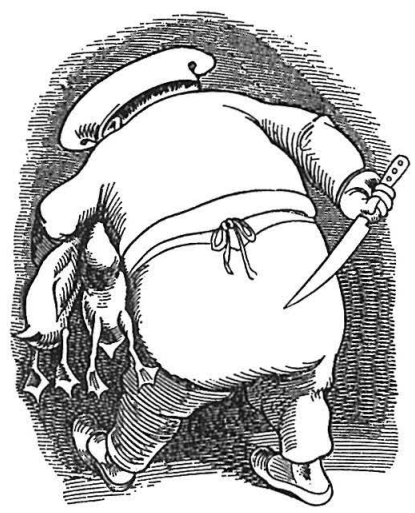
Sie suchen ihn im Wasserrohr,
Der Frosch springt aber schnell hervor.



Die Enten mit Geschnatter
Stecken die Köpfe durchs Gatter.



Der Frosch ist fort — die Enten,
Wenn die nur auch fort könnten!



Da kommt der Koch herbei sogleich
Und lacht: „Hehe, jetzt hab' ich euch!"



Drei Wochen war der Frosch so krank!
Jetzt raucht er wieder, Gott sei Dank!

FIG. 11.1. *The Frog and the Two Ducks* (1861).
The last couplet, which soon became celebrated, translates: "Three weeks the frog was much in pain! / Now, thank God, he smokes again!"

survived from the 16th century to the 19th century, with its Imagerie d'Epinal and Bilderbogen,[5] gathered together large numbers of motifs more or less systematically and arranged them in a sufficiently comic strip–like grid pattern to justify the inclusion of a sample in Volume One, *The Early Comic Strip*. But they never became, until Busch, truly sequential or narrative, nor did they—nor could they, in a format designed as a kind of catalog of motifs—show the process, effect (reward or punishment), and social context of the development of power reversal. Although the precise historical context of a given early WUD broadsheet or Bilderbogen is rarely available, it can sometimes be inferred, especially in examples we know were subject to official censorship. We can thus gauge the subversive potential of the genre as a whole, and it is evident that Busch, as he absorbed WUD themes and principles, also retained, in his characteristically ambivalent way, some of this rebellious potential.

Busch brings WUD into the age of Darwin. He, and other Darwinist popularizers in the social realm, developed the WUD's parallels between human and animal hierarchies, its polarization of species into predator and prey, and its presupposition that power relationships are not fixed but always subject to inversion. Competition among animals and the law of the jungle became ready metaphors for human behavior and social conflict. According to Engels, Darwin's doctrine was a "bitter satire on mankind . . . when he showed that free competition, the struggle for existence, which the economists claim is the highest historical achievement, is the normal state of the *animal kingdom*."[6]

Busch started with animals in conflict for children. In his first, "zoological," period (1860–1864), only four of twenty-two Bilderbogen are not connected with animals.[7] His early Bilderbogen phase as a whole (1859–1871) is a series of "innocent" demonstrations how, by superior adaptation, intelligence, and willpower, the physically weak may prevail, or seek to prevail. In Busch, the moralism underpinning the WUD broadsheet, which posited the power reversals either as justified or as wrong and absurd, depending on the historical circumstances and political viewpoint of the producer, is lacking or muffled. The early Bilderbogen are superficially innocent in that Busch appears to remain neutral; he wants to be funny, no more. But he is nevertheless dealing with traditional moral broadsheet components: rebellion, victimization, reward, and punishment. Rebellion is both justified and punished; jungle law is both natural and cruel. The proverbial "Might makes Right" is both affirmed and subverted.

The 19th-century petty bourgeoisie, in its profound ambivalence toward the concept of rebellion, found satisfaction in seeing it manifested *and* punished, succeeding *and* failing. At the same time, realistic norms as well as political caution prevented Busch from representing clear-cut "revolutions against nature," the obviously impossible, fantastic, or really polarized reversals of the WUD tradition: the peasant cannot unseat the king, the mouse cannot really chase the cat, the frog eat the duck, or the hare shoot the hunter (as in *Struwwelpeter*), although the "underdog" can prevail in other ways.

Animal versus Animal

Busch's *The Frog and the Two Ducks* is a fable showing that quarrels between two individuals of a stronger species can be turned to advantage by the weaker species (Fig. 11.1). The frog's escape is aided by his superior adaptation to the environment and by his smaller size, otherwise the index of inferiority. But he is too small, too much the natural prey, to execute his own revenge, WUD-style; this is performed for him by human proxy, the cook, who carries the ducks off for slaughter while the frog celebrates

5. See, notably, among Münchener Bilderbogen, Olms edition nos. 44, 84, and 86, all from roughly mid century.
6. Quoted in Bannister 1979, 131. Stress original.
7. This count is from Kleeman (1972, 28). My own count would be somewhat different. For animals in Busch, see Ueding 1977, 121–132.



Sie fliegen dann, o weh, o weh!
Mit Heinrich fort und in die Höh'.



Hoch über seiner Mutter Haus
Da lassen sie den Heinrich aus.

FIG. II.2. *Cunning Heinrich* (1864).

his escape in a little anthropomorphic flourish characteristic of early Busch.

The human intervention is that of a superior power who will restore order and punish the guilty. More typically, though, Busch's method is to show how easily that supposedly superior power can itself be discomfited by even the smallest creature. In *Cat and Mouse* (1:304),[8] the mouse escapes the cat, again, by virtue of its small size and superior adaptation to the environment, which the cat ravages in the course of the chase (see Fig. 11.8). The mouse's victory is triple: its own escape, the damage the cat does to the human master, and the punishment the master metes out to the enemy the cat. When the human master takes over the cat's function and chases the mouse himself (*The Mouse,* 1:50), he damages himself directly; his defeat and the mouse's victory are unmediated.

Apart from incidental anthropomorphisms, such tales all lie within the realm of the possible, as is generally the rule with Busch when he is not telling traditional fairy stories. *Cunning Heinrich* is an exception, a fairy tale of Busch's invention that is also a development of a characteristic "impossible" WUD motif: direct revenge of the birds on their human predators. Geese seize by his shirttail the naughty child who uses a pretzel to lure goslings to their doom; picking him up by the ears, they drop him down the chimney into a soup pot (Fig. 11.2)—and they also get to eat the pretzel. In *Max and Moritz* it is fowls that, victimized at the very start, become in the end executioners, gobbling up the boys who have been ground up into bird food (see Fig. 11.20).

Insects

The mouse is the smallest and weakest of all creatures to appear in the early WUD imagery. In the 19th century, however, insects, which had always been known to farmers, mainly as pests,

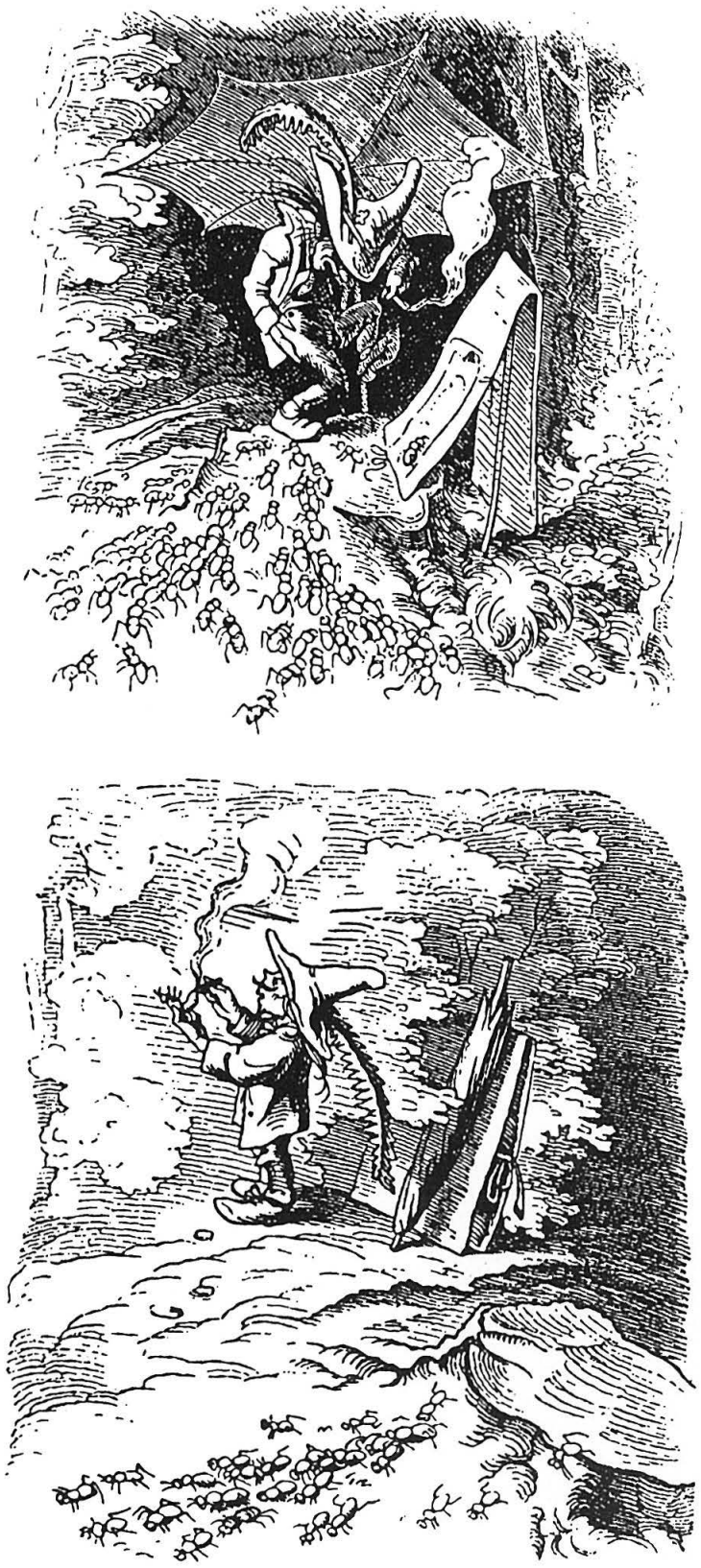


FIG. II.3. *The Little Painter with the Big Portfolio* (1859).

came to be recognized generally as an essential element of creation, part of the "chain of being," but also as a social as well as economic nuisance. Busch's "chain of being," too, incorporates tiny creatures, as emblems of poetic truth (in his poetry) and of human vulnerability (in his comic strips). Fly, flea, earwig, wasp, ant, and beetle are primary actors on the social stage; brought into verbal or graphic close-up, they are a moral under a microscope. While insects were evident enough in earlier 19th-century caricature, they usually appeared collectively, as a plague associated with the discomforts incidental to country life in general; for Busch, flea and fly are individualized, and their menace has spread into the urban realm. Max and Moritz's introduction of beetles into their uncle's bed is a symbolic invasion by nature at its most cunning and noxious into the urban bourgeois sanctum. If the insects always end up being slaughtered, it is only after they have caused disproportionate damage to the human psyche, social tranquillity, and, through the overreactions they provoke, the human environment itself. In this sense they are victorious even after death; and they are, of course, infinitely replaceable. The execu-

8. Reference here and subsequently is to Busch 1959, the best standard edition of his work.

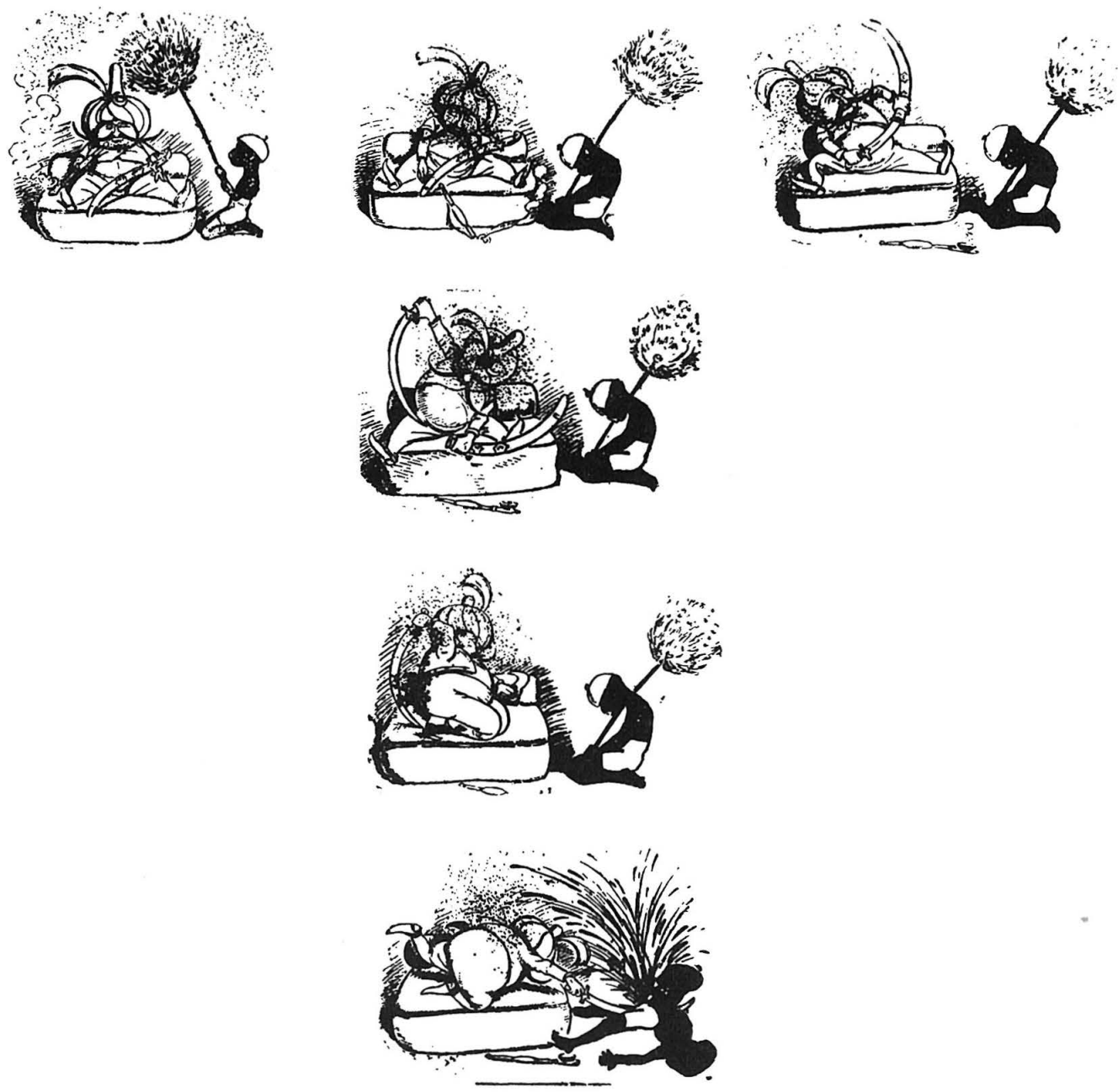


FIG. 11.4. Anon. German (?): "The Sultan, the 'Skeeters,' and the Slave" (c. 1886).

tion of individual members of insect species is not as a rule casual, but grisly, ritual, exemplary, magnified in proportion to the social danger they represent. In *The Little Painter with the Big Portfolio,* the human protagonist makes an example of one captured ant by roasting it on his cigar end, in order to scare away the rest of the attacking army (Fig. 11.3). Like any public execution, this is a political act.

Insects flow from country to town like (and with) displaced peasants, literally—in peasant hair that has been turned into a wig—spreading the plague within the bourgeoisie.[9] Numerous, ubiquitous, armed with sting and bite, insects were ready metaphors of those lower classes, workers, peasants, and lumpen, who at times of social upheaval were perceived by the ruling classes as a pestilential swarm. In a poem Busch refers to insects as the lowest common denominator, the winged atoms of nature, whose stubbornness is impossible to conquer, even by despots who seek to forge armor from them.[10] They are, in comic art, the quintessential disturbers of the peace, with no regard for rank. Persecution and death only multiplies them; they are immortal and supernatural.

An English critic of 1831 had likened caricature to the "caterpillar on the green leaf of reputation."[11] How fitting that the scientific study of pest control and application of insecticide began in the 1860s,[12] just as the insect world was finding metaphorical elaboration in graphic art. (Denigration of one's enemy as a lower animal or insect is of course still very much a part of political rhetoric: at the beginning of the war in Lebanon in 1982, the Israeli chief of staff called Arabs of the West Bank "drugged roaches" and advised Israelis to treat them accordingly.")[13]

The deadly insect swarms throughout the late-19th-century comic strip. Small insects cause pain and panic to large and docile domestic animals and make humans commit murder (Fig. 11.4). They subvert social institutions such as courtship, marriage, and the ritual of painted and photographic portraiture.[14] They are nemesis, nightmare, and death itself, capable, in all-devouring demonic clouds, of stripping human flesh to the bare bones (Fig. 11.5). And these are not exotic carnivorous ants of the jungle but the little winged denizens of peaceful country lanes. The insect demonstrates how the smallest thing can become the starting point for major disaster, the first link in a chain of being that leads to civil war—a concept formulated long ago in folk rhymes. The *Fliegende Blätter* filled the bulk of one issue with a ten-part pictorial drama on the "house-that-Jack-built" or "all-because-of-a-

9. *Chat Noir,* July 17, 1886.
10. Cited in Lotze 1979, 114.
11. Cited in Hill 1966, 18.
12. The *OED* gives 1865 as the first recorded use of the word "insecticide." The first book on the subject is John Curtis's *Farm Insects* (1860).
13. Megged 1983. In view of the new meaning that any human/animal comparison takes on in the light of Darwin's theory of evolution, it is ironic to learn, from the same article, that a group of religious fanatics, including several university professors, have appealed to the Israeli minister of education to prohibit the teaching of that theory.
14. *Chat Noir,* March 27, 1886.



FIG. 11.5. Percy Kemp: "Made a Meal. The Bank Holiday Fly" (1894).

horseshoe-nail" principle, under the title *The Honey Drop*.[15] A hunter buys a pot of honey, from which a drop falls to the shop floor, which attracts a "black and stupid fly," which is killed by the shopkeeper's cat, which is killed by the huntsman's dog, which is killed by the shopkeeper, who is attacked by the huntsman, who is attacked by the neighbors, who are attacked by a group of apprentices. The police intervene, the people fight back and erect barricades, shooting breaks out, and "in our Germany, alas, there's a great rebellion again." This sequence appeared in 1870: in June of that year, did a small error in telegraphic decoding cause the Franco-Prussian War?[16]

Humans, Animals, Objects

> I see the links in the chain unified: children, parents, people, animals, plants, and stones. And I see all filled with a single power.[17]

Scientific philosophy of the time, especially in Germany, countenanced monism, the idea of a single, unifying energy and an atomic, cellular, or molecular structure that encompassed inanimate objects. In the 19th century, simple objects of everyday use acquired a new status, and a kind of individual character. The relationship between man and object changed fundamentally. As nature came ever more fully under human control and this control allowed industry to produce objects apparently as fruitfully as nature herself, man defined himself more and more in relation to the "fruits of his production" which were not directly edible. Social relations revolved around systems of commodity exchange; things, as so many complained and Marx explained, tended to be valued more than people. Busch himself illustrates an extreme but not entirely incredible end result of the process when he shows parents, their house ablaze, saving first the most trivial household objects and only then thinking of the baby—which is finally saved by a monkey (3:343).

Busch satirizes a mind-set characteristic of both bourgeois and peasant (and prominent in the literature of the period, especially 1830–1850), in which household objects are made agents of a higher, ethical, purpose.[18] In Busch, however, things are not only symbols and functional instruments of power but also mediators of power relations. Several recurring objects in Busch are invested from the start with obvious, traditional power-related symbolism: the key (property, control), the ladder (ambition), the top hat (masculine dignity and self-control; see especially *The Top Hat,* 2:481), the pipe (masculine sensuous pleasure), the umbrella (protection), and the broom (female control of the household, and hygiene). The umbrella and broom also function as weapons and instruments of judicial power. In addition, a wide array of objects usually associated with the household are drawn

15. *FB* 52 (1870): 181–184.
16. For the "fantastic accident that changed the course of world history," see Taylor 1955, 100ff.
17. Busch; quoted in Bohne 1958, 142. This work remains the best biography of Busch.
18. See Sagarra 1971, 69, 119.

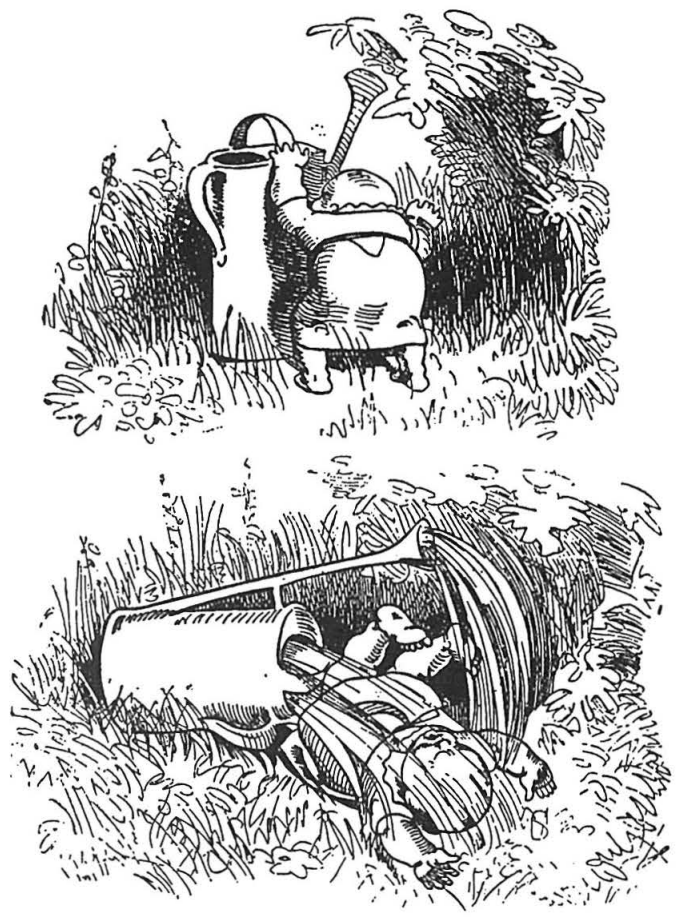


FIG. II.6. *The Baby's Comforter* (1863).

into the physical disorder unleashed by human foibles and conflicts. They are accidents waiting to happen, casual instruments of moral judgment, agents of the law of gravity by which humans condemn themselves to punishment. They are goals of the chase and obstacles in it, causes and effects, loose links in the chain of order, falling dominoes in the game of life. They are the highly vulnerable symbols of property and status, acquired initially to enhance the quality of life but ultimately liable to reversals of meaning as agents of degradation.

Objects in Busch have a kind of independent willpower, a trickster instinct, an autonomous deceitfulness—the *Tücke des Objekts*—and the role they play transcends that assigned to them in earlier pictorial satire. In Hogarth, for instance, objects are imbued with important narrative and moral meaning and often contribute significantly to realistic settings; in Busch, however, they are no longer mere moralized props or adjuncts but primary actors and significant intermediaries in their own right. A very early Bilderbogen, *The Baby's Comforter,* develops a "chain of being" including inanimate objects; these are listed as characters in a cast list: "Dramatis personae: Grandmother, Baby, First Dog, Second Dog, Wasp, Watering Can, Stable Broom, Comforter." This is the only text; the power struggle here is one that predates, as it were, human language, a "wordless drama" in which the human protagonist is too young to speak. He is man in his evolutionary infancy, embattled against nature.

The object of the struggle is the comforter, which carries the same sweetness and pleasure/power symbolism as honey, the food so prominent in the later story *The Bees*. The comforter is given



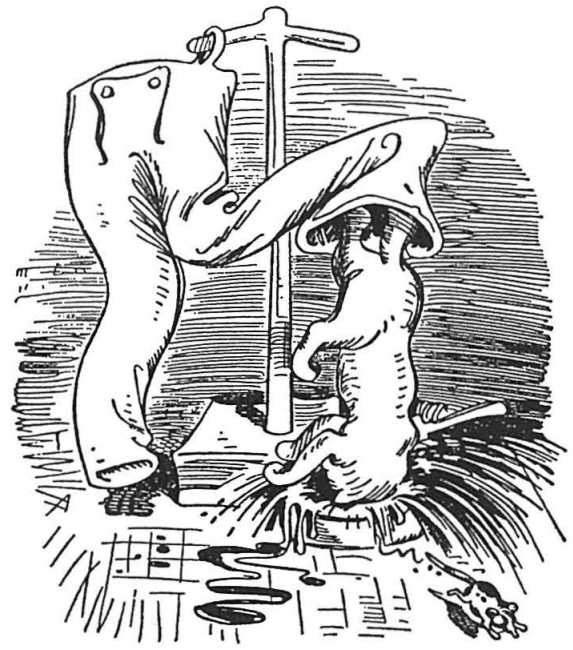
FIG. II.7. *The Baby's Comforter* (1863).



Den Kleiderstock erklimmt die Maus,
Der Kater nach in einem Saus.



Hier sausen sie durchs Hosenbein,
Die Maus heraus, die Katz hinein.



Klatsch! fällt der Kater mit dem Kopf
In einen schwarzen Wichsetopf.



Der Kater ist ein halber Mohr,
Die Maus springt in das Stiefelrohr.

FIG. 11.8. *Cat and Mouse* (1864).

(as if by God) by grandma to baby, who loses it to a pair of cunningly cooperative pups. The infant turns instinctively to a watering can for support or as a weapon (he seems to want to hoist himself up on it and thereby gain true human stature), but this treacherous object tips over and drenches him (Fig. 11.6). Then, with a big step down the evolutionary scale, it is the turn of the wasp, which seizes the comforter after stinging one of the pups, distracted by his tussle with his mate over the booty. Grandma restores order and metes out justice, killing the wasp and giving the comforter back to the baby. Busch's special means of graphic emphasis is already at play here in close-ups of the wasp greedily probing the comforter for its juice, being struck by the broom, and as a conspicuously dismembered corpse. The watering can is coprotagonist in no less than four drawings, and the comforter, which the grandmother handles at the outset with reverent deliberation, is featured in the penultimate drawing as the crowning orb over a quasi-geometric design of cradle, coverlet, and baby's head (Fig. 11.7). Like the honey pot over Hans Dralle's head in *The Bees* (see Fig. 11.29), it is an emblem of peace, order, and power.

Unlike in Töpffer, where chases generally take place in wide, open landscapes, in Busch the struggle is generally confined very close to and often actually within the home, in humanmade environments littered with small mobile objects. These seem to have their own position in the chain of being, and interact with humans and animals almost as if they were a living species themselves. They represent the environment in an active and reactive form, reducible to a prepositional spectrum: cat chases mouse *through* a lantern, *up* a clothes hanger, *into* a bowl, *along* the floor, *into, through,* and *out of* a boot (the cat only into, for it gets stuck; the mouse through and out of a hole at the end) (Fig. 11.8).

A special subspecies of object in Busch is the container: sacks, barrels, boxes, chests, troughs, and bowls figure prominently, generally holding food of some sort, either liquid or solid. These containers are agencies of primitive peasant capital accumulation in its raw form, in a pre-cash and pre-banking economy, the vehicles of that peasant parsimony and hoarding instinct so roundly denounced by uncomprehending bourgeois observers.[19] These containers get slit, broken, knocked over, and spilled. They also serve to degrade and defile, as when a character falls bottom first into a bowl or barrel of liquid, and to entrap, as when the bold miller's daughter lures and then decapitates a robber-murderer with the lid of the very chest he had intended to steal (1:534). There is an element of "absurdist" WUD here—the object captures (and executes) its would-be captor. Sudden power reversals in Busch often revolve around an object; on escaping, Hansel and Gretel use the cage in which they had been kept to imprison their erstwhile captors (1:328).

As with animals, the human struggle evolves in Darwinian terms—those with superior powers of adaptation to the environment survive. The painter Klecksel (Squirtle) prevails over his

19. See, e.g., Mayhew [1865] for a typical denunciation.



A brace of fast and furious lunges



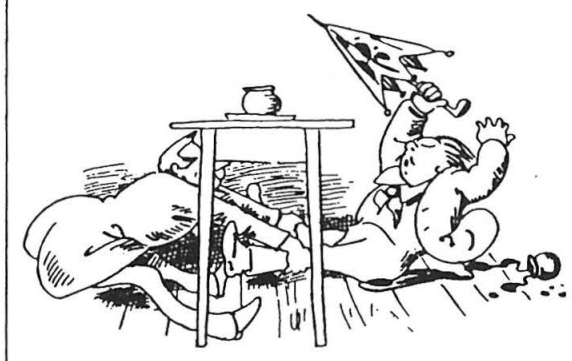
Is foiled by faster skips and plunges.



Now Stykker summons to his aid
An inkpot for a handgrenade;
The damage, though, is not severe,
Thanks to the sheltering hemisphere.

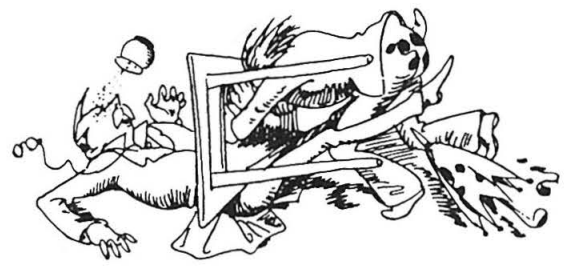


But then the fiend employs a ruse

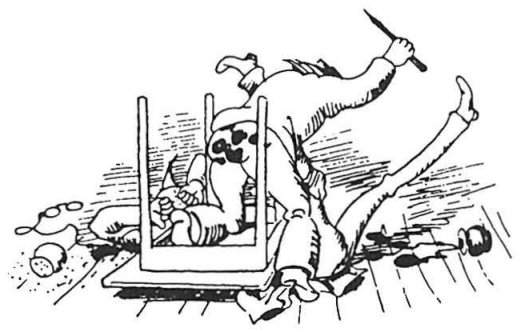


And drags him through the inky ooze.

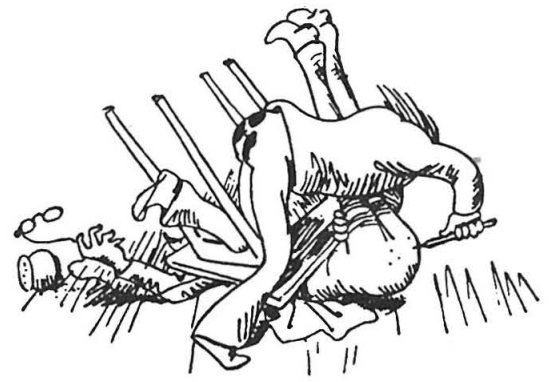
The barrier falls. Fine blotting sand



The naked eye finds hard to stand.



Now Georgie makes a vengeful dive
For his sharp Faber No. 5.

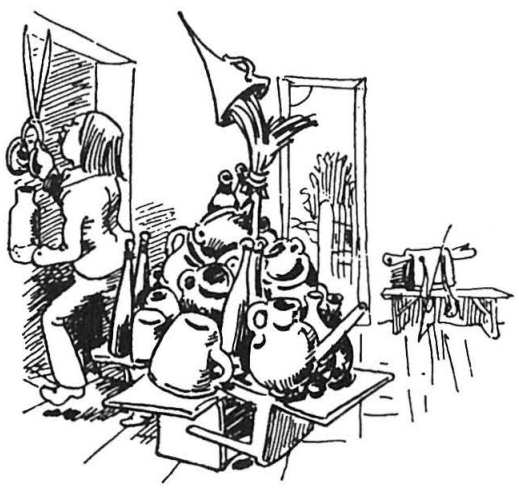


The outmaneuvered foe's defense
Is probed and pierced in every sense.

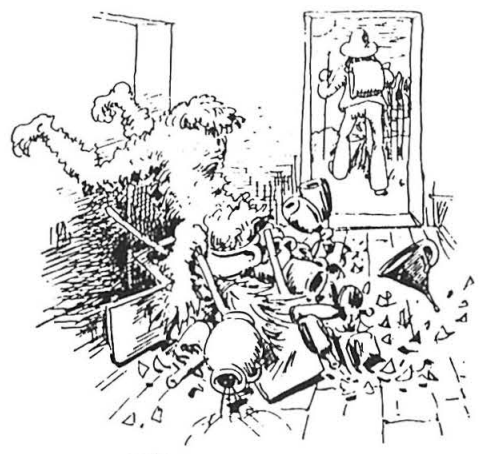
FIG. 11.9. *Painter Klecksel* (1884). Chap. 6.

FIG. 11.10. *Painter Klecksel* (1884). Chap. 3.

Then he assembles in the hall
Of pots and stools and broomstick tall
A nicely poised memorial pile,
Vaguely pyramidal in style.



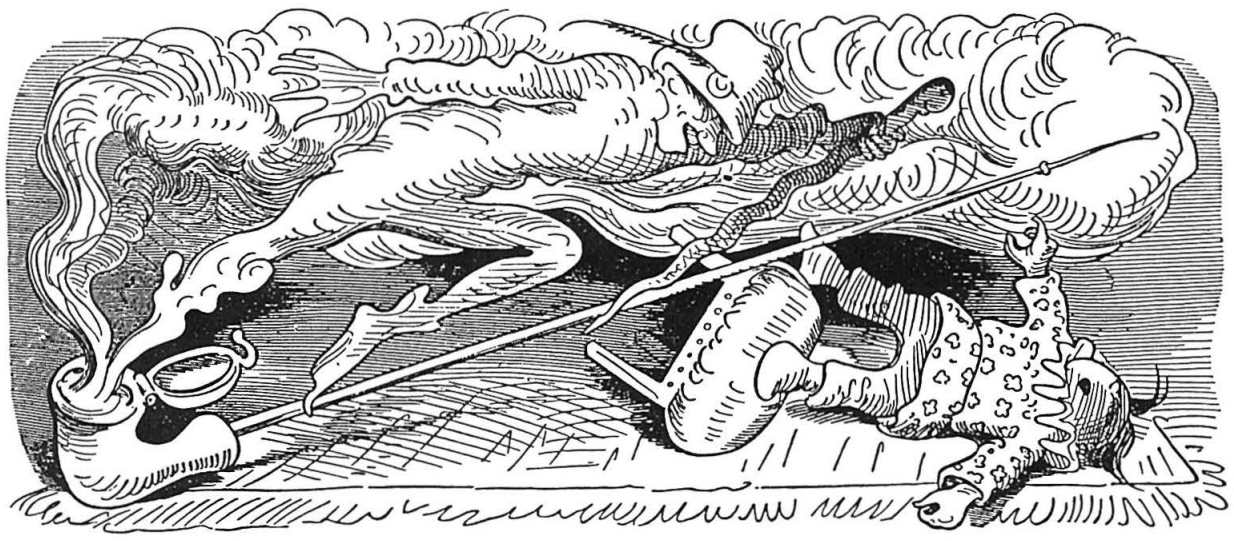
A paint jar in his hand appears
Along with paperhanger's shears.



And crashingly puts on the skids
The latest of the pyramids.



De Slaprock danzt mit den Stohl, juheh!
Un de Disch mit den olen Kanapeh.



Up eenmal — puff! — do werd et dunkel:
Dat is de ole Runkelmunkel!



Un — puff! — kummt no'n Keerel an:
Dat ist de swarte Morian.

FIG. 11.11. *Krischan with the Pipe* (1864).

enemy the critic, on the latter's own terrain, with "natural" weapons (umbrella and a good sharp pencil) and by using the critic's own writing table as shield and battering ram (Fig. 11.9). Klecksel the artist has an instinct for the creative use of objects. Earlier in the story the boy apprentice Klecksel, incensed at the treatment he receives from his master, Quast the house painter, takes his revenge and farewell by slitting open Quast's down coverlet and pouring glue over the sleeping man, who leaps out of bed to find himself turned into a befeathered monster (and suddenly dropped, as it were, in the scale of being). Blinded and furious, Quast crashes into a great pyramid of housewares erected, in advance, by Klecksel (Fig. 11.10). The degrading transformation and great shattering of objects signal the master's sudden loss of status and property.

Scenes such as these take place in the realm of the possible, in what one may term a human- and gravity-induced mobilization of objects. Another kind of animation—autonomous, fantastic, and "literal," in the sense that it derives from common linguistic usage—enjoyed great popularity in the previous generation, in the allegorical designs of Grandville and Cruikshank, who made household objects move by lending them wings with which to fly and legs with which to walk. But this is not generally Busch's method. Objects are not self-propelled; rather, they are drawn into a highly unstable environment, at the center of which there is, usually, a falling or rushing human body.

Occasionally, however, Busch engages, like Grandville, in the representation of dream states and hallucinations, where objects "take over." In *Krischan with the Pipe,* for example, it is as though

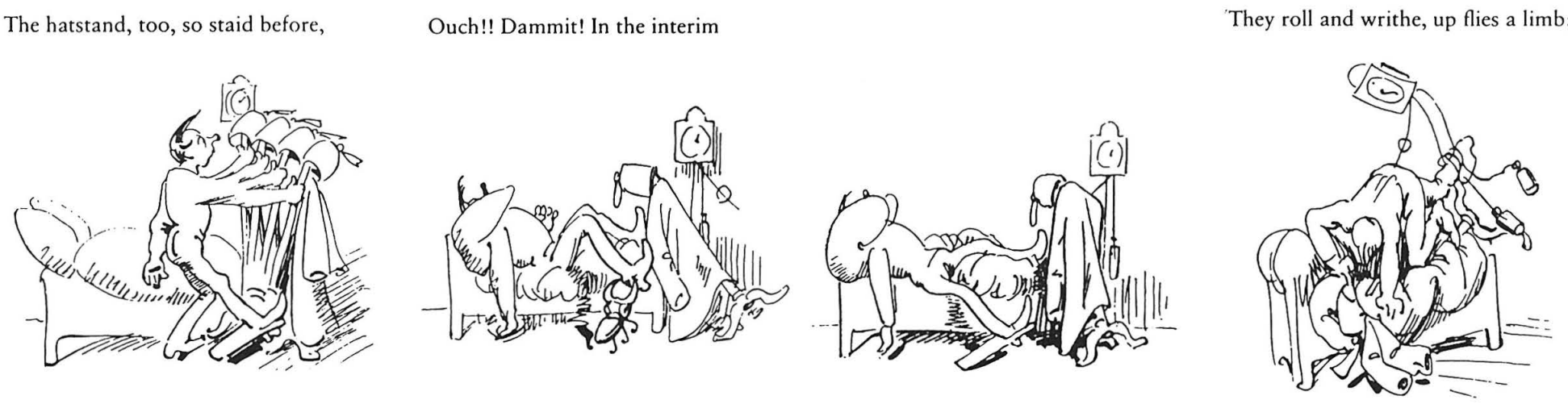


FIG. 11.12. *The Anxious Night* (1868).

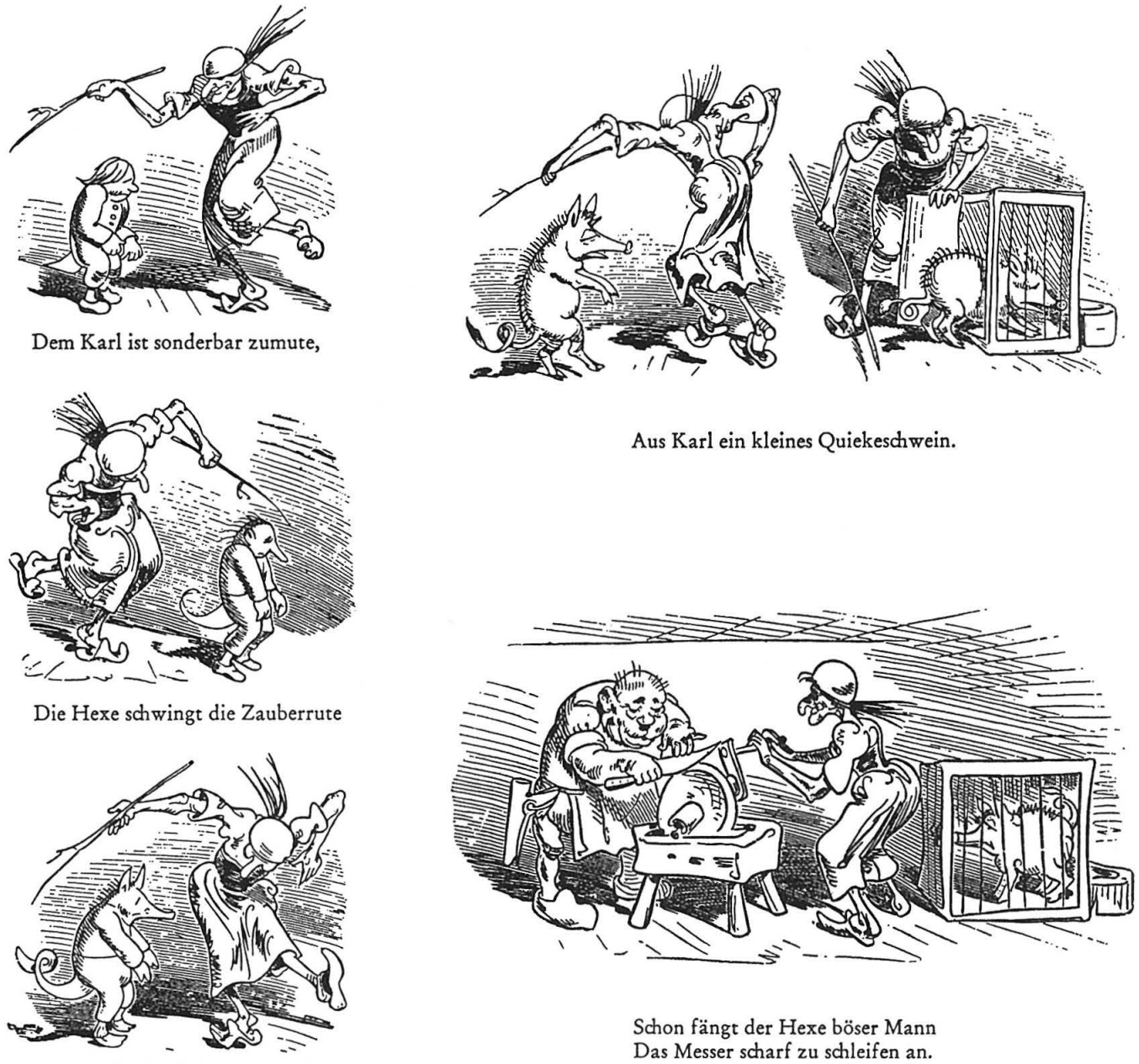


FIG. 11.13. *The Transformation* (1868).

the pipe is smoking the child instead of the child the pipe (the principle is WUD, the rendition totally different). The narcotized child sees umbrella, stove, and walking stick initiate a dance, which is joined by table, sofa, and finally human genies, who materialize out of the pipe bowl (Fig. 11.11). The idea is eminently Grandvillean, the development, especially in terms of the dancing linear rhythms, entirely Busch. In *The Anxious Night,* which is more original still, the drunkard experiences the objects, by means of a "photographic" superimposition of forms, as physically attacking him; thus, while the subjective is clearly visualized, the objective—what we see happening—is still in the realm of the possible. As in the fairy tale, familiar objects become agents of retribution for sin (Fig. 11.12). The first symptom is the way the hat stand doubles in form, then quadruples, before falling on the drunkard in his bed like a frightful burglar in the night; the bootjack, meanwhile, pinches his heel like (very like, in a slight lapse of realism) a monstrous beetle. Even the clock joins in, wrapping its pendula like tentacles around his leg. After a fierce struggle, the drunkard appears to prevail and rests at last; but he awakes to find his head turned into a watering can on which a demon reminiscent of Gillray beats a tattoo.

The Human Animal. Tails

In the realm of popular graphics Busch is probably the most important original fabulist since Grandville. The difference between the two is that of pre- and post-Darwinian thinking. Grandville's perfectly formed animals in human dress and demeanor are socially critical metaphors of human behavior. Human and animal, though blended into a single appearance, paradoxically remain absolutely distinct species, and in a strictly analogical relationship. Busch establishes the continuity from animal to man and buries the metaphor in the outward realism of a struggle that, unlike in Grandville, appears first physical and only later psychological or sociopolitical. In 1864, Alfred Brehm's *Tierleben* (Animal Life) established in the popular mind the notion that man is (merely) a superior form of animal; Haeckel and others had already popularized the idea, extrapolated from Darwin, that the struggle in the animal realm was not merely a metaphor but the historical antecedent, explanation, and in some sense justification for the struggle among humans—a struggle that is physical, material.

Busch uses special tactics to remind us of the animal nature and derivation of man. "Man is what he eats," Feuerbach had punned (*Man ist, was man iβt*). I eat, therefore I am, says Busch. Although real hunger was not a problem for Busch's readers, they felt underfed (consciously or not) in terms of social power. The constant quest for food that Busch's human characters seem to be engaged in links them to their animal origins and is an atavistic metaphor of their power starvation. This quest is the motor and target of much activity, and it determines the environment: the kitchen and dining room where so much chasing and fighting takes place, the foodstuffs and utensils that get spilled or knocked over.

Human appearance also betrays the animal, but in subtle ways. Busch is too much the realist to engage in traditional and facile approximations of animal and human physiognomies or bodies or to show humans engaging in specifically animal-like behavior, and vice versa. Clumsiness is always human (childish, perhaps, or drunken), although the constant loss of upright position and falling down onto the back or all fours may be termed a reversion to the primitive child/animal state. That the clumsiness of animals in Busch is human rather than animal would be another argument.

One anatomical particular, however, did serve in Busch to establish the biological and symbolic link between animals and humans: tails. Busch could have read in Darwin's *Origin of Species* speculations on the role of the tail, especially in its vestigial and useless forms, as an indicator of evolutionary change, and, under the heading "Organs of Little Apparent Importance,"[20] how the absolute survival of American cattle depended on their ability to drive off insects with their tails, and how dogs used their tails to help them turn. The loss of the tail in humans separated them from most other mammals. This lack also made them, especially in the back view, faintly ridiculous, and Busch treats the retreating human backside (for instance, on the cook about to butcher the ducks; see Fig. 11.1) as a physiognomic enormity, its sheer mass and vacuousness an emblem (paradoxically) of a "higher" brutish moral inertia. The missing tail, a body part so beautifully expressive and distinctive in animals, is supplied or compensated by human fantasy, which sets coattails in expressive motion and sees human faces in the creases of the seat of a man's pants and an unspeakable suggestiveness in the gap left by the failure of a woman's petticoats to meet at the waist ("whitetail"—see below). Such indicators, together with the persistent use of the human behind as the locus of punishment and humiliation, leave little doubt of the broad sexual significance of this part of the human anatomy.

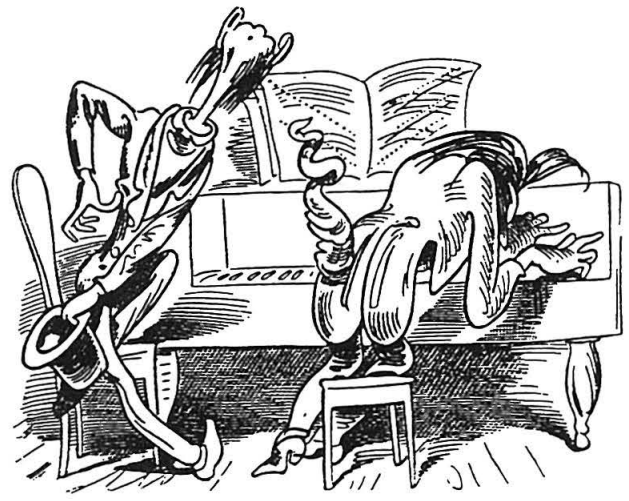
What is peculiarly Darwinian is the way Busch also seeks out, exaggerates, or constructs taillike appendages from the current clothing of civilized man. The *Schwanz* (standard German for tail, common slang for penis), the primary symbol of human animality, since it cannot be shown worn before, is worn conspicuously behind. It appears first and foremost on small human males—who have correspondingly small tails—in the form of shirttails projecting through the crack in their short pants at the back, rather like the tailfeathers of a duck. In *The Transformation* (also known as *Circe;* Fig. 11.13) we see this shirttail reverting, in stages, to its animal origin as a witch turns the little boy, in punishment for his piggish greed, into an actual pig. She waves her wand over him, and the little tuft of a shirttail sprouts into a curly pig's tail; soon his nose (the same nose by which the witch hoisted him on a fish hook; for this as castration symbolism, see below) grows into a pig's snout. He has behaved like an animal, is caught like an animal, and is about to be eaten like an animal, but just in time he is miraculously saved. Busch's long prose tale about magical transformations, *The Butterfly* (1895), also plays much on the peculiar uses and similarities of tails, both human and animal, in the adventures of a hero who is himself alternately both human and animal; the exquisite pain of having a witch slam the lid of a chest on his tail "at about the spot where at one time the coattails had taken their common origin" convulses the hero, now a poodle, back into human form.[21]

The human adult makes for himself a longer and more expressive tail out of his coat, into the tails of which he sticks a subtail, or tail within a tail: a handkerchief, which usually projects as much as the child's shirttail, and in a similar way. The coattails move with the body or wind; they dance, fly, reveal sexual arousal, betray drunken imbalance.[22] They express special physical and psychological conditions and can be made to serve highly expressive, indeed fantastic, aesthetic purposes. Witness the way the handkerchief in the back pocket of the virtuoso pianist follows the movement of the music, twisting, throbbing, and flying, and at the end standing up with a flourish as the performer receives his applause (Fig. 11.14).

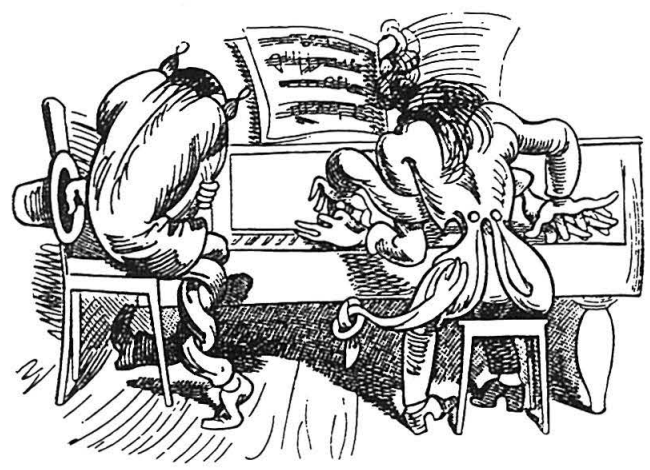
The tail of the animal, as represented by Busch, is both highly functional and highly vulnerable. Its value as a "fifth limb" is demonstrated best in Busch's choice of a monkey with an extremely prehensile tail, whose behavior he studied at the Frankfurt zoo,[23] as the hero and villain of one of his best later stories, *Fipps the Monkey*. Fipps uses his tail in all manner of creative ways: to stack stolen pretzels, to play or pretend to play musical instruments, and, most amusing and touching of all, to carry the baby Elise's bottle when he rescues her from the fire (3:346). The prehensile tail also appears in an early Bilderbogen about a rat, which cleverly uses it to extract syrup from a jar (1:211)—a demonstration of intelligent adaptation extrapolated from rather than replicating observed behavior in nature.

The degree to which the tail is useful, expressive, and beautiful is also the extent of its vulnerability. Fipps is himself twice caught by the tail; he also knows how to use it in combat, wrapping it around the (shirt-)tail of an infant of remarkably simian appearance, from whom he steals a slice of bread and butter. A much more serious contest for supremacy with the house cat also becomes at one point tail-to-tail. Fipps's tail, wrapped around the cat's, together with his weight on the basket in which he has trapped the feline, immobilizes the enemy, allowing him to declaw it with pliers; this done, he clamps the tail to the basket handle with a clothespin—all of which is of course no longer mere adaptation to objects in the environment but technological application *of* them. A moment later, when cat and basket fall into a tree, the cat's tail is stripped of its flesh to the bone (naturally,

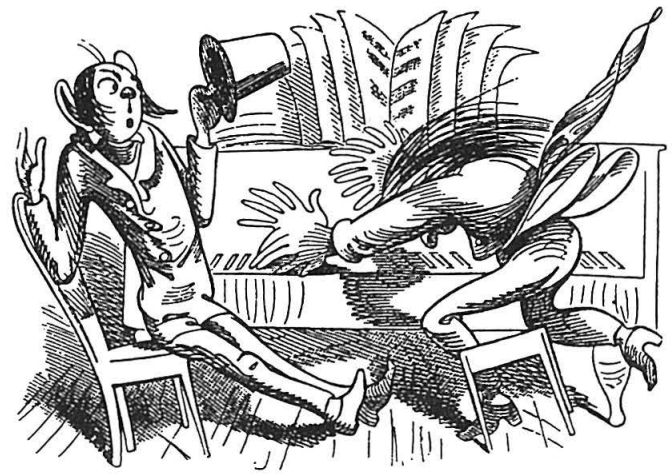
20. Darwin 1968, 224.
21. Arndt 1982, 195a.
22. In the 18th century, when coattails were less narrow, another artificial appendage, the fashionable "pigtail," betrayed the swaying gait of the drunkard; hence the cry "Haarbeutel" ("hair bag," or pigtail), which was still current in Busch's time, and used by him as the title for a collection of short picture-stories about drunkenness (Busch 1959, 3:207–272).
23. The story, however, starts in Africa, where monkeys do not have prehensile tails. His mischievousness, and bare perineal region, assimilate Fipps to the African baboon; the boot trick (Busch 1959, 3:286ff.), which Busch could have read about in Raff's *Naturgeschichte* (see Kleeman 1972), might just possibly work with a tailless chimpanzee. Busch's drawings from life in the Frankfurt zoo show macaques and chimpanzees. (I owe this information to my squash partner, Professor Robert Bailey.)



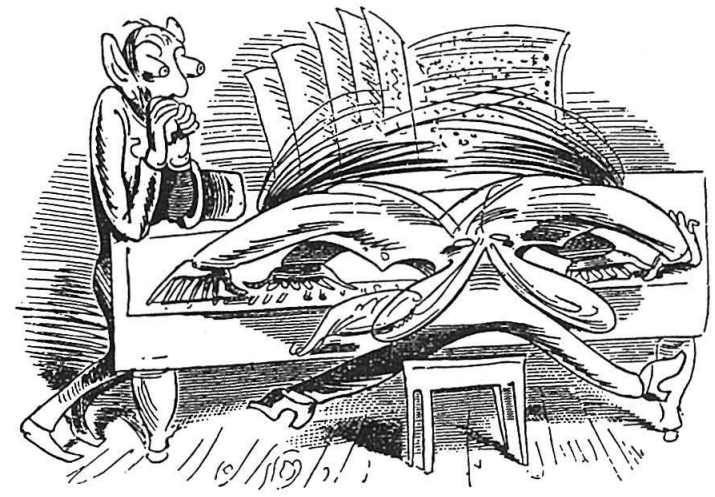
10. Passaggio chromatico.



11. Fuga del diavolo.



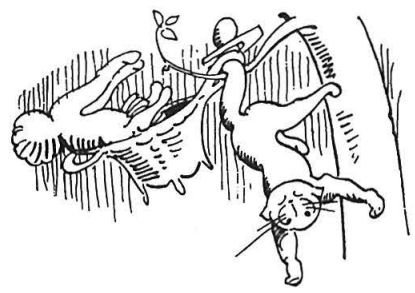
12. Forte vivace.



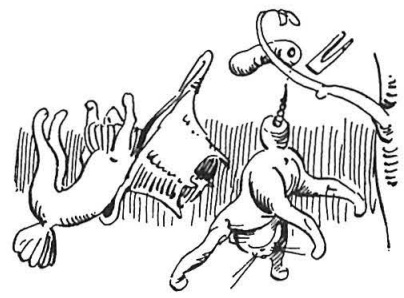
13. Fortissimo vivacissimo.

FIG. II.14. *The Virtuoso; or, a New Year's Concert* (1865).

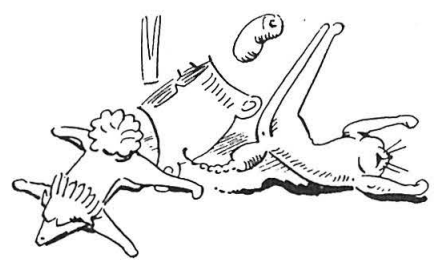
They pour off the roof at confusing speed,



But come to a stop, temporarily treed.



Here's where they separate, not without pain,



And each carries on



By himself again
Henceforward Fips is acknowledged lord



By these two creatures, if not adored.

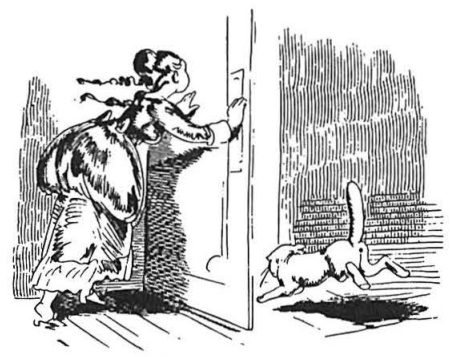
FIG. II.15. *Fipps the Monkey* (1879). Chap. 8.



To push it home wheelbarrow-wise.
This huntsman wears a nasal ring
(For smartness more than anything).



The ring is hooked to make connection.
The captive captor curls his hands,



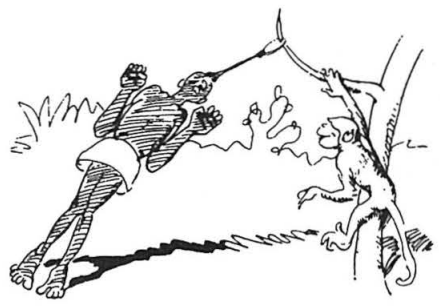
Eric races for the door,
Nearly passing through, what's more.



To achieve a tighter fit,
Drop some sealing wax on it.



Fips coils his tail around this charm.
The huntsman stiffens with alarm.



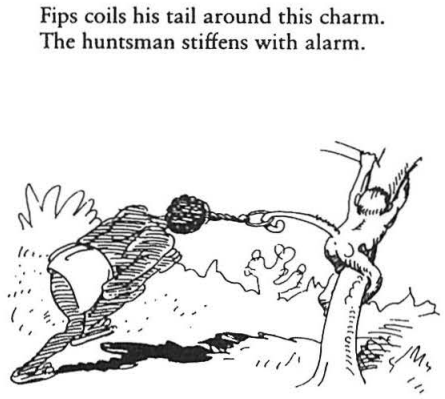
His soul contracts, his nose expands.
A sudden jerk relieves the tension.



Now he can't see Helen handle
Paper, sealing wax, and candle.



Set the paper hat alight,
Wait until the flame is bright,

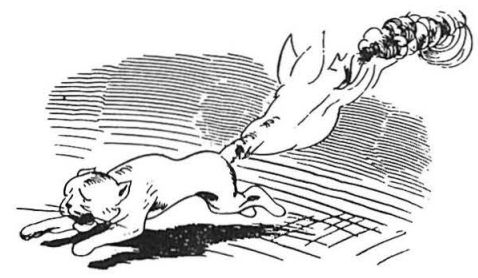


The nose revolves in pain and stress
And forms a spiral of distress.
A branch is bent in its direction.





First one adds the paper hat
To the end of pussycat.



Then release the captured vandal
As a streaking feline candle . . .

FIG. 11.16. *Fipps the Monkey* (1879). Chap. 1. (Note that Arndt translates "wicked man" and "black man" as "huntsman.")

FIG. 11.17. *Pious Helene* (1872). Interlude.

this could not happen in reality; Fig. 11.15). The dog, too, is humiliated and punished, though less severely, by the tail, from which he is dangled over a well by Fipps's own tail—proving, as it were, Fipps's superior virility. This limb-cum-weapon, which the simian uses with humanoid intelligence to establish his authority over animals roughly equal in size and strength, reaches its symbolic apotheosis in the drawing of Fipps luxuriating in bed, like a pasha with his eunuch slaves, the dog serving as a backrest and the cat subjugated on Fipps's belly. Fipps's paw rests on the cat's horribly mutilated tail, and his own tail, projecting majestically from between his legs, is clasped reverently and proudly between his feet.[24]

The human nose as a vehicle of sexual comedy and fantasy and fears of castration has a rich history in popular graphics and folk custom.[25] For a man to pull another's nose was a particular insult, hilariously ritualized by Dickens in *Nicholas Nickleby;* Cruikshank showed himself using a pair of tongs to pull the nose of a publisher.[26] The nose, ever the target of assault in Busch, is the victim of the monkey's nether instrument in an earlier episode of *Fipps,* set in his African home. The monkey foils the Negro who tries to capture him by slipping the tip of his tail through the ring in his enemy's nose and then, dexterously using a tree branch, pulls it off altogether (primitive technology once again; Fig. 11.16). This fantastic, bloody, and singularly excruciating episode—so horrible that Busch excluded it from the planned children's edition of *Fipps*[27]—represents the most extreme form of nose mutilation (although straight amputation also occurs, in the apparently casual negligence of a barber [1 : 394]; and Fipps, who also becomes a barber for a moment, severely bloodies nose and ear of his client as well). The attack on the nose by insects lies at the other end of the spectrum, with an assortment of pricks, perforations, gouges, and bangs in between. The nasal "tail" is clearly the most vulnerable of all the visible and representable human appendages, and the constant assaults on it represent the most thoroughgoing testimony to castration anxiety in the 19th century. The devil himself is unmanned when he dares to tease the blacksmith. He gets it at both ends, both animal and human: tail severed and pinned up as a trophy on the shop door, and his tremendous nose horribly clamped in a vise (2 : 71–72).

The cat's tail as a sexual symbol has been identified in other domains of art and literature, but nowhere, surely, does it un-

24. The monkey's tail as both liability and weapon appears in a strip where the mother of a monkey that was caught by the tail and skinned by a tailor succeeds in catching and hanging him with *her* tail (Warwick Reynolds, "The Tragical Tail of a Tail and a Tailor," *Judy,* November 27, 1872).

25. See, for example, the Münchener Bilderbogen (no. 180) *Das Nasenland,* based on a tradition going back to the 16th century, and H. S. Beham's woodcut *Nasentanz zu Gümpelsbrunn* (1534, with verse by Hans Sachs), which depicts a festival where peasants dance around a maypole surmounted by a large nose. "New Epigrams on Wal's Old Long Nose," probably by Busch although not admitted to the canon (*FB* 39 [1863]: 83–84), is full of Cyrano-like fantasies; in it, Wal courts his wife so ecstatically that he pierces her clear through the chest with his nose, killing her.

26. "A Chapter of Noses," *My Sketch Book* (1834–1836), reproduced in Vogler 1979, pl. 96.

27. Those fixated on the stereotype of "Germanic cruelty" in Busch should take note of the French/Dutch broadsheet, specifically designed for children, about a child afflicted with the habit of sticking his finger in his nose. The nose grows to a monstrous size and has to be cut off by a surgeon with a huge saw, and is afterward kept pickled in a jar. Now (reassuringly!) father of many children, the former delinquent keeps the nose thus as a warning to them (Malteste, "De geschiedenis van een neus," Waller Collection, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, R. 3-2).

    The savage character of the incident in Busch may derive from the episode's setting in the land of savages. A strip by Hengeler called "African Heroism" (*FB* 89 [1888]: 178–179) shows a Negro in combat with another Negro, caught by his nose ring (as in Busch), and cutting off his own nose in a fountain of blood.

dergo such torments as in Busch. If Manet's famous courtesan Olympia (1865) "uses" her black cat with its erect tail to signify her sexual plenitude, her "antitype" in Busch, the fading spinster Helene, uses it to vent her sexual frustration and cruelty. She keeps pets to distract her while she waits for a husband; but the cats, sexually aroused, kill her pretty canaries, after which the tom goes on a rampage that culminates in the destruction of a statuette of Venus (symbolic of Helene)[28] and a candelabra (symbolic of her hoped-for marriage?). To punish the cat, Helene slams its "rod" (here, tail; but *Rute* is also common slang for penis) in the door. That member was heretofore drawn promiscuously erect and peculiarly thick, more squirrel- than cat-like, bulging toward the end, and sometimes oddly kinked into a "head" just at the tip.[29] With studious cruelty and paper, wax, and a candle, Helene turns it into a flaming torch (Fig. 11.17). A typical childish trick? Not even Max and Moritz did anything so exquisitely horrid.[30] She will, however, be appropriately punished, for she marries an impotent husband.

The principal male sartorial tail was the swallow-tailed coat (*Frack*), broadly connotative of masculine dignity. The tails of this coat, standard male attire in the 19th century, were themselves vestiges of an earlier phase in the evolution of costume, the medieval robe, which, worn by men of high status, enveloped the figure to the ground. In the 19th century the tailcoat is a symbol of the urban bourgeoisie; Busch's peasantry are conspicuously tailless, wearing short jackets, like children,[31] and the urban worker or artisan is usually identifiable by his smock, also a short, tailless garment. Coattails can also function as a sexual symbol: in *The Top Hat* (2:482) they act as sexual antennae that pick up on a pretty woman. With the top hat, another symbol of masculine bourgeois dignity, and likewise a perennial target in Busch, the tailcoat is subject to desecration, again with Fipps as the primary agent. At the very moment when Professor Klohn, representative of philosophy and science, perorates on the wisdom of nature in ordering man and beast so perfectly to the former's advantage, Fipps mutilates three of his chief vestmental attributes: coattails, hat, and stick (3:337–340). Children inflict similar indignities (to hat and coattails) on Herr Knopp (3:47), who suffers worse still at the hands of his own infant daughter: the complete amputation of his coattails just as he is preparing to go to church (3:167).

Max and Moritz *(1865): Rebellion, Crime, and Punishment*

Busch's most celebrated and quintessential power reversal within the human realm is embodied in *Max and Moritz,* with *Alice* perhaps the best-known children's book in the world. A comparison of Busch's masterpiece and the very different *Alice* books may seem strange, but they have in common more than the dates of their first publication (*Alice in Wonderland,* like *Max and Moritz,* first appeared in 1865) and of their respective authors' birth (Charles Dodgson and Busch were both born in 1832). The popularity of the two works derives from their appeal to adults rather than children, an appeal based, I believe, on their common sense of the subversibility of the normal social order and on a tone, noted by a recent critic of *Alice,* and shared by *Max and Moritz,* that is "at some points fierce, at others rancidly cynical."[32] Both the English and the German works are satires of the then-current liberal belief in the essential goodness and educability of human nature and the justice of the prevailing power relations. Both show elites as "nothing but a pack of cards"; both show children scoring off adults, the weak taking revenge on the strong. The endings, however, are significantly different: Alice wins, whereas Max and Moritz lose; she defies her would-be executioner, they submit to theirs.

In Darwinian terms, Max and Moritz are two variant individuals of an inferior species—human child—who in cooperation and through exploitation of numerical advantage are able to inflict severe, if not lasting, defeats on the stronger human species—adult—whom they cunningly attack singly and at selected weak points. As variant individuals the boys show an evident physiognomic differentiation that may correspond to a hitherto unperceived class difference: Max, with his snub nose, wild hair, and cloglike shoes, could be of a slightly lower class than Moritz, with his sharper features, checked trousers, and better-shaped leather shoes. It may also be significant that it is the rougher-looking Max who generally takes the lead. They are not brothers, bound together by nature, but rather class associates, acting against a common class enemy.

Theirs is a systematic attack on the hierarchy of authority in the village, represented by various social types: the widow, the uncle, the teacher, the tailor, the baker, and the peasant or miller. The first two stand for the family structure and evoke the village community as an extended family. The widow demands respect and protection because she is a widow, and all the more because, like most adult peasants in Busch, she owns a little property. The teacher in the public school, as Busch stresses in a copious verse interpolation, not only is responsible for imparting practical instruction but also embodies broad moral authority: first that of the priest, whom he supersedes historically, then that of science, and ultimately that of the state. Busch's teacher, Lämpel (the name connotes enlightenment), combining his pedagogic office with that of verger and organist—as teachers of that time often did in reality—is also directly linked to the old ecclesiastical authority. An older man, he is (perhaps) the village elder.

The sequence of Max and Moritz's chosen victims starts with the essentially petty-bourgeois types (widow, uncle, teacher, tailor) and proceeds down the social scale to end with the laboring classes (baker, peasant, miller—thus they wind up biting the hand that literally feeds them). The tailor and the uncle, as types, require special comment. Both are introduced with a special verse eulogy, corresponding to the special role they play in society, which could not or should not be taken for granted. The tailor represents the higher crafts at a time when these were threatened by industrial processes and the guilds that had protected them were disintegrating. As Busch says elsewhere,[33] his was "a pretty superior trade," comparable to that of schoolmaster. Busch stresses his versatility in making all manner of clothing and states that "everyone in the community wanted him for a friend"—a phrase that implies a relationship to the community that was not simply commercial but of a higher kind: the tailor gave the town its grades of outward respectability. His glasses suggest intellectuality and reflection; and he may well still have borne, to a lower-middle-class audience not far removed from village life, the aura of functions accumulated informally about his trade over the centuries, of marriage broker, storyteller, distributor of gossip, news,

28. See Busch 1972, xxiii.
29. This feature seems to have escaped Cornioley (1929).
30. Busch's publisher, Otto Bassermann, had reservations, overtly aesthetic but also by implication of a moral nature, about the inclusion of this whole chapter, which he suggested be cut altogether (letter to Busch, October 9, 1871, in the Wilhelm Busch Museum, Hannover, which houses a typescript of the whole, and considerable, unpublished correspondence of Bassermann to Busch).
31. The short, tailless jackets worn by younger boys at Eton, before they went into the long, tailed jackets, are (and were) known as "monkey jackets."
32. Watson 1986, 543.
33. In his fantasy prose tale, *The Butterfly* (Arndt 1982, 190).



In one swoop he cleared the stoop,
Ell in hand: Again a whoop
Of protracted bleating smote
On his ear, and "Billy-Goat!"



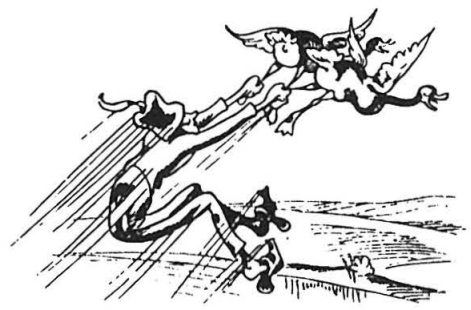
Gleeful bleats and whoops, a snort—
Plop! We are a tailor short.



At this crisis of the piece
There approach a brace of geese.
Billy at his dying gasp
Seizes them with viselike clasp,



He is crossing at a dash;
No! A crash, and then a splash!



And is fluttered back to land
Shrieking goose in either hand.

FIG. 11.18. *Max and Moritz* (1865). Second Trick.

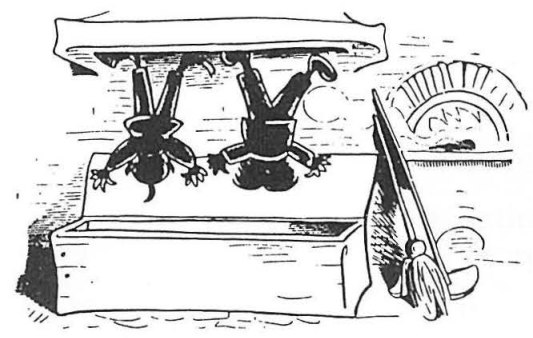
and local scandal.[34] He often stood high in the social hierarchy, represented social ambition and arrogance,[35] and was potentially a political radical. Indeed, tailors, along with their brethren shoemakers, participated in the 1848 revolutions (Busch features a tailor as a member of the dissident group in *Der Geburtstag* [The Birthday; see below]). Bismarck expressed his contempt for the democrats gathered at the Gotha Congress of 1849 by terming them the "Gothaer Schneider";[36] tailors for him were synonymous with low-class political discontent and ignorance. The *Fliegende Blätter* honored the revolutionary tailor Wilhelm Weitling with a mock monument, which Eisele and Beisele pause to admire in Ulm.[37] At the founding of the First International in London 1864, the German workers were represented by Marx and Eccarius, a refugee German tailor. And tailors, whether radical as in 1848 or conservative in the less turbulent 1860s, were among Busch's readers.

In folklore, by a very ancient tradition, the tailor was associated with the goat, and thereby with mockery, irascibility, sexuality, and diabolism, qualities combined in the totem animal name, Schneider Böck ("Master Billygoat"). This was the current nickname, not worse than our Snips and not necessarily insulting in itself; but Max and Moritz go further: they also bleat at him mockingly like a goat from behind a bush. The combination is an affront to his status, and the association with a vulgar, smelly animal, even if traditional, is intolerable coming from these rascals. It is the bait to a physical trap, for the tailor is lured onto a bridge that the pair have sawn in half. The tailor's dunking in the river, his miraculous Munchausen-like rescue by geese (Fig. 11.18), and his subsequent ironing out are all part of the characteristic Buschian ritual of childish degradation. Only after he is reduced to the status of a thing, like his own cloth, is the tailor saved for further use. And finally the man who normally uses the iron has the iron used (fancifully, of course) on himself, as in a WUD nonsense inversion.

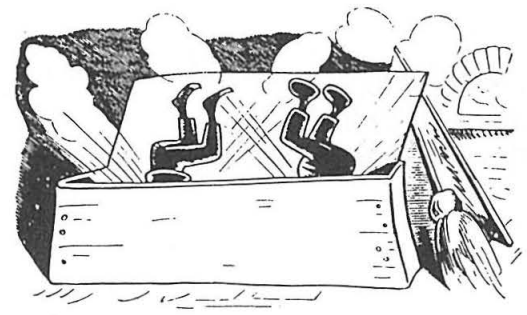
The uncle is the other figure whose role is broader than one would at first suppose. Busch does not elaborate here (as he did with the tailor) his titles of respect, which are too obvious; rather, he is concerned with the various forms that respect should take. His verse enters a subtly parodic mode, turning properly respectful attitudes into highly ceremonious pampering, the currying of favor with a person of superior status.

This mockery cannot be made explicit without Busch's breaking his ironically maintained facade of moralism, by which adults have to be shown as virtuous models for children. The calculated interest of the family vis-à-vis the uncle is based on the fact that he is by definition not directly (biologically, paternally) obligated to his nephews and nieces; yet he may, of his own free will, assign himself as their protector and benefactor and, ideally, make them his heirs, since he can have none of his own as long as he remains celibate. The richer he is, the more deferentially he should be courted (as Mr. Lillivick was by the Kenwigses in *Nicholas Nickleby*) lest he "betray" the family by getting married or disinherit-

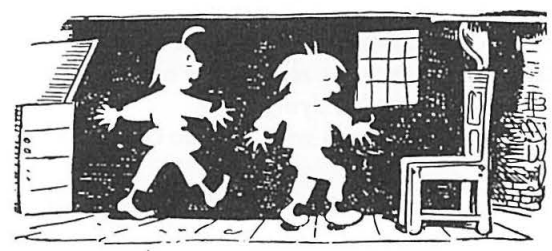
34. This combination of roles was discerned by Weber (1976, 225) among Breton tailors at this time; it probably obtained to some degree in Busch's Northwest Germany as well. The association with intellectuality and cunning (and of course cheating) probably emerged in relation to the fact that historically it was the physically weaker son who was the more likely to be apprenticed to the physically undemanding trades. In folklore, the tailor was often mocked as a figure so physically slight that he needed to carry his iron with him to prevent himself from being blown away by the wind; Busch's tailor is in fact carried off, if not by the wind, *on* the wind, by birds.
35. In "The Tailor of Ulm" (*100 Deutsche Bilderbogen* 1978, no. 42) he is a "bold-spirited" genius who tries to realize his dream of flying, and builds wings with municipal cooperation, causing a great mess in the process. He leads a civic procession to the test flight from the cathedral tower, jumps, falls straight into the Danube, and must be fished out by bargemen, his hubris punished.
36. See Buchheim 1966, 221; also Riehl 1854, 362.
37. *FB* 12 (1850): 152.



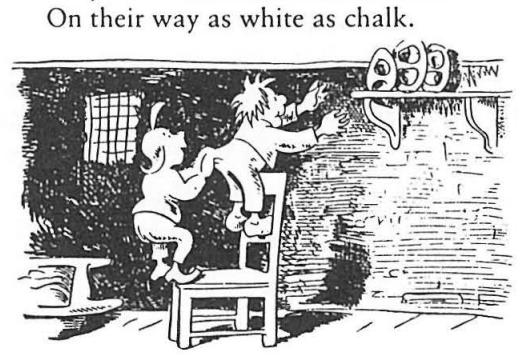
Here a pair of clients goes
Down the chimney, black as crows.



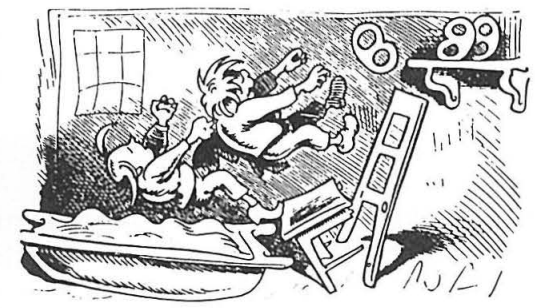
Poooff! they fall into the bin
Baker keeps the flour in.



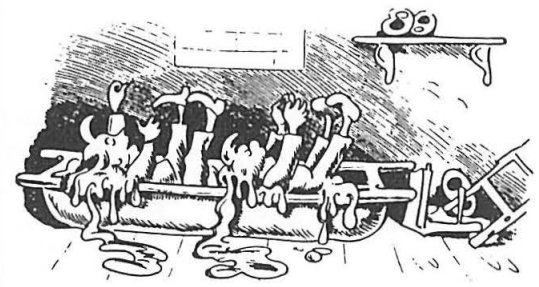
They retrieve themselves and walk
On their way as white as chalk.



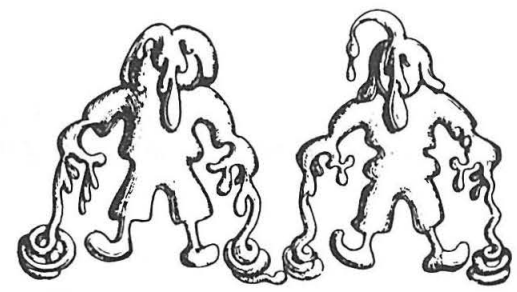
Sugared pretzels, neatly stacked,
Are the first to be attacked.



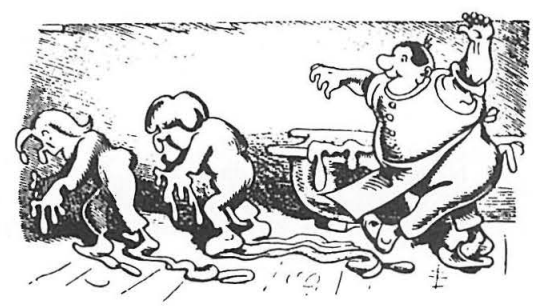
Crunch! their stairway breaks in two;



Flop! they flounder in the goo.



All encased in heavy dough,
They present a sight of woe.



Worse, the baker now discovers
And pursues the pastry lovers;

FIG. 11.19. *Max and Moritz* (1865). Sixth Trick.

ing them. The "American Uncle" was a dream, as we know from the Maupassant short story where he is the only chance of salvation from lifelong poverty. The uncle must, moreover, be seduced away from potential rivals, and the favors he bestows have to be earned; they do not come by law or by right. The uncle gives you the comic book for your birthday, Christmas, or New Year, but the Big Present lies in the future.

Because Max and Moritz have no visible parents, and may therefore be orphans, they are particularly dependent on and beholden to the uncle, who may be truly in loco parentis. Their lack of parents makes it both easier and more heinous for them to run riot. Pious Helene, also apparently a parentless female, and a counterpart of Max and Moritz, is actually adopted by her aunt and uncle, and when she misbehaves, she finds herself expelled. Busch himself, though not orphaned, was as a child taken in by an uncle, who gave him a better education than he could have had at home; and when his brother-in-law Pastor Nöldeke died in 1878, Wilhelm took over as guardian of his three nephews. Celibate, powerful, wealthy, niggardly in his way, and definitely not to be trifled with, Busch was himself the quintessential uncle (who did not, however, give his own comic books away to anybody as a present).

The uncle is also an appropriate "safe" target for rebellion in bourgeois ideology, insofar as to challenge him is to challenge a relatively arbitrary and circumstantial authority, rather than the absolute biological and "natural" one represented by the father. It is revealing that in Disney comics (for which the characteristic uncle-nephew relationship has been elucidated by Dorfman and Mattelart)[38] this rebellion is endemic, safely resolved, and legitimized, with victories to the youngsters but always in the name of the values of the elders. It is a moral rather than a physical rebellion, justified by superior efficiency and intelligence. In Busch, at a much earlier stage of capitalist ideology, the rebellion is more acute and more physically dangerous; because there is no means of co-opting it, the rebels must be destroyed like real criminals and subversives—or animal pests. (A commercial calculation also protects the lives of popular characters; today, Max and Moritz would have to be kept around for sequels, like their progeny the Katzenjammer Kids.)

Widow, teacher, tailor, and uncle are the pillars of the old social structure; in contrast, the base is constituted by the primary producers: peasant, miller, and baker. The baker also represents the sanctity of private property, individual production, and the guardianship of the sweet things in life (pastries), which he protects by conspicuously, carefully, and smugly locking the bakery door. In the course of their attempted theft of food, Max and Moritz, WUD-like, are turned into food themselves, falling first into the flour trough, then into the dough (Fig. 11.19), and finally getting rolled into loaves by the baker and put in the oven. An unexplained fairy tale miracle preserves them intact from the fire.[39] In a counterreversal, the humans-turned-edibles escape by eating their way out of the crust "like mice."

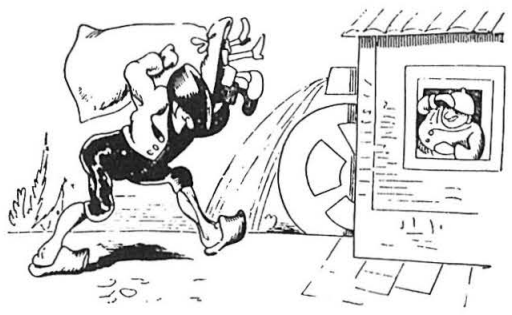
In this episode the urchins obey that driving instinct in Busch, the quest for food. It is not this, however, that impels them into their final trick but rather the instinct for gratuitous malicious

38. Dorfman and Mattelart 1975, chap. 1.

39. The baker's shovel in this drawing bears Busch's signature in full with the date, the only time it appears thus in the book—as if to remind the reader of his authorial privilege to suspend natural law. *He* draws them out of the fire, rather than the baker. The verse uses the generic pronoun *man* (one).



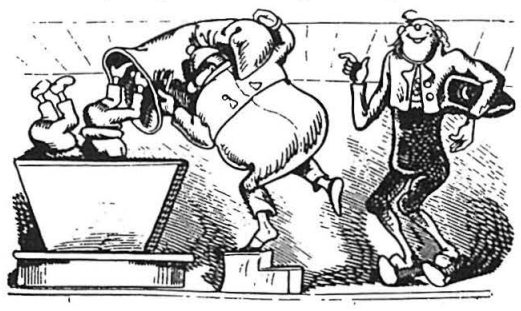
Swoop! he scoops the worthless pack
Right into the handy sack.



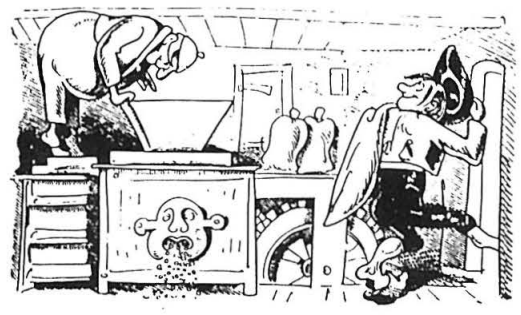
Max and Moritz feel quite ill,
For this way leads to the mill.—



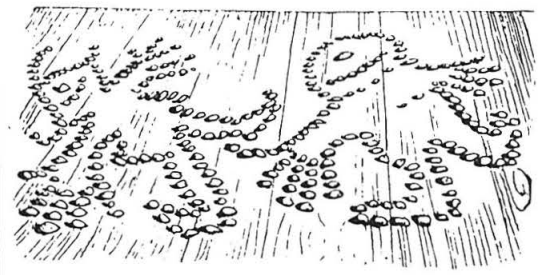
"Howdy, Master Miller! Hey,
Will you grind this, right away?"



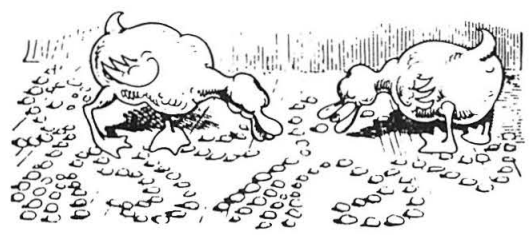
"Right you are!" He dumps the lot
Down into the feeder slot.—



Rickle-rackle, rickle-rackle,
Hear the millstones grind and crackle.



Here is what the mill releases:
Still themselves, but all in pieces.



And the miller's ducks are there
To devour the loose-knit pair.

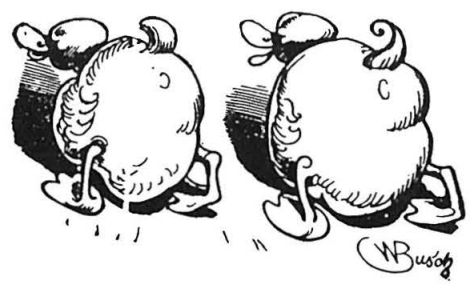


FIG. 11.20. *Max and Moritz* (1865). Last Trick.

mischief. They cannot eat or keep the grain that gushes out of the peasant's sacks they slit open. Ironically, and fittingly, this last and fatal trick is played out like a children's game—a hide-and-seek in which the children do not bother to hide very well and allow themselves to be taken, unawares and passively, by the peasant who tiptoes upon them barefoot. He then shovels them into the sack, as if in replacement of the grain they wasted. By the standards of realistic combat that Busch observes elsewhere, the brats could have escaped or at least put up a fight against the fate that says, "The game is up." Ground up as grain, they once again, and now definitively, become part of the food cycle. Ejected by the mill in the form of pellets that replicate their human silhouettes, and gobbled up by the miller's ducks, they suffer a fate that is ritual (anthropophagous) and mythic rather than realistic (Fig. 11.20). The mill in cartoon tradition is a metaphor of transformation. But killed they are, according to a judicial logic that is cynical or pragmatic from the adult point of view but shocking and frightening from the point of view of didactic literature for children, which finds the folk tradition of child cannibalism unacceptable.[40]

Max and Moritz are not punished for purposes of correction, since they are assumed to be incorrigible, "bad by nature"; in fact, they are not really punished at all, but simply executed, or exterminated like pests. There are no preliminary sanctions against them. Their victims feel no sorrow, only the pleasure of having their natural vindictiveness satisfied and their moral complacency justified. The miller, the one figure not personally aggrieved by Max and Moritz, performs the execution with a positive glee and no questions asked. He grinds them to death with the indifference of the machine he uses, and with pleasure. This is society's response to an act of petty sabotage. In an age that sought to humanize the penal code, especially as it applied to children, by punishing in sorrow rather than in anger, not to speak of pleasure, Busch seems to strike a discordant note.

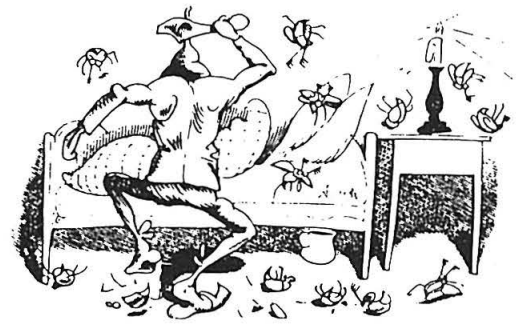
The manner of Max and Moritz's death may be ritual, unreal, but the social vindictiveness surrounding it is very real indeed. This is the point of Busch's satire, as well as his originality. It is conspicuously missing from an imitation from the same publisher, intended as a female counterpart to the master's male rascals, called *Maus und Molli,*[41] which, moreover, has an even more mythical ending: after a series of fairly harmless misdemeanors

40. Perspective on what is so often cited as quintessential Buschian (or Germanic) gruesomeness and sadism may be gained from a similar episode in a context intended as merely funny and lacking all didactic purpose: Iky Moses starts a home for lost dogs, which serves Ally Sloper's sausage shop. His machine disgorges one particularly fat string of sausages in which a customer finds a weskit button. Ally Sloper identifies it as that of the office boy, who must have fed himself into the machine accidentally. Ally muses, "And his poor mother had two pounds of 'em only half an hour ago" (*Ally Sloper's Comic Kalendar for 1876,* pp. 18–19).

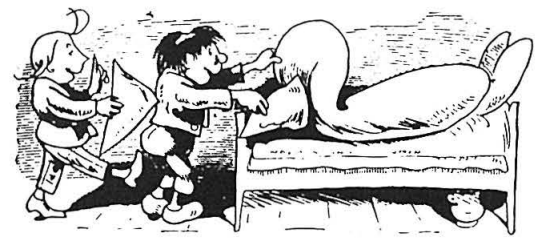
41. *Maus und Molli: Eine Mädelgeschichte* von Wilhelm Herbert; Bilder von Carl Storch (Munich, n.d.). Described in Hahne-Braunschweig 1943, 22.



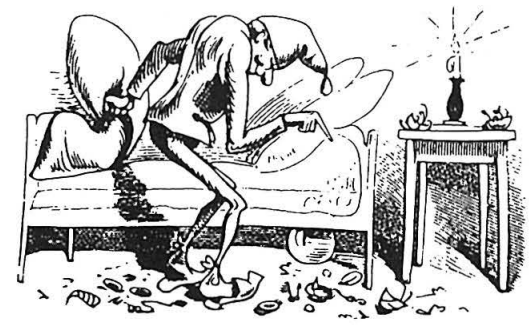
They have brought two bags of paper,
Also needed for their caper.



In a frenzy Uncle Fritz
Stamps and tramples, slaps and hits.



These they bear with catlike tread
And insert in Uncle's bed,



"There! You've done, I'm telling you,
All the crawling you will do!"

FIG. 11.21. *Max and Moritz* (1865). Fifth Trick.

(only one is physically dangerous), the girls are pitched into a river by a Neptune figure, carried out to sea, and swallowed by a shark.

Given the immediate success of *Max and Moritz,* one must assume a widespread understanding not only of the special and ritual aspect of the story and its outcome but also of the double-edged character of the satire, which condemns both parties, children and adults alike, and takes pleasure in the suffering of all. Hostility to this ambiguous moral position, voiced by critics subsequently but surely felt also at the time, is based on a very different standard, one pedagogic rather than poetic. Children suffer for their sins in some pretty gruesome ways in the didactic literature of this era,[42] but death is always part accident (though they bring it upon themselves, as in *Struwwelpeter*), part divine judgment. It is not couched humorously or in such a way as to inculpate adult judicial or moral values.

There is no parallel to *Max and Moritz* in the didactic or humorous Bilderbogen, although these swarm with naughty children. One Bilderbogen published by Weise of Stuttgart, called "Starting Small,"[43] which uses a clarified, contour-stressed style obviously derived from Busch, stands forth as an indirect critique of *Max and Moritz* and an attempt to reestablish a norm. The boys, little older than Busch's pair, are caught stealing fruit from an orchard and are beaten; they put on a show of repentance but are beaten again and led on a cord like animals or prisoners to the local jail, where they spend twelve hours. Their punishment is consummated in the laughter of the bystanders, a public humiliation shared by the genuinely distressed parents.

Regarded as punishment for an accumulation of crimes, the execution of Max and Moritz may appear somewhat less egregious. Naughty boys in Busch's short Bilderbogen receive immediate punishment, which often derives directly from the prank itself (for example, boys who steal honey get stung by bees). In *Max and Moritz,* a compilation of pranks perpetrated by continuing characters, Busch could not stop and devise an appropriate punishment for each misdeed—in contrast, for instance, to *Struwwelpeter,* where each prank is performed by a different child.

In *Max and Moritz* Busch is in fact less interested in maintaining the symmetry of crime and punishment than in establishing a spectrum of crime and victim and a relationship between them. Just as their victims represent a composite of the social hierarchy, Max and Moritz represent a composite of the lower-class criminal. At the milder, more childish end, they commit malicious mischief, steal food, and kill small domestic animals. This is akin to the relatively trivial and typically lower-class offense of poaching, which in the 19th century could be severely punished. They also engage in psycho-physical harassment. The idea of putting beetles in their uncle's bed, the creepiest and most childishly ingenious prank of all, establishes a link (familiar from fairy tales) across the chain of being between little people and little animals. As in other cases where Busch shows children taking advantage of their lack of squeamishness, such as Cousin Franz's use of a frog against *his* uncle (and aunt) in *Pious Helene,* we are shown petty-bourgeoisified village denizens recoiling in positive terror before harmless nature in the raw. Innocuous as they are, the beetles, after a prolonged battle, meet the same fate as insects throughout Busch (apart from bees), which prefigures the rebels' own: they too will be crushed, dismembered, and exterminated in what Busch mocks as a cruel pseudovictory (Fig. 11.21). It is that of the petty bourgeoisie over their lower-class enemies.

The worst crimes of Max and Moritz are physical assaults in a different category and, logically, directed against the higher-status figures. The sabotage of the bridge, which pitches the tailor into the stream and might have caused his death by drowning or pneumonia (see Fig. 11.18), and the putting of gunpowder in the pipe, which might have killed the teacher (Fig. 11.22), are the actions of juvenile terrorists and call for state intervention. Even if teacher Lämpel suffers no more than severe shock, burned-off hair, and blackened face, he looks for a moment (especially to a child reader) horribly disfigured, and the pipe, symbol—as Busch's verse reminds us—of the simple, just, and pleasurable reward for his labors, lies in broken fragments, looking remarkably like the burned bones of a human leg and hip. Technically these are acts well within the capabilities of a child, but they are greater assertions of power than was generally envisaged by children's litera-

42. Avery 1965, 44ff.

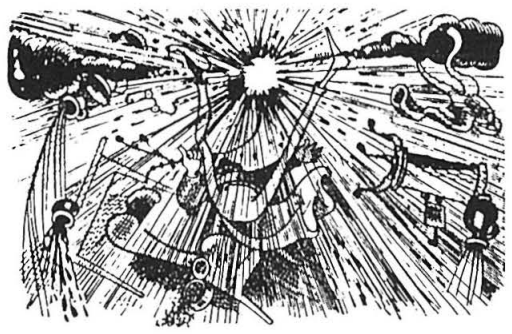
43. "Mit Kleinem fängt man an," drawings by Carl Haberlin (*100 Deutsche Bilderbogen* 1978, no. 48).



"Ah! to be content," he sighs,
"Is the best of earthly joys!"—



Hands, facade, and apertures
Are quite like a blackamoor's,
And the hair's precarious hull
Burnt away unto the skull.—



Krroom! explodes the meerschaum head
With a crash to wake the dead.
Water glass and coffeepot,
Ink, tobacco box, the lot,
Table, stove, and chair of oak,
All goes up in flash and smoke.—



Lifting fumes show him prostrated
But, thank God, still animated
By the priceless godly spark—
Though much balder now, and dark;

Who is now to foster youth
And diffuse scholastic truth?
Who devote such gifts as his
To his sundry offices?
How shall Teacher have a puff
With his pipe not up to snuff?—



All in course of time is mended;
But the pipe's career is ended.

And was this their last trick? Wrong!
For the fifth comes right along.

FIG. 11.22. *Max and Moritz* (1865). Fourth Trick.

ture and the Bilderbogen, in which "playing with fire" was confined to matches (as in *Struwwelpeter*) or candles and invariably rebounded on the mischief-makers themselves.[44] Max and Moritz never act out of simple inward curiosity, but always against someone. They raise mischief to the realm of planned subversion and terrorism, far beyond that prefigured in Busch's own verse preamble, which merely speaks of conventional pranks: "teasing people, tormenting beasts, stealing apples, pears, and plums."

In the history of humorous literature for and about children, the cruel and drastic side of *Max and Moritz* (as elsewhere in Busch) seems to belong to an earlier age, that of *Struwwelpeter* in mid century. More representative of the later 1800s are two collections, similarly very popular and no doubt indirectly inspired by Busch, that record more or less amusing and imaginative little follies rather than dangerous crimes. Here, not only is punishment generally altogether lacking, but the children (who are not individualized and not necessarily identical) are in most cases allowed to win. In the first collection,[45] by leading *Fliegende Blätter* artists, only one of the twenty or so episodes shows the perpetrators properly punished; in nearly all the rest they score a clear-cut victory. In the other collection,[46] with over thirty little tales mostly by Meggendorfer, the great majority also give the children the victory and characteristically end with a kind of popular rejoicing, which was surely designed to legitimize the pleasure the reader, child or adult, might take in the discomfiture of adult authority. In the late 19th century, 1848 was a long way off, and 1871 had receded; rebellion was no longer so fearful a concept for the lower middle classes, and so they might safely, vicariously enjoy the power asserted with impunity by the child rebels.

The popularity of Max and Moritz has, I believe, to do with the manner in which they lend themselves to political interpretation. This would not be new: already in 1848 the *Fliegende Blätter* had pretended to demand that *Struwwelpeter,* the famous collection of tales about wicked and foolish children, be banned as radical poison;[47] and the following year Henry Ritter published an elaborate parody of the work in a conservative spirit, casting the naughty children as terrorists ("gathered from the workshops of tailors and shoemakers"), rebels, and subversives of various easily identifiable kinds, all of whom deserve their horrible punishment.[48] The identification of Max and Moritz as political rebels

44. In "The Consequences of Meddling," the children who play with gunpowder blow themselves up. The other eight examples of childish vice and folly all rebound on the perpetrators directly (*100 Münchener Bilderbogen* 1978, no. 205; from ca. 1857).
45. *O diese Kinder: Lustige Bubenstreiche,* mit Illustrationen von Th. Grätz, A. Hengeler, A. Oberländer, E. Reinicke, H. Schliessmann, und Knittelreimen von Georg Botticher (Munich, n.d.).
46. *Bubenstreiche und Schelmereien,* mit zahlreichen Bildern von Lothar Meggendorfer und anderen. Text von M. Abeg, 17. bis 33. Tausend, (Reutlingen, n.d.). Both *O diese Kinder* (see n. 45) and *Bubenstreiche* are very rare; I saw copies in the Wilhelm Busch Museum, Hannover.
47. *FB* 6, no. 137 (1848): 129–131.
48. Ritter 1849.



FIG. 11.23. Thomas Theodor Heine: "The Max and Moritz Case" (1907).

probably was made at the time of publication; it became quite explicit later, in a brilliant pastiche of 1902 by Thomas Theodor Heine (drawings) and Ludwig Thoma (verse). Originally published in the antiestablishment, highly political *Simplicissimus* on the occasion of Wilhelm Busch's seventieth birthday, then republished as a little book, *Die bösen Buben* (The Wicked Boys) resurrects the rascals during the retirement of their creator in his twin roles as artist (Max) and poet (Moritz). Physiognomically they are Busch's originals, but blended with portraits of contemporary politicians, complete with mustaches and spectacles. Their purpose now, like that of *Simplicissimus* itself, is strictly political: to "tease rulers, torture people, steal [mock] lofty ideals."

Space here permits no more than a summary of the multiple allusions to the political situation of 1902.[49] The widow Bolte's chickens, the rascals' first victims, represent bourgeois property and the great rival military powers. The uncle is the prince who must be flattered and whom the boys torment with bees; the teacher becomes the church, which explodes; the tailor is the public prosecutor and persecutor of "wicked democrats"; the baker or pastry cook (*Konditor*) makes sweet official chauvinist sculpture; the farmer's sacks of grain represent capital, wealth of state and church, accumulated at the expense of the people. The lads are killed by being turned into coin (taxes, surplus value), which is greedily gobbled up by the military monster: at which the political hierarchy (which includes the giant armaments manufacturer Krupp, by name) rejoices.

Heine and Thoma resurrected Max and Moritz again five years later on the occasion of Busch's seventy-fifth birthday, with reference to the renewed persecution of social democrats in 1907.[50] The buoyant mood of rebellion has now turned into a defeatist gloom; the boys are simply shown in court before the judge and in the presence of their victims and accusers (Fig. 11.23), facing conviction for injury to property and persons, group theft (*Bandendiebstahl*), and crime against paragraph 6 of the law on explosives. They are sentenced to a total of forty years in jail, despite Wilhelm Busch's own defense in which he cites extenuating circumstances. Then, after forty-three years (that is, from 1865 to 1907), under heavy guard, Max and Moritz are allowed out to present birthday compliments and flowers to their creator; but "it is almost to be feared that Master Busch has over the years persuaded himself of the guilt of the criminals, and may not be too pleased to see them again." This underhand reproach implies that the liberal Busch, once regarded as a potential ally, remained untouched by the social concerns of *Simplicissimus;* a similar reproach may also be read between the lines of the dedicatory verse to the duo's birthday tribute: "To the Poet Who Has Stopped"—and failed? The master's retirement was well earned, but his long silence need not have been so complete.[51]

Fipps the Monkey *(1879)*

As a prototype of systematic rebellion and ritual punishment, *Max and Moritz* is the masterpiece of the early Busch; its equivalent in the later period is *Fipps the Monkey,* published in 1879, fourteen years after *Max and Moritz* and eight years after Darwin's *Descent of Man*. Here the supposed ancestor of man is cast as both hero and villain: as an animal who attains a human state of civilization, Fipps recapitulates eons of evolution; yet he reverts to primitive behavior and thus represents the very failure of civilization to root out evil instincts in man.

The sense of a special and historically determined relationship between man and ape is ancient. Hogarth in several places has a

49. These allusions were laid out in extenso by Hahne-Braunschweig (1943, 24–25) as "un-German and designed to poison the soul of the people. The Second Reich perished not least because of such poisoning of the people. Our state will never degenerate into the error of false toleration, faulty state logic, and flabby permissiveness." Heine, the artist of *Die bösen Buben,* was Jewish.

50. *Simplicissimus,* April 15, 1907, an issue specially dedicated to Busch, and including the *Fipps* parody noted below (n. 53).

51. When asked in 1892 what his preferred political line was, he replied, "None." In *Eduard's Traum* (Edward's Dream, 1891) he assessed his political interests thus: "I concerned myself with politics just enough to know more or less what was going on" (see Wiechert 1968).



A buzz, a stabbing pang—the stinger
Is driven home into his finger.

The odious thing is brought to book;



And he regains his tranquil look,

Returns to where Eliza lies
And watches patiently for flies.

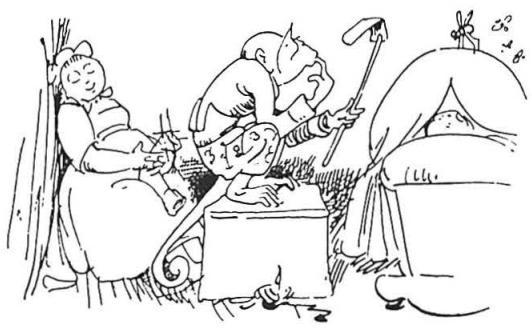
One proves a quite uncommon pest
By its tenacity and zest,
Now crawling low, now whizzing high,
Now farther off, now closer by,

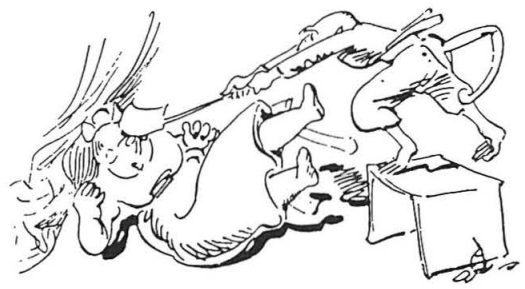


Now climbing slopes to Nubbie's peak,



Now basking on her bulbous cheek.
The worthy girl has nodded off;
The shock is therefore rude enough





When—shlop! the swatter interferes,

FIG. 11.24. *Fipps the Monkey* (1879). Chap. 7.

monkey mock human so-called civilization, and popular culture even before Darwin was using the hypothesis that Darwin was to prove. Two Bilderbogen of mid century, both of which contain incidents that appear in *Fipps* in similar form, show how the adventurous but educable young monkey may enter or aspire to enter permanently a civilized state.[52] In one case, after heroic actions, he blends idyllically into virtuous human childhood, as playmate to the baby boy whose life he saved; in the other, the alternative solution is used—which is also Busch's in *Fipps:* a relapse into primitive behavior. After showing promising signs of usefulness, he ends up actually impersonating an adult human (a professor to boot) and must be severely punished. Busch himself, in a Bilderbogen of 1864, pitted a child against a circus monkey, who punishes his tormentor, in this instance a kind of inferior monkey himself (1 : 266). From the 1870s the switching of simian and human identities became something of a commonplace in comic strips and theatrical farce.

In *Fipps,* punishment is unavailing, and death the resolution. The weave of rise and fall, crime and punishment, renders a much richer and more complex pattern than the structurally simplistic and episodic *Max and Moritz. Fipps* contains perhaps the most complete and interwoven "chain of being" or evolutionary scale in Busch's oeuvre: insect, monkey, cat and dog, baby, Negro, peasant, servant, petty-bourgeois adult, bourgeois adult. Through these runs a thread of reciprocal crime and punishment or revenge, in a struggle for domination that is conducted simultaneously from widely spaced and symmetrical points on the evolutionary scale. Thus the nursemaid Jette uses against the monkey the very wasp he was protecting the baby from, and he is painfully stung before he succeeds in killing it; in revenge, Fipps craftily uses the execution of a fly, settled on the sleeping nursemaid's cheek, as a pretext for swatting her (Fig. 11.24).

The career of Fipps, like that of any low-class creature endowed with will-to-power, is aimed at advancement through the hierarchy, by defeating rivals at, near, and above his position on the evolutionary scale. After humiliating the village elders and petty bourgeoisie, however, he gets punished for stealing chickens—ironically, a crime he did not commit. Promoted thereafter to quasi-human status (he wears human clothes and is referred to as a "handsome boy"), he becomes arrogant and relapses into animal (or instinctive human) behavior, but redeems himself by saving his masters' baby. Then the cycle is repeated: the parvenu, corrupted by rewards, relapses once more. In an irony reminiscent of *Max and Moritz,* his later crimes are milder than his earlier ones, the result more of rollicking boyish spirits than of his previous bloody malevolence, but it is these lesser misdemeanors that cause

52. "The Clever Monkey," a realistically drawn Bilderbogen from Neuruppin (no. 9940, Berlin, Volkskunde Museum 33, 273); and "Jokko the Brazilian Monkey," a pair of Münchener Bilderbogen (nos. 183–184), and later a Münchener Bilderbuch of 1854 by Ille, of which there was also an English version for children, part of a series "Jocko the Brazilian Ape," published by A. N. Myers, which included a translation of Busch's *Max and Moritz.*



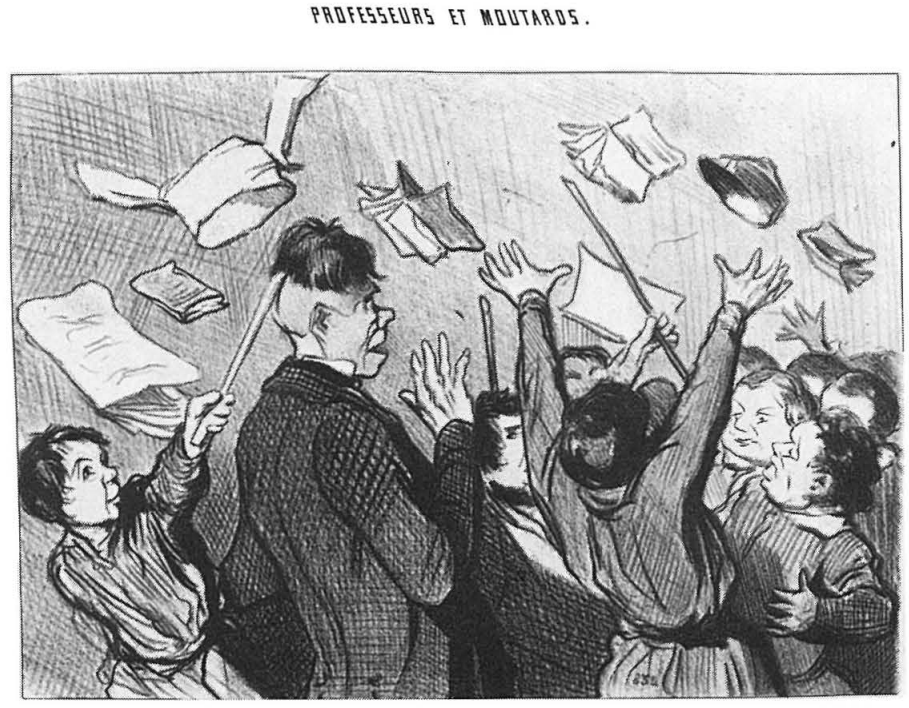


FIG. 11.25. Daumier: *Teachers and Kids* (1846 and 1845). "Sad fate of teachers in the fertile years for June-bugs!" / "A riot": "R-r-rascals!.... I'll d-d-double your exercises!....." "Exercises!... Under a despotic government insurrection is the only exercise!..."

him to be executed. His life ends where it started: in the trees. As in *Max and Moritz,* his death is both ritual and morally ambiguous. While the village as a whole callously celebrates his demise, he is truly mourned by the only innocent among them, the little Elise, whose life Fipps had saved as a baby.

Fipps is a child of Darwin, and Fipps is a social-Darwinian child, exterminated by society as it weeds out the unfit and rebellious. For confirmation of our hypothesis that the wicked animal or child stands for the political and social rebel, we turn once more to *Simplicissimus*. In a parody relating to current social democratic fantasies of revenge on the reigning authorities, Fipps, wearing a conspicuous social democratic hat, is shown dedicated to "subversion, trouble, agitation, and lack of patriotism [*Umsturz, Krach und Wühlarbeit / Und Vaterlandeslosigkeit*]."[53] As demon barber he torments the German Michel and smashes a mirror over the head of his master, Bülow, "Friseur der Politik" (that is, the conservative and imperialist chancellor Prince Bernard von Bülow). Fipps goes on to insult the German eagle (which stands for imperial power), ripping out its tail feathers and binding shut its beak, and to inflict indignities on Squire Fritz (Prussian aristocracy) and Pastor Bohn (the church). For all this, he is executed by his enemies, as in Busch. The "apolitical" Busch cannot have been pleased at this harnessing of his work.

Daumier: Teachers and Kids

Given the all-important equation of child or animal with rebel, which though subdued or masked in Busch is rendered explicit by *Simplicissimus,* we may pause briefly to consider how Daumier presented it in the France of the rebellious 1840s. In Daumier's stereotypical bourgeois family (*Les Bons Bourgeois,* 1846–1849), the son repeatedly demonstrates his superiority to his father. Whenever the senior attempts to educate and amuse the junior, whether as teacher or playmate, he succeeds only in humiliating and infantilizing himself. The parent also overreacts: for a single, individual rebellious act, the child is cursed and treated as an anarchist.[54] Small wonder that when, in 1848, groups of children took to the street to play revolutionary like some of their elders, the conservative bourgeoisie was filled with terror.

At that time, the larger social arena for rebellion was the school, where children were in a position to act en masse. Daumier's major series about schools, *Teachers and Kids* (1845–1846), gives clear political dimensions to the current metaphor of school-as-society, which is a major context for child-as-rebel. At a time when the struggle for political democracy in France was underpinned by the struggle for the popularization of knowledge, and the state supported by secular interests was vying with the church for control of education, the school was a veritable ideological battleground. The whole educational process was "a struggle as full of hate and relentless as that of Guelfs and Ghibellines," and a "constant struggle between masters and schoolboys, a struggle with no quarter given, which has no comparison in society apart from the battle of the Opposition against the Ministry in a representative government."[55]

Daumier's cartoons show that the social status of the public schoolmaster in France was much lower than in Germany. Both may have been poor, overworked, and ill rewarded, but the German teacher was respected, not actively despised like his French counterpart. Daumier's series derived an acute topicality in 1843–1845, moreover, from widespread, rhetorically and even physically violent confrontations resulting from the discovery that the Jesuits, banned under the ancien régime, had illegally infiltrated back into France and were actively campaigning against state-sponsored, liberal lay education. Without being specifically identified as such, the teachers in Daumier's series are associated with the hated Jesuits and narrow, repressive religious education. In Busch, by contrast (and in German caricature in general), the teacher is more the feared but respected moral policeman of the state; often the primary or secondary schoolteacher such as Lämpel blends into the university professor, a type wholly missing in French caricature but stock in German graphic humor, reflecting his role as a pillar of German society and state. True, Fipps pricks the bubble of professorial pomposity, but teachers at all levels are authority figures.

53. "Fipps der Affe," *Simplicissimus,* April 15, 1907 (75th birthday issue), pp. 34–36; verses by Ludwig Thoma and drawings by Olaf Gulbransson.
54. Delteil 1904, nos. 1590 and 1762.
55. Balzac, in *Louis Lambert* (1832–1835), quoted in Raymond Picard's preface to Daumier, *Teachers and Students* [*sic*] (Boston, 1970), 5.

These circumstances, taken together with Daumier's (or the *Charivari*'s) greater personal radicalism and the greater scope for rebellion that caricature, the "children's art," had in France, explain why the schoolboys in Daumier are able not only to triumph more completely and consistently than in Busch but also to indulge freely in the rhetoric of liberation. At the same time, their rebellion and victory are more symbolic and less drastic; and whereas their tactics may occasionally appear similar to those of Busch's children (in their use of insects, for instance), their insults, protests, and riots aim to inflict moral humiliation rather than physical damage (Fig. 11.25, opposite page, right). Furthermore, the last six plates of *Teachers and Kids* seem to illustrate a kind of reconciliation, which may be factitious but even as such is more reassuring than the truly violent solutions of Busch.

Busch's Political Interlude (1869–1873)

Buzz-a-Buzz; or, The Bees: *Class Struggle and Sexual Selection*

Busch, after his first resounding success with *Max and Moritz* in 1865, continued to draw for the *Fliegende Blätter* and the *Münchener Bilderbogen,* but the ambition grew in him to execute longer, book-length, picture-stories as a way of raising himself in the chain of literary being. Weightier subject matter demanded a more imposing and flexible format, with more text. *Buzz-a-Buzz; or, The Bees,* conceived and executed in 1867–1869, was Busch's first attempt at a long, continuous narrative eschewing the simple episodic form of *Max and Moritz,* which is essentially a collection of Bilderbogen incidents with common protagonists. *The Bees* deals with a relatively complex web of social forces, in which human and insect worlds are at once balanced, contrasted, and integrated.

The quickening tempo of history served to broaden and deepen Busch's social views. The General German Workers Party (Allgemeine Deutsche Arbeiterpartei), established on Marxian principles in 1863, had quickly launched the working classes and social democracy into the political arena. In 1866 August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht founded the Saxon Peoples Party (Sächsische Volkspartei), a bourgeois-worker alliance; the very next year, when universal suffrage was introduced, the party won two seats in parliament. Even Bismarck found workers parties useful at this time, as a counterweight to his liberal-bourgeois opposition, and the "people" as a political force gained reality and respectability. This trend, however, was soon to be overwhelmed by the wave of imperial patriotism of 1870–1871, after which social democracy was severely repressed in Germany at large but especially within Busch's petty-bourgeois audience.

The Bees is unique in Busch's oeuvre in its use of the concept of "the people" and in the leading and favorable role in which they are cast. Bees, of course, have always served as a metaphor for industriousness.[56] One early working-class magazine, the editorship of which was offered to Karl Marx, was called *The Bee-Hive* (1865). Busch, by his careful description of bees' characteristic behavior, enlarges the metaphor vividly, endowing them with the virtues, powers, and rights of the masses in the industrial age, making them capable of forming their own state and rebelling against oppression. Busch's fable opens by showing them—as in a Bilderbogen[57] or children's book illustration—anthropomorphically, and as constituting an altruistic, ideal form of social organization. Later, at a critical moment in the story, with a full-page drawing (Fig. 11.26) and almost a full page of verse (a caesura in the usual Bilderbogen format of small vignettes with small groups of verse), the bees rise up against their nominal master, a tyrannical, obtuse peasant beekeeper called Hans Dralle. Their behavior and language is unequivocally liberationist and revolutionary. "The People" (*das Volk*), discovering that their ruler is asleep, send out their call: "He's snoring, the old state-thief! Calls himself Father of the Bees and all! A fine father! Hey, what did he ever do [for us]? And what use is he? . . . We deprive ourselves, toil and moil, try to put something by for our old age. . . . He is a rascal [*Schwerenöter*], a honey thief and bee killer. So up, and follow the queen!" (2:16).[58]



Schnurrdiburr! da geht er hin!

FIG. 11.26. *Buzz-a-buzz; or, The Bees* (1869). "Buzz-a-buzz! There he goes!"

Busch's beekeeper, Dralle, forfeits his rule not so much by his cruelty as by his carelessness, torpor, and ignorance toward the bees. (He is also a cheat in business.) He loses control of his subjects, who are the productive forces in the state, and in doing so is

56. Two examples among many: The Russian emperor as the bear who disturbs the Hungarian hive and is stung by nationalist bees (*New Puppet Show,* n.d. [last issue, 1849], p. 55). Queen Victoria and Prince Albert coolly contemplate the new beehives installed at Windsor, one of which is cut open to show industrious workers of various kinds (including artists) at their labors. The caption reproduces a newspaper report that "these hives are so constructed that the honey may be removed without destroying the bees" (Richard Doyle in *Punch,* August 1844; reproduced in Houfe 1978, 58 [fig. 23]).

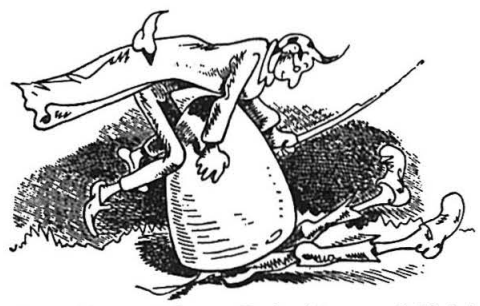
57. Such as *100 Deutsche Bilderbogen* 1978, nos. 22 and 111.

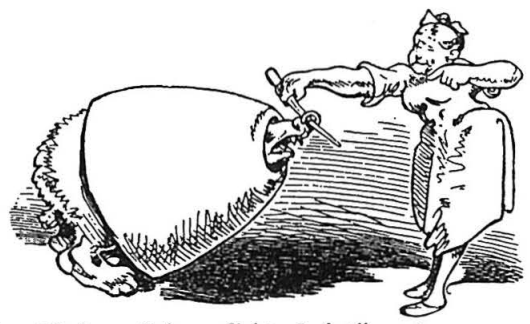
58. Many beekeepers destroyed whole hives of workers annually and started afresh. The view of bees as oppressed creatures is developed in an article for his uncle's *Bienenzeitung* (written in May 1867, at the time Busch first conceived *Die Bienen*) entitled "Do Bees Know Their Master?" (Busch 1959, 4:491–497). Designed to counter the popular belief that the bees regard the beekeeper as a kind of benefactor, relate to him personally, and die when he does, the article describes the beekeeper as a "smoky ogre" who ruthlessly kills off "the whole, good, brave, industrious, little people," and the bees' work as ceaseless drudgery, leading to total exhaustion and an early death. But their sting is a constant reminder that they are far from defenseless, and their swarming is a "fearful" phenomenon.



„Adje! Dat is de nie Mode!!"

FIG. 11.27. *The Bees* (1869).
"No way! That's new-fangled stuff!"





Vergebens sucht er sich zu sträuben,
Er muß im Korbe sitzen bleiben. —

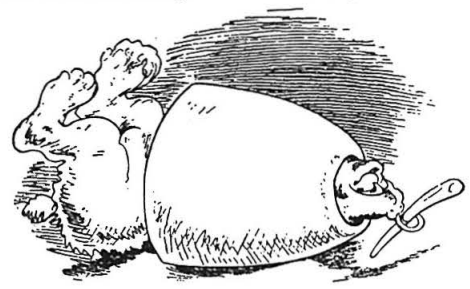
Doch ach! was muß Christine schaun?!
Der Zottelbär steigt übern Zaun,

Hier diesen Pflock, nur flink, nur flink!
Quer durch des Bären Nasenring!

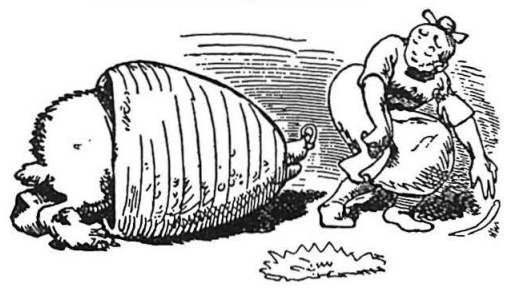
Ja, brülle nur!
Die Nase geht nicht mehr retour! —



Riecht in den Korb, und mit Geblase
Steckt er durchs Spundloch seine Nase.



— So wär' nun alles wohlgelungen;
Die Liebenden stehn fest umschlungen.



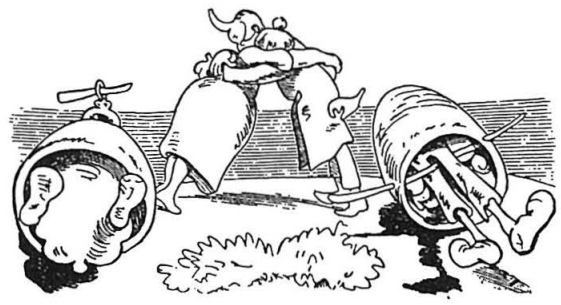


FIG. 11.28. *The Bees* (1869).

Vain are the rogue's attempts at flight.
The hive and Knörrje hold him tight.
Oh! Tina's fate seems worst of all.
The shaggy bear surmounts the wall,

Smells the hive and snuffs about
And through the hole sticks out his snout.

Quick now! A stick! And in it goes!
Right through the ring in Bruin's nose!
Yes, you may roar
Your nose will leave that hole no more.

So things are working like a charm;
Behold the lovers, arm in arm.

humiliated before the small-town community and particularly his neighbor Knörrje. This figure—whom Busch refers to as *Herr* Knörrje (Dralle is just Dralle)—represents the educated, scientifically minded bourgeoisie; like Busch, he is knowledgeable about the theory although not a practitioner of beekeeping, and he gives Dralle technical advice, which the peasant pooh-poohs. The image of the sharp bespectacled Knörrje in his elegant dressing gown advising his rough, stolid (*drall*), Brueghelesque neighbor over the garden wall to "apply nuclei, friend, that is the real method," and of Dralle turning his back on him (and us), saying curtly, "No way! That's new-fangled stuff" (Fig. 11.27), is emblematic of two classes in confrontation: the old and the new, physically contiguous, inhabiting the same terrain, even arising out of the same circumstances, but in rivalry, the one historically passé and doomed to defeat by the other with its scientific command of the environment.

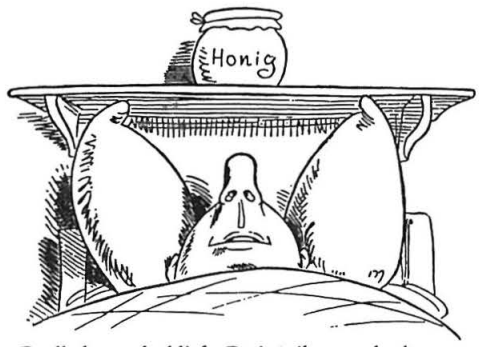
This defeat is signaled in two subplots, two quests: for the honey, the product of the bees' labor, symbol of power and material sweets; and for Dralle's highly desirable daughter, symbol of sexual sweets. Both are in the possession of the peasant; both will be claimed by the bourgeois. He will do so, however, without the usual violent confrontation with his rival, indeed with his consent and to popular applause.[59] Christine Dralle willingly falls to Herr Knörrje, her former tutor: if the peasantry is to survive, it must come under the tutelage of the bourgeoisie. The bees further the courtship by cross-fertilizing the flowers that the lovers exchange and by providing for them a place of rendezvous. The bees behave in the new age of universal suffrage like electors of their rulers, alliance brokers of the disparate forces of history.

But a rival intervenes in the form of Knörrje's young nephew Eugen, who also aspires to Christine Dralle's love. Thus different elements within the same class compete against each other, a principle affirmed as a natural law by early capitalism and biologically naturalized in Busch's oeuvre here and elsewhere, insofar as the children who threaten adult power generally do so outwardly (whatever their metaphoric function as representatives of inferior classes) from within their own class. This same principle underpins the generational struggle manifested or implicit in all contentious uncle-nephew or uncle-niece relationships (*Max and Moritz, Pious Helene, Donald Duck*). Young Knörrje's bid for sexual power is biologically premature, for he is only fourteen years old; he is

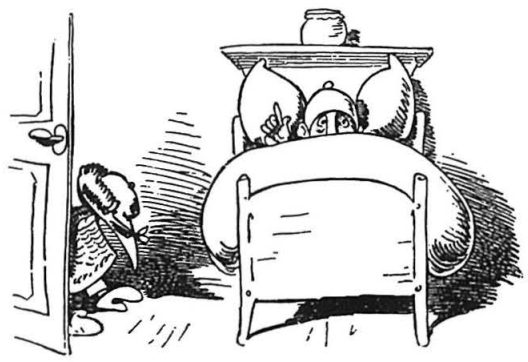
59. The commoner resolution may be found in one of Busch's Bilderbogen of the period (1867; in Busch 1959, 1:452), where the more-than-willing peasant girl elopes with the enterprising bourgeois youth who, though pitchforked in the coattails by the irate father, manages to escape by superior guile. The father appeals to the neighbors for help, but they enjoy his discomfiture instead.

Man sollte denken, daß nach allen
Verdrüssen, welche vorgefallen,
Am Ende dieser gute Knabe
Vor Süßigkeiten Abscheu habe!

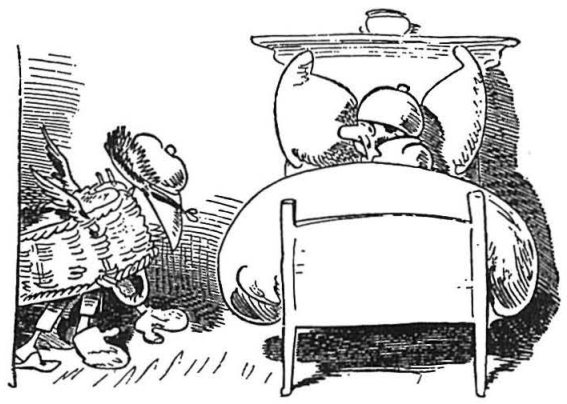
Ach nein! — Schon spekuliert der Tropf
Auf Vater Dralles Honigtopf,
Der, wie er weiß, auf einem Brett
Dicht über dessen Bette steht. —



Als heut nun Dralle lag und schlief,
So gegen zehn recht fest und tief,
Da ist's ihm so, als ob was rauscht. —
Hans Dralle spitzt das Ohr und lauscht.



Ha! schleicht nicht dort aus jener Tür
Ein greulich Phänomen herfür??!!



In seinen Augen kann man's lesen:
Dies ist fürwahr kein menschlich Wesen!!

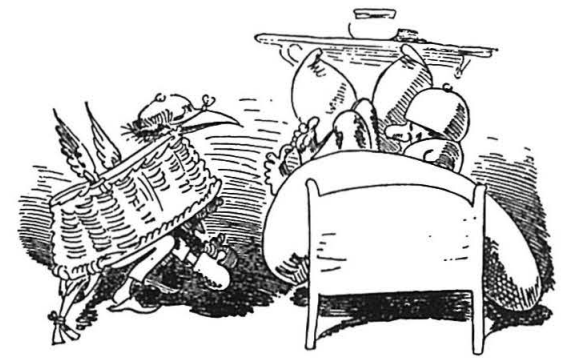


FIG. 11.29. *The Bees* (1869).

As Dralle lay abed that night
'Bout ten o'clock, and sleeping tight,
He seemed some rustling noise to hear—
and, quick as thought, pricked up his ear.

Ha! through the door comes creeping on
A direful, dread phenomenon??!!

And one can read in Dralle's eye
This is no human entity!!

an overgrown Max or Moritz, old enough to engage in a sexual prank, but he is punished by his uncle as befits a child—with a whacking on the butt. His youth disqualifies him in the sexual quest, but it gives him the edge in the quest where children are preeminent: for food, in this case for the honey pot, which, like the daughter, is the property of the peasant Dralle.

Uncle Knörrje earns his sexual prize by a military-sexual exploit that attests to the superior intelligence and courage of his, the ascendant, class. Just as he is to meet Christine at the beehives, Herr Knörrje catches a common thief out to steal the honey, or worse, the whole beehive; but he traps and, passing a pole through his crotch, symbolically castrates the man. Christine meanwhile demonstrates her fitness to be elevated to bourgeois rank (and the results of her superior education) by her ingenuity and sangfroid in catching another, lower, species of honey thief, a shaggy old bear escaped from a zoo, whom she immobilizes by means of the hive basket and a peg through his nosering (Fig. 11.28). As with the Negro punished by Fipps, the ring is the symbol of the bear's hybrid wild/domesticated state. The beast's capture here, as well as his earlier failure to get the honey, compresses eons of evolutionary development by which humans seized power from and subjugated the largest and wildest animals.[60] At the same time, the bear assumes the mythic role of the dragon slain by Knörrje–Saint George, who thereby wins the princess. The two species of would-be violators of property and usurpers of power are then restored to their respective guardians (the police and the zookeeper). The lovers, in their stylized embrace, and the immobilized thieves complete a kind of symbolic hero memorial, with the defeated foe consecrating the victor.

This exploit places on Dralle the moral obligation to yield his daughter to Knörrje and give the nuptial blessing. Yet for this forced alliance Dralle himself wins a social consecration when the whole village, young and old, turns out to applaud the exploit as well as the marriage, for both of which Dralle takes credit. Ironically, though, what they are applauding, without their knowing it (and Busch himself only half knows it), is the surrender—not just Dralle's, but the peasants' collectively—of power and flesh to bourgeois ascendancy.

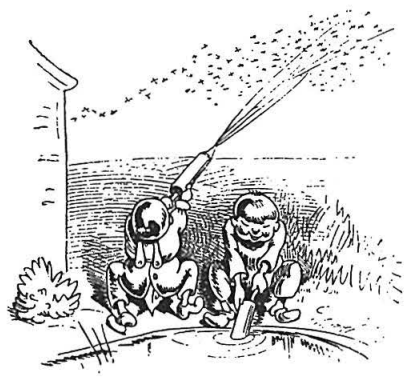
A complementary surrender, here of the material symbol of power, takes place at the level of the other subplot, in which the younger Knörrje goes after Dralle's honey. The sequence of his efforts is significant. First he seeks it in the wild, in the hollow of an old tree where Dralle's escaped bees have swarmed; but he fails, as do the old circus bear and Dralle himself once more, who merely pursue the bees to the same tree. Young Eugen Knörrje then goes for Dralle's beehives, only to be foiled again by the bees, which envelop him completely. The child can reach the honey only in its more accessible, already domesticated form, in the pot that sits over the sleeping Dralle's head like a crown—another perfectly symmetrical emblem of the sweet union of peace and pleasure (Fig. 11.29).

Dralle's first sleep was interrupted and penalized by the bees' insurrection; this one is interrupted by a "horrible phenomenon"—to the viewer perhaps an amateurish (and certainly childish) construction but to the superstitious Dralle a nightmarishly real monster into which Eugen Knörrje has ingeniously transformed himself by dint of basket, cap, and feather. It is the child masquerading as, or reverting to, primitive and menacing nature. Terrified, Dralle sees and hears it as the avenging ghost of the oppressed bees and does not even notice that his honey pot has been filched. The child, qua child, exploits his "natural" talent for dissimulation, which is experienced as a capacity to imitate or command natural or hostile supernatural forces. This "fairy tale" capacity is originally the natural property of the peasantry; here it is usurped by the bourgeois child and used against the peasant.

Eugen's triumph is unambiguous but limited, and his manner of enjoying it attests to the infantile side of his dual nature. Having tried and failed to steal the sweetness of a maiden's mouth, he is now content to sit in the basket like a baby in a crib, or like a bear, pot in hand, sucking honey off his paw.

The child's cunning succeeds against the gullible and slothful peasant. And how does the peasant respond, meanwhile, to the escape of the rebellious bees? Not just Dralle now, but the villagers in general take absurdly childish and ineffective countermeasures: syringe, broom, trumpet, and shouting are all perfectly useless (Fig. 11.30), and the most "advanced" and technological solution of all, that of shooting at the insects with a gun, adopted by the ever trigger-happy forest guard, is surely the stupidest of

60. In another article for his uncle's *Bienenzeitung* ("Unser Interesse an den Bienen," June 1867; in Busch 1959, 1:496), Busch refers to the bear as a kind of ancestral brother (*Waldbruder*) to man, who, having observed the bear taking honey from the tree, entered into rivalry with him.



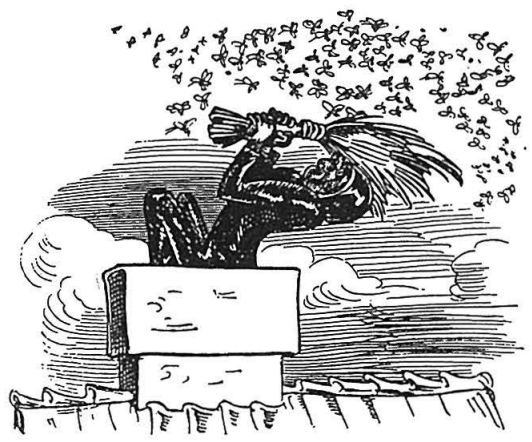
Zwei Knaben sitzen an der Pfütze
Und spritzen mit der Wasserspritze.
Die Bienen kümmern sich nicht drum,
Sie sausen weiter mit Gebrumm.



Ernst, Fritz und Wilhelm pfeifen, schrein;
Der Schwarm läßt sich darauf nicht ein.



Den Besen schwingt die alte Grete,
Der Kirmesanton bläst Trompete.



Jetzt ist er oben am Kamin,
Der Schornsteinfeger sieht ihn ziehn.

FIG. 11.30. *The Bees* (1869).

Two boys sitting by the pool, for fun,
Squirting with their squirting gun.
The bees, not bothered by the spray,
Buzz off, upward and away.

Her broom aloft doth Peggy swing,
And Tony makes his trumpet ring.

The local urchins whistle and cry,
The swarm is not disturbed thereby.

The sweep in vain gives them a swat
As they fly past the chimney pot.

all. (This same forest guard also offers to shoot the relatively harmless old performing bear, now captive; this is the mindless and cruel response of the regular military, from which he may have retired.)

The bees are eventually brought under control again and will presumably resume the production of honey on behalf of their human masters, but it is not clear *how* this happens, nor indeed is it even explicit *that* it happens. Busch critics have seen this lack of resolution as an "aesthetic defect,"[61] but it results from Busch's having to glide over a fundamental contradiction: the people (represented by the bees) rise in justifiable revolt and evade foolish attempts at (re)capture, having effectively deposed their rustic (feudal?) ruler. But in the end it is the bourgeoisie that is victorious. By a narrative sleight of hand, the bourgeoisie and the people merge and become mutual models, in sharp distinction to their initial, and overt, moral opposition. The bourgeois state represented by the humans—corrupt, conflicted, and backward (because of outdated Dralle types)—stands in contrast to the ideal popular-bourgeois state, represented by the ornate, anthropomorphic, fairy tale framework of the autonomous bee society—altruistic, thrifty, laborious (and with a clear-cut and complex division of labor), hygienic, artistic, armed, and well policed. The bee society is not perfect, because it has a sector of "greedy, fat, stupid, and lazy" drones who behave like petty tyrants, like aristocratic parasites; and it has natural enemies in mice and wax moths. But it represents a kind of utopia, a model of harmony that serves to further the harmony of nature as a whole. It is both democratic and (constitutional-)monarchical, with a queen who is chosen and governs by consent, if she really governs at all a people that is essentially self-governing. Such was the polity that liberals like Busch countenanced for Germany at the time, with more than a side-glance at Britain, but this favorable view of the democratic British model did not survive the installation of the German empire, which seemed instead to prove the merits of militarist autocracy. In this respect, too, *The Bees* is a pre-1870 work.

The closing framework of *The Bees* shows the insects reaping their reward for work in play and, in parallel to the union of Knörrje and Christine Dralle, staging festivities to celebrate their queen's wedding flight. This is all conducted, as in the opening sequence, in a Grandvillean, anthropomorphic fairy tale style. As the bees previously fostered the fertilization of different plants and people, so now they promote the miscegenation of different species of insect. This is undertaken in the spirit of millenary evolution by sexual selection according to the theory of Darwin rather than as a practice of nature in the present (beetles do not mate with bees); and it carries a social analogy that, although not explicit, is irresistible in the context: the large beetles in their hard-shelled "tailcoats" (complete with projecting handkerchief!) court the diminutive, tender, winged insects in a transspecific/cross-class alliance such as that of the peasantry and the bourgeoisie, which will produce the stock best fitted to survive. Another survival factor, equally important to the bourgeois worldview, was the suppression of social deviance, a leitmotif in Busch and the 19th-century comic strip as a whole. This theme appears in a wry conclusion as two drunken cockchafers are picked up by the police and thrown into the cooler.

Honey, before it was overtaken by sugar, was a primary condiment, preservative, and medicine. With sugar, honey was the first edible luxury to become a proletarian commonplace, produced by that "insect," the worker. Following the 17th century, consumption of the two basic sweeteners rose astronomically, and especially in the 19th century, when they fell drastically in price.[62] To meet the demand, beekeeping was totally revolutionized in the early 1800s. The scientific study of bees, as perhaps the most sophisticated form of social organization in the subhuman realm, became the most challenging branch of entomology, and the scientific exploitation of the productive potential of bees demonstrated the domination by the highest intelligence in man over the highest intelligence in nature. Darwinism served to increase respect for the role of bees in the whole complex economy of nature, in what we now call the ecological chain. Crossbreeding of different species, the discovery of parthenogenesis, and hive improvements in mid century (to which Busch specifically refers in *The Bees*) helped to raise production, keep prices down, and preserve the role of honey in the face of competition from cane and beet sugar. Ready to use in its natural state, as but a few ingestibles were, honey was a symbol of the immediately consumable luxury, and it preserved its value, as the true and ancient gold, against newer and more artificial alimentary currencies. In the historical view, the relationship of bees and humans seems a perfect model for capitalist exploitation. Nowhere in the animal kingdom is the *product* of animal labor (as distinct from the labor itself) so clearly, cleanly, and easily stolen by mankind.

The work of bees was also that of poets, like Busch himself. The old picturesque beehive basket, so different from the new geometric boxes, reminded him of the "old, worthy human head, where thoughts fly in and out . . . wing off to gather near and far" and "lay down their treasures in the golden pots of memory."[63] With this lovely simile Busch naturalizes the human creative process as a complex of bee instincts, and artistic products as the sweeteners of life.

61. E.g., Bohne 1958, 80.
62. See the brilliant article by Mintz (1979–1980).
63. Busch 1959, 4:499.

Religious and Nationalist Satire (1870–1873)

Modern descriptions of *The Bees* as "lyrical," "enchanting,"[64] and his "only unabashedly Romantic picture story"[65] ignore the fact that it, too, is a tale of conflict, though sweetened, it is true, with an atypical happy ending. We have suggested that the ideal resolution or elision of conflict, the merging of the concept of justifiable popular insurrection into a unification of class interests, has much to do with the date of composition of *The Bees,* just before the Franco-Prussian War. Up to this point there was reason to hope that a relatively peaceful solution to the major political problem of the age, the unification of Germany, might be found; yet Busch's picture-stories after 1870, in their engagement of the big social issues, do consolidate, as history had done, the idea of violent solutions.

The major obstacles to unification, if this was to take place under the aegis of Protestant Prussia, were particularism and the Catholic interest. These are the butts of Busch's political satire. Militarily the Catholic interest had been several times defeated, most decisively in 1866, when Prussia routed the Austrians at Sadowa, shortly after annexing Busch's own homeland, the old kingdom of Hannover. The great victory over France, which finally brought about the long-desired unification, was also viewed as one of Protestantism over Catholicism, which had taken, officially, a militantly reactionary stance since Pius IX's Syllabus of Errors in 1864. This syllabus outrightly condemned socialism, liberalism, and modern scientific thought generally, including of course Darwinism. The promulgation of the dogma of papal infallibility, on August 12, 1870, the day before France declared war on Prussia, was received by German Protestants and freethinkers as a final provocation. In December 1870 a Catholic political party, the Center Party, was formed, which the following year returned sixty-three deputies to the Reichstag. Bismarck accused it of "mobilization against the state" and, through his minister of education and religion (*Kultusminister*) Adalbert Falk, launched the "Kulturkampf," as it became known from the coinage of the Darwinian naturalist, physician, and prominent liberal politician Rudolf Virchow. The French translated this movement as "combat pour la civilisation," and it was regarded by many as a fundamental struggle for the political hegemony of enlightenment and reason. Its legislative fruits were a series of restrictions on Catholic clergy and Catholic influence in education (which, however, by 1878 were admitted to be futile and counterproductive). Catholic priests were forcibly ejected, as Busch gloatingly shows; in Prussia alone, at the height of the Kulturkampf (1874–1875), eight out of twelve bishoprics were vacant, and 140,000 parishes were without incumbents.[66]

Culture had long been engaged in the battle of cultures. It has been calculated recently that in the years 1859–1878, 430 primarily anti-Catholic historical novels appeared, involving 156 authors and 60 publishers.[67] The Catholics counterattacked vigorously, as Busch mentions in a general way in a memorandum he prepared, also on August 12, 1870, for his publisher's lawyer in defense of his first of several polemical contributions to the Kulturkampf, *Saint Anthony of Padua.* This work had run afoul of the censors in Catholic Offenburg, in Baden, where in a court decision of July 8 it was declared an "offense to religion." Ingenuously denying any polemical intention against the Catholic religion as such, much less against religion or "the holy" in general, Busch protests: "That our little book should cause such an unpleasant fuss is surely due to the fact that it happened to appear at a time when the best knowledge and thinking of a large part of mankind is being attacked and cursed from Rome in the coarsest way. Anyone who belongs to that party in these matters may therefore easily assume [on my part] a deliberate polemical bias [*Tendenz*] where there is only an accidental clash provoked by the violent current from beyond the mountains."[68]

Busch opens his defense of *Saint Anthony* with the contention "I have never in all my life dealt with tendentious [polemical] things." It is true that he had never before touched on politically sensitive issues; the implication that the present work was as untendentious as the earlier work, however, is an exercise in self-deception and a characteristic evasion of responsibility for the effect the book might have. According to the author, the motivations for *Saint Anthony* were, first, his healthy Protestant skepticism that there could be such a thing as a perfectly sinless man and, second, his chance encounter with a popular religious almanac dating from around 1700, *Unser Lieben Frauen Kalender* (Almanac of Our Lady), together with the humorous possibilities the "absurd" miracles recounted in that work offered.

By choosing five of these miracles, as well as another traditional one (that is, the temptations of the saint long familiar to religious iconography, plus a tale borrowed from Boccaccio with the saint gratuitously inserted), Busch was virtually compelled to return to his familiar episodic structure. But the relationship of verse to picture has now changed significantly, toward a format associated less with farce and more with serious purpose. Instead of the regular merry Bilderbogen staccato, which still largely underlies *The Bees,* the rhythm is slowed down, with longer blocks of text interspersed with larger pictures, over half of them full-page size or nearly so.

In his introductory verse Busch situates himself, as was his habit, in the context of popular print media: as a conservative pretending to chide the modern materialist and anticlerical tendencies fostered by a corrupt newspaper press. But it turns out that even Catholic doctrines which defy reason and nature have a materialist, not to say immoral, explanation. The saint's conversion to chastity as a romantic youth is the result of a humiliating defeat in attempted adultery, sealed by his emerging black with filth from the sewer. His pursuit of sanctity is pure egoism; protected by the Virgin, he moves on, happy and indifferent, when his traveling companion is fried by lightning for having yielded to lustful thoughts toward a passing "beauty of nature." The sexual temptations to which Saint Anthony is subjected are the natural product of the unnatural or immoral custom of confession and the fantasies conjured up (one may infer) by his own forbidden desires (Fig. 11.31).

The satire is crude, not Busch at his best. But *Saint Anthony* was greeted on publication, at the Leipzig book fair in the spring of 1870, with "extraordinary jubilation." The ban in Baden and Prussia may not have been effective even locally and can only have given useful publicity. Even before the Baden ban was lifted (on March 24, 1871), the publisher had reprinted the story in expurgated form in a popular little peasant-oriented newspaper he owned, substituting the name Fritz for Anthony.[69] The book remained banned for a while in Catholic Bavaria and Russia, and in Austria until 1902, and some editions omitted the penultimate couplet, put into the mouth of the Virgin, which accompanies the picture of Saint Anthony and his pig entering heaven: "Many a sheep gets in, so why not a worthy pig too?" The censor had deemed this a mockery of the doctrine of Christian salvation and the immortality of the soul.

The other sources of offense—the attempted seductions of the saint, first by a courtesan from her bed and then by a scantily clad ballet dancer who turns out to be the devil in disguise—certainly carried, by the standards of German popular graphics, an unwonted and unwarranted erotic cast. These episodes even embarrassed the artist, who shows (in the final version, much less so in the original drawings) graphic hesitancies, inconsistencies, and

64. Introduction to Busch 1974.
65. Lotze 1979, 51.
66. Hirschmann 1978, 47. See also Just 1974 and "Wirbel" 1972.
67. Hirschmann 1978, 7, 193.
68. Busch 1968, 1:57.
69. "Der heilige Fritze, genannt Fritzonius," uncredited to Busch, in the *Illustrirte Dorfzeitung des Lahrer Hinkenden Bote,* Band 8, Heft 2, nos. 42–50, and republished 1871 as a contribution to the "illustrated history of the War of 1870." Bohne's statement (Busch 1959, 2:539) that the story was reprinted "unchanged" is significantly mistaken.



„Hm! hm! — — hm! hm!!!"



Auf einmal aber — er wußte nicht wie —
Setzt sich das Mädel ihm gar aufs Knie
Und gibt dem heiligen Antonius
Links und rechts einen herzhaften Kuß.

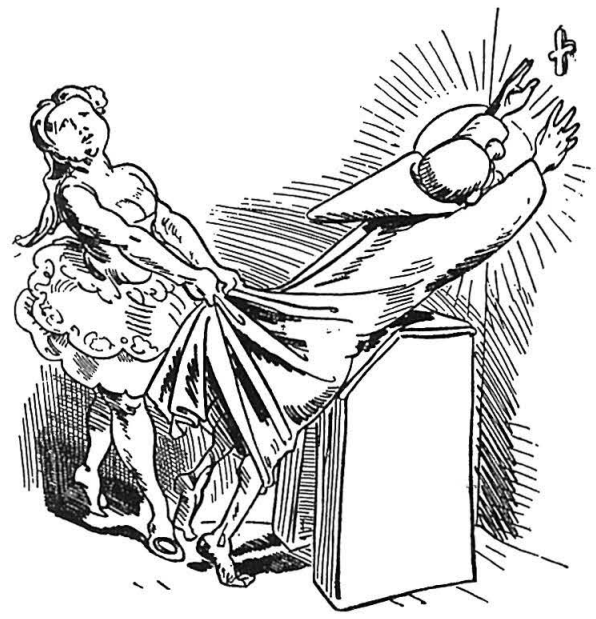
FIG. 11.31. *Saint Anthony of Padua* (1870).

"Hm! hm!——hm! hm!!!"

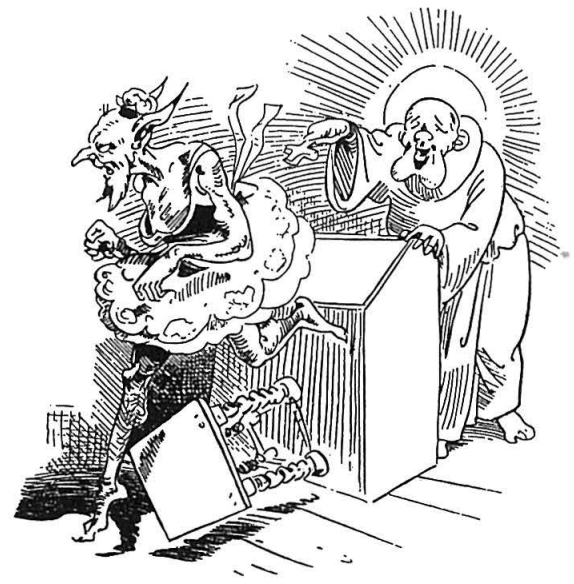
But of a sudden, unwittingly,
He found her plumped down on his knee,
And giving Saint Antonius
On both his cheeks a hearty buss.

Saint Anthony, the holy man
Much disquieted by her plan,
Infuriated by her tricks
Sprang up and grabbed the crucifix,

"Unclean spirit, begone, depart!
Reveal thyself, whoever thou art!!"



Der heilige Antonius von Padua
War aber nicht ruhig, als dies geschah.
Er sprang empor, von Zorn entbrannt;
Er nahm das Kreuz in seine Hand:



„Laß ab von mir, unsaubrer Geist!
Sei, wie du bist, wer du auch seist!!"

downright clumsiness in his handling of the female forms. The censor felt accosted too and indicted the work as "a use of the press to degrade religion, and indecent writings to incite public scandal."

The artist claimed, in the letter quoted, that his parodic intention "militated against sensuality," an argument that discounts the now well accepted fact that comic effect can heighten erotic pleasure. The (erotic) pleasure we experience in seeing the saint so comically, and by contemporary standards so realistically, tempted induces us to feel an amused mixture of pity and contempt for him[70] and seduces us into Busch's own anti-Catholic purpose.

A decade later Busch faced similar censure, this time from the well-known philosopher and aesthetician Friedrich Theodor Vischer, who was offended by the same passages as the official censors. In his youth he had praised the "pure comedy" of Töpffer; now, by an impenetrable logic, Vischer, in a tortuous, tautologous, and humorless text, granted the comic draftsman the right to be "smutty [*unflätig*]," but not to indulge in the "nudging, insinuating [*graziös*], more or less audible [goatish] bleating, tickling, and itching of the inguinal region." He accuses the "dexterously clumsy" Busch of using a loose "pornographic line" that was "not German" but French, akin to that found in the *Journal Amusant* (Vischer was presumably thinking of the truly loose and jaunty line and risqué subject matter of Grévin, which is, however, quite different from that of Busch). In a classic example of the critic looking through dirty glasses, Vischer, to close his diatribe, singles out the "even more vulgar and downright disgusting effect of the way the beard of Saint Anthony is handled. . . . But no further word on this!"[71]

The 19th-century bourgeoisie (vide Dickens) preferred to separate comedy from sex, despite the long tradition uniting the two. Vischer's hostility was compounded by his sense that not only comedy and sex were incompatible, but also art and poli-

70. Lotze's contention (1979, 58) that Busch gradually "developed a liking for his creation . . . [and that] the portrayal of the hermit [at the end; see Busch 1959, 2:132] is charming and utterly without malice" runs directly counter to the graphic evidence. As a hermit the saint looks wildly outlandish, although the effect of birds nesting in his hood and perched on his halo adds a Disneyesque touch of the cute. He returns to a state of nature, allowing ants to devour him and moss to grow out of his ears—a perfectly ridiculous model, says Busch, to hold up to 19th-century man.

71. Vischer 1881, 126–129. The whole passage is cited by Daelen (1886, 71–73) in a long footnote, adding at the end, "(How much would be needed to explain this dark phrase! E.D.)." The divided beard, which does not look particularly scrotal to me, also occurs on the railway station master in *Balduin Bählamm* (Busch 1959, 4:72); presumably, it was a fashion of the time.



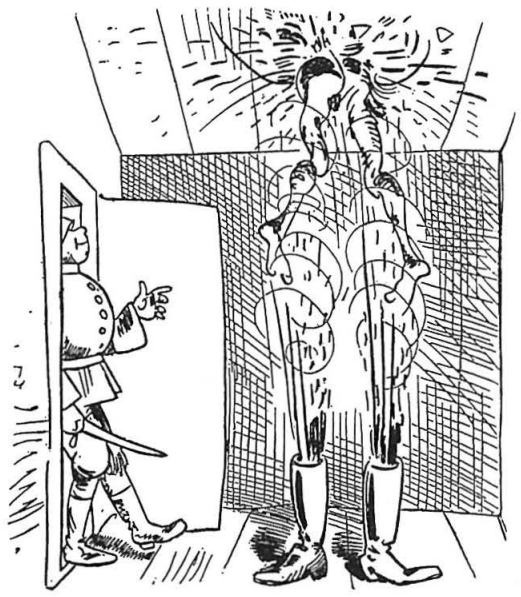
Statt der Preußen stürzen sich zwei hungrige Citoyens auf die geladenen Karbonaden.



Furchtbare Wirkung der neuen Sprenggeschosse.



Monsieur Jacques wird desperat, ladet seine eigenen Stiefel



und sprengt sich selbst gegen die Decke.

FIG. 11.32. *Monsieur Jacques in Paris* (1870).
"Instead of Prussians, two hungry citoyens pounce upon the cutlet bombs. / Frightful effect of the new explosive devices. / Monsieur Jacques becomes desperate, loads his own boots, / and fires himself through the roof."

tics—at least as far as Busch was concerned. The critic takes the artist to task for "allowing himself to drift into a foreign element, foreign not in itself, but foreign to Busch's nature, as we have known it and come to love it hitherto, and foreign to the nature of pure unmixed comedy." As if Busch had ever engaged in "pure unmixed comedy" (here Vischer may have been thinking of his former favorite, Töpffer); and as if his later work, which takes on, in Vischer's words, "all kinds of degenerations in family, customs, against particularism, against [political] parties in the German empire," were not of the very highest caliber. The absurdity of Vischer's desire to depoliticize Busch was pointed out at length by Eduard Daelen, Busch's first biographer,[72] who himself suffered eight days in jail for outrage to religion, and whose taste for polemics led him to eulogize Busch as the great polemical, patriotic, and Protestant artist. (This praise was far too warm for the artist's own comfort, however, and Busch attempted to correct it with a short, politically evasive autobiographical statement of his own.)

Meanwhile, the quick and stunning victories of Prussia and her German allies in the war against France, and the consequent demand for patriotica, had inspired Busch to execute the meanest Bilderbogen he ever did (his fiftieth for the *Münchener Bilderbogen*): *Monsieur Jacques à Paris During the Siege of 1870*. This work invites a well-fed German audience to mock the dreadful sufferings of poor Parisians during the siege, which coincided with a particularly harsh winter. To show, as Busch does, a pathetically emaciated man eating canaries and rats was no exaggeration of reality, his cooking a dog's tail as if it were a sausage barely so. Monsieur Jacques's fabrication of explosive cutlets to booby-trap the invading Prussians, which blow up hungry *citoyens* instead (a wild-looking pair, perhaps communards), and explosive pills to propel him suicidally through the roof (Fig. 11.32) are of course fantastic, but they remind us of the decisive role the new military technology played in the Prussian victories against Austria and France. These campaigns relied primarily on superior deployment of heavy artillery and the deadly needle-gun, the inhumanity of which in any hands Daumier, at least, denounced,[73] while the bombardment of the city of Paris has been termed "an act of savagery which brought only discredit on the Prussians."[74]

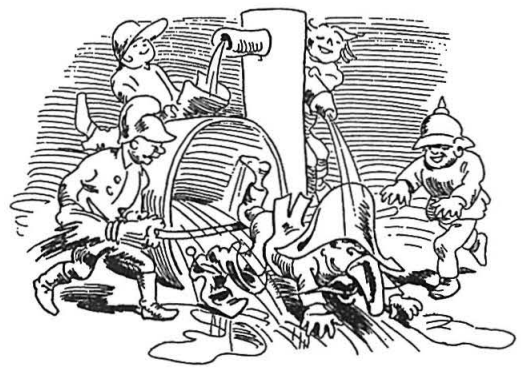
Patriotic pressures extended the natural life of Busch's work for Bilderbogen and magazine, now largely superseded, as far as the artist was concerned, by the book. *The Particularist* (2:148–153), in a virtuoso, kaleidoscopic display of physiognomies, applauds the German military successes of 1870. *The Napoleon Game* (1871) shows a child, who unwisely allows himself to be chosen to play the part of the French emperor (or is unlucky enough to bear the name of Louis), being punished rather beyond the conventions of a game for small children. The application of syringe artillery and broom bayonets are only preliminaries to a thorough dunking in water and burying in builder's mortar. "I'll never play Napoleon again"—this tearful scream from the child Louis presumably echoes that of the real Louis-Napoléon who, sick and exiled, should have regretted his ambition to play his uncle's martial games (Fig. 11.33).

In 1870–1871 Busch was overwhelmed by different publishers anxious for topical works from his pen; but he was not about to scatter his efforts further in mere journalistic squibs on "transient" issues. In mid 1871 he decanted his anticlericalism in

72. Daelen 1886.

73. Between 1866 and 1869 Daumier did many cartoons against European militarism and new armaments. The *Fliegende Blätter* made one gesture in this direction, tracing the evolution of weaponry from the caveman's club through a modern cannon that knocks people over, literally like a toy, to the needle-gun, the French fan-gun, the steam-gun and "total" gun, used in ever shorter and more murderous wars: a caveat for our own nuclear insanity (*FB* 86 [1867]: 150–151).

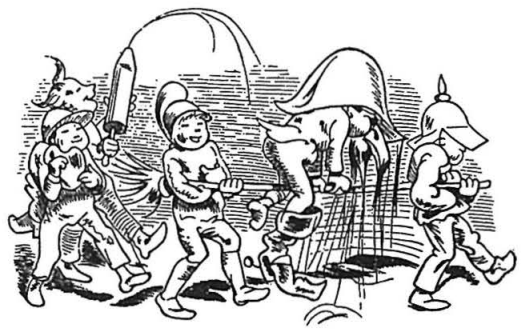
74. Carr 1969, 121.



Und kein Entwischen gibt es hier.
Viktoria! den hätten wir!!



Schwapp! liegt er da im weichen Lehm,
Bequem und doch nicht angenehm.



Der Louis schreit: „Auch weh! Au weh!"
Denn jetzo geht's nach Wilhelmshöh'.



„Ne!" — schreit der Louis laut und sehr —
„Napolium spiel ich niemals mehr!!"

FIG. 11.33. *The Napoleon Game* (1871).

There's no escaping now, no way,
We've got him, victory, hurray!!

Louis sets up a frightful row.
To Wilhelmshöh' we take him now.

Plotsch! Pitched into the mortar mix,
In a soft but nasty mess he sticks.

"No!" screams Louis with might and main,
"I'll never play Napoleon again!!"

his longest and, after *Max and Moritz,* most famous story, *Pious Helene.* For publication of this story he turned to his childhood friend Otto Bassermann, having felt exploited and cheated by Braun and Schneider, publishers of the *Fliegende Blätter,* the Bilderbogen, and *Max and Moritz.*

The anticlericalism of *Pious Helene,* though conspicuously responsive to the Kulturkampf, is overlaid here with other anxieties about sex and the family (see below) as well as philosophical concerns derived from Schopenhauer, then very much in vogue, and his theory of the primacy of the will and the necessity of subduing it ("Good, this much is certain, is always the evil one refrains from," Busch aphorized). The doubts voiced nowadays—that Busch was really motivated by anti-Catholic or anticlerical feeling[75]—serve to raise him above the "vulgar realities" of historical contingencies; but it was these very realities that determined his audience's responses (then as now, for there is still intense disapproval of Busch among religious conservatives today). Busch personally, like one of his most distinguished readers, Chancellor Bismarck,[76] saw the Catholic resurgence as a threat to a new German civilization. The resolution in a great war of Germany's most pressing problem, moreover, and the unleashing of a religious repression that affected all levels of cultural activity inclined Busch more than ever to simple, drastic, and violent solutions and to moral harshness of even greater consequence.

Pious Helene is designed to show that Catholic doctrine and practices, especially regarding ostentation of piety and charity, inevitably lead to hypocrisy; that the celibate ideal encourages immorality and even forms of sexual perversion (the torture of the cat); and that religion, as Marx said, is a drug, like alcohol, and religious fanaticism, born of failure and renunciation, goes hand in hand with alcoholic degeneration and can likewise end in self-destruction.

A sense of political timeliness also underlay Busch's unusual decision to develop a suggestion coming from an outside source, his friend and publisher Otto Bassermann. *Pater Filucius,* published to great applause and some criticism in November 1872, was executed at unusual speed, in just three weeks, and in quick response to a law passed in June 1872 banning Jesuits from the new German empire. This shorter work, a thirty-page pamphlet, remains Busch's most overtly polemical piece, a compact allegory of German politics of the time, a *Zeitbild* (a term he abhorred) with relatively little farcical ornamentation. The author hurried for fear that word would leak out ahead of time, as had happened, to his annoyance, with the *Jobsiade.* He even distributed the woodblocks to different engravers, to prevent them, so he said, from understanding the story as whole and to speed up production.

Bassermann, in the dark as to what Busch was concocting, became excited at the prospect of another succès de scandale. Although he was concerned lest the book be too "staatsgefährlich" (inimical to the state—he needn't have worried), at the same time he hoped for a prohibition, or at the very least some hostile reviews. He even proposed to hide the woodblocks and clichés (copies from the blocks) from possible confiscation by the police.[77]

Inquiring as to the meaning of the "allegory" for purposes of advance publicity, Bassermann was told by Busch emphatically that "in *familiar terms* [*familiär genommen*] it is drastic, in *political terms,* not." To avoid provoking "ultramontane denouncers" in advance, and because it was "tedious and irritating when the narrator of a story explains in advance the long and short of it," Busch wanted no more than the title in the advertisements, with at most the word "allegorical."[78] He enjoined Bassermann to silence, even in private conversation, but he did add a summary allegorical "key" for the publisher's strictly private information. Once the work was out, he continued to resist Bassermann's urging that he give his own explanation, either directly or through a review, despite the advantage this might have in stimulating demand for a proposed second edition. It goes, said Busch, "against my grain [*es fährt mir wider die Haare*]." He was leery of being drawn into any public controversy, remaining content to have others make what they would of his "rebus" for themselves. He reproached the publisher for using the phrase "personalities of the present time" in an advertisement, since he did not have individu-

75. Most recently Qualen (1984), who absurdly denies (p. 53) that *Antonius* had an overtly militant purpose.

76. There is hitherto neglected evidence that Bismarck was actually reading Busch in these years: "After the assassination attempt [on Bismarck], von Oertzen, formerly Bismarck's secretary, was with him in [Bad] Kissingen and found him occupied with reading—your Pious Helene and Jobsiade" (letter of Bassermann to Busch, August 13, 1874, f. 257, Wilhelm Busch Museum, Hannover).

77. Letters from Bassermann to Busch, June 13, July 8, and August 4, 1872, Wilhelm Busch Museum, Hannover.

78. Letter of August 7, 1872 (Busch 1968, 1:82).

als in mind but only political parties and tendencies. "A whole false trail is laid. That is bad. Better to say nothing." Again, however, he consented to add a "cast list [*Theaterzettel*]" for Bassermann's "private use, *but only that,*" so as to avoid direct misinterpretations, and now countenanced a "throwaway [*bummlig*] witty article . . . on the Jesuits, as it was, is now, and ever shall be."[79]

Even without referring to Busch's key but armed only with elementary knowledge of the political forces current in Germany at this time, one has little difficulty in deciphering the allegory. It is like a narrative extension of one of those great complex baroque-period political cartoons. The hero of *Pater Filucius* is Gottlieb Michael, representing the German state and to a degree the German people. ("Deutscher Michel" was the type-name for the long-suffering German—like John Bull for the Englishman—but in the new Germany he refuses to be the victim.) Gottlieb Michael is a bachelor in his prime, served by two pious household aunts, the fat Petrine representing Catholicism or, as Busch calls her in his key, "ultramontanism" and the thin Pauline Protestantism, identified with Saint Paul as Catholicism was with Saint Peter. A pretty, clever young cousin named Angelika symbolizes the idea of a state church "of the future," nonsectarian and relatively secularized, like that of England. Favored by the master, she arouses the jealousy of the older women.

Pater Filucius (Latinization of the French *filou,* or "rogue") is a Jesuit, openly designated as such, who has his eye on Gottlieb Michael's money (state power) and cozies up to Angelika in the kitchen until she rebuffs him with a ladle of applesauce in the eye (see Fig. 15.12). (Catholic) Aunt Petrine's repressed sexuality, however, inclines her toward this clerical male, who gives her a dog called Schrupp. The creature appears at first as an amusing, obedient, and playful pup. But his insidious nature is already evident in the way he has learned, when he hears the question "Where is the *Ketzerl* [heretic]?" to bristle and snarl like a boar at (Protestant) Aunt Pauline and then kiss Aunt Petrine. This pup (the only major figure missing from Busch's key) surely stands for the Jesuit insinuation into education, for the plague of their propaganda. Schrupp is thoroughly obnoxious, and flea-ridden to boot. Petrine, being Catholic, is immune to the fleas, but both Pauline and Gottlieb Michael are tormented by them, in familiar Bilderbogen-style Buschian flea hunts. Of the two solutions to fleas on the body politic, eviction (*exmittieren*) or a good old-fashioned *Knacks!* with the knuckle, Gottlieb Michael prefers the latter. (This is perhaps an allusion to the debate on the level of coercion appropriate for dealing with Jesuitry; priests were being thrown into jail at this time, as well as exiled.) Against Aunt Petrine's and Filucius's protestations that the pup is "pure as an angel," the master of the house seizes and rids him of his fleas, but he cannot cure other destructive and dirty instincts. The dog's real punishment comes later, as accomplice to Filucius's crimes.

The dalliance between Aunt Petrine and her priest is scotched by Gottlieb, who kicks out the intruder in an astonishing graphic that shows him coming literally unwound like a spring (see Fig. 15.23). In a vindictive fury, Filucius hires two thugs, Internazi and Jean Lecaq. Internazi is a rough-looking, definitely lower-class type with a cudgel; his name points to international social democracy. Lecaq, of rather more refined appearance, with a Napoleonic waxed mustache, represents what the author called "Frenchdom." Thus Busch, no close student of political developments but always vulnerable to current chauvinistic paranoia, summoned up a political phantom, a monstrous agglomerate of three heterogeneous political entities supposedly united in their hostility to the new German state: a class formation (social democracy), a foreign nation-state (France), and a religious interest (the Jesuits).[80] None of these were closely connected, although they all had reason to fear Bismarck and the empire. In the new French Republic, conservative and clerical as it was, the Jesuits were not a revanchist, anti-German force; social democracy, although it attracted many working-class Catholics, was not favorable to clericalism and the Jesuits; and the social democrats, who had gained such momentum during the 1860s, were not a revolutionary party, or even truly international. Yet although they never posed a real threat to the government, Bismarck nevertheless had the organization and its press outlawed in 1878. The bees were smoked into subjection. If Busch's rendition of the potential opposition to Bismarck's Germany bears any grain of historical truth at all, it is only insofar as it embodies the concept of the union of heterogeneous elements. For the opposition to have succeeded, Danish, Polish, and Hanoverian particularism; French, Austrian, and Polish Catholicism; social democracy; and bourgeois liberal antimilitarism would have had to come together in an unlikely conjunction.[81]

The oath sworn by the unholy alliance of Filucius, Internazi, and Lecaq is overheard by Cousin Angelika, who tells Gottlieb Michael; he then engages three friends to defend him and destroy the enemy: policeman Hiebel with his sword, schoolmaster Fiebel with his cane, and farmer Bullerstiebel with his pitchfork. They represent, obviously (and as Busch confirmed to Bassermann), the three pillars of the German state: the Defenders, or army; the Teachers, or educational system; and the Feeders, or peasantry (the "Wehr-, Nähr- und Lehrstand").[82]

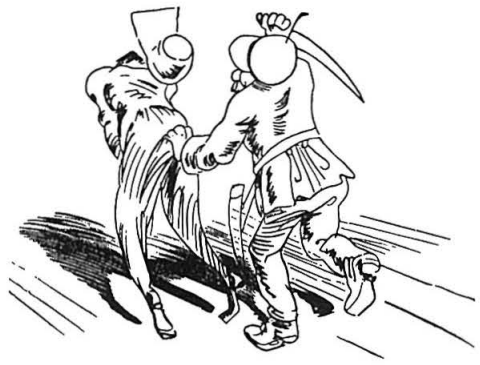
The conspirators are foiled in their murderous attack on Gottlieb Michael and punished in a symmetrical pairing: the Jesuit suffers the schoolmaster's cane, the Frenchman the policeman's sword, and the social democrat the peasant's pitchfork. All three traitors are thrown out of the window (with Schrupp) into a dirty puddle (Fig. 11.34). The victory is sealed by the all-too-predictable marriage of Gottlieb Michael and Angelika.

The little book is not divided, as all Busch's other longer stories were, into chapters; it is a truly continuous and coherent whole, with no episodic or digressive farce. The protracted sequence about the dog's fleas is finely integrated. *Pater Filucius* is perfect in this way, and a shade dull; it has not been a favorite in the 20th century.

Busch's next major production identified a fourth tendency inimical to the new empire: particularism. In 1873 he undertook *The Birthday; or, The Particularists,* in preference to another topical subject suggested by Bassermann, the Dachau bank scandal. This affair had erupted in the midst of the unprecedented economic boom and financial speculation stimulated by the flow of money from French war reparations, and because of it a large number of small savers, many of them peasants, suffered.[83] Busch, however, was not too interested in the manipulations of high finance, which in England gave the theme to the five-part painting series by W. P. Frith, *The Race for Wealth* (1879), designed for a much higher class audience (see p. 26). He saw a better topic, set in his familiar propertied peasant–petty-bourgeois world, in the antics of those who mourned the passing of the kingdom of Hannover, annexed by Prussia in 1866. Liberal use of Hannoverian dialect localizes the story in Busch's homeland, but particularism survived throughout the thirty-six formerly independent states of Germany, including Catholic Bavaria and its capital of Munich, Busch's adoptive city, where the religious difference sharpened particularist tendencies.

These threatened what supporters of the imperial regime (like Busch) saw as the only basis for long-term social stability and progress. To typify particularism Busch takes his characteristic mix of peasant and petty-bourgeois villagers, who turn out to be drunken, clumsy, quarrelsome cheats. Not only do they represent

79. Letter of December 14, 1872 (ibid., 95).
80. Klaus Mlynek has recently called this fantasy union an "almost impermissible coarsening and simplification," shifting the blame from Busch onto his publisher, allegedly the originator of the idea (Busch 1982, 114).
81. See, for example, Engelberg 1897, 64–70.
82. They also correspond to the "Three Alls" of popular imagery, which showed the soldier ("I defend you all"), the priest ("I pray for you all"; superseded in Busch by the "secular priesthood" of teachers) and the peasant ("I feed you all"). A fourth type was often satirically added, the lawyer: "I exploit you all."
83. Busch considered the "Spitzfeder Affair," as it was also called, as potential material more seriously than has hitherto been supposed; see the letters of Bassermann to Busch, notably that of January 19, 1873, Wilhelm Busch Museum, Hannover.



Heißa! Wie der Sabel blitzt! —



Motten fliegen, Haare sausen;
Das gibt Leben in das Haus.

FIG. 11.34. *Pater Filucius* (1872).

Whoosh! How the saber flashes down!—

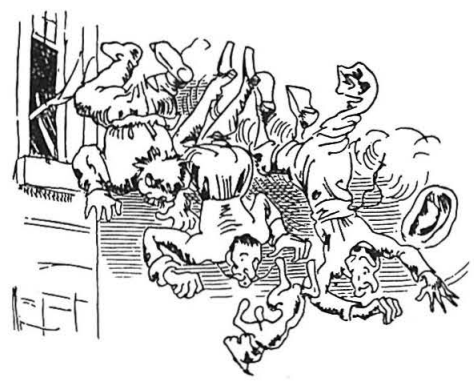
Twinfold is the fork's sharp prick,
Which twofold cuts one to the quick.

Moths sent flying, hair torn out;
The house is quite a lively sight.

Helterskelter! Through the window
Out they fly into the night.



Zwiefach ist der Stich der Gabel,
Weil sie zwiefach zugespitzt. —



Hulterpulter! Durch das Fenster
Springt man in die Nacht hinaus.

FIG. 11.35. *The Birthday; or, The Particularists* (1873).

Dammit now! Is this a fright!
Quick! My headgear's all alight.

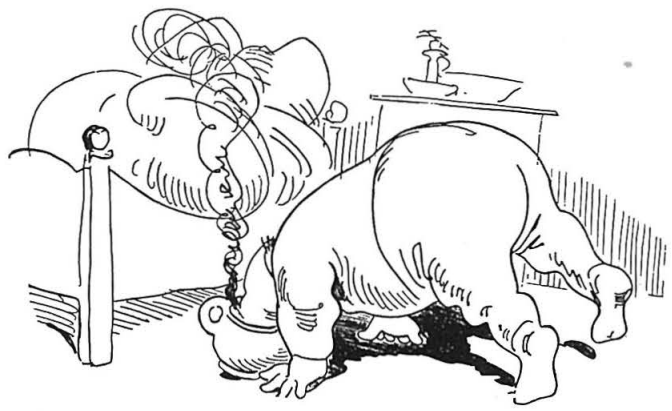
Thundering crosses, yes, I thought a-
s much, the bowl is out of water.

In fear, there are many things one tries
Which one wouldn't be trying otherwise.

The cap for sure has seen some trouble.
The scalp is singed down to a stubble.



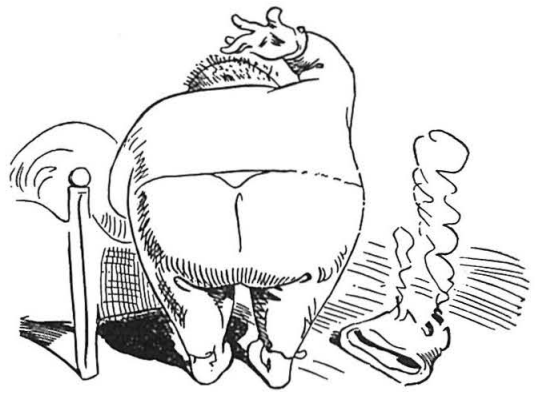
Potzsapperment! Hier heißt es schnelle!
Die Kopfbedeckung leuchtet helle.



In Ängsten findet manches statt,
Was sonst nicht stattgefunden hat.



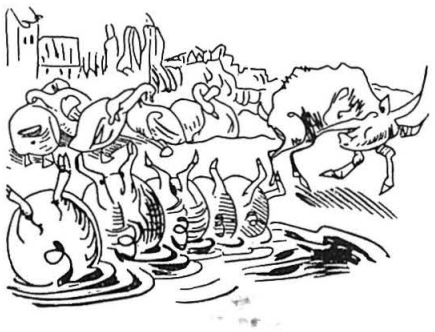
Kreuzdunnerschlag! Ich dacht es ja!
's ist wieder mal kein Wasser da!!



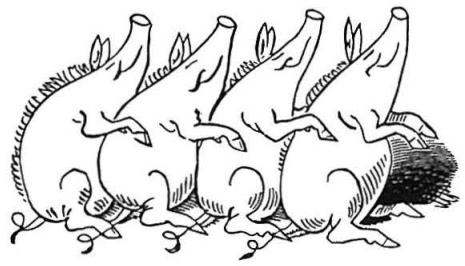
Da liegt die Mütze sehr versehrt.
Das Haar ist meistens weggezehrt. —

a particular form of German rustic[392] or feudal conservative, but they also serve as the butts of Busch's petty-bourgeois contempt for pub politicking and popular agitation generally, which here leads to all kinds of mini-disasters. As an emblem of the process, the village mayor becomes literally inflamed by brandy and politics: falling into a drunken sleep over his paper in bed, he sets his nightcap on fire and burns his hair to the scalp (Fig. 11.35). Like alcohol, like religiosity, popular politics leads to the destruction of those who indulge in it.

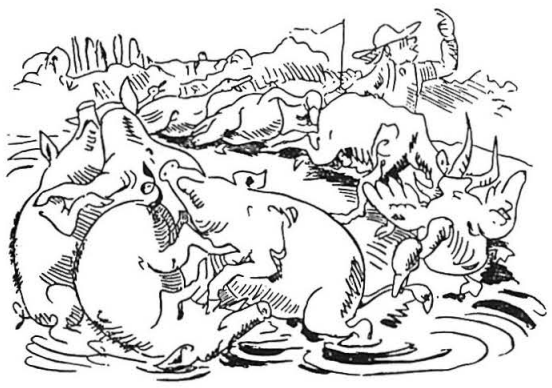
The leitmotif of *The Birthday* is drink, the symbol, lubricant, and curse of pub politics. In the White Horse Inn of Milbenau (the white horse was the symbol of Lower Saxon or Hannoverian particularism as organized into the so-called Guelph Party),[393] the particularists bemoan the passing of the good old days and can think of no more appropriate way to honor the old king's birthday than with twenty bottles of the apothecary's very own brew, his "bosom buddy." But from the very moment the libations are transported, the village begins to descend into a chaos of intoxication and self-humiliation. As everywhere in Busch, drink reduces man to a subhuman state, for which the various animals of the farmyard set up a kind of parodistic celebration, a hilariously stylized ballet of the tipsy (Fig. 11.36). Peasants who contribute their supplies and skills to the party take the opportunity to swindle their fellows. The whole proposed event is sabotaged by cheating,



Dem Hirt sein Bock fängt an zu springen,
Die Schweine wälzen sich und singen.



Sowohl allein wie gegenseitig.



Viel Kurzweil treibt man anderweitig



Jetzt eilt die Bauernschaft herbei
Und wundert sich, was dieses sei.

FIG. 11.36. *The Birthday* (1873).

The farmer's goat begins to spring,
The pigs, they roll about and sing.

Frolicking and lots of fun

Enjoyed in common and one by one.

And now the peasants hurry by
And wonder what is up and why.

drunkenness, and accidents—as when the hornet stings the horse, which throws the mayor into the hen sculpted out of butter. The finale is a fight, resolved by more drinks all around. In the end, the only party to profit from this melee is the hostess of the White Horse Inn.

The manuscript version of the story originally ended with the line "Blessed is the pious Christian, as long as he keeps the cash flowing in [Selig ist der fromme Christ, wenn er nur gut bei Kasse ist], a gratuitous provocation insofar as the story is about neither religion nor money. Bassermann suggested a change to "Long live the particularist, as long as he keeps the cash flowing in" and the addition of a new ending: a brigadier of police, present in the tavern, would inform the local authorities (*der Landrat*), who would rebuke the mayor and company and order the tavern closed for instigating dissidence. The particularists, in a change of heart that must have appeared to Busch and any thinking reader as unrealistic and facile, would retire to the Black (imperial) Eagle and drink to a united German empire, with the policeman standing watchfully in the corner.

Busch responded sharply: "Your proposal would be like a transformation and give the story a character I have studiously avoided. Fun above all, and not much beyond that."[84] True, with its broken eggs, drunken geese, amorous pigs, and riotous goat, the story is much more strenuously slapstick than *Pater Filucius;* Bassermann thought it was too much so, to the detriment of the political satire, but the satire and the intention to rally supporters of the empire is nonetheless transparent. The unfunny coercive solution proposed by Bassermann was no doubt too close for Busch's comfort to the actual methods adopted in the Prussian police state. The author preferred the implication that the particularists would simply drink themselves into economic and political bankruptcy and oblivion.

Sexual Renunciation and Punishment (1872–1884)

Pious Helene

In middle age, Busch confronted for the first time in his art issues of sexuality, marriage, and the family. Personal biographical circumstances, as well as the European-wide crisis in family and gender relations of the 1870s, help explain this development. After three winters spent in Frankfurt living with or very close to the wealthy, well-connected, and culturally active banker family presided over by Johanna Kessler, Busch's horizons opened up. He was surely tempted to settle in Frankfurt for good, to enjoy and compete socially and professionally in a cosmopolitan life. He also had access to Johanna's brood of eight children, two of whom he virtually adopted as his nieces, and to Johanna herself, with whom he became intimate enough that rumors, certainly unfounded (in his copious correspondence with her he addressed her always as "aunt"), began to circulate. In this situation he must have ruminated on the idea of marriage, its pleasures and pitfalls, even though he never came close to the reality of it.

The second half of Busch's oeuvre, from *Pious Helene* on, represents a confrontation with and rejection of these challenges. Busch scholars have connected this renunciation with the philosophy of Schopenhauer, which became "fashionable" at this time and on which Wilhelm's brother Otto, tutor to the Kessler family, was writing a book. A philosophy of renunciation could well suit those members of the bourgeoisie unable or unwilling to compete for a place in the new prosperity of the post-1871 *Gründerjahre* (economic boom and speculation), which coincided paradoxically with a widespread European fear of slump and recession. Busch has been viewed at this time as making multiple renunciations: of life in the big city (Frankfurt or Munich); of a career as a painter (although he spent increasing amounts of his time painting); of a career or reputation as a poet; of marriage, family, and sexuality. He had slowly achieved financial independence as a creator of picture-stories and discovered that as a petty-bourgeois or parvenu peasant critic of the upper-bourgeois world he had to remain on the outside, the solitary spectator and satirist of rather than participant in that world. His attempt to establish credentials as a serious, philosophically inclined poet in *Kritik des Herzen*

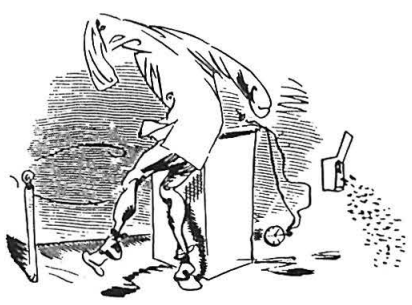
84. Busch 1959, 2:550. See Wiechert 1970.



"There's something funny here, by thunder!"
Her uncle's angry, and no wonder.



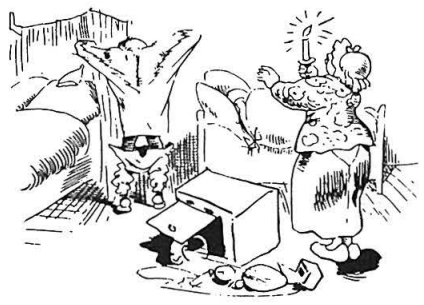
Annoyance is quite useless, though.
There goes the light, I told you so.



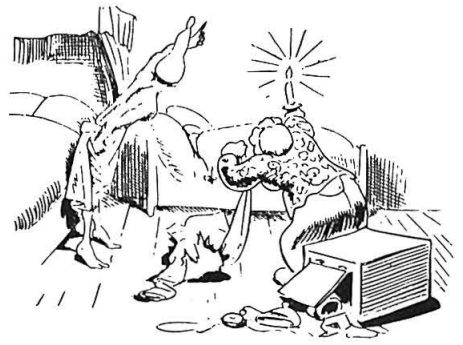
As if this hadn't been enough,
There go the watch, the box of snuff.



The clóset of nocturnal need
Succumbs to Uncle's blind stampede.



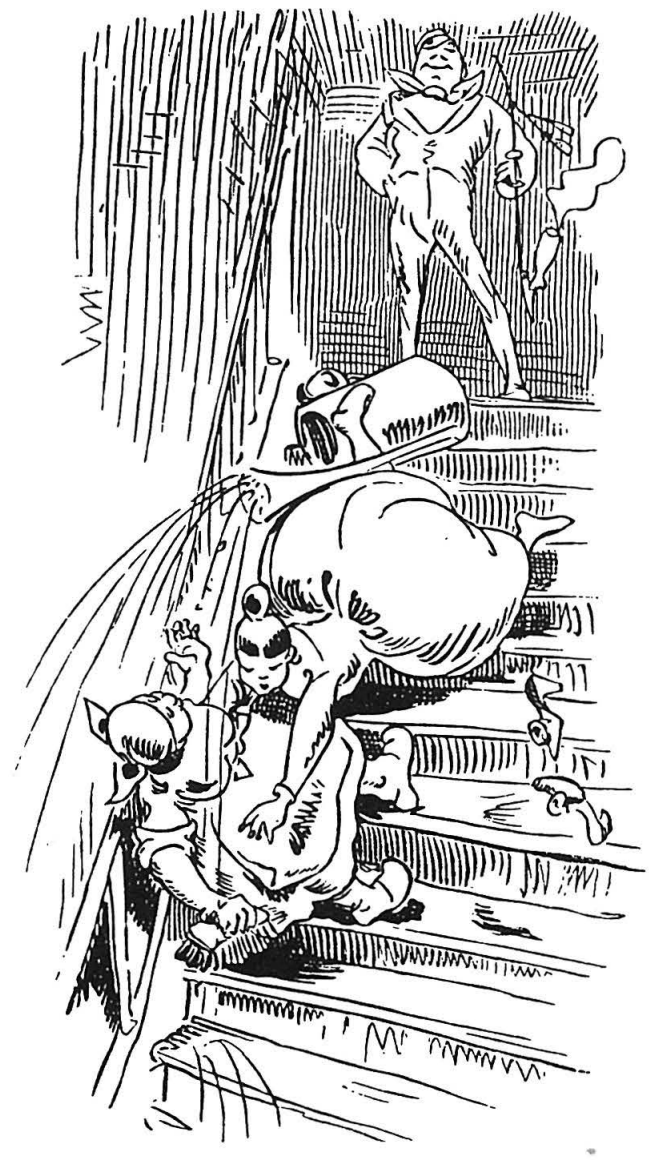
The noise brings Auntie with a light.
He has regained both air and sight.



"Oh, shameless, wicked girl, I say!
It's you I mean. Yes, snore away!"

And Nell resolves that she will never
Do this again. But never—ever!

FIG. 11.37. *Pious Helen* (1872). Uncle's Nightie.



Sie kommt auf Hannchen hergerollt,
Die Franzens Stiefel holen wollt.

FIG. 11.38. *Pious Helen* (1872). Cousin Franz.

(1874) had run aground on his treatment of sex. As a humorist, Busch was not considered qualified to treat so solemn and difficult a topic, and he was accused, once again, of immorality.

In *Pious Helene* sex is disruptive. It must be repressed and punished lest it destroy those who yield to it. The story opens with a brisk verse panorama of cosmopolitan sensual pleasures, all promoted, as Busch opines with ironic primness, by an immoral press: Offenbach (then popular in Frankfurt), balls, concerts, fashionable clothes, money grubbing, and liberal anticlericalism. Sexual promiscuity is manifested in the mindless production of children, who become sinners for lack of the proper parental example and control.

Helene is one of these. She is orphaned—literally, one supposes, but also spiritually, for the city ("city fathers") has reneged on its parental mission. So uncle and aunt summon Helene to the countryside, "where dwell gentle sheep and pious lambs . . . Thus our Nell was countryfied."[85]

The first thing she learns from her Catholic guardians is religious hypocrisy. She atones not with a change of heart but by counting her beads. The little girl's prank already has covert sexual connotations, and these become more explicit as she matures: sewing up uncle's nightshirt is her first disruption of the harmony of the bedroom. Blinded, Uncle Nolte flails around like a drunkard, knocking over the furniture and defiling his intimate possessions with urine, until finally his shirt rips down the middle. He is, as it were, sexually (in his impotence/incontinence) exposed, at the sight of which Helene prudently and hypocritically turns her back, pretending to be asleep (Fig. 11.37).

Voyeurism is the theme of the next chapter, where she is old enough to begin displaying precocious adolescent charms. She watches, riveted at the keyhole, while Cousin Franz, just arrived (from the city, no doubt), awakens, showers, and dresses. This is one of Busch's more extended set pieces, a lesson in hygiene, solemnly numbered as in a school manual, which for Helene becomes a lesson in male anatomy. When Franz suddenly exits bearing before him his well-hung pipe, Helene overhastily withdraws. The "trickery of objects" takes over: in three full-page drawings, she trips over the watering can (itself perhaps a sexual symbol), which gushes all over her, and tumbles down the stairs, falling on the maid, who knocks over aunt and uncle like dominoes (Fig. 11.38).

A clandestine kiss in the garden is a commonplace prelude to a more interesting—and childish—prank: putting a frog in uncle's snuffbox. The slimy creature does the rounds of uncle's nose, the coffee, the butter, and finally auntie's lap; auntie faints. The frog or toad, a traditional sexual symbol (in Hieronymus Bosch's tabletop of the *Seven Deadly Sins* it squats over the crotch of a naked female, representing Lechery), has a similar effect on a coy female in the Busch Bilderbogen *Adele's Promenade* and, in Daumier's *Bons Bourgeois,*[86] on a whole bourgeois family out for a walk in the country. The slimy creature is so taboo that in *Pious Helene* even the maid removes it with a pair of tongs. Of all these goings-on, Franz and Helene are gleeful voyeurs.

85. Arndt 1982, 42. All unattributed rhymed translations of Busch in the text are from this source.

86. Busch 1959, 1:281; and Daumier, Delteil 1904, no. 1423 (from 1845).



"My dearest Franz! We are apart,
But well you know, yours is my heart!

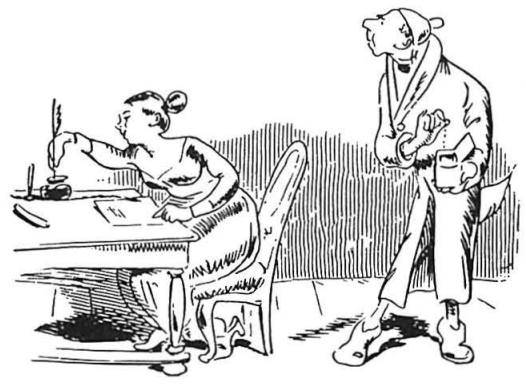


Let's say, an ardent cousin kiss?
O Lord, if Auntie knew of this!

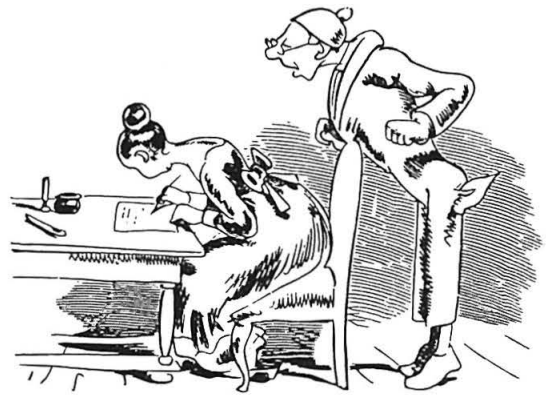
And both are holy as can be . . .
Oh, Franz, do come and rescue me,
My tears of longing make a well!
Ten thousand kisses from your
Nell."



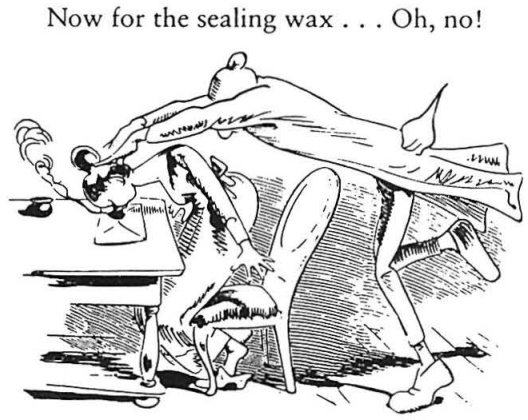
Now for the sealing wax . . . Oh, no!



How heavenly a time we spent,
So full of fun and sentiment . . .



Here things seem duller than before;
In fact, a soul-destroying bore!



For Uncle pounces, thundering: So!!



When deep in beans and watercress
A someone gave a someoness,



Our uncle's daft (good thing, no doubt),
Aunt keeps on pottering about,



And ouch! she has her nasal fob
Impressed into the bubbling blob.

FIG. 11.39. *Pious Helen* (1872). The Love Letter.

The next episode, the love letter, is stereotypical as a concept but dramatized here by the superb mimic interplay of Helene writing, pausing to reflect, and dwelling pleasurably on phrases of sexual defiance, all the while unaware that her uncle is standing behind her; when realization dawns in his mind, his hands instantly mete out punishment, plunging Helene's nose, always the vulnerable (and sexually symbolic) member, into hot sealing wax. The close-up of Helene's upper figure, in her low-cut dress, her nose streaming with hot wax, which pulls her head streaming with agony out of her shoulders, is a most expressive emblem of sexual punishment (Fig. 11.39).

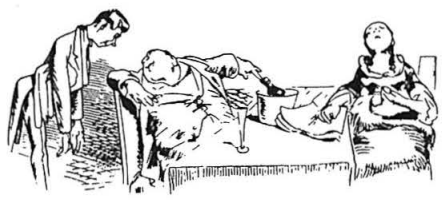
In revenge, Helene strikes once more at the intimacy of her guardians' bedroom, where sexual sublimation and harmony are symbolized by the elderly couple's clasped hands. This harmony is rudely disturbed by Helene, who, by hooking away the coverlet, causes a quarrel between the couple and agony and fury to the uncle, whose toe is infibulated (a symbolic castration?). For this escapade Helene is dismissed, and she passes into the social limbo of the single woman.

The next episode is cast in the farcical mold of Busch's Bilderbogen period and is a free interpretation of what might happen in reality to a young girl of some social standing who suddenly loses all of her natural human family. Several years older now, and still marriageable, she lives without visible human companionship. She regresses to the world of animals, the arena in which Busch habitually establishes his metaphors for naked human instinct, and where she sadistically acts out her sexual frustration on the cat's tail (see above, and Fig. 11.17).

Prematurely aging, her charms fading,[87] she contracts a marriage of convenience and desperation with Schmöck and Co. Representative of the economic and social elite, perhaps a banker of that preeminent banking city of Frankfurt, Schmöck is fat, elderly, unfit, and foolish (or fearful) enough on his wedding night to get too drunk to fulfill his marital responsibilities (Fig. 11.40). Helene sucks expectantly on her asparagus (honi soit qui mal y pense). He may be impotent. Her tears at this moment of rejection constitute a rare moment of true pathos in Busch. Schmöck, incapable of giving Helene the children she desires, quickly disappears.

Helene engages in religious philanthropy, the typical sublimation of rich, sexually frustrated females, and in a form that is a foretaste of her later alcoholism. She generously warms the poor (their only appearance in Busch as a social class) with knitted comforters and a beverage astutely decanted from the wine she uses "medicinally" in her bathtub. More important, with Cousin Franz, who has become a Roman priest, she undertakes a pilgrim-

87. A drawing in the manuscript final version, cut in a rare last-minute change, shows her shaving her face. See Busch 1972, xx.



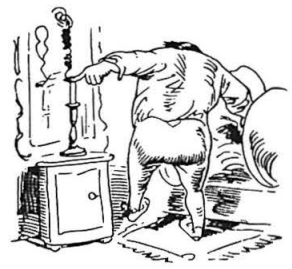
"Garçon! Let's have another, then!"
The hands on Helen's watch show ten.



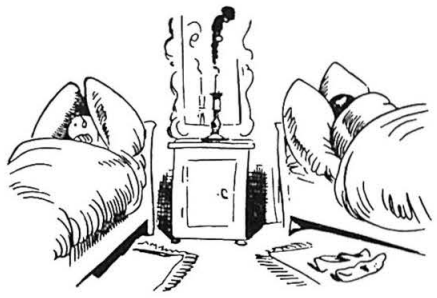
The waiter heeds the call and speeds
Away—but Helen intercedes.



The waiter lights them to their berth.
The gentleman is full of mirth.



One finger, pshh! the light is out.

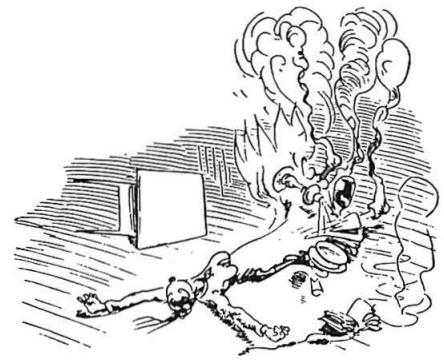


He's down and never turns about.

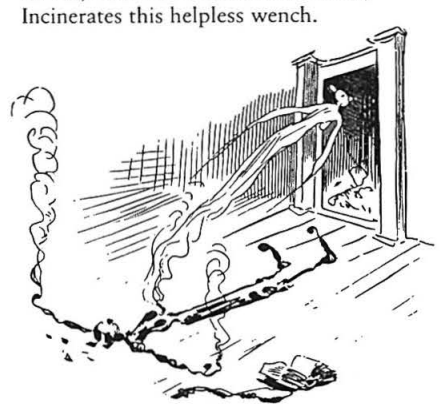
FIG. 11.40. *Pious Helen* (1872). Helen Bestows Her Hand.



In accents ominous and melan-
Choly she cautions:
Helen . . . ! Helenn . . ."



And it, with less lament than stench,
Incinerates this helpless wench.



Here fume her ruins, charred and brittle.
What's left amounts to very little.



In vain! The lamp begins to lean,
Still well supplied with kerosene.

FIG. 11.41. *Pious Helen* (1872). A Fallible Friend.

age to the "Cradle of Fruitfulness," known for its miracles of fertilization, for which natural explanations are offered.

All this is narrated in a large central segment of three sparsely illustrated chapters, two short and one longer. Helene's adultery, which is inferable as a fact, is strictly unspeakable, or rather (since it is usually the role of the pictures to depict the actual truth), unrepresentable graphically. We have only to remember the strictures that met *Saint Anthony of Padua:* Busch's ironic circumlocutions are in themselves a satire on bourgeois prudery and hypocrisy.

The shrine duly produces for Helene, and twins withal, who perfectly resemble Cousin Franz. Schmöck, reappearing for the occasion, celebrates with his habitual gluttony and chokes to death on a fish bone. The impending sinful union of the adulterers is prevented by an alcoholic servant called Jean, whom Helene had earlier tried and failed to cure of his vice; he now, in a jealous rage, kills Franz with a bottle when he finds him in the arms of his, Jean's, chosen, the kitchen maid. Thus both Franz and Helene die by the bottle. (Franz's "penchant for kitchen personnel" was manifested earlier, when he was a mere boy, in a narrative link new in Busch.)

Helene renounces all her erotic artifices in a spasm of piety, of which alcohol seems to be the logical lubricant—different drugs with the same purpose: consolation for failure in life. Her twins, who do not reappear, presumably grow up to make more Helenes, or Max and Moritzes. A wraith with breviary and rosary, she enters into a crescendo of hallucination and dipsomania, finally burning herself to a crisp, bottle in hand (Fig. 11.41). Death comes to her as brutally as to Paulinchen in *Struwwelpeter,* who plays with matches. The finale is composed of an allegory unusual in Busch but appropriate to a satire on religious superstition, in which devil and angel battle for Helene's soul (a kind of medieval psychomachy). The devil loses his tail but wins Helene, and brings her down to join Franz. In the epilogue, Uncle Nolte delivers his complacent, heartless, and hypocritical "I told you so," with the lines that have become a famous epigram of cynicism and renunciation: "The good (I am convinced for one) / Is but the bad one leaves undone."

The Knopp Trilogy (1875–1877)

If *Pious Helene* shows some similarities to the tradition of Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress,* not least in its tragifarcical ending, the Knopp trilogy is a very much transformed version of Hogarth's *Marriage à-la-Mode*—à la mode bourgeoise. Sex, merging with religion, alcohol, and social ambition as destroyers of the "harlot" Helene, is effectively sublimated in the Knopp marriage, as is social ambition.

The bourgeoisie always countenanced, indeed relied on, recruitment from below, although preferably not too far below. A degree of social mobility was necessary to the system, and this encouraged the virtuous worker to rise a little in the ranks and the "poor but honest" (and preferably good-looking) girl to marry somewhat above her. We have seen in *The Bees* an example of a petty-bourgeois type marrying a desirable and propertied peasant girl. In the city the bourgeois might marry his housekeeper or servant—as Knopp does. The "Pamela phenomenon" occurred not infrequently in reality (we remember the bizarre mésalliance of Cham), at a time when the upper classes often left the care of children to servants (whence, perhaps, Cousin Franz's "penchant for kitchen personnel"). To marry one's servant or governess connoted a renunciation of social ambition and a kind of regression from the sociosexual struggle of adulthood to the physical security and simple comforts associated with a well-tended childhood.

Very short and roly-poly like a baby, Knopp may not be as rich as the entrepreneur or industrialist Schmöck, the only other comparable upper-bourgeois type in Busch, but he evidently has no economic worries; he does not demonstrably work and is probably a rentier (there is no hint as to the source of his wealth). His physical type is akin to Schmöck's and offers the best clue to his social meaning: he is fat, past his prime, and altogether unattractive. His bulk as an index of gross self-indulgence, together with his lack of identifiable profession, points to the social parasitism of a class that the hard-working, thrifty petty bourgeoisie had no reason to admire, although many may have envied it. Knopp is also haunted by a vague fear of death, of being "crossed out," of having nothing personal to leave behind him, for he has as yet produced nothing independently, neither wealth nor children.

Busch underestimated the aesthetic fertility of what he conceived as a sterile social type and intended as a mere framing or linking agent in a panorama of unhappy marriages-in-miniature. The public success of *Adventures of a Bachelor* created a demand for a continuation, which, published the following year, 1876, as *Mr. and Mrs. Knopp,* dealt with Knopp's married life. This story ends with Knopp achieving, after some tribulations, his modest ambition: self-reproduction, in the form of a child. By what must be regarded as a strange coincidence, Busch's own worries about "self-reproduction" (of his intellectual progeny) were resolved, for the first time, in a new way: after much deliberation and experimentation, he decided to have *Mr. and Mrs. Knopp* transferred onto the woodblock by the latest photomechanical process. Thus the Knopps' baby, the first to be conceived, born, and reared in a picture-story, was also the first to pass directly from sketch to printing block. The next year the sequel begat its own sequel, *Julchen,* about the growing up of Knopp's daughter.

In an earlier age, Knopp would have resolved not to marry, all previous example being a deterrent. First he is confronted with a reverse image of his aging self, in the form of a childhood sweetheart grown now as thin as he is fat, and as reckless in her pursuit of marriage as Knopp is fearful. He flees in horror when she throws herself at him. His subsequent adventures constitute a kind of field research program into the nature of bourgeois marriage. Two major themes emerge from the eight or so couples and families he visits: the children's rebelliousness, and that of the wife. The aim of bourgeois marriage is to secure the future, a future that might be threatened by the children or by the couple themselves (primarily through adultery). The kind of trouble one expects from orphans, nephews and nieces, or strays like Helene and Max and Moritz also infects children under direct parental authority. Two successive chapters deal with the impossibility of disciplining them. Neither system, the old one of freely dealt physical punishment ("particularly effective before the crime"!) or the new one of moral injunctions, prevents children from playing dastardly and disgusting tricks on their father and his guest, Knopp.

Adultery, the other traditional enemy of domestic harmony, is manifested in two episodes, one involving a Catholic priest, the other involving a barmaid. In the latter episode, Knopp is left to pay the price twice over: at the restaurant he is stuck with the bill, and at home the wife, taking him in the dark for her wayward husband, subjects him to a beating. The punishments are particularly painful (he gets a broom in the crotch) and disgusting (he is thrown into a garbage barrel). The association of adultery with Jesuit and Catholic priests reinforces a warning that Busch already delivered in *Filucius* and *Helene* about the priestly disruption of the "happy marriage" between church and state in the young German empire. It is a Catholic priest (again) who is to blame for the poor reception Knopp gets at the home of his old friend Babbelmann, formerly known for his jollity but now an austere hypocrite given to prayer and fasting. Knopp's revenge, as he abruptly bows to depart, is accidentally-on-purpose to stick his umbrella tip into the priest's nose, leaving both nose and weapon dripping with blood.

Knopp then tastes the life of Plünne, a sexton or verger resigned to a peasant's poverty. This is new in Busch, where the



FIG. 11.42. *The Knopp Trilogy.* Part 1: *Adventures of a Bachelor* (1875). Enough Is Less Than a Feast.

peasantry, however clumsy, drunken, and quarrelsome, and however simple their life-style, were not shown as dirty, poverty-stricken, or economically oppressed. But verger Plünne has apparently (although this is not made explicit) allowed his marriage to drag him down. As a verger he should have some status in the community, but he lives like one of the poorer traditional peasants, in a space serving at once as bedroom, dining room, kitchen, and children's playroom (Fig. 11.42). These are the conditions the lower middle classes had every reason to fear descent into, the conditions of Karl Marx, who, born into the upper bourgeoisie, now lived as an impoverished political outcast in London.[88] Plünne tries to be hospitable but preserves the horrid peasant custom (which must have been a personal observation of Busch's) of keeping the soup pot warm by placing it between the bed covers. His baby pisses on Knopp, the older children play the usual tricks on him, and the cat upsets the contents of the chamber pot into his hat. Significantly, the mother is absent, so Knopp witnesses how the father, humiliated by having to perform female tasks, must grapple with the full dread weight of house and child care.

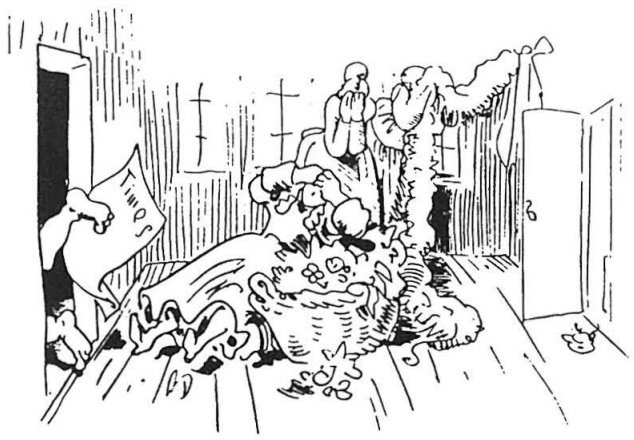
Knopp eventually happens upon a prospect of his own, a woman of relatively high class, whom he determines to secure. Yet he is frustrated in a nightmare of self-exposure such as recurs so often in cartoon and comic strip. In an earlier Busch Bilderbogen, *The Unwilling Ride* (1865; 1:396), a portly gentleman who had been swimming is suddenly propelled on an uncontrollable military horse through a village, exposed almost naked to the gaze of high and low. And Knopp himself in an earlier episode, stripped to his underpants in a quiet meadow in order to repair the seat of his trousers (sabotaged by naughty children) as well as the damage to his ego, was subjected to the insulting and insulted gaze of,

88. See the Prussian police agent's report of 1853, which stresses the Marx family's friendliness, as well as the disorder and poverty (Marx 1983, 41–42).

"I can't spend all day in here!"
Quavers Knopp in stark despair,



And, well camouflaged, he streams
From the locus of his dreams
Like a rushing wind on legs;



But the threshold rudely pegs
All advance—his fall is fated.
Gosh . . . ! He is defoliated.

FIG. 11.43. *Adventures of a Bachelor* (1875). Oh, No.

respectively, passing peasants and a French governess with her two wards. But what happens now, just when a proper marriage beckons, is infinitely more damaging. Having fallen asleep the previous evening in the privy, he hastily exits in the early morning, through a room being prepared for his prospect's sister's engagement party. It is as if he has defiled his own prospective wedding by charging through the room with his nightshirt over his head in the foolish hope he will not be recognized, and with the (London) *Times* clutched around his lower body. In his rush he trips over the threshold of his bedroom, "defoliating" himself of even these inadequate coverings (Fig. 11.43). His humiliation is total, his prospects ruined.

Marriage, especially when undertaken in middle life as was common, was feared by men as a form of self-exposure before woman and society. Confronted with the possibility of marriage to a high-class lady, Knopp's nightmare is exposure of his deep, animal self. The nightmare is brought on by a kind of incontinence, such as a less prudish comic tradition formerly had played off in an openly scatological way against promised sexual gratification. Knopp's incontinence here is like a special form of drunkenness, the ever-present and generally more representable threat to physical decorum and human dignity. His animal clumsiness declasses him, that is, disqualifies him from marriage at his own social level.

Knopp finally returns home to find his "nice, good" servant Dorothee Lickefett, of whom we caught a glimpse at the very beginning, airing his bed. She who tends the sheets shall occupy them. At the sight of her great backside and bare calves Knopp realizes that what he had been seeking everywhere was there at home the whole time.

Such a marriage offers both progeny and legitimation of basic animal needs. The sequel, *Mr. and Mrs. Knopp,* starts with some introductory verse setting forth the necessity of marriage in its broad, conventional social context. In Busch, sexual pleasure (or perhaps amity is the word), which cannot be decently attained without marriage, is in its mature nuptial form generally associated with peaceful sleep. Here, in its honeymoon phase, it takes the guise of childish and teasing, but in its own way creative, even ecstatic, play (Fig. 11.44). It leads, moreover, to a kind of consummation of graphic freedom, surely facilitated by the direct photographic transfer of Busch's drawings mentioned above. In a quick transition, the sexual (fore)play becomes a freewheeling graphic play, as Frau Knopp, in her own—that is, the artist's—erotic imagination, projects a variety of expressive physiognomies into the folds of Knopp's pants seat as he dresses. This process is in itself a metaphor of sexual sublimation into art. The mildly erotic prank merges harmoniously into the slightly risqué graphic prank, for which the accident of trouser folds may take responsibility.

From sex and art the transformation of energy proceeds with characteristic Buschian logic into the realm of food. A breakfast of rolls, followed by a copious lunch of pancakes (the exact recipe is appetizingly versified), gives way to manual and other pampering of the husband by the wife and finally culminates in his taking a nap on her bosom. This, says Busch half seriously, is "the bliss of marriage." Eating stands forth as a kind of sexual fulfillment—or sublimation[89]—in *Fipps the Monkey* (3:298) as well, where portly lovers sit in ecstasy over a "big shapely pudding with a red sauce, brown and fragrant." When Fipps pours this sauce down the lady's cleavage, it is a kind of rape or sexual defilement, and particularly apparent as such in a colored manuscript version where the sauce lies like a pool of red blood beneath her skirt.

> It is strange that throughout the whole Germanic race it is the housewife who makes the most noise with her pots and pans and is always rushing about with something edible in her fingers, who is considered the best and most virtuous: no wonder that the Germanic gentlemen become thereby the greatest eaters, their whole happiness of life based on well-ordered eating arrangements, and people wholly forget what a secondary thing eating is in this brief journey of life.[90]

The role of food in 19th-century bourgeois culture is a meal in itself, for which we may here take a short break, leaving Knopp in his postprandial nap. In Busch and elsewhere, food and sleep are goals and compensation for physical effort and suffering; they mark the cessation and antithesis of activity, the negation and supersession of that nefarious will-to-power. The recovery of appetite (including that for nicotine) is the first symptom of the return to normal bodily health; after the horrors of tooth extraction or bee stings, there is the victory banquet. Foodstuffs (a term that for the present purpose includes drink, tobacco, and especially any kind of sweetener) and their preparation are at both the center and the periphery of human life in Busch. When a teacup falls, a human body tends to fall with it, and social peace is disrupted. This peace is drugged by food and drink, artificial aids to shutting out of consciousness the larger conflicts.

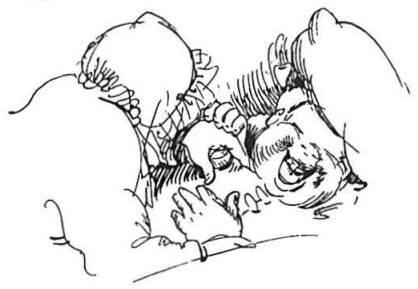
The bourgeoisie in its most dynamic phase was ever in search of stability. In Germany this class lacked not only stability but also political power, for which material well-being, with food its most obvious symbol, was the primary substitute. Instead of the sweets of power, the bourgeoisie enjoyed the next best thing: sweets proper. Unlike France and Britain, where the bourgeoisie had access to the levers of state power, in Germany control of government and the principal agencies of the state was left to a hereditary aristocracy. The exceptional emphasis that Busch—in this respect, the truly representative middle-class artist of his age—placed on eating, drinking, and smoking bespeaks widespread addiction, which his audience consciously recognized as such. This is not to imply that food and eating are not prominent in the artistic culture of France or England: the novels of Zola and Dickens are ample testimony to the contrary. Busch, however, assigns to food a special role as the primary social narcotic, for which he also criticizes it, sometimes obliquely, sometimes directly. This is all

89. For this familiar topic in Busch, see Sautermeister 1970, 26–34.
90. Keller [1856] 1949, 17.

Soon Knopp, as is often the case with him,
Gives in to a mischievous vein or whim.



Quite unexpectedly he goes "eeks!"—
Producing delectable squeals and squeaks.
But Doris, who for some time has known
Knopp's own most vulnerable zone,

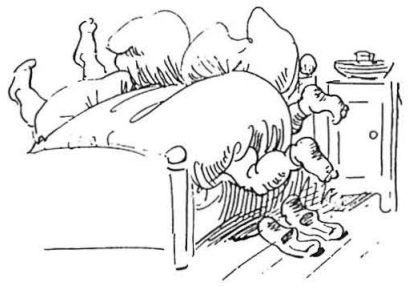


Pokes under his chin, much though he
wriggles,
Reducing him, too, to the bleating giggles.
Attempting to rise and gain his feet
By way of a tactical retreat,
He finds himself spirally restrained

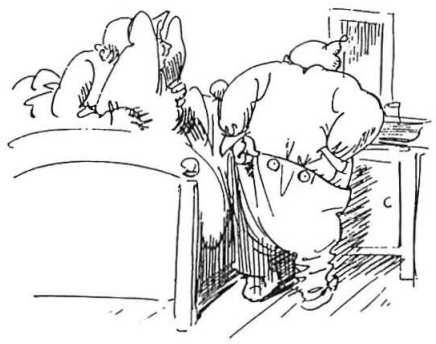


By the slack of his garment and so detained.
But faster than eye can make it out,

He performs a masterly turnabout,
Attacking deep under the featherbed,



Where then a hilarious chase is led.
Eventually, after much fun and play,
It's time to get dressed and begin the day.



Then Doris is fond of directing her gaze
At Knopp's pantaloons in their morning
phase,
Which fascinate and divert her so
By their physiognomic variety show:

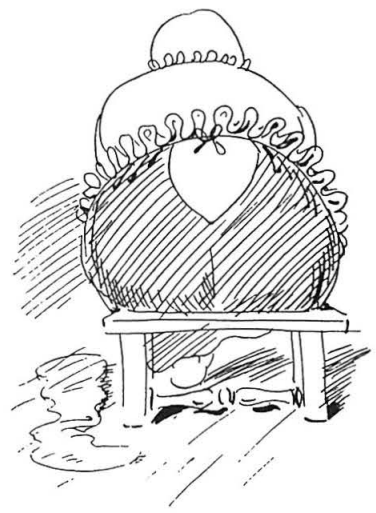


Now scowling in outraged disbelief;

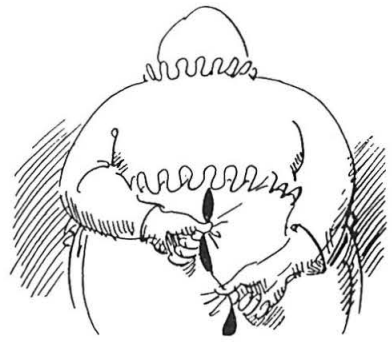


Beaming with what-can-I-do-for-you
cheer . . .
Dorette much treasures this morning view;
Others, though, find entertainment too:
There oftentimes beckons to be seen
With dazzlingly white and glistening sheen,
At bottom quite narrow but wider on top,
A spectacle interesting to Knopp.

A stoop will develop it without fail;



In feminine jargon they call it "white tail."
"White tail, Madame," cries Knopp with a
laugh;



And instantly it is curtained off.

FIG. 11.44. *The Knopp Trilogy.* Part 2: *Mr. and Mrs. Knopp* (1876). Admonitions and Hints.

too familiar. No one would deny that in today's consumerist societies eating, smoking, and drinking are like drug taking and constitute similar psychological responses to similar political conditions on the part of the popular masses adhering to petty-bourgeois ideologies, people materially satisfied but politically impotent. The difference is, of course, that whereas Busch maintained a critical stance toward this consumerism, the dominant "popular" imagery of today, advertising, reinforces it.

Eating and drinking in Busch take many forms. Although Schmöck is the only figure who eats himself to (sexual) impotence and sudden death, the number of characters who get helplessly and destructively drunk seems legion. The obvious difference in the immediate effects of excessive eating on the one hand and drinking on the other, quite apart from the class differences (overeating could hardly become the vice of the poor), led to very different moral attitudes. Whereas Busch often enough portrays eating with an affectionate irony, as a just reward, an enjoyable sociable relaxation, and a necessary stasis after excessive activity (even the hyperactive Max and Moritz take a rest after devouring the chickens), drinking is usually destructive and an impediment to repose. It is also antisocial, but its worst effects are on the drunkard himself and his peace of mind and body. (Except for Helene, a special case, women do not get drunk in Busch.) The drunkard cannot find the keyhole, the match, the bed that will allow him his rest, and he knocks himself and his environment about in the process of trying to secure his repose.

Alcoholism in its classic form, as a gradual degenerative disease (as represented by Cruikshank, for instance), appears only in *Helene,* where it is a metaphor for spiritual-religious degeneration. For Busch, drunkenness is more a temporary aberration capable of leading to accidental death. In *A Chilly Affair,* one of a collection of shorts called *Die Haarbeutel*[91] dedicated exclusively to the effects of alcohol, the drunkard has made it as far as his home, but he drops the key he had so carefully secured beforehand, falls into a water barrel, and freezes to death—so picturesquely, forming so perfect an ice sculpture, that he seems merely to have returned to nature as some comic Spirit of Winter (Fig. 11.45). His wife's immediate reaction on discovering him in the morning is governed by household thrift, that is, considerations of food supply: in a phrase that has become (in German) proverbial, she reduces the milk order. Death is only one less belly to fill.

The more famous instance of death by freezing is that of *Ice Peter,* the boy skater who falls into the river and likewise freezes into a dramatic abstract pattern of icicles. Unthawed by solicitous parents, he melts into a liquid deemed edible and preservable and (again, thriftily) is scooped up and put in a pot next to the gherkins and cheese (1:288): like other disobedient youngsters in Busch, notably Max and Moritz, Peter is punished by being turned into food. In the traditional peasant economy, because the economic burden of children is measured in the food they eat, if they are bad and die by their own fault before they can, by becoming producers themselves, begin to make a return on their parents' investment, they must compensate (according to fairy tale lore) with their own bodies for what they have consumed. They are treated like animals raised for food. Thus Busch reverts to a familiar fairy tale formula, one historically rooted in an age of rural economic scarcity rather than of urban affluence, by which bad or unfortunate children are turned into food for ogres.

We become aware, meanwhile, that the process of caricature is itself one of "culinary" distillation or reduction, which, especially in Busch, tends to reduce humanity literally to cookie contours and gingerbread or puppet forms. In a French comic strip,

91. See above, n. 22.

At this point, scientists advise,



The substance tends to "crystallize."
The watchman drones: "Good night to all!"



The chilly figure spurns the call.
It sits unfeeling, stark, and still;



The snow envelops it at will.

The morning dawns so grey and drear;



The milkmaid, Madam Heyndt, is here.
Frau Twien receives her at the door



And notes the singular décor.
"Well, well," she calls in agony,
"He's had one for the road, I see!



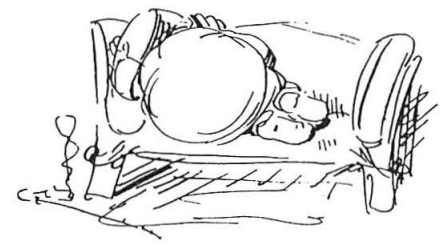
Henceforward, worthy Madam Heyndt,
I'll trouble you for just a pint!"

FIG. 11.45. *A Chilly Affair* (1878).

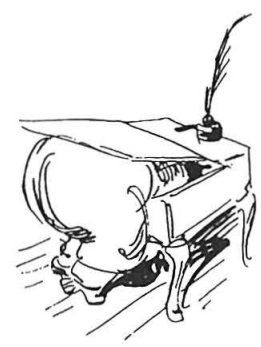
What suspense, remorse, despair



Knopp now suffers, waiting there!
Smoking palls, he is so shaken;



His old meerschaum dies, forsaken.



Nothing shields him, it appears,
From tormenting thoughts and fears.



Be it to the loftiest casement,



Or to dungeons of the basement
That his demons drive him now,
Fever beads bedew his brow . . .

Why, he even turns to prayer,



Which with him is rather rare.—

FIG. 11.46. *Mr. and Mrs. Knopp* (1876). Worrisome Transition and Happy End.

Jean Fusain, the son of a gingerbread manufacturer, fanatical *croqueur de charbon* (muncher of coal/sketcher with carbon; in French, *croquer* means both to sketch and to munch) and infant graffito prodigy, fails as an academic painter but is acclaimed at the *Charivari* and makes his parents' fortune by designing all kinds of new gingerbread beasts.[92] Food for thought here.

To return to Knopp. By marrying his servant and cook, Knopp has created a vacancy and a servant problem. This "problem" was endemic to bourgeois Europe, where the quantity and quality of servants did much to determine a household's status. The faithful, unassuming dynastic servant seemed a thing of the distant feudal past. The necessary mobility of labor under capitalism led to a high turnover of personnel, in households as well as factories; better education and a sense, on the servants' part, of having been downgraded from a higher status in their native villages, fostered a consciousness of exploitation and the courage to make demands. *Punch* ran an extensive series of cartoons mocking "uppity" servants, under the generic title "Servant-galism"; in Cham's album *Au Diable les domestiques* (To the Devil with Servants; 1857), when a whole succession of servants turns out to be unsatisfactory, the baron and his wife decide to do the housework themselves. The control of servants became such a social problem in Germany that strict police supervision was imposed, with employment record books kept for purposes of identifying and punishing habitual deviants.[93]

Although the German bourgeoisie tended to keep fewer servants than the English, Knopp's single (visible) household servant seems less commensurate to his ease of circumstance than a matter of convenience to his creator, who preferred a small cast. In England the single servant would be an indication of very modest circumstances, but she could create dire trouble for a young insecure married couple such as David and Dora Copperfield. The series of maids who replace the former Dorothee Lickefett represent three typical problems: the first, through no fault of her own, is the target of Knopp's suberotic distracted playfulness, which occasions an excessive display of wifely jealousy. The second is fired for her dirty habits, and the third, a very vulgar person, for using her masters' toiletries. Herr Knopp, meanwhile, is reduced to gloomily performing tasks both menial and female, and hence doubly humiliating: grinding coffee, cleaning boots, milking the goat.

The first rift in the marriage is, logically, over food, when Knopp rejects a meal for no good reason except underlying boredom. Efforts at reconciliation fail; Knopp's drunken refuge exacerbates the problem, which is undefined and unresolved until Frau Knopp whispers tremendous news in her husband's ear. The book ends with touching pictures of the prospective father's agonized waiting (Fig. 11.46) and a verse-eulogy of the midwife who brings Julchen successfully into the world.

Julchen then traces the problems, both familiar and new, of the child and adolescent. The accent on infant care, though not new to Busch's oeuvre, testifies to a deepening sensibility within the bourgeoisie for the sanctity of childhood and bonding between father and baby, themes that also figure prominently in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* of the same period. The bourgeois male considered himself exempt from baby care, as he still does to a large degree today; but Busch, who never showed in his own life any particular fondness for babies, challenges the "natural" aversion of his readers, be they nervous bachelors, prospective fathers,

92. Baric, *Jean Fusain, ou le dessin des enfants par Crayonniscoff,* "traduit du Russe" (Paris, 1866). This was a children's album, Baric's specialty.

93. See, for example, Mayhew [1865], chap. 11.



Hygiene's brisker onward drive
Sees his interest revive.

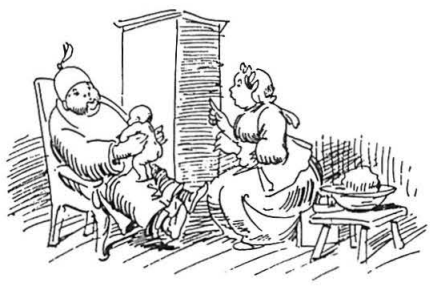


All are glad and full of fun
Once the cleaning job is done.

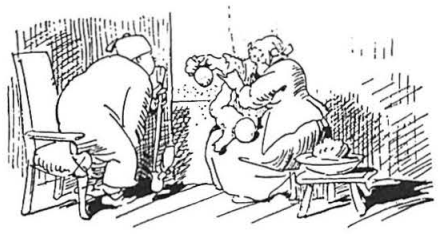
Even Knopp by then feels fit
To take Julie for a bit.



Flushing baby's nasal track
Takes him painfully aback.



Piping pretty melodies,
He will ride her on his knees



As remarkable, but welcome
Is the soothing dust of talcum.



And enjoy a father's smack
On her rosy lower back.

FIG. 11.47. *The Knopp Trilogy.* Part 3: *Julchen* (1877). Baby Julie.

or the women of classes able to afford nursemaids. In social practice, the wealthy left the care of infants to servants and nannies; and the official bourgeois image of infancy was still basically that of Jesus suckling at the breast of the Virgin Mary or, if a portrait of a real-life youngster, a child playing innocently in his or her mother's lap. No infant in popular culture dares to behave as real babies do and as Julchen does. No artist or poet had acknowledged as part of nature's cycle the tiny human animal's primal needs to scream and defecate. (In Daumier there are, it is true, bawling infants aplenty, but all ugly and indicative of the abnormal home, a bluestocking's perhaps, rather than a normative one such as the Knopps'.)

Busch assumes the role of the physician-reformer, a type abundant in the 19th century. He urges hygiene in baby care among the popular classes, eulogistically holding up Dorothee Knopp as a model to those who, out of ignorance (one may infer) or the need to work, left infants immobilized in swaddling clothes to stew in their own excrement; and as the wife of a wealthy man, she was a reproach to upper-class mothers who left child care to others. In all these scenes the maid is conspicuous by her absence (see Fig. 11.47).

Busch had already dealt with the topic of changing a baby's linen in the Bilderbogen *The Crybaby* (1869–1870; 1:559), where, however, the servant does the dirty work while the mother goes off to warm the bottle. The aunt's discovery of a rather unlikely object, a candlesnuffer, under the wrappings as causing the baby's pain and screams points to the importance of baby care in general and the placing of pins in particular. There may be another element of criticism in this Bilderbogen: of swaddling as such, depicted as a rather fierce process that starts the baby screaming. For all the evident advance of certain lower (petty-bourgeois) classes in Germany vis-à-vis other countries—in terms of bodily hygiene as of physical education generally (to which other Busch stories testify)—the persistence of the custom of swaddling babies, progressively abandoned in England by all classes from the mid 18th century, represents a retrogression.

Knopp's initial disgust turns to fascination as the sponging and powdering progresses, and his fascination culminates in his planting an ecstatic kiss on the baby's bare bottom (Fig. 11.47). By the next chapter the father has taken the initiative and responsibility for independently quieting the infant, whose squalls are here quite normal and not motivated by any accident like that of the candlesnuffer. (In the *Crybaby* Bilderbogen, the father also attempts to quiet the baby.) Knopp has seized the only chance he will have, short-lived though it is, of controlling his progeny. In a few years it is too late; already as a toddler Julchen is of an age to act out her mischievous instincts. She does so (with impunity, being still so small) on various male symbols: father's writing materials, watch, razor, pipe, and coattails, all of which she destroys (Fig. 11.48).

As with Helene, the next stage of mischief-making (at eight or ten years of age) is already sexual. Julchen's pleasure is to sow discord among her four young suitors, who follow her to the very end of the story as four distinct species or variations of animal competing in sexual selection. Three of them, destined for relatively low occupations (veterinarian, apothecary, and assistant verger), are graphically assimilated to lower creatures: rodent, beetle, and bluebottle (Fig. 11.49). Only the fourth looks fully human, the forester's son Fritze. Suave-featured and with fair curly hair, he is superior in looks and physical agility to the others. Destined to be a forester himself and thus to bear arms and enforce the law of the rich, he will acquire something of the status of that singularly privileged, aristocratic class in Germany, the military. He is also, of course, Julchen's choice and ready gallantly to rescue and avenge her when she gets roughed up for deriding the others. The image of the pretty, courageous upper-class or upwardly mobile boy single-handedly dunking three loutish rivals has many a counterpart in the children's literature of the later 19th century.

Superior as forester's assistant may be in contrast with the other suitors, he is not good enough for Knopp, who reserves his precious (and most palpable property) for a better claimant yet. Meanwhile, he acts to humiliate the three less-attractive youths, punishing them, despite the adult stature they have now attained, like children, collectively and severally, when they attempt to approach Julchen. Their means of doing so is generally conventional and harmless; but when the apothecary's apprentice mistakenly sneaks into a bedroom that belongs not to Julchen but to an aunt, he meets with a gesture of castration: Knopp's saber between the legs. The intruder's leap from the window, which tears a potted rose from the window sill, leaving the bloom at the crotch in front and the thorny stem behind, also has the pungent flavor of sexual retribution (Fig. 11.50).[94]

The defeat of the one lower-class suitor in *Julchen* is consummated collectively when all three, in order to spy on the rendezvous of Julchen and Fritze, slip one after the other into Knopp's greenhouse. Finally, in anger and frustration, the three burst outside, attack each other with garden implements like rabid peasants, and flee. An explosion from Fritze's gun, which falls in the fracas, brings Knopp to the scene, and now it is Fritze and Julchen's turn to hide. This last chapter, a masterpiece of causation and a brilliant staccato of rapid-fire motion, is resolved only when Knopp, confronted with a fearful Julchen and her suitor, who stands in the garden shed with his gun like a sentry in his box, frozen but awaiting, as it were, his commanding officer's orders, decides to concede his daughter. Aunt and mother arrive

94. There is a female counterpart to this youth in the young girl of a short strip (*Die Kirmes,* 1874; Busch 1959, 2:480) whose father punishes her for disobediently going to a ball by dropping her into a rose bush. The drawing here is bad and testifies, I believe, to an embarrassment on Busch's part about how to indicate without really revealing the mingling of naked limbs and posterior with thorny roses.



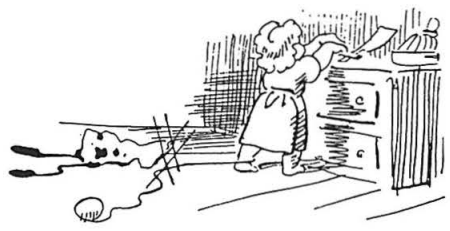
Wiping ugly messes off
Wants a sock, for wool's the stuff.—



Job all done, no fuss and bother.
Julie's ready for another.



Here's the lid of beaver fur.
Handsome, but too large for her.



Job all done, no fuss and bother.
Julie's ready for another.

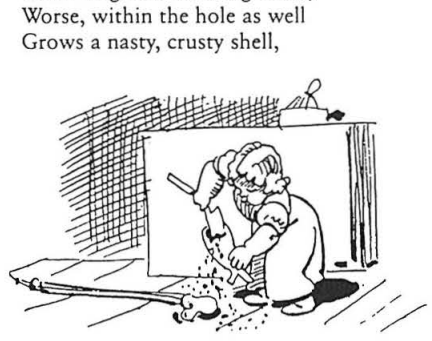
Nothing makes a better chopper
Than big Daddy's whisker-lopper.
Daddy's outfit: to what profit
Are those pigtails dangling off it?
Here a slash and there a slit,
Slice across and off with it.—



Job all done, no fuss and bother.
Julie's ready for another.



Daddy's pipe: a tarry blob
Often clogs the smoking knob;
Worse, within the hole as well
Grows a nasty, crusty shell,



And the smoker will be cheered
When the bowl's all scraped and cleared.
Job all done, no fuss and bother.
Julie's ready for another.



And, for heaven's sake, unfit
For a thoughtful little sit!



Stricken Pop, all washed and dressed,
Ready for his Sunday best,

FIG. 11.48. *Julchen* (1877). A Sabbath Morning.



Derek, with his shirttail out,
Isn't much to moon about.



As to stumpy "Porker" Farrel,
He's the bottom of the barrel.



Nor does Freddy, dim at best,
Light a flame in her young breast.



Fritz, so fair and crisp of curl—
He's more comfort to a girl.

FIG. 11.49. *Julchen* (1877). Bad Boys.

Shame and terror send the lover
Diving for the nearest cover.
Ouch! the sabre pricks the joint,
For it tapers to a point.

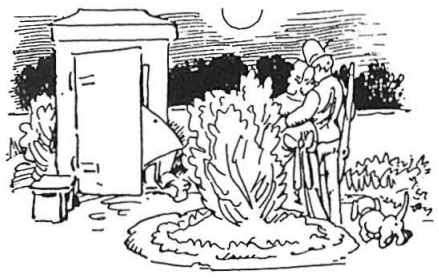


Everyone is stunned and damp:
Fred is able to decamp,



With a rosebush from the shelf
Needlessly attached to self.

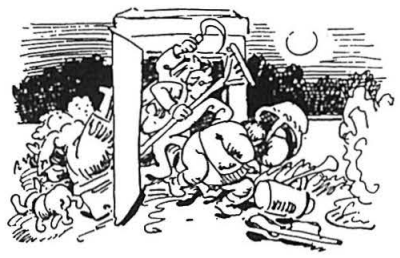
FIG. 11.50. *Julchen* (1877). Auntie's Visit.



Derek squeezes in as well.
In the moonlight's wavering spell
There approach in close formation
Subjects of investigation.



What a misery it is
When three bosom enemies
In enforced togetherness
Sweat with hatred and distress!



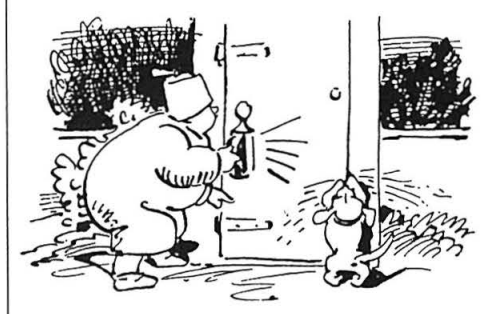
There was bound to be a falling
Out, volcanic and appalling.
All the horticultural kit
Gets into the thick of it.



Boom!! the rumpus is enlarged
As the shotgun gets discharged.



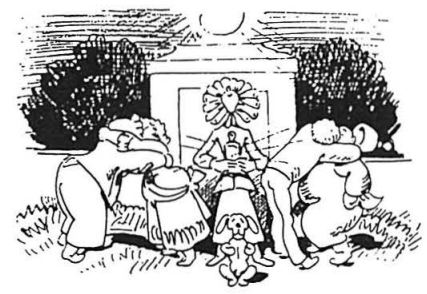
In the shed, now cleared of welter,
The upset young pair seek shelter,
In confusion and some fright:
Here comes Father with a light.



Nip keeps scratching at the door.
Knopp starts wondering what for.



"What the . . ." He stands petrified;
So does the young pair inside.
Then he rumbles with a grin:
"Have it your way—I give in . . ."
Mum and Julia lumber near
In peculiar slumber-gear.



What a touching, clutching, warm
Family tableau they form!!—

FIG. 11.51. *Julchen* (1877). The Toolshed.

to complete a touching nuptial tableau (Fig. 11.51). An illicit rendezvous has accidentally ended in a pseudomilitary exploit, which, as in *The Bees,* wins the bride.

Another happy ending? Not quite, for an epilogue shows Knopp's death in a powerful statement of the author's pessimism. There is no place here for happy grandfatherhood, in the manner glorified in Victor Hugo's poems *L'Art d'être grandpère* (published the same year) or depicted in sentimental paintings of the period. Julchen's departure deprives Knopp of his raison d'être, and he literally, in two remarkably abstract images, shrivels up (Fig. 11.52). It is as though the Fates, represented as cutting the thread of his life, in effect untie his bodily balloon at the neck.



Balduin Bählamm: *The Peasant's Revenge (1883)*

City-dweller Knopp sought a bride and rejuvenation in the countryside. Helene's guardians hoped that life in the country would save the girl from urban corruption; when this failed she was thrust back to the city, where she met her alcoholic(-sexual) doom. *Balduin Bählamm,* set largely in the countryside, is Busch's final statement on the impossibility of using the countryside as a source of moral regeneration. Here an urban sexual fantasy, mingled with and, as it were, ennobled by poetic ambition, takes on an imperialist dimension; both sexual and poetic designs are roundly defeated, partly by nature in the raw and partly by the peasants themselves. Daumier had already shown the peasant girl as the target of petty-bourgeois male sexual conquest; for Busch, who links sexual conquest and poetic conquest, both represent a "conquest of nature."

The bourgeoisie sought to dominate nature in both its raw and human forms. But the process was fraught with pain and humiliation. The happy union of petty bourgeois and peasant consummated in *The Bees* represented a transitory moment of op-

Life by now has left for Knopp
Little really worth the stop.—
Nature's plan for him is met.—
Wrinkled grows his silhouette.—

Fez and meerschaum, coat and bags,
All his aspect shrinks and sags.
People whisper with concern:
"Saw him—gave me quite a turn . . ."



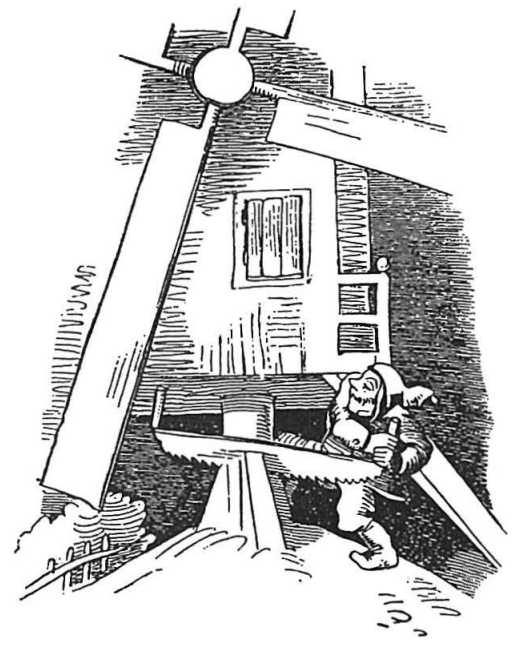
Lurking in her rain-cloud, swart
Atropos of the nasal wart,
Lifts the fateful shears and, pop!
Snips the vital thread of Knopp.



FIG. 11.52. *Julchen* (1877). Conclusion.



Die Nase blutet fürchterlich,
Der Bauer denkt: „Was kümmert's mich?"

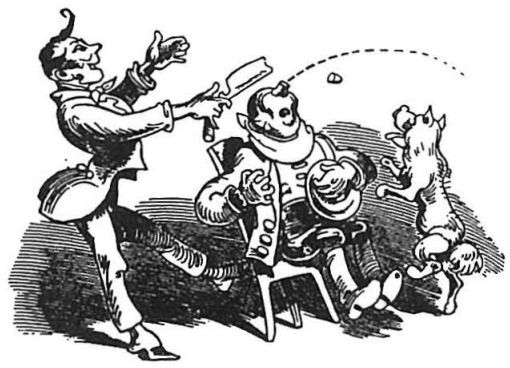


Zur Mühle geht der Bauersmann
Und fängt sogleich zu sägen an.

FIG. 11.53. *Peasant and Windmiller* (1860).

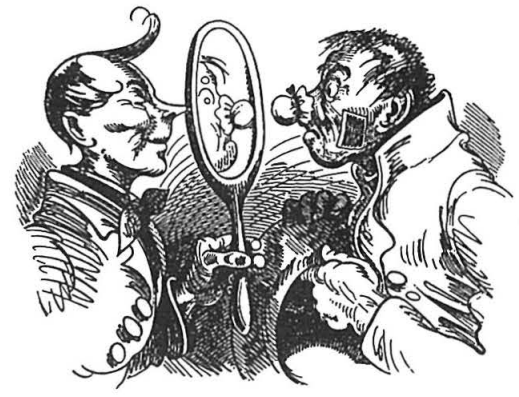
The nose now bleeds a fearful lot,
The peasant thinks: "All right, so what?"

The peasant goes off to the mill,
And saws its base through with a will.









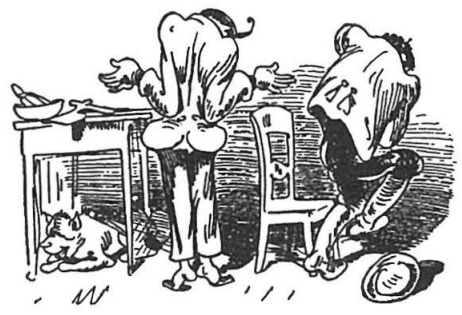


FIG. 11.54. *The Skillful, Artful Barber and His Clever Dog* (1865).

timism in Busch. His more considered and mature attitude is conveyed in *Balduin Bählamm,* which not only denies the possibility of such a union but also punishes the fantasy of it in a rather nasty way.

This tale may be viewed as the peasant's revenge for the many defeats he endured in Busch's earlier stories. Let us backtrack here briefly to look at how Busch showed the peasant being humiliated at a time, in the 1860s, when the elimination of the peasantry as a class was well under way but before the bourgeoisie had come fully to realize the consequences. The caricaturists had always made it their business to prick that rosy balloon of romantic idealization to which the critical sociologist Riehl still clung, and which the novelist Gustav Freytag propagated in ringing phrases in 1855:

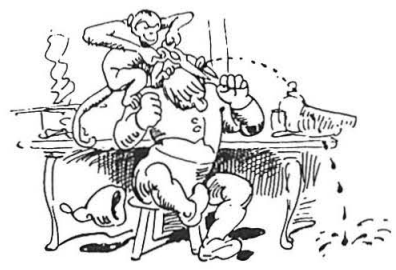
> Happy the head which knows how to subdue the thriving powers of nature under its rational will. All that makes men strong, healthy and good, falls to the lot of the agriculturist; his life is a continual struggle, an endless victory [!]. The pure air of heaven strengthens the muscles of his body; the primeval order of nature forces his thoughts into a regular course. He is the priest who has to preserve the steadiness, discipline and morals—the first virtues of a people.[95]

By the 1870s and 1880s public opinion had begun to catch up with, or on to, the caricaturists' view. This was a period of agricultural depression resulting from the general economic crisis. The bourgeoisie, even as they still looked back to a "golden age" of uncontaminated peasantry, recognized the irreversibility and degenerative effects of the "modernization"—that is, urbanization—of the peasant and became receptive to less flattering pictures, as that of Zola's *La Terre* and Léonce Petit's "Histoires campagnardes." *Balduin Bählamm* is the peasants' revenge: repelling the invader with losses, they win a kind of victory.

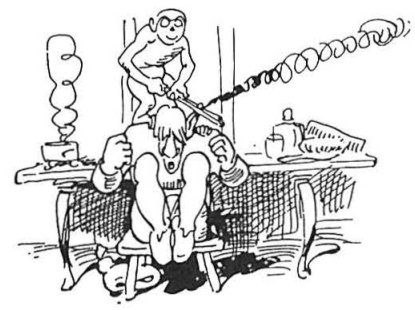
Busch himself, who had grown up and lived close enough to the peasantry to observe their habits and vices firsthand, and whose personal-social transcendence of his peasant–petty-bourgeois origins was never so complete that he could afford to look at this past through rose-colored glasses, had no reason to idealize rural life. The first cartoons Busch and other artists did for the *Fliegende Blätter* in the 1860s take a dim view of the peasant, showing him (as in Petit) as quarrelsome, stupid, primitive, and resistant to modernization, especially in the field of education.

The quarrelsomeness of the peasantry seemed like a caricature of the bourgeoisie's own quarrelsomeness. Under pressure from the broadening markets, the peasantry, struggling to retain, recover, or enlarge into viable economic units their historic landholdings, certainly did become divided, and they fought among themselves fiercely. On the other side of the coin, the old constructive community solidarity that to a degree remained characteristic of traditional agrarian society is conspicuously missing from Busch's view, as it is from Petit's. In his early Bilderbogen, Busch delights in pitting peasant against peasant, as he does animal against animal. Whereas in the latter conflict marked, naturally determined power differentials usually exist, which the weaker must overcome, the peasant contestants seem to be better balanced—but only seem: there are among Busch's peasants, as among Petit's, fine calibrations of strength, cunning, and status. Unlike Petit, though, Busch likes to show the weaker winning; and where the more "modern" French peasant takes to the law, a typically bourgeois trap destined to ruin him, the more primitive German peasant resorts to old-fashioned physical violence.

In *Peasant and Windmiller* (1:121), the enmity starts with a caprice, a naked gesture of will-to-power on the part of the miller, who stupidly decides to assert his superiority by playing a lethal practical joke, "accidentally-on-purpose" killing the peasant's ass with his windmill. The use of such a machine for such a purpose is perhaps not quite casual. The windmill was already in Töpffer a symbol of nature's forces out of control rather than harnessed. To



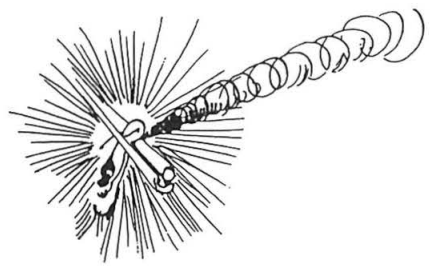
Oops! quite a painful blunder here,
Injurious to the outer ear.



The iron glows and heats the tissues;
A plume of smoke and vapor issues;



"Whoa!" Dümmel shouts, alarmed and vexed.
Fips gets the curling irons next.



At once the world's delights have dwindled
In throbbing blazes, ever kindled
Afresh at one live source or pole,

FIG. 11.55. *Fipps the Monkey* (1879). Chap. 3.

the small peasant in the 19th century, as to the factory worker, machinery was generally more a threat than an advantage. But Busch's peasant, deprived of perhaps his only animal possession and smarting psychologically and physically from his wife's reproaches, retaliates with *his* machine: a large saw. With it he scores two victories: the first one over his wife, to whom he accidentally-on-purpose gives a bloody nose; and then the decisive (Luddite?) one over the miller, whose mill he cuts down and destroys (Fig. 11.53).

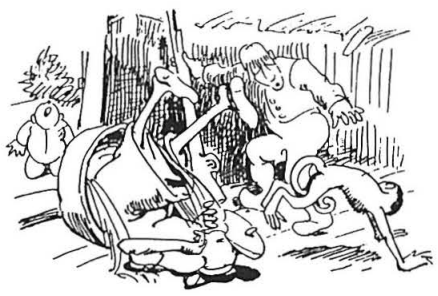
When he is pitted against the bourgeoisie or urban dweller, the peasant usually loses. When he goes into town he is apt to get fleeced. Fleecing, shearing, and shaving were old cartoon metaphors for exploitation and chastisement, with the barber a symbolic instrument of the process. In social reality, the barber's modest status gained from his access to higher crafts such as barber-surgeon and wig maker, his ability to serve (even as a mere shaver of beards) both rich and poor, and the fact that his shop, usually centrally located, carried newspapers and comic magazines and functioned as an exchange for gossip and local information, (see Fig. 1.3, top right, where the barber engages in a genial character assassination of his client). He was in a position to pass judgment; and we do not need Sweeney Todd to remind us how easy it would be for him, technically, to execute the sentence.[96] In Busch he does so on a peasant who looks clumsy and dumb (he is also silenced, as it were, by the medium: a wordless Bilderbogen), mutilating him, in fact, most purposefully; the Bilderbogen's very title, *The Skillful, Artful Barber and His Clever Dog,* conveys the barber's combined physical dexterity and artistry—of painter, surgeon, sculptor, dancer, and fencer. As deftly as a fencer he flicks off the tip of the peasant's nose, which is quickly gobbled up by the dog, and scores the peasant's cheek. The barber then patches up these wounds with the swiftness and aplomb of the physician at a German university students' duel, where the severing and sewing back of facial appendages was commonplace.[97] The peasant is left to contemplate his new image in impotent rage (Fig. 11.54).

There is a similar episode in *Fipps,* where the demon monkey imitates the demon barber torturing a peasant who is actually

95. Freytag 1857, 237.

96. In *FB* 70 (1879): 200, a caliph gets his throat cut by his barber.

97. For an extensive description of German dueling customs, see Mayhew [1865], 310ff., where he observes that noses were very frequently lopped off; indeed, they were aimed for.



He seizes the rifle, last tried and found true
In an earlier crisis at Waterloo.



A posse of neighbors in battle trim,
Hastily gathered, fall in with him..



And as they advance with deliberate speed,



Dümmel gets in position;—takes aim;
—and—Wooom!!



An almighty bang and kick to the rear:
This gun has not fired in many a year.



One suddenly cries: "You've got him
treed!"
All freeze with a shrinking sense of doom.

FIG. 11.56. *Fipps the Monkey* (1879). Chap. 12.



Der plebejischen Taktik gegenüber erweist sich der Harnisch in mancher Hinsicht als unzulänglich.



Amorette (sich demaskierend): „Ich erlaube mir, Ihnen bei dieser Gelegenheit Ihre Schneiderrechnung zu überreichen."

FIG. 11.57. *The Handsome Knight* (1868).
"Armor proves in many respects inadequate against plebeian tactics. / Amorette (unmasking): 'Allow me to use the occasion to hand you your tailor's bill.'"

named Dümmel ("Dumbkin"). Even as a personification of stupidity, the peasant's forbearance seems unnatural. Is he a ritual sacrifice? The ear first offered up to the shears in a rich arc of blood is still in place to suffer the singeing of the curling iron, in an incomparable rendition of "seething, piercing pain" (Fig. 11.55). But Fipps, the petty-bourgeois proxy who reverts to his animal nature, gets his comeuppance. In *Fipps* (like *Balduin Bählamm,* a late work, from 1879), the peasants themselves, the chief targets of Fipps's mischief, are, significantly and logically, also the avengers. Thus the "archetypal" peasant Dümmel, on whom Fipps has inflicted the worst physical tortures, and whose house he then invades and whose wife he knocks over, finally takes the initiative, assumes leadership of an armed peasant band, and executes the sentence. The peasant revenge is emphasized by five rather similar, for Busch slow-moving compositions, which also serve to build the suspense. Dümmel owns a gun and, no dumbkin now, knows how to use it (Fig. 11.56). The familiar pitchfork and tailor's shears are nothing to the ancient carbine, which metes out justice in extremis. But this weapon is a symbol of an earlier historic moment when the German people rose en masse against the Napoleonic invasion, for it had hung unused in the peasant's home, as the verse notes, since 1815. It thus tends to shift Fipps's identity from class enemy to foreign interloper—the French in 1815 or 1870—against whom it is a popular patriotic duty to act.

The horse is another potent symbol in the social conflict. An instrument of war to the aristocrat and of labor to the peasant, the horse was to the urban bourgeois an instrument of recreation and a symbol of his domination over nature and society. Failure on his part to control the animal is an index of the precariousness of his social status. A character called Cousin Franz, challenged by his pretty cousins to show off his equestrian skills (1:521), finds a donkey and comes woefully to grief, upsetting and drenching both himself and his audience. Humiliation before one's own class was bad enough; worse still was humiliation before members of the lower classes, who were apt to celebrate it as a vicarious victory. A Bilderbogen mentioned above, in which a bourgeois gentleman in his underwear tries to control a military officer's horse and is exposed before the whole town from high to low, offers a clue to a historical explanation: a military horse connoted aristocratic status and bourgeois, especially petty-bourgeois, aspirations, which were always fraught with danger (the Léonce Petit story of Athanase Robiquet is similarly conceived; see p. 161).

The aristocracy in Busch appears only in a vestigial form and as a petty-bourgeois wish-fulfillment. The lower classes devised an institution, the carnival or fancy-dress ball, which permitted them safely to act out fantasies of social aggrandizement, transformation, and deviance (compare, again, Léonce Petit's *Monsieur Tringle*). In the Bilderbogen *The Handsome Knight,* the petty-bourgeois hero rigs himself out in painful and inconvenient medieval body armor, which leads to his being robbed of his drinks by two "plebeian masks." The knight bears this with chivalrous magnanimity, but his humiliation becomes unbearable when the same masks, taking advantage of his physical incapacitation, seize his lady and beat him up (Fig. 11.57). This incident briskly recapitulates history as farce: the supersession during the outgoing Middle Ages of the knightly class, militarily vulnerable in armor that was not only no defense before the new "plebeian" weapons of crossbow and firearms but also a hindrance to movement and flight. Further humiliations follow: the petty-bourgeois knight's amoretto reveals herself as his tailor (and mocker of the very social ambitions he caters to) and whips out an enormous bill. Thus the bruises left by the armor of aristocracy, in which the poor youth is obliged to sleep, are financial, moral, and social as well as physical. The last scenes—from the hero's landlady hauling at his waiststrap in an attempt to release the breastplate and his casting off of all the torturous components of his costume to his palpating of the bruises and vowing "never and never again"—are, in a general way, reminiscent of a genre of morality tales directed against vain and ambitious females who overindulged in the supposedly fashionable body armor of tight-laced corsets.

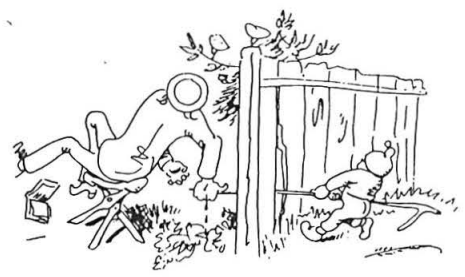


This is conclusive evidence!
A joker lurks behind this fence
The thing to do with such a chap
Is to play dumb and lay a trap.



He stoops again and sits in wait,
A tempting overhang for bait.

The stick is quick, but he is quicker;
His timing could not have been slicker.



The reasoner was not misled.
He hit the nail upon the head.

Dove skips about and sheds some blood.



Young Art regains his native mud.

FIG. 11.58. *Balduin Bähllamm, the Poet Thwarted* (1883). Chap. 5.



He stops in passing, half in jest,
And tries to fasten at her breast
A playful flowery caress—
(The Poet and The Shepherdess).

A slap strikes home like thunderclap.



A fall compounds the sad mishap.



FIG. 11.59. *Balduin Bähllamm* (1883). Chap. 6.

We may now look more carefully at Balduin Bählamm, the Poet Thwarted (whom Arndt evocatively calls Clement Dove). He yearns to transcend his lowly status by means of his imagined poetic gift. Busch, too, had been frustrated as a poet, disappointed by the critical response to *Kritik des Herzen,* his first volume of (unillustrated) poetry. (He did not publish a second volume until 1904, when he had been long retired.) The substantiality of the poetic gift, as well as the sense that it is both bestowed and processed by nature, is conveyed at the outset, in a verse introduction of exceptional length. We have here one of Busch's most dazzling extended metaphors, whereby the creative poetic process is likened to one of the primary culinary processes: the transformation of milk into butter. Busch describes this procedure to an audience who tended to take it for granted because they bought their milk and butter ready-made,[98] just as they tended to take for granted his caricatural art (as he complained), not realizing the painful churning it required. Linguistically the elaboration is highly eroticized, forging from the start the triple equation of art and sex and nature. The poet is both milkmaid, "artfully" drawing the milk of poetic inspiration from nature (or the cow-muse), and cook, beating the cream into butter. This is a magical, alchemistic (gold-producing) process as well as a culinary one, and it is rendered with onomatopoeic and alliterative rapture: "Es kullert, bullert, quitscht und quatscht [it squelches, squooshes, gulps, and goops]." The passage culminates in an erotic climax not unmixed with pain and fear, as the perfect pat of golden butter emerges in the hand: "Thus too the poet"—and caricaturist, who labored for the perfect coagulation of word and image, of verbal and graphic line.

But this is only the first stage, from conception to production; the poet must now transmit his happy product. The process by which he penetrates the eye, mind, and heart, "lives on in" the other until exhausted, is also erotic in itself: "Dann kreuz und quer und niederwärts / Fließt's und durchweicht das ganze Wesen [Its vagrant lilt, its sinuous vowels, / they liquefy the very bowels, / they percolate to every cell (Arndt, freely)]." This generalized erotic fusion has an ulterior goal: sexual conquest of his "sweet torment," lady-love.[99]

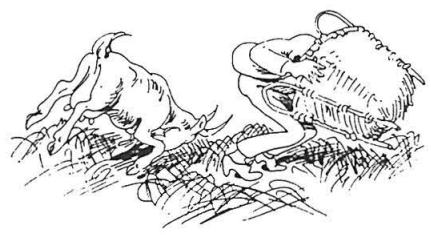
This then, is the ideal, the dream summoned up by the verse. Yet the mundane reality, the verifiable and typical experience of the petty-bourgeois husband, is what Busch pictorializes. Bählamm, clerk by profession and would-be poet, finds his inspiration paralyzed by adverse circumstances: crowded city, economic stress, family responsibilities, brutishly insensitive friends. So he seeks out the "peace and quiet" of the countryside, which is, after all, the proper context and source of poetry. Surviving on the train thither a minor assault from a country bumpkin who gaily (and premonitorily) treads on his corn, Bählamm limps to the village, where "peace reigns everywhere." At the moment when inspiration beckons, when the first verse approaches on the sound of the cowbells, a real cow invades his rustic sanctum, shattering verse, rhyme, and his poetic flower, symbolized by a flowerpot. That night he is plagued by insects and suffers more pricks and stings from a rustic infant armed with a needle stuck on the end of a pole—a human insect taking cunning advantage of the native terrain he instinctively defends against the intruder. He can no more be resisted than can a force of nature, for that is what he really is. When, after a prolonged, unequal duel, the poet finally counterattacks, he only inflicts on himself worse damage yet—the bloody perforation of his hand (Fig. 11.58).[100]

No sooner does he succeed in settling into "the lap of nature" ("most men of letters like a date / with nature in her virgin state" is Arndt's extrapolation) than he is assailed by an earwig. His

98. At the mill of Ebergötzen, where Busch frequently stayed as a child with his friend Erich Bachmann, the guide today points to the spot in the living room where Busch must have sat watching the women churn butter in the courtyard outside.

99. The ancient courtly tradition was ritualized in the 19th-century custom by which male poets were asked to inscribe elegant verses in ladies' albums. In a slightly earlier strip (not Busch; *FB* 70 [1879]: 57–59), the low-class poet Klex, in a desperate attempt to live up to this honor offered him by a high-class lady, ends up splashing the whole room with ink. The lady, returning, swoons in horror. The poet's clumsiness and the defilement he has committed may not be merely social.

100. While a victory of peasant-child over petty-bourgeois adult is acceptable, that of an upper-class child in similar circumstances is not. In Busch's *Peashooter* (1867/1868; Busch 1959, 1:505), the upper-class child (identified as such by the lace frill around his boots and neck) who shoots peas and darts at Herr Bartelmann is horribly and bloodily punished by having all his teeth knocked out.



A hamper offers welcome shelter.
The poet takes it, helter-skelter.



The wickerwork is sound and tough.
The point is, is it deep enough?
All of a sudden, Pearl is here
With her devoted cavalier;



She carries mischief in her soul,
And he a sturdy wooden pole.



He threads it through the hamper's eyes
Between the inmate's weaving thighs;
And thus uncomfortably grooved,
Dove feels himself picked up and moved.



He struggles hotly, for profound
Yawns the dark query: Whither bound?

A well-spring, moonlit, deep and cool
Awaits the swaying reticule.



Here they proceed to dunk the basket
More frequently than Dove would ask it.

FIG. 11.60. *Balduin Bählamm* (1883). Chap. 7.

He would have liked to reach the station
Without a noisy demonstration.



As it turns out, he must endure
A final small discomfiture.

FIG. 11.61. *Balduin Bählamm* (1883). Chap. 9.

minor victory here, as he exterminates the creature in a typical close-up, is offset by the defilement he suffers from a bird, the very symbol of poetic flight, and the dousing he gets from a rainstorm, all this but the monitory foreplay of Nature in her various aspects, and a prelude to the more serious attacks of the peasantry direct.

The first of the peasant assaults is also symbolic-premonitory: the peasant Krischan Bop rips Bählamm's umbrella "accidentally-on-purpose" with the tip of his scythe.[101] But again the warning goes unheeded. With an innocent and poetic gallantry sanctioned by an ancient pastoral tradition, Bählamm offers a bouquet to the buxom young goatherd Rieke Mistelfink ("Rica Dungfinch") and is resoundingly and amazingly rejected, to the mocking bleating of her goat (Fig. 11.59). The process and rationale of this rejection, striking emblem of the bourgeois-peasant conflict, are the subject of another metaphoric magnification. If observation of the metamorphosis of cream into butter conjures up the process of artistic creation, so another law of nature can be adduced—now more parodic-scientifically than poetically—to explain the "mechanics" of a slap on the cheek. Rieke's rustic instinct to reject the alien advance is explained not in moral or social terms but in those of mechanical and Darwinian science: sexual selection in the negative. Balduin's "juicy cheek" invites, chemically or magnetically, as it were, a blow that illustrates a thermodynamic law of transformation—of a moving mass into heat, or of an instinctive attraction into a painful reaction, felt "bis in den tiefsten Seelenkern [in the deepest nucleus (kernel) of the soul]." Science/Nature shows that the two species, peasant and bourgeois, are simply incompatible.

101. In an early cartoon for the *Fliegende Blätter* (Busch 1959, 1:16), where a peasant catches a "manager's" tophat, blown off by the wind, by sticking his scythe tip through the crown, Busch leaves open whether this is a typical example of well-meaning peasant stupidity, a hostile act, or the latter masquerading as the former. In *Balduin Bählamm* the matter is hardly in doubt, as subsequent developments indicate.

The rejection continues more painfully yet. From his bed, under the poetic "lunatic" influence of the moon, Bählamm sleepwalks into his enchantment with the goatgirl, who beckons from a window opposite.[102] His dream turns into nightmare. In the goatshed he is butted and lacerated in various parts of his anatomy by the goat, which acts like a witch's totem animal. The punishment is consummated by Rieke with Krischan, who emerges as her legitimate, peasant, lover. The pair join forces to castrate the intruder symbolically, trapping him in a basket, thrusting a broomhandle between his "weaving thighs," and carrying him off upside down to a pond, where he is dunked (Fig. 11.60).

The aftermath of Bählamm's sexual misadventure is also obliquely sexualized, for the dunking gives the would-be poet a cold, which brings on a toothache, the pain of which (a classic nightmare image of the 19th-century comic strip, and treated by Busch in an earlier Bilderbogen, 1:137ff.) is nonpareil (see Fig. 15.15). Both intensely localized and overwhelming, the agony seems, as described by Busch, the negative counterpart of sexual pleasure, which is here punished. A small verse digression establishes that the toothache possesses the perverse virtue of expelling all triviality and mundanity from one's consciousness, thereby laying bare the very soul itself—in Bählamm's case, the poetic soul, "which resides in the narrow socket of the molar."

Despite the pain and all the genial efforts of the dentist, Dr. Schmurzel (a name that conjures up *Schmunzel,* meaning "smirk"), the tooth will not come out; is it because poetic genius is too firmly rooted to be forcibly extracted? In this particular case, surely not. Once Bählamm overcomes his illusions of possessing such genius, the pain simply fades away. Because he has already suffered his sexual expiation, to lose a tooth would be supererogatory. The toothache has served its purpose, making the poet finally abandon both the countryside and the ambitions that caused him so much misery. His send-off sets the collective and public seal on his personal humiliations as he is obliged to run the gauntlet of the "goatish mockery" of the villagers—and their goat (Fig. 11.61).

A laudable poetic tryst is tainted by a less laudable sexual tryst. Although both are equally frustrated, guilt over the latter pursues Bählamm all the way home, where he shows up with a baby he accidentally got stuck with on the train. The misunderstanding is cleared up, but still the little clerk dreams of being swept into the arms of a beautiful Muse—until he is rudely awakened by his wife telling him it's time to go to work. The Muse turns into a mocking goat, and instead of soaring upward Bählamm is dragged down by the dead weight of family (Fig. 11.62). The deliberate banality of the famous last couplet, "Die Schwierigkeit ist immer klein, / Man muβ nur nicht verhindert sein [The obstacles are not that great, / As long as they do not frustrate]," is matched by that of Bählamm's bent figure retreating to the office, a terse symbol of dejection and defeat.



But oh! A thrill of nameless dread;
With viselike clutch and tons of lead
Reality and all her minions
Encumber his unfolding pinions
And halt the rapturous ascent.
By demon bleats the air is rent.
The sweet celestial vision wanes,
And only one stark fact remains—

FIG. 11.62. *Balduin Bählamm* (1883). Conclusion.



Painter Klecksel *(1884): Transcending Art Back into Reality*

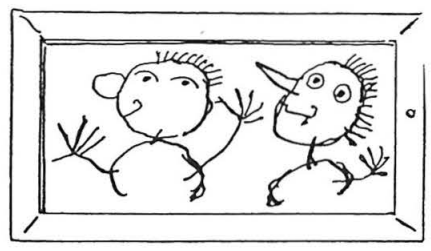
Busch's vision of the failed poet Bählamm has been connected with a personal crisis symptomatized in a severe nicotine poisoning and depression and his feeling of being, at fifty years of age (as he says himself), "burned out" and "over the hill with the wheelbarrow of life."[103] He recovered, and his final picture story, *Painter Klecksel* (1884)—which is also his testament on the subject of the artist-in-society—ends less in a sense of defeat than in a pragmatic renunciation and transcendence of vain ambition. As with the poet Balduin Bählamm, Wilhelm Busch identifies with the art-

102. Lotze (1979, 91) takes this gesture as sincere ("suddenly Rieke, who seems to have forgotten her earlier behavior, beckons from an open window"); it should, however, be interpreted either as a deliberate deception or else as a poetic hallucination. The former is consonant with what happens subsequently, whereas the latter is obliquely suggested by Busch's verse: "The poet however is inspired to compose. [Picture] What is that signal over there?"

103. Busch 1959, 4:551.

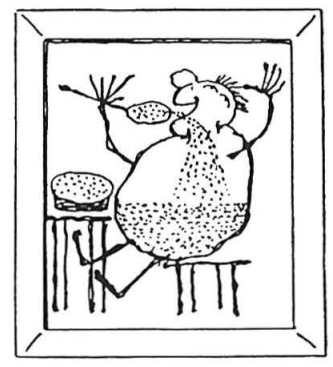


A striking aptitude for Art.
With slate and stylus, he is deft
At drawing faces looking left;



Both eyes are always plain in view:
He knows that people come with two.
Experience instructs his pen:
Soon he can do entire men;
And with especial skill and pleasure
He draws a gentleman of leisure;

And not alone his outer shell:
He shows the inner works as well,
Revealing for our introspection
A longitudinal cross-section.



This man is sitting on his seat,
Consuming, say, some cream of wheat.
Observe the spoon bring up its catch;
It spills and slithers down the hatch,
And further down the wholesome ration
Accumulates in tidy fashion.

Thus we are granted, phase by phase,
Rare insight into Nature's ways.

But oh! my friends, how soon we lose
The bounties of our infant Muse!
How soon is mother's lap exchanged
For classroom benches tightly ranged!



To teacher Beadle (for his part
No connoisseur of graphic art,

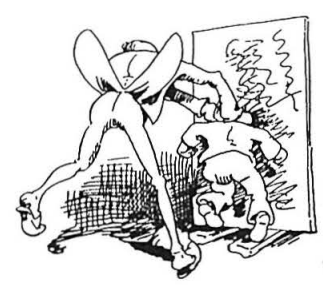
But strictly practical of taste)
All works of fancy are sheer waste.



One day our friend portrays this teacher
Lifelike in every salient feature.
But he, who has not ordered it
And thinks the image less than spit,



Approaches stiff with rage and cunning.
The sequel is confused and stunning.
Old Beadle swoops and starts erasing.



The artist's face does the effacing.

FIG. 11.63. *Painter Klecksel* (1884). Chap. 2.

ist Klecksel (*klecksen* means "to blotch," or "botch") both on a personal-professional level and as a representative of his audience, the upwardly-downwardly mobile, easily frustrated petty bourgeoisie. Moreover, Klecksel embodies the pictorial component of Busch's low-art medium as well as his unfulfilled ambition in a high-art medium, painting. Fearing to confront the critics in the fine arts, where true reputation was to be garnered, Busch experienced the art world as potentially hostile; the counterhostility he projected into his caricature was a defense and a revenge, but only partly so, and the socially subversive and antagonistic side of his art was of necessity muted and rendered ambiguous by pragmatic retreats and surrenders. Rather than fight society as an artist, Klecksel opts for the easy way out—and back in again.

In the introductory verse Busch damns with faint and condescending praise the trivial social chatter that passes for serious literary discourse, pretending a preference for the art gallery, the home of equally foolish conversation about art and equally pretentious painting. Against this background is born young Kuno Klecksel, whose instinct for the visual is akin to, and rooted in, his instinct for food, being invested from the start with a biological primacy and truth that high art can only attenuate. Busch posits the problem on a philosophical level (which has since been so well analyzed by E. H. Gombrich is his *Art and Illusion*): how to distinguish between *seeing* something and *knowing* it. As Busch explains in picture and verse, the special artistic vision of the child enables him to represent what he knows to be there (as in the child's first scribbled faces, which always have two eyes, even in profile view)[104] rather than what may be temporarily visible from a certain limited viewpoint. Hence derives Kuno's capacity to draw the inner man, the inner truth, to penetrate external appearances.

Kuno's perception of himself as a human feeding tube, rendered in a diagram of porridge pouring from spoon into stomach (Fig. 11.63), is also a portrait of instinctive, basic humanity. "Thus we are granted, phase by phase, / Rare insight into Nature's ways." Showing insight, for sure, but crudely drawn; and with his calculated imitation of a child's scrawl, so distinct in quality from the adjoining portrait of Kuno's teacher, which is rendered with Busch's usual simple elegance, the author-artist justifies and puts in context (like Hogarth before him) his own highly sophisticated method of drawing. For although his technique could appear naive, even childish, to the superficial observer, it was in fact the product of much practice and skill, and any readers who supposed, as Busch feared they did, that he drew with the unthinking ease of small children were surely disabused by this comparison. Simple-looking expressions and contours, like simple-sounding verses and rhymes, required all the same culling, beating, and "tormenting" that milk did to be turned into a golden pat of butter.

Caricature, and artistic popularization generally, required the child's sense of the simple and basic, of knowing rather than only seeing. But "alas! How soon is the lovely moment of naive art botched for us [*verhunzt*]" by schooling! Confrontation with the typical Buschian pedagogue naturally provokes Kuno to rebel, to act on the artistic instinct for survival: graffito-caricature. For the child, as earlier in Daumier (Fig. 11.64), caricature is the symbolic rebellion and revenge. Later Kuno will fight battles with and through the higher genres of art, winning one battle but ultimately losing the war against social forces beyond his control. Busch's most famous child rebels, Max and Moritz, are also in their own way caricaturists, satirists who act out cruel distortions of the adult will-to-power to unmask its dismal inner truth. Young Helene does the same with sexuality and religion.

Kuno soon transcends his infant scribbles and, in chalk on the blackboard, captures the essence of his teacher, Herr Bötel—an

104. This commonly observed feature of childish drawing does not appear in any of the numerous comic imitations in 19th-century journals I have examined.

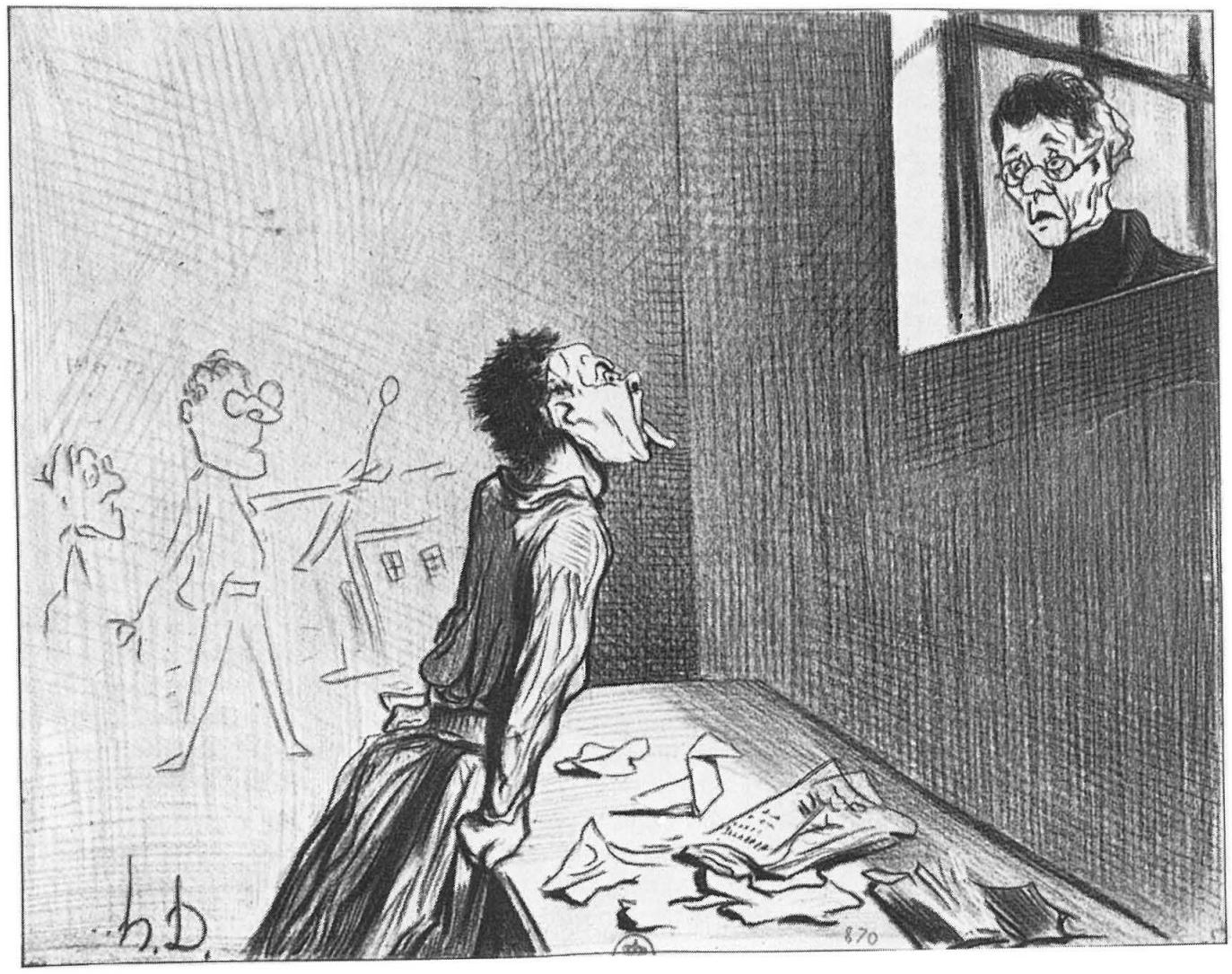


FIG. 11.64. Daumier: *Teachers and Kids* (1846). "Being locked up in the school jail does not always produce the best results."

essence quite close to Busch's own habitual style, and close therefore to Busch's own perception of truth. Teacher Bötel punishes Kuno, just as Gottlieb Michael does the Jesuit dog for pissing on his coat and as Uncle Nolte does Helene for her defiant love letter: by rubbing his nose in what his chalk has excreted. The scene represents the bourgeoisie's angry attempt to erase the unpleasantly truthful portrait critics had painted of that class. With his coattails flying, Busch's schoolmaster resembles a hawk plunging its talons into a rodent (see Fig. 11.63).

In revenge, Kuno advances to the mini-terrorism of Max and Moritz, who put gunpowder into their teacher's pipe. More ingenious, less lethal, and more discriminating than his already famous predecessors (he is an artist, after all), Kuno adapts a church key as a gun, fires it off, and squirts Bötel with red paint from a syringe. (This trick with a key is a reminiscence from Busch's own childhood; the squirting of fake blood from a syringe appears in Petit's *Père Miche*.) Bötel, though ferocious toward children, is a coward at heart, and he falls paralyzed with fear, much as Hans Dralle did when confronted with the monster created by performing artist Eugen Knörrje in *The Bees*. Kuno is deported to another town, in the (mistaken) notion that a new environment will change his disposition.

His apprenticeship to Master Quast, the house painter, is the occasion for another of Busch's cameo eulogies on the humble craft. But Kuno, impatient with his master's mechanical labor, finds an opportunity to vent his innate creativity by painting spots, stripes, and grids on the dogs who come sniffing at his lunch pail. Again like Eugen Knörrje, he is (caricaturing) God or Nature itself creating animal variants. Of course, many a caricaturist before him, a Grandville or Tenniel, had invented hybrid creatures; but Busch here reveals the act of animal creation itself as an artistic and mischievous caprice. Meddling with the appearance of domestic animals was (and is) not unusual behavior for children (the seven-year-old Gustave Doré reportedly painted white hens green); but in the age of Darwin, Kuno's deft transformation of a greyhound into a small, slender zebra and a dachshund into a leopard cub compresses the processes of evolution from a millennium into an instant (Fig. 11.65).

"Master painter" Quast has no time for such frivolities, typical as they are of apprentices in many crafts (and not least in fine art academies), and punishes Kuno by sadistically starving him. We have already noted the manner of Kuno's revenge, which turns Quast into a feathered monster and causes him to wreck his own property (see Fig. 11.10). Young Klecksel then insists his parents send him to a real art school. His experiences include drawing after antique casts; demanding credit from tradesmen and acquaintances and additional funds from home; assiduous toping and philandering—all typical of the art student's life, whether in Antwerp, Düsseldorf, or Munich, towns where Busch himself had studied. It goes without saying that Kuno has renounced caricature as such. Practical careers open up, as they did to Busch, as portraitist and painter of peasant genre; but his first contribution is perforce in the higher branch of history painting: a picture of friar Bertold Schwarz two seconds after he invented gunpowder, with his face blasted black, standing like a historical version of teacher Lämpel after Max and Moritz had spiked his pipe.

A critic blasts his painting and is summoned to a duel by the irate Kuno, whose umbrella and pencil prevail over the critic's pen and ink bottle. Here Busch gives us superb, cinematically crafted knockabout, extending a familiar cartoon metaphor of artistic conflict (see Fig. 11.9). Kuno's repeated stabs with a "Faber No. 5" into the critic's backside represent the symbolic revenge of a legion of artists savaged by critics, as Busch feared he would have been had he dared to exhibit his paintings in public. And certainly, with brushwork halfway between Frans Hals and the French impressionists, who themselves had suffered much critical lashing over the last decade, Busch had cause to fear rejection.



A dachshund, first to find the gap,
And too naive to sense a trap,



This greyhound presently comes out
Quite zebralike, though not so stout.



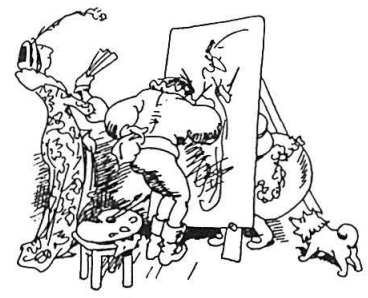
Is pounced upon and swiftly dosed.
He seems a leopard cub, almost.
Another, more the racing type,
Looks better with a transverse stripe:

A bulldog next comes up for paint.
Here Georgie uses more restraint:

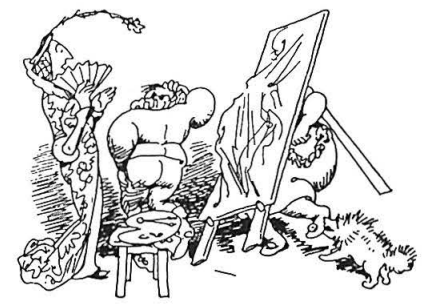


In sober green and yellow tweed
Milord looks very well indeed.
This is great fun. But Master Paste
Views the diversion with distaste.

FIG. 11.65. *Painter Klecksel* (1884). Chap. 3.



The artist is quite busy now.
But Spitz, suspicious, goes "bow-wow!"



And now he charges, all abristle;
The canvas bulges, and the trestle,



Next there is heard a piercing squeal,
As he makes contact with a heel.

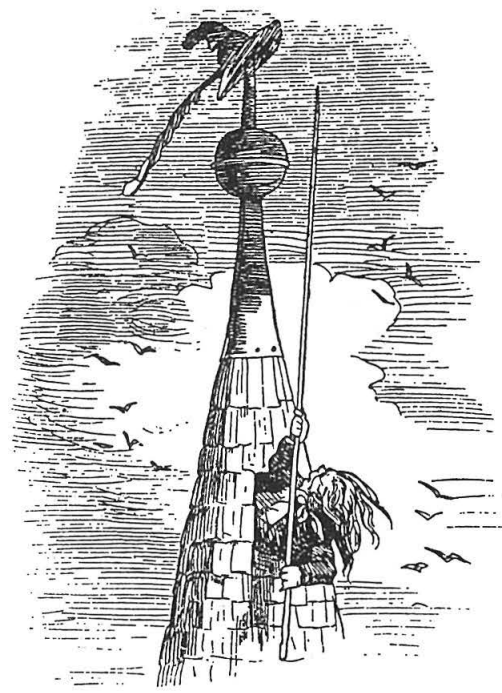


Collapsing with the sudden stress,
Unveils a bashful shepherdess.

FIG. 11.66. *Painter Klecksel* (1884). Chap. 9.



allein ein gewaltiger Sturmwind zerstört auch dieses Projekt, und nur der großen Mappe verdankt es der Künstler, daß er von einem mitleidigen Baume aufgefangen und durch einen noch mitleidigeren Bauern gerettet wird.



Nachdem noch der mit Farnkraut geschmückte Hut von einem für ihn durchaus nicht passenden Kopfe heruntergeholt wurde, wird, bereichert mit neuen Erfahrungen und Studien, der Heimweg angetreten.

FIG. 11.67. *The Little Painter with the Big Portfolio* (1859).
But a mighty storm cuts short this project [to draw on the mountain summit]; he is saved by his portfolio, a tree, and a peasant. / The fern-bedecked hat is recovered, and the homeward journey begun.

Passing rapidly from the heights of portraiture and history to landscape, the next major category of painting, Klecksel encounters the classic dream figure of the humble cartoonist: a rich, admiring, amorous patron and model, here named Fräulein von der Ach. She sets Kuno to paint "some legendary subject" fit for the castle chapel she sponsors; the ballad Kuno chooses, about a knight who, having slain the dragon, refuses his reward of princess and half the kingdom, prefigures his own destiny. Through his careless long-term attachment to the local barmaid (his source of beer on credit), he forfeits both his aristocratic prize and the career for which he is neither temperamentally nor technically fitted. Better with beer and barmaids than with knights and châtelaines, he disqualifies himself from entry into the upper class (Fig. 11.66).

The comic dramatic climax here is itself a metaphorical enactment of Busch's underlying philosophical proposition that the lowly truth of life (and animal instinct) must prevail over the elevated illusions of art: for the lowly truth, in the form of the barmaid (dressed for a carnival as a shepherdess), is sniffed out by the aristocratic lady's dog (animal instinct) and erupts through the canvas, behind which the barmaid has been hiding. Thus discovered, she simultaneously destroys the canvas and Kuno's social and artistic illusions. Fräulein von der Ach, for her part, retires to a convent, the proper refuge for outmoded art and social classes. Kuno flourishes as the barmaid's husband and heir to the pub, and the story closes with a toast by his former enemies in honor of his newborn fifth child. Beer, not art, is the social harmonizer and universal. Thus the last important work by Busch, who is often regarded as the quintessential pessimist of the age, has a happy ending. Whereas Balduin Bählamm, the failed poet, was condemned to return to his soul-destroying office, Klecksel, the apostate of painting, finds his true métier in dispensing the real pleasure, a liquid, bodily one.

(In France about this time, also toward the end of his career, Léonce Petit left a comparable testament of artistic renunciation. A young man's vision of social-artistic ascent is realized in a secret marriage to his patron, a rich lady with vanguard tastes, with whom he goes off in a balloon. But while she is transported into oblivion, he uncontrollably reveals his base nature [he beshits himself], is thrown overboard, and descends to earth, where he inherits a successful grocery business.) [105]

In choosing to make his last picture-story a new definition of "the hungry (thirsty) artist," Busch has come full circle in his career. His first two Bilderbogen are about the primal quest for food (*The Little Honey Thieves*) and artistic ambition (*The Little Painter with the Big Portfolio*). The little painter is of childlike stature and is dwarfed by his portfolio, which serves at once as plaything, protection against the elements, instrument for negotiating the treacherous paths of life, and salvation when he climbs too high (Fig. 11.67). Art is bigger than artist. *The Little Painter* thus remains in the realm of the ideal, the metaphorical, and the socially abstract, for all the realistic scenic apparatus characteristic of Busch's beginnings. Klecksel's world, in contrast, is the here and now; he climbs no mountain tops, recovers his hat from no church spire, but rather loses his illusions in the friction of daily life below.

105. "Anastasie Bocasot, ou la déception d'une âme héroique," *Journal Amusant,* nos. 1320–1322 and 1325 (1881). An important art-historical enrichment of the tale is that the hero attaches himself to a vanguard, bohemian art movement, headed by a realist-cum-impressionist-cum-naturalist called Duflanchard who physically resembles Courbet. Patronage is on the scale of the Medici, with all the artists being fed and lodged in the patron's chateau in exchange for heroic paintings they refuse to execute, frittering away their great chance like idle, silly schoolboys.

CHAPTER 12

THE GERMAN EMPIRE, 1870–1895

Other German Magazines

Busch's rhythm of production for the *Fliegende Blätter* and the *Münchener Bilderbogen,* considering his popularity and the potential demand for his work, remained relatively slow, with only a handful of comic strips each year throughout the 1860s. Busch was not a facile artist, and he set himself exacting standards. His were, moreover, virtually the only comic strips in the *Fliegende* (and the only signed work); he had few imitators until the 1870s. In other words, despite Busch's example, the magazine comic strip was slow to mature in Germany.

After Busch left the *Fliegende* in 1871, comic strips in that journal fell off both in quality and in number before quickening to the rate of about a dozen a year in the late 1870s. The incidence remained at about one strip in every two or three issues through the 1880s and into the 1890s by means of regular contributions from Adolf Oberländer, Hans Schliessmann, Emil Reinicke, Adolf Hengeler, and especially Lothar Meggendorfer, whose work became numerically predominant. Indeed, he was so fertile that he was able to launch his own successful magazine, *Meggendorfers Humoristische Blätter.*[1]

Unlike England, where it was necessary to resort to heavy borrowing, Germany had no lack of good artists. With Meggendorfer, Adolf Oberländer attained a high reputation, although in our context he seems uninspired, both in ideas and in execution. He was certainly prolific, a stalwart of the *Fliegende* from 1863, when he was only eighteen years old, author of thirty-four original broadsheets for the *Münchener Bilderbogen* besides, and a draftsman who "never quite gave up painting."[2]

There were several rival caricature journals in Germany now, during the last quarter of the century, which helped themselves liberally, as an Oberländer cartoon complained,[3] to *Fliegende Blätter* material (as did the cheap European magazines generally). In Berlin, *Kladderadatsch* had operated since 1848 as a mildly political collaborationist journal, taking advice (in the 1850s) from a police spy on the staff[4] but carrying few comic strips. It was joined in 1873 by the no less uncritically political *Ulk,* also with few strips. Then came the now elusive but popular *Lustige Blätter;*[5] this journal featured the comic strip as a primary ingredient by the early 1890s, when it was carrying one and sometimes two per issue. Edited by the Russian-Polish-born Alexander Moskowski, it has been described as "less submissive" than its rivals and (after the end of our period) critical of the imperial policies.[6]

The most direct rival to the *Fliegende* originated in 1885 in the same town, under the name *Münchener Humoristische Blätter;* it started out in the same size and format but on cheaper paper and at half the price, which justified its claim to be the cheapest funny paper (*Witzblatt*) in Germany. It had proportionately more cartoons than the *Fliegende,* with at least one on virtually every page, and more varied styles. It helped itself to strips from French journals, by Caran d'Ache and Döes for example, and the *Lustige Blätter,* including some American ones as well (leading in 1889 to the confiscation of various issues for unauthorized copying).[7] The *Münchener Humoristische Blätter* imitated the styles of Grévin and other French caricaturists and introduced proto–art nouveau graphic effects (especially by C. Köystrand), establishing the solid blacks of the French as the first real stylistic innovation since Busch. With one notable exception (see below), it is hard to detect particular originalities or emphases in the comic strips of the *Münchener Humoristische Blätter,* which ran frequently, and by 1890 almost weekly. But the magazine may have reached a wider, less differentiated, or more "unsuspecting" audience, for by 1889 it was being given away virtually for free (fifty pfennig a quarter) as a weekly supplement to subscribers of the *Neues Münchener Tageblatt.*

1. For Meggendorfer's own journal, which, starting in 1889, ran under several different titles, see Hollweck 1973, 87ff.
2. See obituary notice in *Kunst und Künstler* 21 (1923): 328–330; and Sickert 1922, 187: "Oberländer has probably carried the art of drawing in its purity further than anyone has yet done." Sickert was the son of a "modest elder colleague" of the German artist.
3. "Moderne Freibeuterei," *FB* 84 (1886): 93.
4. Piltz 1980, 160.
5. Despite careful search, I have been able to locate and check only the volumes for September 1888–December 1889 (Frankfurt University and Civic Library) and for 1890, 1891, 1895, and 1896 ([West] Berlin State Library). Founded in 1886, the *Lustige Blätter* designated itself as a supplement to the *Berliner Börsen-Courier.*
6. Piltz 1980, 221.
7. Hollweck 1973, 83.

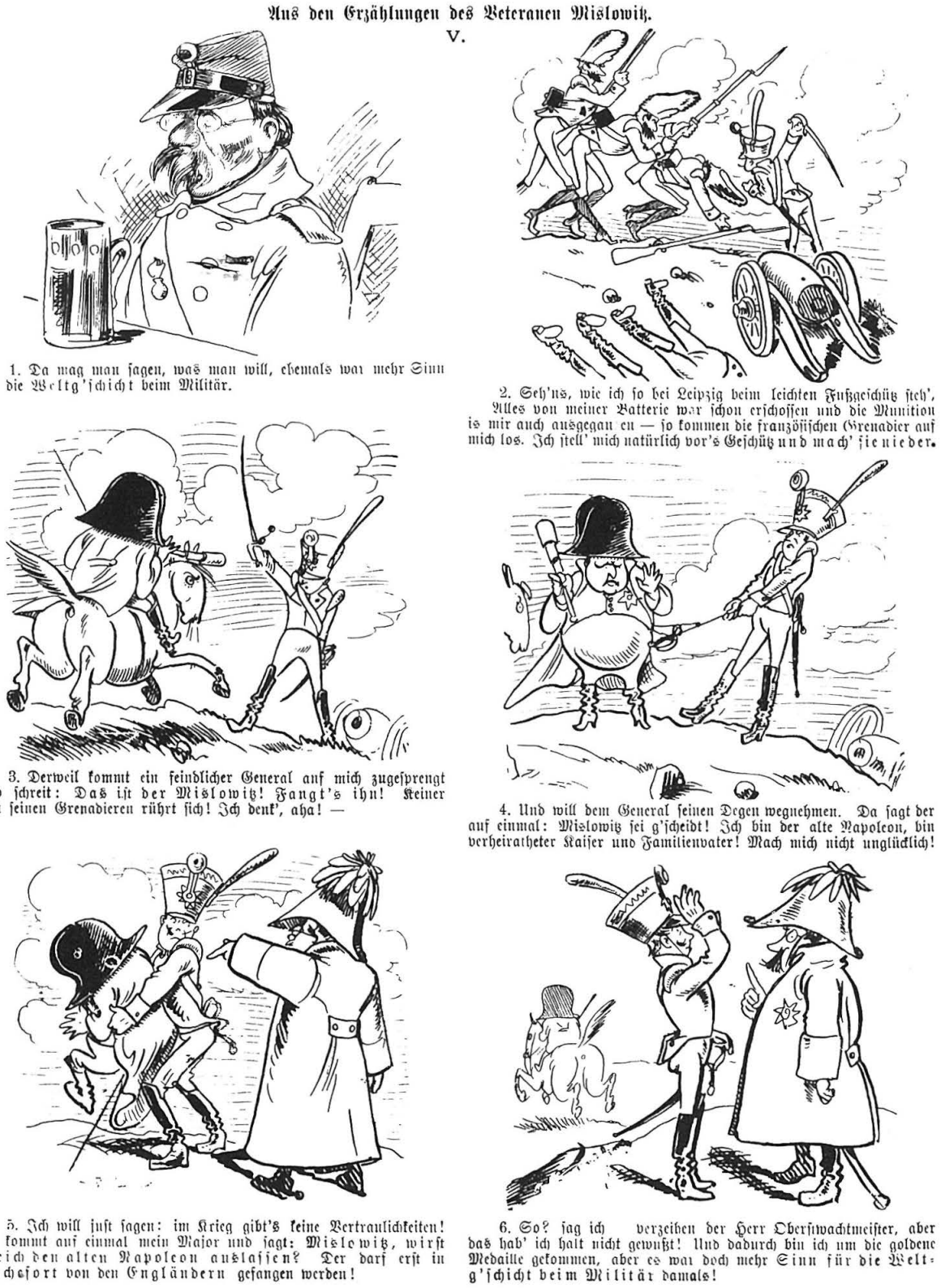


FIG. 12.1. *Tales of the Veteran Mislowitz* (1887). Part 5.
[1] There was a sense of world history among the military in those days. [2] Everyone around me killed, no ammunition left, I slay all the French grenadiers who attack me. [3] An enemy general bears down on me, shouting, "That is Mislowitz, capture him!" Not one of his grenadiers stirs! I think, aha!— [4] And am about to take away his dagger. But he remonstrates, "Mislowitz, have some sense! I am old Napoleon, a married emperor and a father. Don't be my misfortune!" [5] I seize him anyway. Then my major arrives and tells me to set him free, since he was eventually to be captured by the English at Rochefort. [6] "Sorry, Sir, I didn't know." So I forfeited the gold medal, because of the sense of world history among the military in those days.

Tales of the Veteran Mislowitz *(1887–1888)*

Like the *Fliegende Blätter,* the *Münchener Humoristische Blätter* ran innumerable jokes and cartoons about the military. We have noted how the *Fliegende*'s early antimilitarism soon shifted to accommodation. In the 1850s and '60s, while field marshal Helmuth von Moltke was refining the Prussian war machine, the magazine accepted the idea of universal military conscription, which fed the machine, and made entertainment out of authoritarian principles, such as those that encouraged the bullying of new recruits. Conscripts were stereotyped in countless cartoons and jokes as lazy and naive or stupid. The military, which by the 1880s had absorbed 10 percent of the total population,[8] was viewed as another kind of school for modernizing and disciplining raw human material, especially the rustic variety. In the last decades of the century, as sergeant majors continued to fulfill their secular mission of terrorizing recruits, the humorous magazines turned from sergeant majors and recruits to the officer as a dominant and prestigious social class in the civilian world: the vanity, conceit, and insouciance of lieutenants, their blasé wit, outrageous flirtations, and cynicism about marriage. This mild satire would acquire a certain edge at the turn of the century with *Simplicissimus;* in the meantime it remained within the realm of permissible social banter, holding up a flattering mirror to the officers, such as "Cousin Briest of the Alexander regiment, an uncommonly jolly young lieutenant, who took the *Fliegende Blätter* and kept a book of the best jokes."[9] There was no question of attacking either the military ethic as such or the militarization of society, the economy, or foreign policy.

The German tradition of mild military satire, the extent of which has no compare in France or England, is the context for the *Münchener Humoristische Blätter*'s most original contribution to the present history: a continuing character, the first in Germany since the Staatshämorrhoidarius and Eisele and Beisele disappeared in the mid 1850s. *Tales of the Veteran Mislowitz,* drawn in a sub-Buschian style, with nine episodes in 1887 and twelve in 1888, is set in 1813–1815 during the German war of liberation against the French. In 1887–1888, Bismarck was meeting a French surge of revanchist militarism, led by General Boulanger,

8. Wehler 1975, 151.
9. Fontane [1896] 1969, 21.

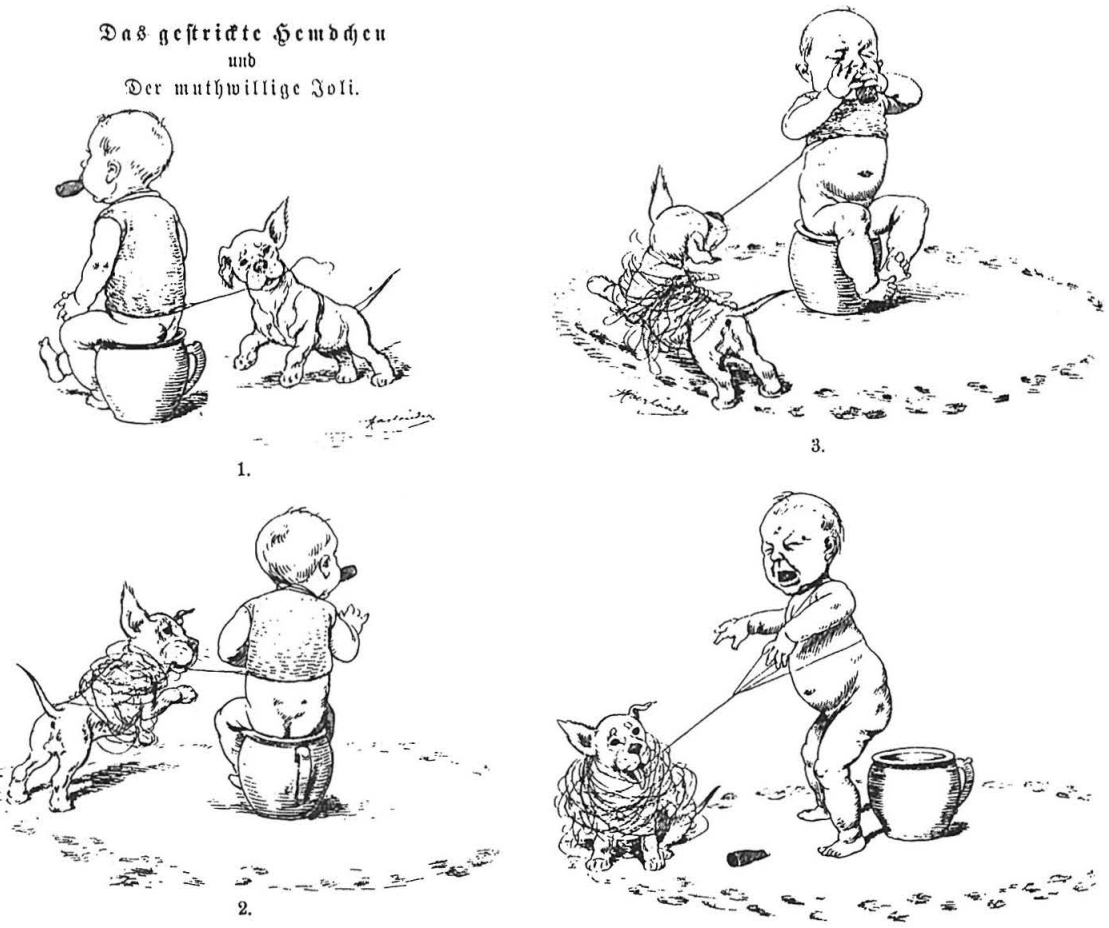


FIG. 12.2. Adolf Oberländer: "The Knit Vest" (1889).

with saber rattling directed against both France and her new ally Russia; Bismarck's generals were in fact urging him to consider a preventive war against Russia and to prepare for war on two flanks (as in 1914). *Tales of the Veteran Mislowitz* was a way of dealing with contradictory feelings about past military glories in relation to the present threat of war, and about an official militarist ideology in relation to the common man's desire for peace.

Mislowitz, based on an old satirical type, the miles gloriosus, is a Munchausenesque boaster who claims extraordinary exploits in war. His adventures are less absurdist than Munchausen's, and he is, unlike Munchausen, no baron but only a corporal—in fact, a cadet, a mere child (young enough in 1813 to be alive seventy-four years later). By his name we know that he is a despised Prussian Pole. He speaks, in an age more democratic than that of *Baron* Munchausen's 18th-century creator Eric Raspe, to the common man's fantasies of grandeur. Mislowitz posits that wars are won and history made by the obscure individual no less (and to some extent more) than the great hero of the textbooks. Today, when there is broader recognition of the "people" as influencing history, we can accept the essential truth of Mislowitz's contention that it was he—with the help of Wellington and Blücher—who won Waterloo.

In a characteristic episode set during the great "Battle of the Nations," fought at Leipzig in 1813, Mislowitz slays a bunch of French grenadiers single-handed and spreads such an aura of terror about him that no one, despite orders from Napoleon himself, dares lay a hand on him. Mislowitz overpowers Napoleon too, who pleads for mercy on humanitarian grounds, calling himself "old Napoleon," a married man and a father. Mislowitz is about to carry the emperor off notwithstanding when his superior officer orders him to let him go, explaining that Napoleon must be captured later by the English at Rochefort. Saluting smartly, Mislowitz apologizes, forfeits his gold medal, and consoles himself with the thought that "there was more sense then among the military for world history!" (Fig. 12.1).

This episode is repeated in a somewhat different form later in the series (1887, p. 376), when Mislowitz decides on his own cognizance to let Napoleon go after the emperor has explained that History requires him yet to go to Elba and fight Waterloo. Thus Mislowitz embodies a current view of war as part of a great irresistible historical design in which the ordinary individual is helpless (a view shared by Goethe, that great admirer of Napoleon) and exploited for their own ends by generals and politicians such as Bismarck, who saw himself as an agent of God and destiny. At the same time, Mislowitz offsets this "official" view with a personal, humanitarian instinct that undermines the military ethic. He embodies quite forcibly an idea which threads through the series as a whole: that he and Napoleon, representatives of nations at war, are really brothers at heart. The little Polish-German corporal and the emperor of the French have been friends ever since 1805, when Napoleon invaded Germany, and the emperor is always quick to recognize and pay the corporal respect on the field of battle. Mislowitz gallantly spares Napoleon's life, and Napoleon saves his. They dine together and go swimming together. Indeed, it was to Mislowitz, not Goethe, that Napoleon paid his famous compliment, "C'est un homme." The worst that Mislowitz, on being taken prisoner, does to Napoleon, is cunningly to offer him his pipe, which makes the emperor sick and causes him to lose the battle. Fleeing, Napoleon wags a reproachful finger at his inimical friend: "Now I see through you, Mislowitz" (1887, p. 416). Thus the very concept of national enmities is made to appear childish.

Mislowitz's tendency to fraternize with the enemy extends to his fighting on Napoleon's side (as many Germans were forced to do), and he wins the battle of Moscow with the emperor. His inventiveness makes him a valuable ally: he fires a mortar filled with tallow candles into a Russian fortress to make the candle-craving cossacks easy to overpower as they quarrel over the booty (1887, p. 400). Guile has always been the common recourse against an enemy of superior strength, from Ulysses to Munchausen, and its application to technology was a fundament of the capitalist mythology by which the lowborn inventor could rise to win markets and wars. Thus, in a more realistic but still comic vein, Mislowitz invents a rapid-fire cannon (*Kartätschenschuß*) after seeing a boy stumble and spill a bowl of dumplings (1888, p. 96). Mislowitz's bravery and ingenuity contrast with the bureaucratic pedantry of the German generals. When one of these officers, noticing two buttons missing from a grenadier's gaiter, orders fighting to stop, Napoleon is all set to take advantage of the situation; but fortunately Mislowitz notices this, points a cannon at him, and wins the battle after all (1888, p. 72).

Tales of the Veteran Mislowitz is a folkish fantasy of grandeur dreamed by the lower-class reader who feels that "History" is somehow robbing him of the fruits of his labor and valor. Yet, although capable of heroism, of winning wars, he is cheated of medals and the recognition that are his due and remains a mere corporal.

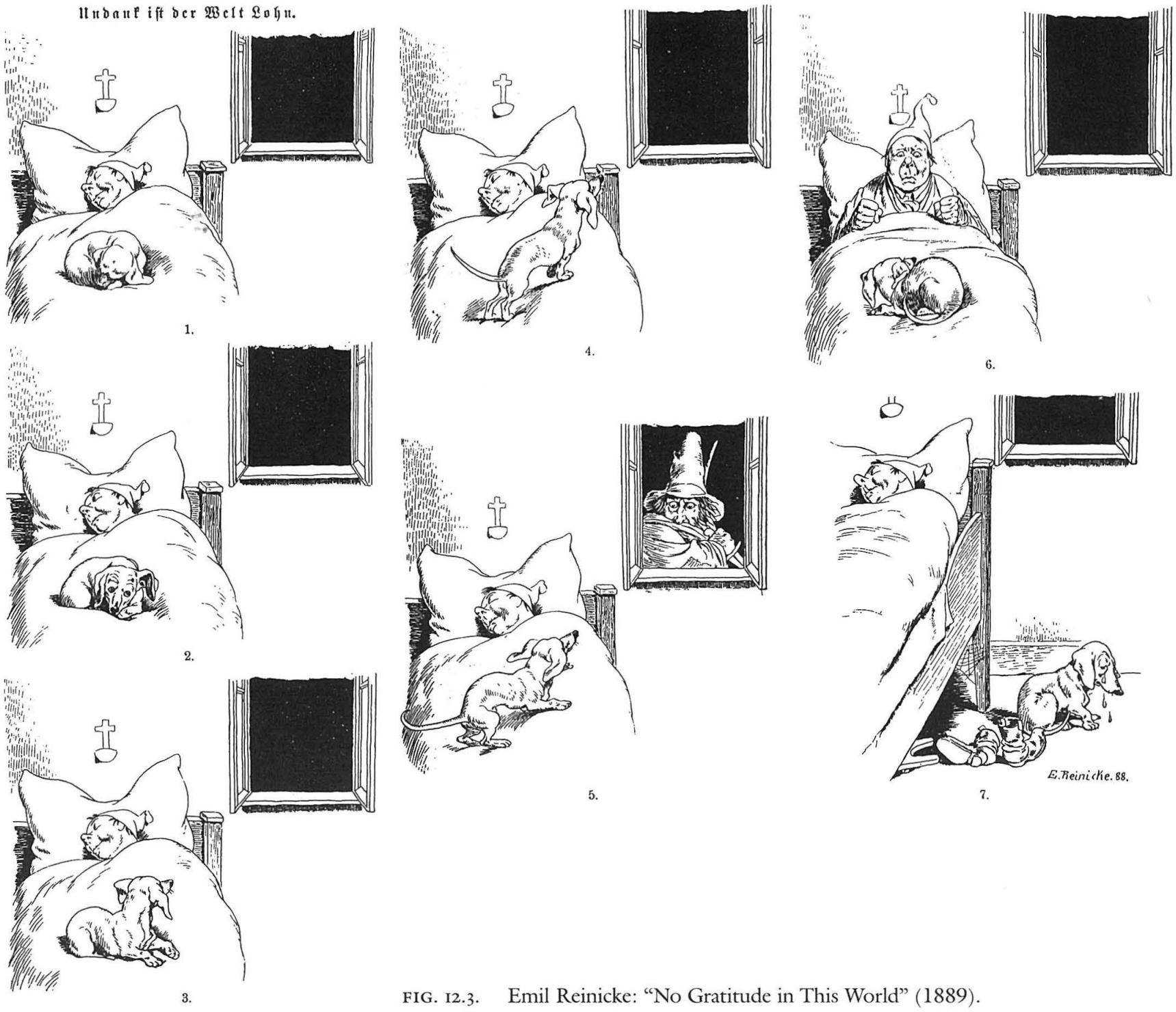


FIG. 12.3. Emil Reinicke: "No Gratitude in This World" (1889).

Mitigation of Violence. Abstraction of Form and Movement. "Mechanical" Comic Strips. Toys

In *Mislowitz,* killing is incidental, for the series is not about physical violence. This reflects an important trend of the last quarter of the century (apart from and beyond Wilhelm Busch) toward less and less violence. Malice becomes mischief; the tricks of animals, children, and students are now more playful and innocent, sometimes even charming. Instead of inflicting physical injuries, children play harmless pranks: they fill a sleeping man's knapsack with stones, switch around a distracted house painter's paint and coffee cans, and take joyrides on carts. The frolicsome pup, instead of causing havoc in the house, unravels a baby's pullover (Fig. 12.2).[10]

Adults impersonate children: the sailor substitutes himself for a sailor-suited child led by an inattentive nursemaid.[11] Many strips show the amusing consequences of commonplace forms of absentmindedness or distraction. And as the crime diminishes in gravity, so does the punishment. Crisis is averted, reparation is made quietly (and often fortuitously), small crimes go unpunished, theft is foiled peacefully and by accident, thieves escape altogether. Kids who, like Max and Moritz, slit a miller's sacks, get to keep the flour unmolested; dogs steal sausages with impunity. An act of virtue now becomes interesting, and the lack of reward poignant (Fig. 12.3). Many of the German strips, by the 1890s, have a conciliatory air. In England, an "unnatural" act of canine generosity, whereby a large dog freely gives up a stick he has fetched, along with the credit he has won, to a smaller dog, can become the subject of a strip (see Fig. 15.57). Thus the trivial, everyday chance observation without moral freight—by earlier standards, a non-event—takes its place in the repertory of the comic strip.

Given the real hostility and unpleasant violence in the French (*Chat Noir*) strips of the period, it is tempting to see national differences at work: the middle classes in France insecure; those in Germany secure, satiated by the war, enjoying a booming economy and peaceful (i.e., internally nondivisive) imperialist expansion, capable of envisaging a "conflictless society."[12]

The harsh reality of conflict, on which the comic strip was hitherto based, is also mitigated in a tendency toward a "scientific" or rudimentarily mechanical analysis of form, movement, and situation. The linear simplifications of caricature are sensed and demonstrated to be analogous to and even derivable from certain simple geometrical constructions. These would be familiar to even the less educated in Germany, where basic school curricula were oriented much more toward scientific and technical subjects

10. Exactly the same theme, with a cushion substituting for the chamber pot, appears most remarkably eight months earlier ("Unravelling a Mystery," in *Illustrated Bits,* January 26, 1889, p. 14, a paper that copied systematically from the *Fliegende*). Is there perhaps a common source here, and was Oberländer not beyond copying?
11. Schliessman, *FB* 92 (1890): 232.
12. See Wehler 1975, 134.



FIG. 12.4. Adolf Oberländer: "Marginalia from Little Moritz's Exercise Book" (1884).

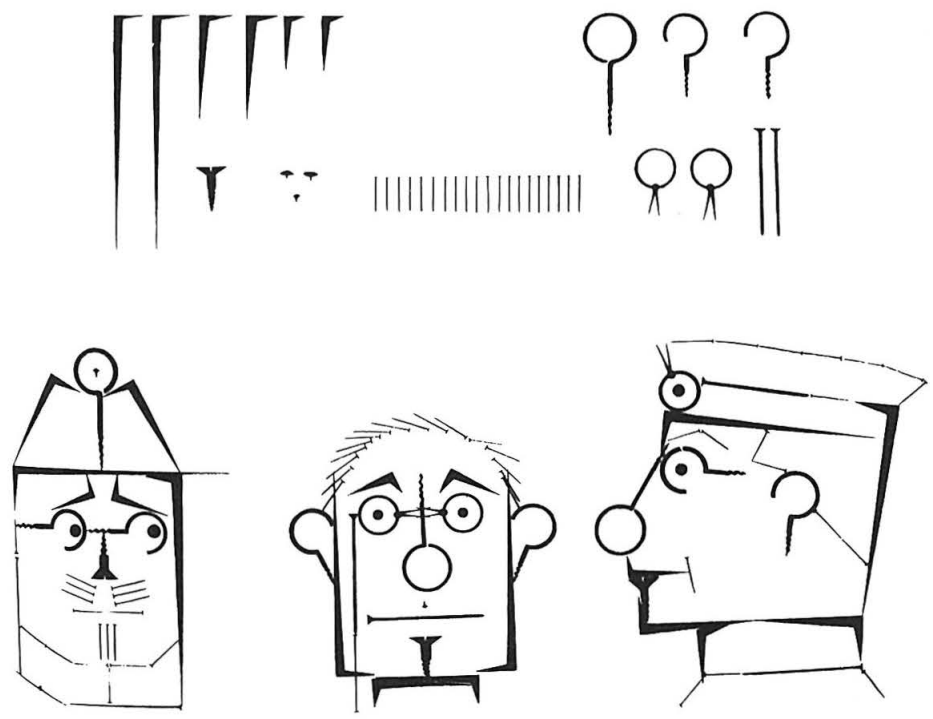


FIG. 12.5. "Brief Instructions on How to Make Heads Out of the Following Hooks, Screws, Rings, Nails, etc., etc. (After Fröbel's Method)" (1883).

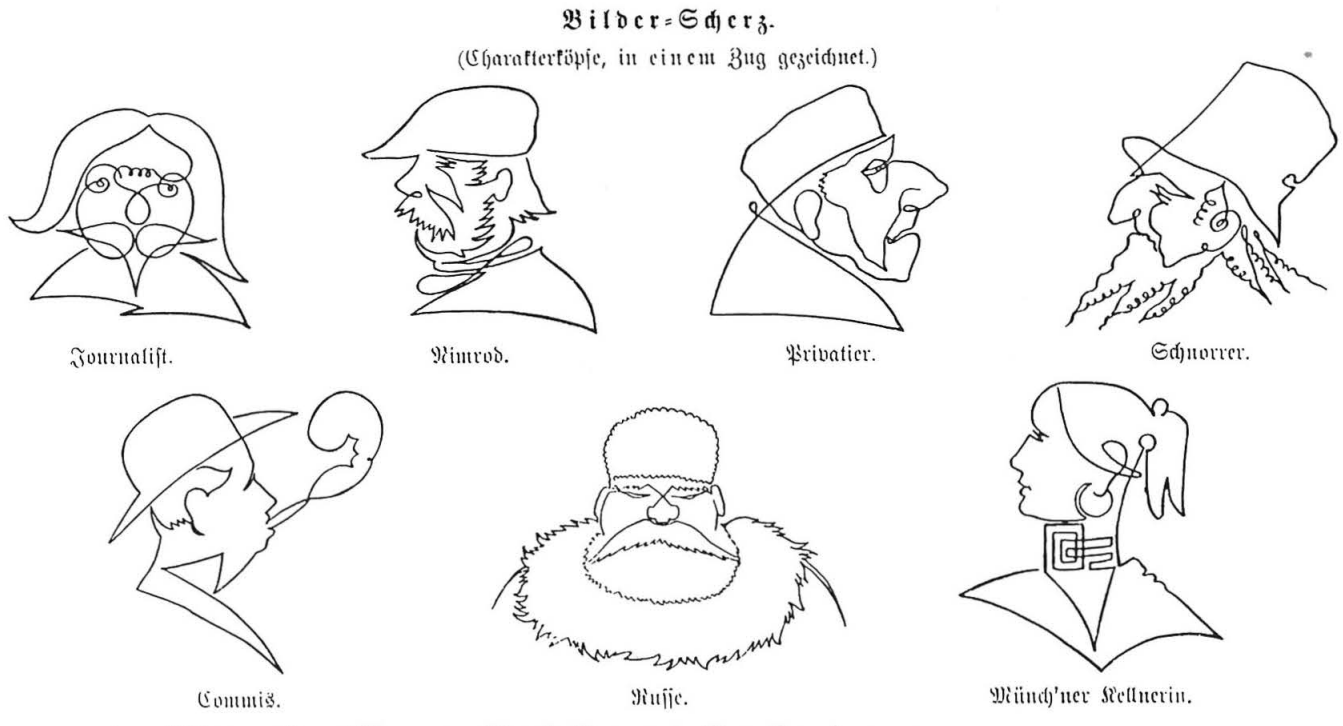


FIG. 12.6. "Picture Fun (Character Heads Drawn in One Continuous Line) (1887/1888).
Journalist. Hunter. Gentleman. Cadger. Clerk. Russian. Munich barmaid.

than elsewhere in Europe. The manner in which a child spontaneously humanizes and animates a "boring" geometrical diagram is demonstrated in one of Oberländer's series, "Marginalia from Little Moritz's Exercise Book," where Pythagoras's theorem sprouts into bustled ladies out walking, an observation on the new geometry of fashion (Fig. 12.4).

The demonstration of "tricks of the trade," which we associate today with children's or elementary drawing books—how to construct human figures out of geometrical or numerical figures, for instance—became characteristic of the 1880s, although they were not unknown before[13] and can indeed be traced back to Lavater and Grandville and old drawing manuals. Busch inaugurated the "do-it-yourself" cartoon in 1871 when he showed how to make Napoleon III out of fruit and vegetables and Napoleon I out of the simplest lines (the French took their revenge later, with the do-it-yourself Bismarck).[14] This development was connected with the educational toys devised by Friedrich Fröbel, whose method is credited in a demonstration of how to compose quite complex and expressive human heads out of household materials such as hooks, screws, rings, and nails (Fig. 12.5). Similarly, complete figures could be constructed with a single uninterrupted pen-stroke (Fig. 12.6). This demonstration of skill takes us back to the

13. E.g., "Eine polygone Familie," *FB* 50 (1869): 52, and "Ziffer-Gesichte," *FB* 56 (1872): 86.
14. Grand-Carteret 1890, 197.

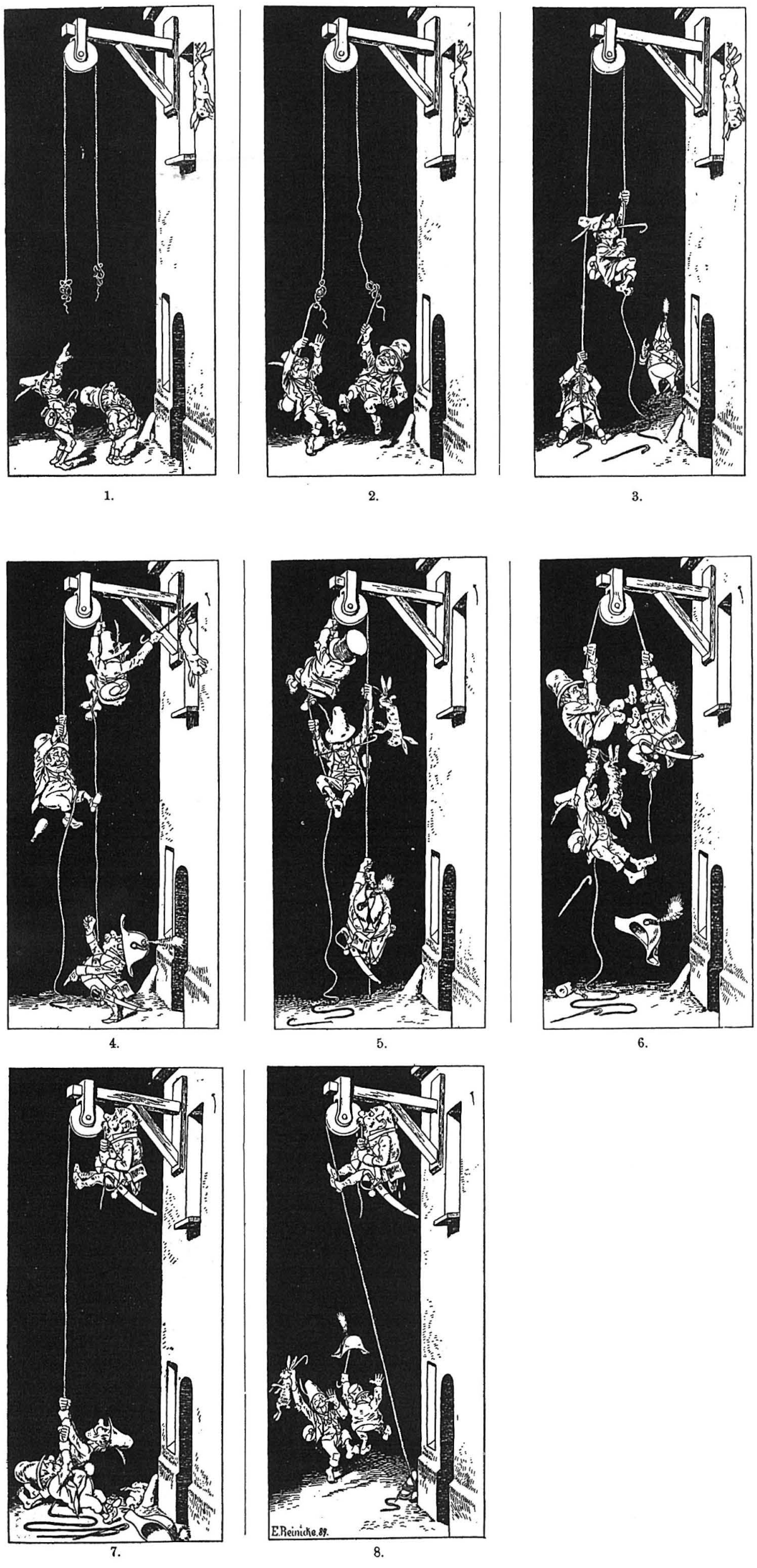


FIG. 12.7. Emil Reinicke: "A Hare-Hunt; or, The Bamboozled Cop" (1889).

very beginnings of caricature, which started as a jocular tour de force appreciated mainly by artists and connoisseurs and by now had become a kind of conjuring act for the masses.

By seeing the human figure as a geometrical diagram, the artist came to see himself in a new way, as a scientific reducer of perceptual complexity. The artist who was also a narrator went still further and began to see not just the static human figure but the dynamic of action, interaction, and whole sequences of actions as subject to mechanical distillation; thus, without actually geometrizing the contours of the figure as such, the artist could "geometrize" the action itself (see 15.52). In this sense, the more traditional graphic mode's realism of appearances is preserved, while the action is subjected to a logic that follows not the principles of social reality and morality so much as those of physics: the laws governing mass, weight, pressure, suspension, and even heat. The comic strips of the 1880s feature an assortment of simple apparatuses from the world of labor, designed to give mechanical advantage to human muscle, the kind of apparatuses cited in school mathematics and physics textbooks: seesaws, swings, rocking chairs, ropes, ladders, water hoses, springboards, pulleys, bridges, builder's lifts and cradles, and levers of various kinds. These are tools in the struggle not merely of man with man (as in Busch, who also uses some of these objects) but of man with the laws of physics.

We encounter here elements of play, both physical and mental, associated with the riddles and puzzles that were regular features of German popular illustrated journals and were aimed primarily, no doubt, at intelligent adolescents as a means of teaching mathematical thinking. Sequential, logical thinking underlies strips that, left deliberately wordless, are intended to take time and effort to decipher. An early example of the puzzle in its pure form, resembling a sort of diagrammatic comic strip, is of a kind still current today; moreover, in its form it is a still-valid tribute to imperialist problem solving, as the reader is asked to figure out how three white men with three black slaves can be transported across a river in a boat that cannot hold more than two people so as never to leave more blacks than whites together.[15]

Situations involving mechanically assisted transference of bodies, usually along a vertical axis, are relatively frequent in comic strips and represent yet another source of early movie farce. One example among many, by Emil Reinicke (Fig. 12.7), involves a pulley—virtually a symbol of the application of mechanics to human ambition—and the classic elements of thieves, object of theft, and cop. The cop's mistake is mechanical thinking of another kind—clearly he should have waited for the thieves to descend instead of obeying his reflex to give immediate chase. That the thieves get away is merely another symptom of the new, socially benign, mood.

Another stereotypical comic strip situation, the abduction from a high window, is similarly updated in a "mechanical" way, and with a different outcome. The suitor (a romantic "thief"), waiting at the bottom of the rope for the girl to lower the chest, is set upon by common thieves and tied up. The thieves lower the chest and make off with it, fixing the suitor in its place. As the girl lowers herself on the pulley, she hoists his bound figure up; when she lets go in fright, he drops abruptly. The father recovers his daughter, leaving the lover trussed up and presumably broken-boned on the ground.[16]

Like Reinicke, Meggendorfer was particularly intrigued by the pulley principle, which he applies to the rustic as well as the urban environment: under the title "The Clever Peasant," a man figures out by trial and error, in eighteen stages, how to get to a high branch of a tree and break it off by means of his oxen, a rope, his body weight, and an ax.[17] All such "experiments," as we may properly call them, recapitulate early phases in the history of technology, which, outmoded as these already were by steam and electricity, stood for the idea of technology as a challenge to human intelligence and a means of empowerment.

The permutation of objects and people along certain vectors, which can be found in so many strips of the period, shares a mathematical basis with music—for instance, popular ballads that systematically ring the changes or play variations on a theme of things, persons, and actions. One Bilderbogen with a text that must surely derive from such a ballad (although it is hard to imagine anyone other than a professional actor being capable of memorizing it in a given order) is entitled "Stork, Pug, and Frog,"[18] in which the additional variables are a sausage, a spittoon, air, jumping, and swallowing. The "theme," given as "When the pug jumps over the spittoon with the sausage, / And the stork swallows the frog in the air [Wenn der Mops mit der Wurst über'n Spucknapf springt / Und der Storch in der Luft den Frosch verschlingt]," passes through thirteen numbered "variations," most of which are more or less nonsensical, and WUD from the fourth "When the pug with the spittoon jumps over the stork / And the sausage swallows the frog in the air" down to the final "When the frog swallows the stork in the air / And the sausage jumps over the spittoon and the pug." The whole series is expressible in mathematical symbols; for example, the cited variations would be

$$\frac{P + Sa}{Sp} : S \times F; \qquad \frac{P + Sp}{S} : Sa \times F; \qquad F \times S : \frac{Sa}{Sp + P}.$$

Busch does something comparable, maintaining his customary realism and eschewing the nonsensical, in his *Miller and Chimney Sweep* (1863; 1:229), essentially a little puppet play in which he permutes the variations of a struggle on the part of a thin black Male and a fat white Male for a thin black Female and a fat white Female, and among each other according to the following five acts (where "+" means love/alliance and "÷" means a fight):

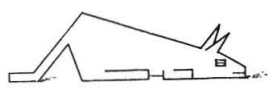
1.	fwF + fwM	fwM + tbF	tbF + tbM	fwF + tbM
2.	fwF ÷ tbF			
3–4.	tbM ÷ fwM			
5.	tbF + fwF	fwM + tbM		

Geometricization also enters caricature via folk art such as toys, dolls, puppets, and cookies, as already in Busch. The cheap, articulated toy is reflected in "A Kangaroo Story," where the naturalistically drawn Papuan native (bearded, but large-headed like a child) chases in vain a very geometric kangaroo, who demonstrates the various positions his limbs are capable of (Fig. 12.8). Strips recapitulating the movements of articulated toys evoke the pleasure of watching a child explore and test logical possibilities and combinations. The circus clown who does this in an effort to mount some passively vexatious beast (real or toy) offers the humor of his action ready-made to the artist.[19]

The most extreme reduction, in either caricature or toy, is the stick figure, which had already been used as a narrative unit in the early 19th century by the English caricaturist Lewis Marks for "The Progress of Boney!!!"[20] The novelty now is that the sticks literally fall apart, as when cardplayers so constructed come to blows (Fig. 12.9). When Franz and Hans get into a fight over a goose, the three lines of its body simply separate (Fig. 12.10)—the moral perhaps being that if you quarrel over your toys, they will break. In fact, even the supersimplified verses here, nine three-syllable couplets rhyming with "Hans," could be called "stick-rhymes." Lothar Meggendorfer, who made a specialty of stick-strips, liked to reduce conventional scenarios to their pictographic essentials; he rarely uses words but constructs little anecdotes out of a limited range of movements by figures that resemble or imitate, to various degrees and quite flexibly, simple articulated toys. Fisherman Lord Pumpkin, for example, rotates about and angles from (let the pun stand) a pole as though he were stuck to it until finally he falls into the water.[21] Meggendorfer was also the pioneer of the children's book with movable parts.

15. *FB* 47 (1867): 149–150 (with solution, in twelve steps, on p. 160).
16. *Lustige Blätter,* December 10, 1891, p. 2.
17. *FB* 78 (1883): 137–139.
18. *100 Münchener Bilderbogen* 1978, no. 74.
19. "Der Stallmeister und sein Pferd," *FB* 89 (1888): 126–127.
20. Kunzle 1973, 385 (fig. 12-36).
21. *FB* 89 (1888): 27.

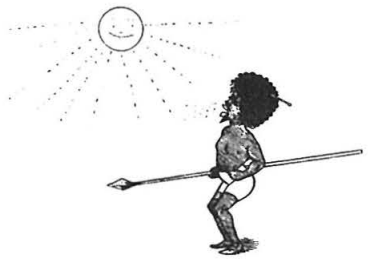
Eine Känguruhgeschichte.



Im Grase liegt ein Känguruh,
Es schläft und hat die Augen zu.



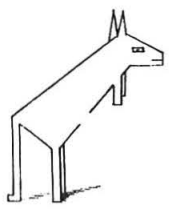
Da kommt gerad' mit seinem Speer
Ein Papua des Weg's daher.



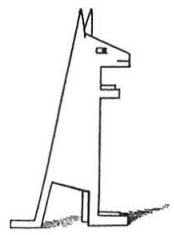
Ihm scheint die Sonne in's Gesicht,
Es reizt zum Niesen ihn das Licht.



Durch das Geräusch vom Schlaf erweckt,
Das Känguruh die Glieder streckt.



Es setzt sich auf die Hinterbein'
Und denket sich: „Was mag das sein?"



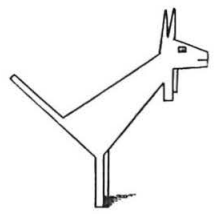
Dann stellt — zur Stütze dient der Schwanz —
Das Känguruh sich aufrecht ganz.



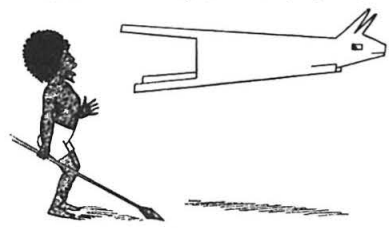
Indessen ist der Papua
Mit seinem Speere auch schon da.



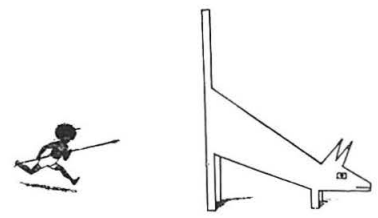
Das Känguruh sieht schnell jetzt ein:
„Es wird die Flucht das Beste sein!"



D'rum plötzlich mit gewalt'gem Schwung
Schnellt's in die Höh' im Riesensprung.



Hin durch die Luft sauft's wie ein Pfeil
Und zeigt nur noch sein Hintertheil.



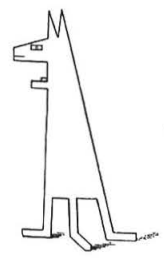
Bis es zur Erde wieder kommt,
Kein Speerwurf mehr dem Jäger frommt.



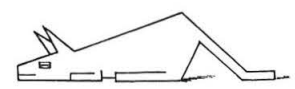
So springt's wohl tausendmal davon,
Vom Laufen schwitzt der Papua schon.



Er kann zuletzt nicht weiter mehr
Und fällt in's Gras mit seinem Speer.



Das Känguruh jedoch, nicht dumm,
Sieht sich noch einmal nach ihm um.

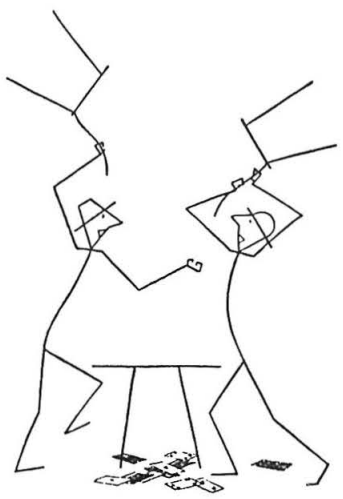


Und wieder liegt das Känguruh
Im Gras und hat die Augen zu.

Woraus Ihr Jäger zieht die Lehr':
„Ein Känguruh erlegt man schwer!"

FIG. 12.8. "A Kangaroo Story" (1883).

Die beiden Kartenspieler.

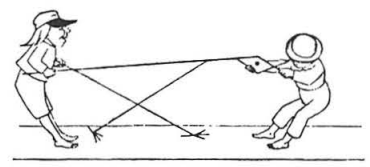


7.

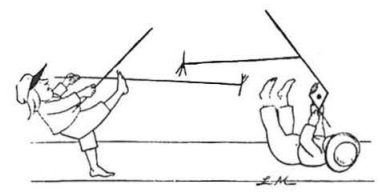


8.

FIG. 12.9. Lothar Meggendorfer: "The Two Cardplayers" (1889).



Kommt der Franz,
Hilft dem Hans.



Aus der Tanz!
Futsch die Gans!

FIG. 12.10. Lothar Meggendorfer: "The Song of the Goose" (1883).

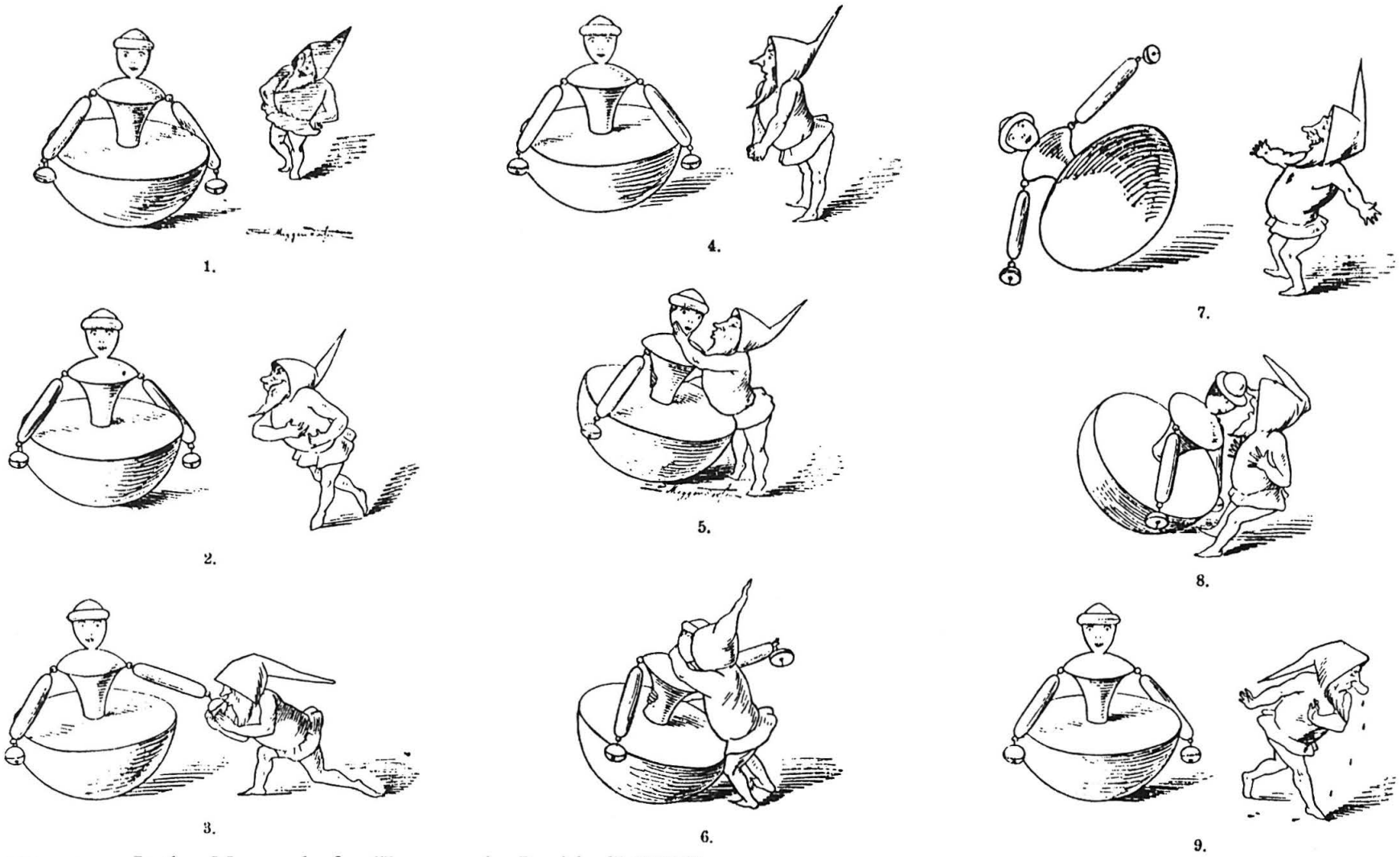


FIG. 12.11. Lothar Meggendorfer: "Importunity Punished" (1888).

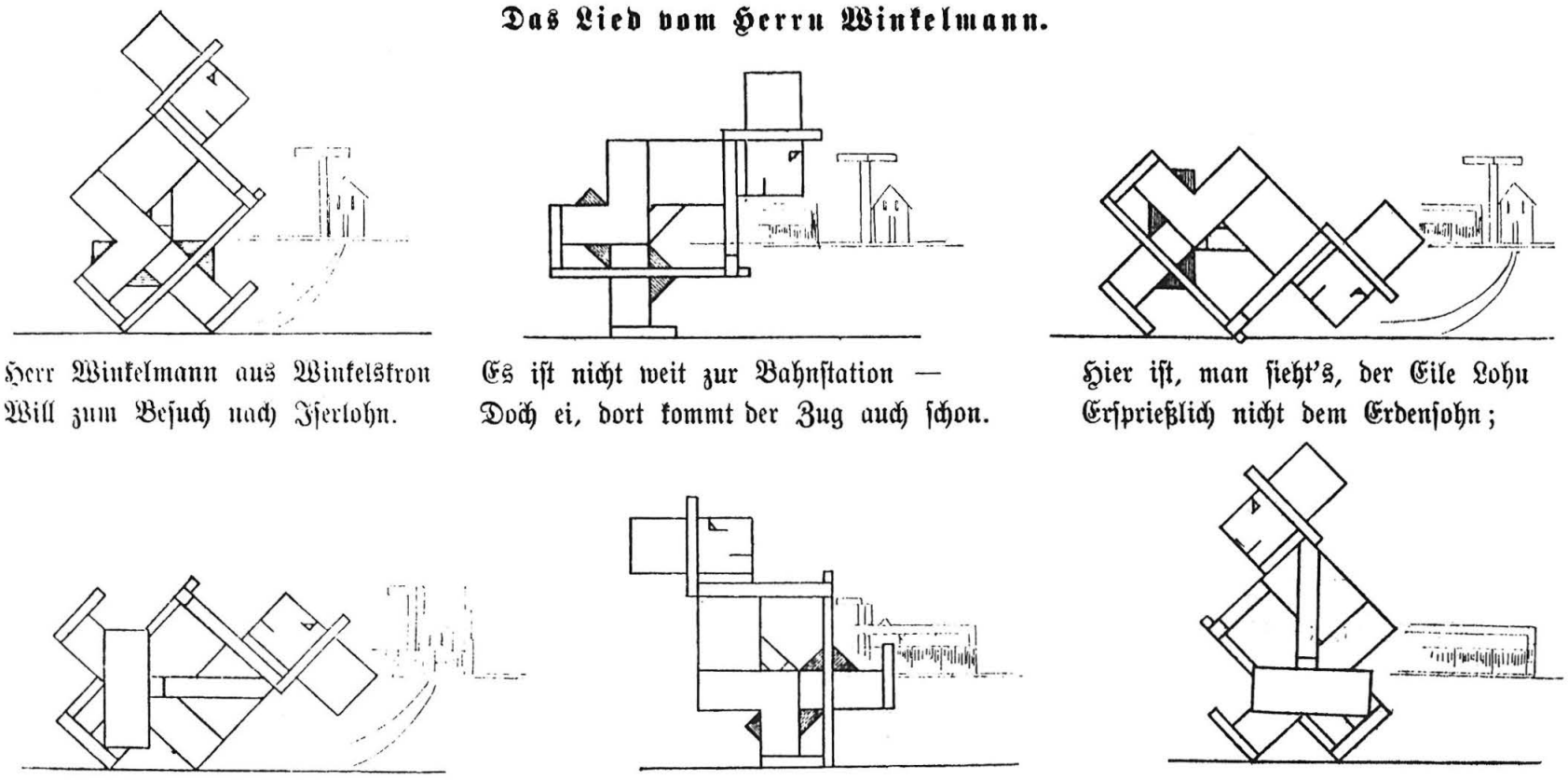


FIG. 12.12. Lothar Meggendorfer (?): "The Song of Mr. Angleman" (1883).

In the 1880s, at about the same time that Howard Pyle in the United States launched his famous Brownies, Meggendorfer was drawing the antics of tiny gnomes. Although he does not draw the gnomes as toys, he enters the world and imagery of the child. The gnomes' encounters with the real world, be it a berry that bursts all over them or a bird's nest that gives way under their weight when they climb into it, are those of children imagining themselves as small as the smallest animals and having to deal with nature accordingly.[22] When the gnome encounters a true human toy of his own size (and therefore fair game), a female doll with a weighted, hemispherical base, his amorous approach is rebuffed—not by human nature, but by inert matter activated by the simplest law of physics (Fig. 12.11).

In Busch's *Tücke des Objekts,* inanimate objects seemed to be animated by an independent will and to be lent locomotive powers, as an expression of hostility toward human beings. Now the human figure itself is constructed as an inanimate object which may be mechanically "animated," by either the toymaker or the caricaturist. Thus the junction of human figure, mechanized movement, and abstraction, hailed as the great discovery of 20th-century art, is present already in a caricature of 1883 (Fig. 12.12)—a perfectly childish demonstration that, who knows, might have affected some abstract artist-to-be just as profoundly as the exhibition of Fröbel geometric toys at the Philadelphia exhibition of 1876 did the nine-year-old Frank Lloyd Wright.

Darwinian Struggles and Metamorphoses in the Later Nineteenth Century

The late-19th-century comic strip, taken as a European-wide phenomenon, testifies to a dialectical process of conflict represented and conflict resolved or dissolved. Both the aestheticization and the scientization of narrative and form suggest, on some profound level of the collective semiconscious, the necessity of a controlled resolution by art and science of conflicts that earlier had been spun out freely, farcically, and cruelly into little disasters and deaths. Darwin was made to argue for a traditional social laissez-faire or jungle law (via Herbert Spencer) as well as for strong social intervention, both of which philosophies recognized the necessity and inevitability of adapting to social/historical/organic *change*. This idea then gained popular currency through the comic strip, in "Darwinian fables" where the interaction between animal species is partly an exercise in comic natural history and partly a metaphor of social transformation.

The Darwinian struggle between animal species (including humans) is taken into fanciful nooks and crannies of natural history and in a variety of ways anthropomorphized, fabulized, and globalized. We are made privy to the evolutionary principle at play, a comic testing of possibilities and probing of the future. The Buschian moral leitmotif that penalizes greed, arrogance, and the quest for power, especially on the part of the young, remains in force; but the moralism is often mitigated by a sense of nature innocently at play, engaging (as Darwin indicated it did) in certain sportive, random, and incongruous interactions that lead to surprising results. There is much anthropomorphism here, and it is impossible to draw a firm distinction between, on the one hand, the artist's sense that nature in its infinite variety is itself capable of playing "humorous" tricks and, on the other, the traditional use of animals as metaphors for the peculiarities of human behavior. The cartoonist poses tantalizing questions. Do animals share with humans an instinct for novelty and adventure? Does an innate inquisitiveness lead individual animals astray and into danger, as it does individual humans? The answer given by Steinlen with respect to cats is on both counts strongly affirmative. Other artists, especially in England, employ less familiar creatures and imagine fortuitous encounters between different and peculiar species that would not normally collide as competitors or in a predator/prey relationship. Thus the pelican bags a tasty-looking morsel that turns out to be a porcupine capable, once inside the beak, of puncturing the gular pouch and effecting an escape (Fig. 12.13).

The injunction not to bite off more than one can chew, applied metaphorically to any ambitious or reckless social behavior, should be taken literally by animals, as by children. The fledgling bird that goes for a snake, mistaking it for a large worm, will be devoured itself;[23] a tiny duckling may manage to swallow half of a huge frog, but it will end up being carried off by its intended prey. The result is neither victory nor defeat for either party, but a new fantastic hybrid species (Fig. 12.14).

The miscegenation of normally hostile or incompatible species, much favored by children's literature as a means of symbolic social reconciliation ("The Owl and the Pussy Cat," for instance), is the outcome of one unusually extensive and charmingly anthropomorphic picture-story by George Du Maurier, "The Egg-Poacher (A Tale of Country Life)," which ran over three issues of *Punch*. This distinguished humorist took, in 1869–1870, a brief Darwinian respite from his usual labors of satirizing the Victorian drawing room. Here he depicts a frog that devours whole, in one round gulp, a duck egg much too large for him; the frog sickens, but a fall from a tree saves him, by breaking the egg. The "habitual criminal" returns, however, to repeat his crime. This time he is caught by the duck, who overpowers him, hatches the egg inside him (his "eggspiation"), and carries him, with her offspring, to the altar (Fig. 12.15). The idea of the male having the egg hatched inside him, as well as assuming an alien paternity, turns the worlds of both biology and social custom neatly upside down.

In another Du Maurier strip, which describes in the scientific language of natural history how a musician and his bass fiddle, like different species of beetle, "giants of the insect world," lock in mortal combat (Fig. 12.16), the idea of the Darwinian struggle between species was extended to the world of competing artists. Du Maurier also devised, among his "Specimens not yet included in the collection at Regent's Park," reptilian musical instruments à la Grandville: a Purse-Frog ("The Purse-mouthed Aurivorous Frog [Port Munney]"), reminiscent of Tenniel's *Alice* illustrations (which can be very Darwinian), and a remarkable "Steinbok, or Stonebuck (Capricornus Elasticus Catapultus—Arabia Petraea)," which has developed horns capable of throwing stones at its enemies.[24]

Although caricaturists had long played off resemblances between animals, objects, and humans, it was only after Darwin published his *Descent of Man* in 1871 and his theories of evolution had gained widespread acceptance that the humorous journals made a regular feature of "metamorphosis," "evolution," or "development." All three terms were commonly used, and often credited to Darwin by name, to designate the gradual change, in a minimum of four stages, of one form into another very different and more or less conceptually related form. Du Maurier may have been the first to do this, in a quintessential fantasy of reverse development of man back to animal, a bird whose form and capacity to fly is evolved only by dint of "much patience and self-denial" over a period of "a few generations" (Fig. 12.17). But neither Du Maurier nor any other *Punch* artist stayed with the idea. It was not taken up systematically until 1872, when *Judy,* a lower-

22. *FB* 75 (1881): 140; *FB* 76 (1882): 1–3.
23. *Fun,* August 3, 1892, p. 51.
24. *Punch,* August 14, 1869.

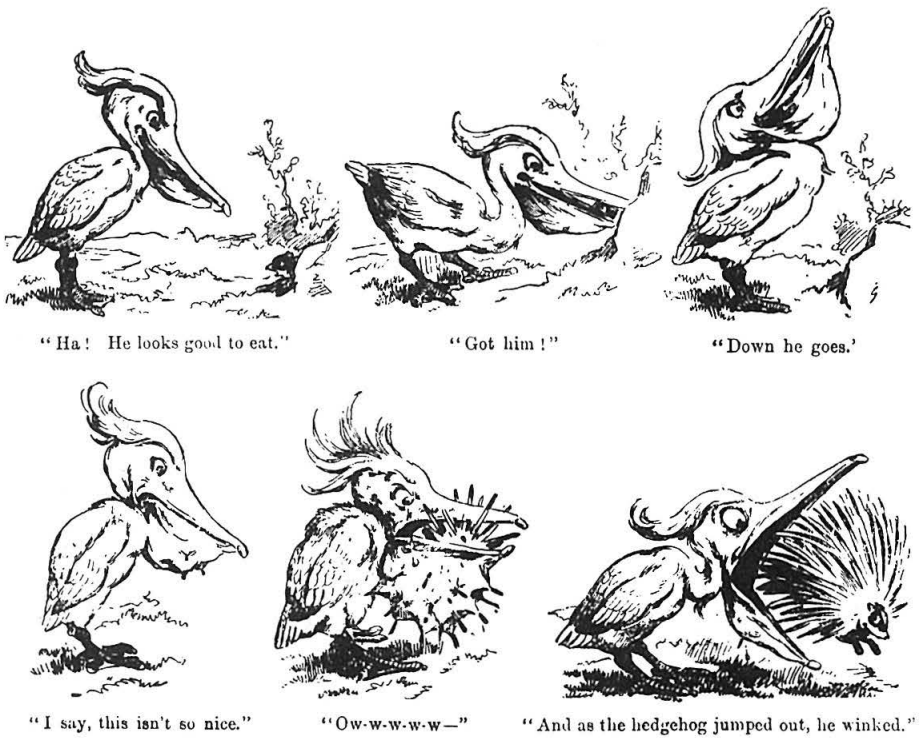


FIG. 12.13. "The Ignorant Bird and the Artful Hedgehog" (1890).

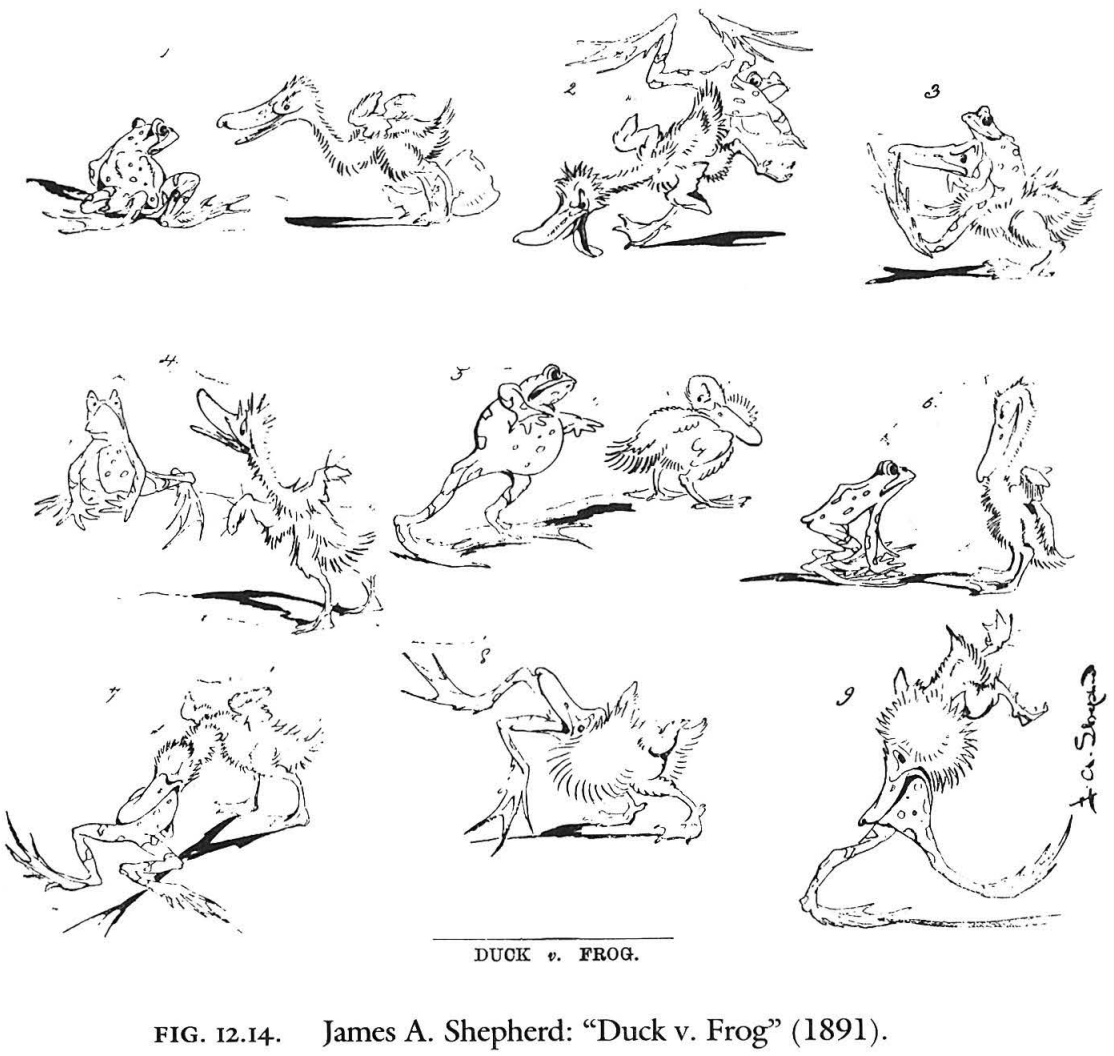


FIG. 12.14. James A. Shepherd: "Duck v. Frog" (1891).

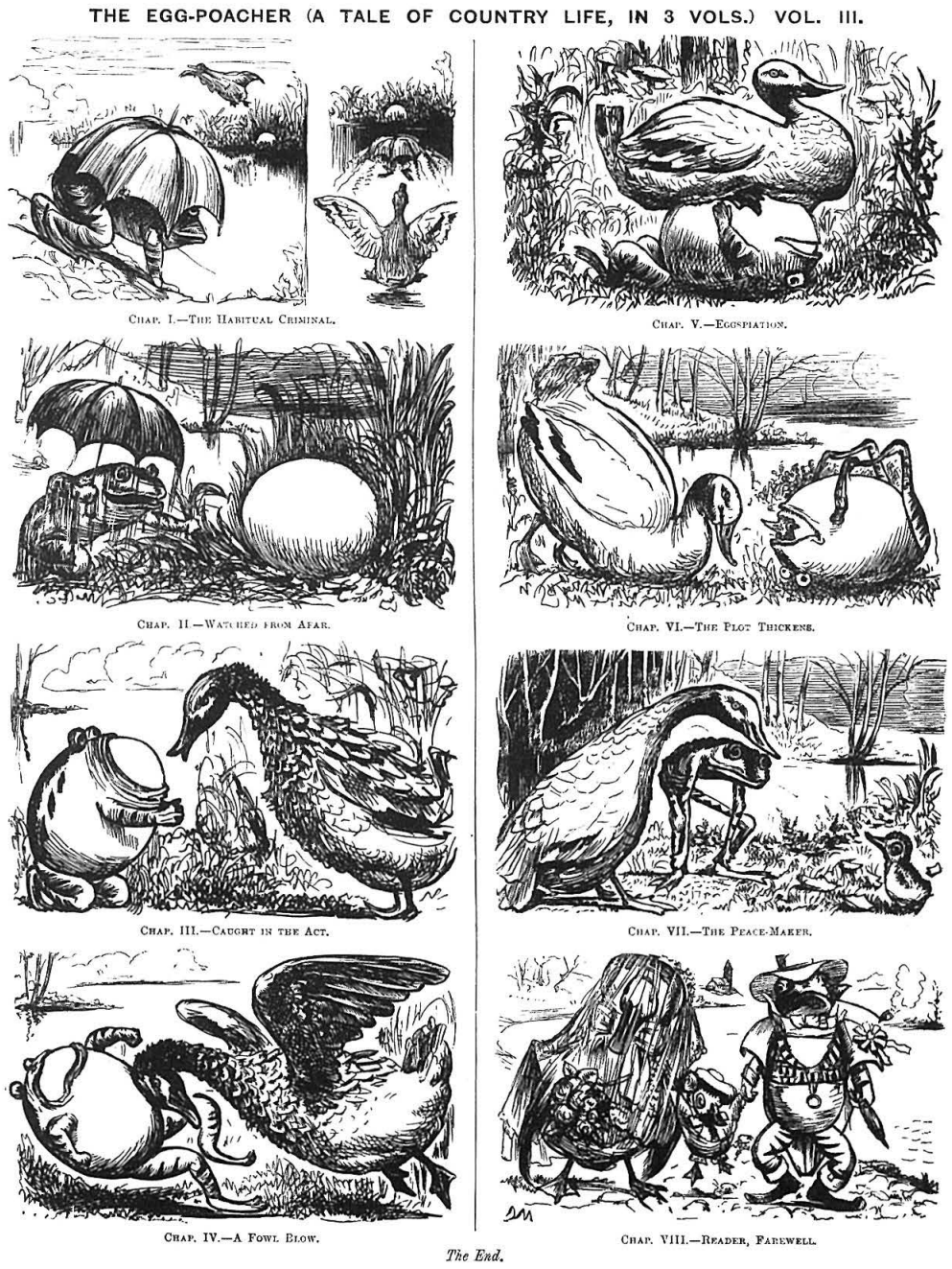


FIG. 12.15. George Du Maurier: "The Egg-Poacher" (1869).

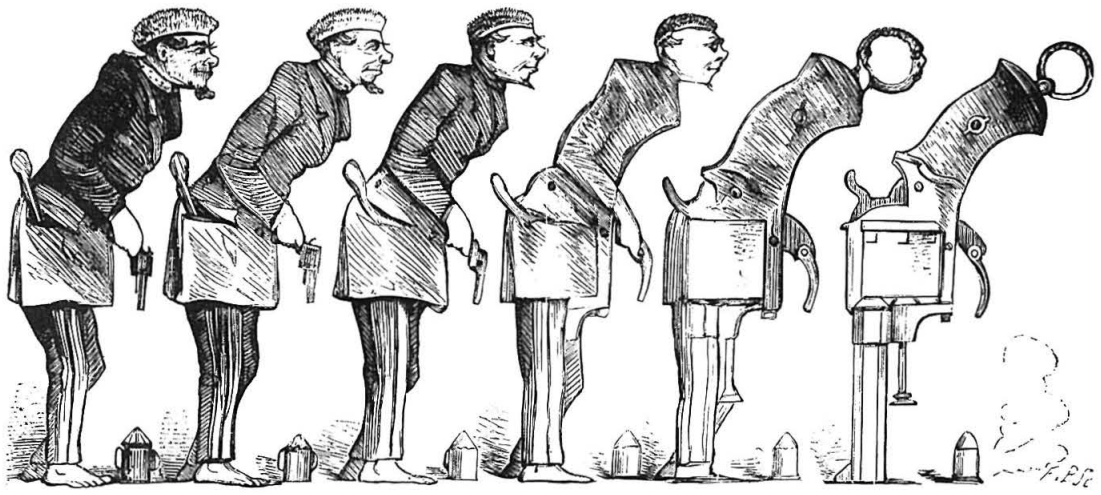


FIG. 12.16. George Du Maurier: "The Insect World." (1870).



PUT ON A TAIL COAT, STAND ON THE [illegible], DRAW YOUR BREATH AND WAVE YOUR HANDS GENTLY UP AND DOWN FOR A FEW GENERATIONS. BY AN EXTENSION OF MR. DARWIN'S THEORY YOU WILL GRADUALLY FIT YOURSELF FOR INDEPENDENT VOLITATION. (THIS PLAN REQUIRES MUCH PATIENCE AND SELF-DENIAL.)

FIG. 12.17. George Du Maurier: "Suggestions for Aerial Navigation" (1871).



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMED BURGLAR.

FIG. 12.18. "The Development of the Armed Burglar" (1883).

class *Punch* imitator started a series called "Metamorphoses by a Maniac," whereby a woman in a bustle is transformed into a camel, a chignon into a cockatoo, and a tiered skirt into a pine tree—little satires on the fashions of the time.[25] In the same year, the *Fliegende Blätter* published its first "Development after Darwin," and it was turning objects into people at regular intervals thereafter and throughout the 1880s. There is no discernible pattern or limit to the mutations of objects, animals, and persons into or out of each other: it was the everyday world, but animated, unhinged, magicked by the spirit of Darwin, an intersection and fusion of origins and destinies, pasts and futures.

Once the trick was discovered, it was not hard to imitate. It quickly became something of a cliché in several European countries, reached Russia in 1878 (*Strekoza,* no. 6), and did not exhaust its appeal until the 1890s. A long-"hidden" theory of biological evolution became the pretext for the divulgence of the "secret" caricatural procedures, which even the unskilled could attempt, and which allowed for the most absurd propositions. It is as if the caricaturist had undertaken to imagine some of those mysterious "numberless transitional links" that Darwin found missing from the fossil record; and if Darwin himself, in a fanciful flight, could "see no difficulty" in a race of bears turning eventually into whales,[26] why should the caricaturist not turn a fly into an elephant? Or fuse, in the monistic (Haeckelian) philosophical mode of the time, vegetables and people, things and animals, inorganic and organic matter—monk into a mushroom, teapot into heron, locomotive into dandy? At this stage we have arrived at a form of graphic absurdism guided by semiconscious association such as inspired the surrealists. The cartoonist is the parodist of freshly discovered historical laws, which, even if probable or scientifically provable, must appear fantastic and incredible to the layman. If we are required to deduce the whole of human history from an animal, a skeletal fragment, a fossil, a stone, an inanimate thing, then any kind of evolutionary concatenation is possible.

With more internal logic, people turn into the objects they habitually use, and vice versa: a billiard player becomes his cue; a compass becomes an engineer; a thief, a revolver (Fig. 12.18); a bean, a peasant; a botanist, a watering-can; an "aesthetic" couple transcend themselves into the porcelain pot they seek to "live up to." The process becomes mechanical, a predictable "tour de farce," but it is all part of the "thingification" of consciousness, the concern that with the quickening tempo of industrialization and mechanical rationalization of production, humankind will be superseded by machine and mechanical products, that people will become interchangeable with and indistinguishable from things. Darwin and industrialization collide and coalesce. And the person-object transformation works simultaneously in both directions: the phonograph becomes the listener, as the listener becomes the phonograph (Fig. 12.19).

Some of the more interesting transformations have a moral twist. The animal lover James A. Shepherd shows how a poor old carriage horse, driven to death, turns into cat's meat (Fig. 12.20). A stereotypical racist application was to turn a Jew into a vicious vulture.[27] In a rare political application, the rear view of an "honest citizen" was turned, via the face formed by creases on the seat

25. *Judy,* August 24, 1872.
26. Darwin 1968, 215, 341.
27. *Moonshine,* September 12, 1891, p. 124, by Shepherd.



FIG. 12.19. "The Phonograph Is Making Such Rapid Strides to Perfection That We Anticipate This Probable Result" (1890).

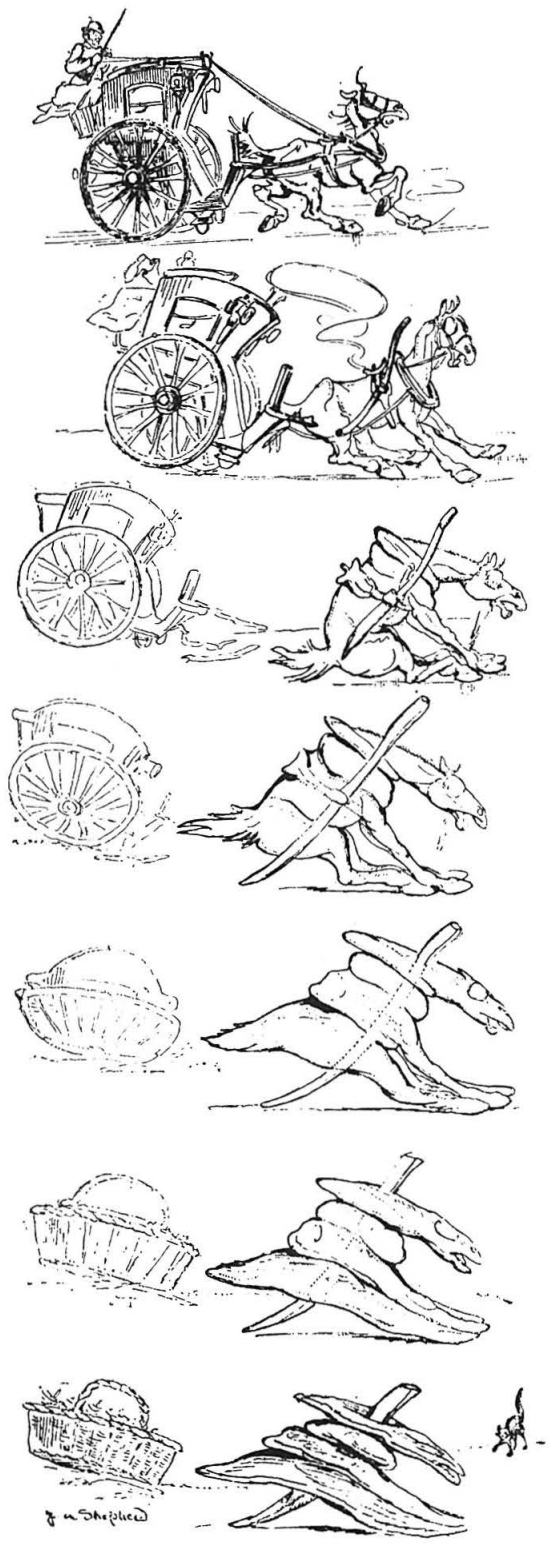


FIG. 12.20. James A. Shepherd: "Cat's-Meat.—A Moral of Cheapside" (1890).

of his pants (the idea must derive from Busch),[28] into the wild-looking head of a social democrat (Fig. 12.21).

The artist at this point claims to command not only the appearances of nature but also the representation of nature-in-history, almost the process of history itself. By supplying, metaphorically, missing links in the fossil record, the artist asks at each intervening stage of the transformation, "Is this still a human being, or is it already something else? Is this still an object, or is it already a human being—or is it a totally different object? If both human and object at once, how much of each?" Such questions had been asked in a court of law by Charles Philipon, caricaturist and publisher, through drawings which E. H. Gombrich has treated as exemplary for the study of "matching" in pictorial representation.[29] When charged with lèse-majesté, with insulting the image and therefore person of the king by representing him as a pear (*poire,* also meaning "fathead" or "prick"), Philipon showed the transformation in four stages, just as in the later "Darwinian" metamorphoses, and asked the court, "Which is king and which is pear, and when? and for which am I to be punished?" (Fig. 12.22).

The novel idea of the "Darwinians" was to extend to the whole form, and to inanimate objects as opposed to animals, what Lavater had already presented in the 18th century, in his famous *Essays on Physiognomy,* as the physiognomic manifestation of a moral and biological evolution. Lavater illustrated a frog's head progressing into an Apollonian human profile and a child's head gradually changing into that of an old man. The latter concept, which was refined and moralized by Chodowiecki and Lichtenberg in 1778,[30] resurfaces in the 1890s in an advertisement for Cassell's *New Popular Educator,* which traces the diverging physiognomies of a child who passes through life honorably by reading the Cassell's series or, alternatively, chooses the opposite path, descending through ignorance into Vice, Misery, and Beggary (Fig. 12.23). This graphic was famous enough to become frequently the subject of parody, as by one of the new cheap funny papers, which tried to distance itself from the "penny-dreadful" by showing the different effects of the rival literatures (Fig. 12.24).

28. *The Knopp Trilogy* (Busch 1959, 3:89); see Fig. 11.44.
29. Gombrich 1960, 344.
30. See Kunzle 1973, 396 (fig. 13-6).

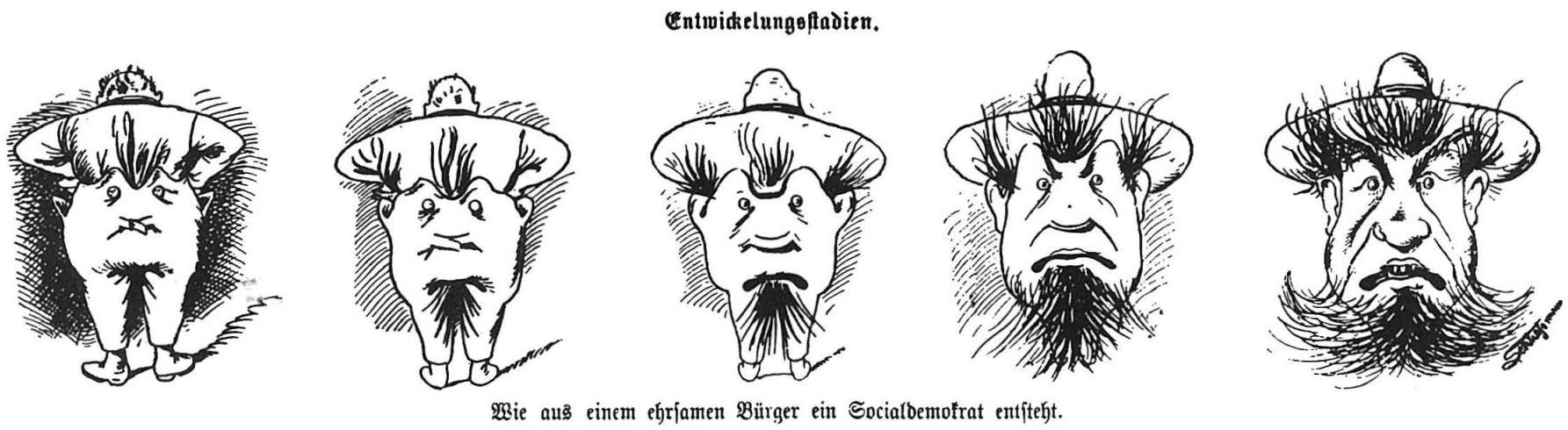


FIG. 12.21. Hans Schliessmann: "Stages of Development" (1877).
"How a Social Democrat arises out of a respectable citizen."

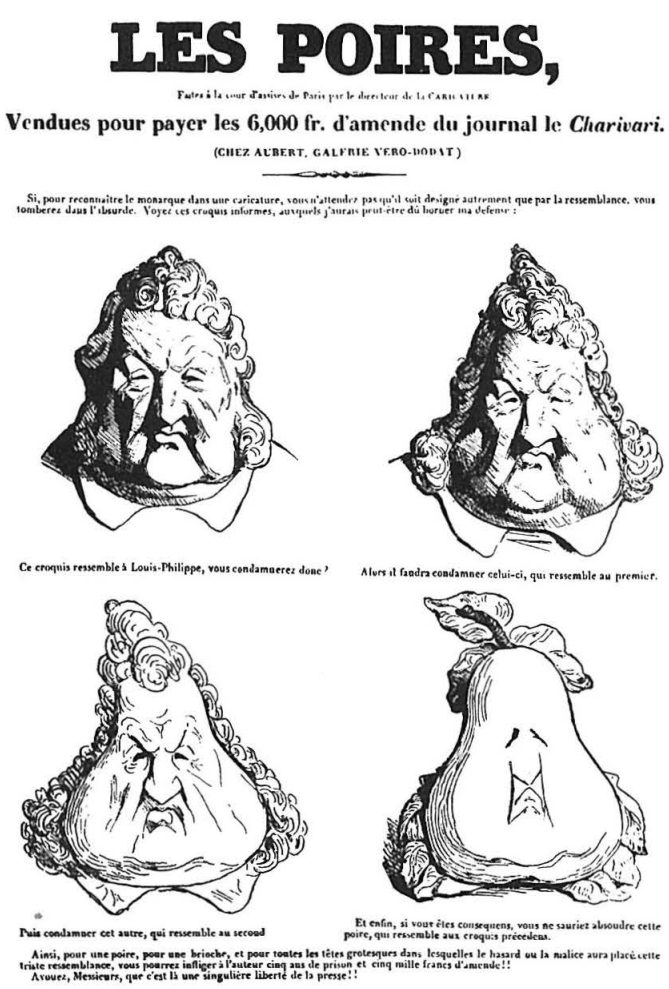


FIG. 12.22. Charles Philipon: "Pears, Made in the Courtroom by the Director of *La Caricature,* Sold to Pay the 6,000 Franc Fine Imposed on the *Charivari* Paper" (1831/1834).
It is absurd to expect only resemblance in the caricature of the king. See these crude sketches, to which I might have limited my defense: "[1] This sketch resembles Louis Philippe, would you condemn it? [2] Then you would have to condemn this one, which resembles the first. [3] Then this one too, which resembles the second. [4] And finally, to be consistent, you could not absolve this pear, which resembles the previous sketches . . ."

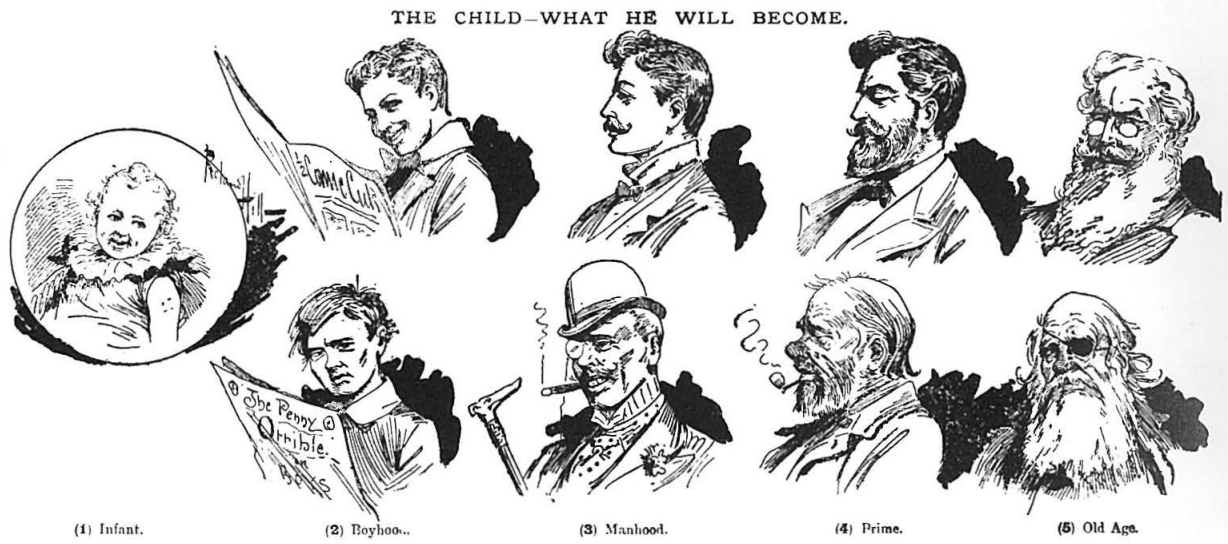


FIG. 12.24. "The Child—What He Will Become" (1890).

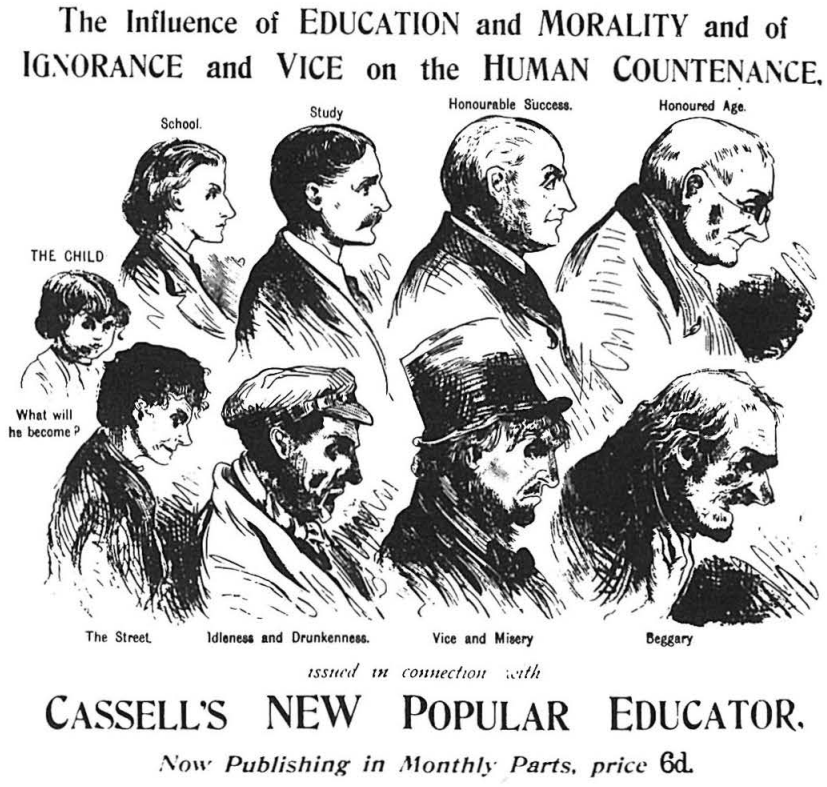


FIG. 12.23. Frederick Barnard: "Diagram Illustrating the Influence of Education and Morality and of Ignorance and Vice on the Human Countenance" (Poster advertising Cassell's *New Popular Educator,* late 1800s).

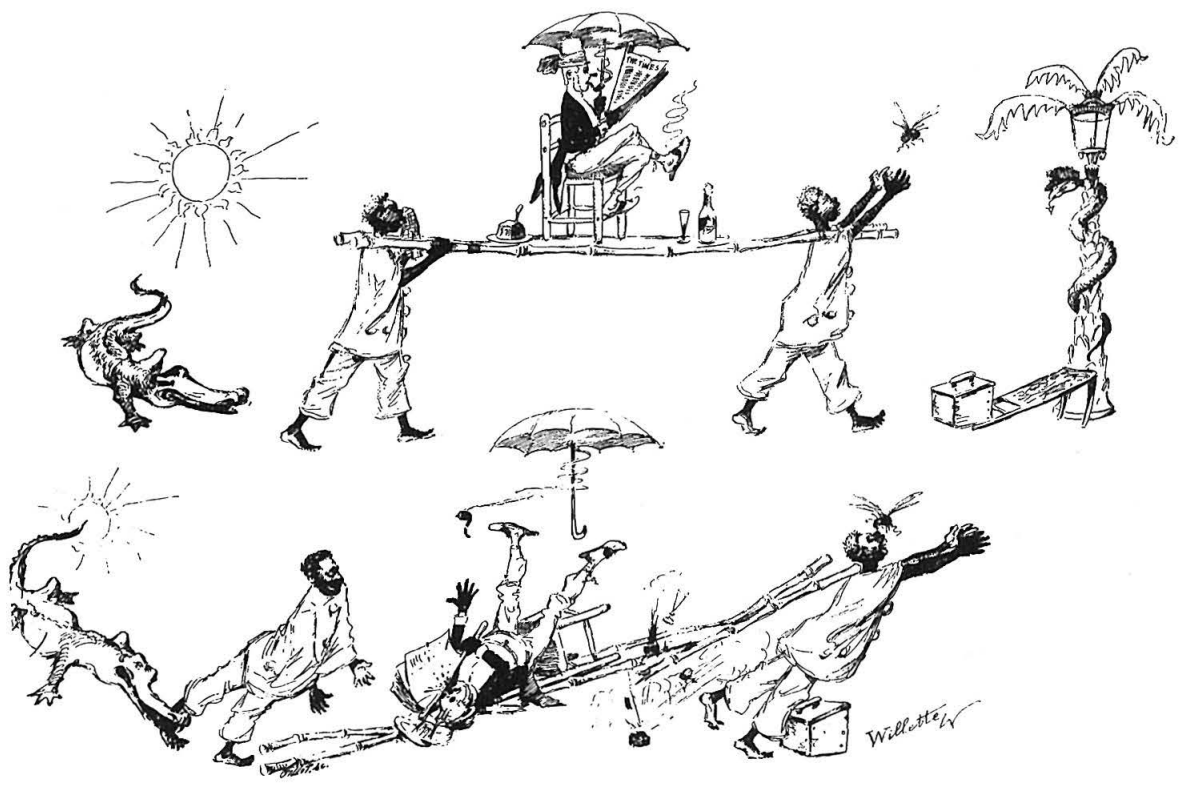


FIG. 12.25. Adolphe Willette: "John Bull in the Congo" (1884).



FIG. 12.26. W. A. Wellner: "The Black Side of Colonial Policies" (1896).
"Africa weighs upon the repose of Europe like a nightmare."

Imperialism in Africa: Wild Beasts and Natives, Explorers and Artists

The theory of Darwin, vulgarized by social Darwinists under the slogan "Survival of the Fittest," was used to justify war, social suppression, and imperialism. The great wave of colonization that propelled the various nations of Europe into a race for Africa brought the comic strip for the first time into the international political arena, a domain hitherto reserved to the single cartoon. Like imperialism itself, the strips relating to it are a Pan-European and American phenomenon, with the major countries under review, Britain, France, and Germany, as well as the United States, contributing their share. It is both fitting and ironic that in a world economy of cutthroat competition the comic strip itself should become a commercial property that magazines in one country found worth stealing from foreigners who represented not so much direct competition as a precious resource to be used against the domestic rival. Publishers no less than businessmen operated in Africa like freebooters, in defiance of international copyright law, which was impossible to enforce. They sought to cut their operating costs to the bone, and to get their raw materials for the lowest possible price or, if possible, for free.

The Darwinian struggle for survival is now acted out in Africa, even in the American strips. It is an elemental two- or three-way struggle involving white colonists, wild animals, and natives. The outcome is not predictable. The white man seldom wins outright: at best he escapes; at worst he is captured and humiliated,

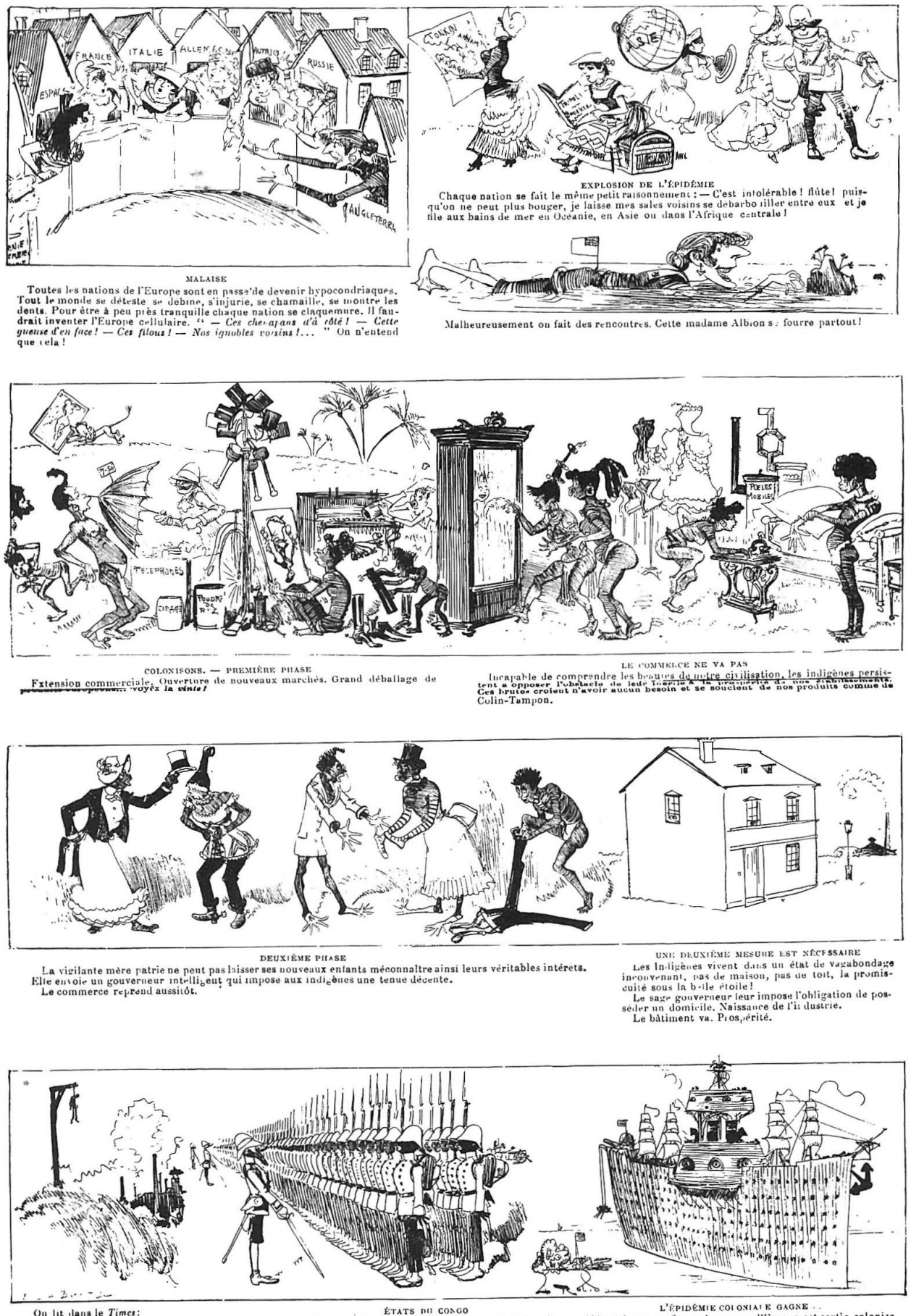


FIG. 12.27. Albert Robida: "Colonization Epidemic" (1886). MALAISE. The hypochondriac, mutually hostile European nations. EXPLOSION OF THE EPIDEMIC. Off for a rest cure in Oceania, Asia, or Central Africa. / Madam Albion is encountered everywhere! / COLONIZATION. FIRST PHASE. Wonderful expansion of new markets. / TRADE SLUGGISH. The ignorant brutes don't give a damn for our products. / SECOND PHASE. The vigilant mother country sends a governor to impose decent clothing. Trade picks up. / A SECOND MEASURE BECOMES NECESSARY. The natives are brought from their improper, promiscuous vagabond state into regular housing. Industry takes off. / The *Times* says: Our colony of ***(Oceania), barely a dozen years old, has achieved unheard-of prosperity. We hanged the son of the reigning king yesterday, and have only three dozen natives left, barbarians destined to perish of hunger in the jungle. / STATES OF THE CONGO. In the Congo, ignorant of the benefits of Krupp and military service, thousands of natives will be thrown against their neighbors. / THE COLONIAL EPIDEMIC VICTORIOUS. America colonizes Monaco; Australian ships are in the Seine.

although it is rare that he is shown being killed. Very few strips follow the straight patriotic line of the political cartoons; to judge by the comic strips, the political philosophy of the lower middle classes was far from one of uniformly simpleminded jingoism, as has been supposed. Morally and politically, the strips offer a very mixed, often skeptical view of imperialism, which corresponds to the broad spectrum and confusion of opinion among the lower classes generally. As many strips condemn as condone the process. It is true that the specific target of this condemnation may be the national rival, whose defeat and humiliation are applauded (Fig. 12.25); but the self-critical view is not lacking now, any more than it was earlier (cf. Cham [Fig. 3.12] and Marie Duval [Fig. 13.8]). By the 1890s, infighting among rival imperialist powers as well as native resistance had turned Africa into a European nightmare that seemed to parody a famous painting by Henry Fuseli (Fig. 12.26).

The historical forces behind the new imperialism and its appalling results become major critical themes of the comic strips, as sketched out, loosely but cogently, in Robida's "Colonization Epidemic" (Fig. 12.27). The little community of European nations is overcrowded and quarrelsome, with Britain, in the smallest house, gesticulating the most wildly and with the longest arms of all. The nations pack their various bags and make for distant resorts, especially Africa, where they assiduously peddle to the as-



FIG. 12.28. Camileff: "Let's Civilize Africa!" (1893).
Yes, my darling little niggers, good white brother brings you civilization...in bottles!... / Here you are, and the best quality! / The cup of civilization runneth over. / The Negroes register its benefits. / Civilization in four motions.—One! / Two!! / Three!!! / Four!!!!

tonished natives such useless knickknacks as shoe polish, corsets, and umbrellas. Local recalcitrants and hierarchies are wiped out and native troops coerced into war with neighboring colonies or tribes so that civilization can be imposed on "thousands of beings vegetating in the most stagnant tranquillity." The sequence ends on an accurate projection of the United States as the next transcontinental imperialist power, taking over Monaco with a huge gunboat "while Europe is away."

This strip appeared in an otherwise apolitical journal of entertainment. Indeed, so great was the pressure to protest colonial practices that it broke through the facade of frivolity and innocence, which until then had been considered a political or commercial necessity, and even, on occasion, through the caricatural facade itself. Thus a typical, apolitical lower-class comic journal like *L'Image pour Rire,* in a style perfectly serious, right down to the representatives of the foreign powers (who are positively idealized), felt obligated to make the most forthright condemnation of imperialism: civilization is shown as coming to the natives in bottles of alcohol, which leaves the natives prostrate, ripe for enslavement and cruel slaughter by massive armaments (Fig. 12.28).

As a genre dedicated to the comedy of material objects and visual incongruities, the comic strip could hardly fail to stress the absurdity of "primitives" rigged out in the technological and sartorial finery of an "advanced" people and turned into human advertisements for consumer products (Fig. 12.29). The strip, apart from mocking the pointlessness and laboriousness of the race for colonial markets, parodies the famous (and racist) Pears soap advertisements of the time, which claimed to "cleanse" the savages of their blackness and barbarism. It was no exaggeration to represent the magazine in which the strip appeared, *Pick-Me-Up* (the

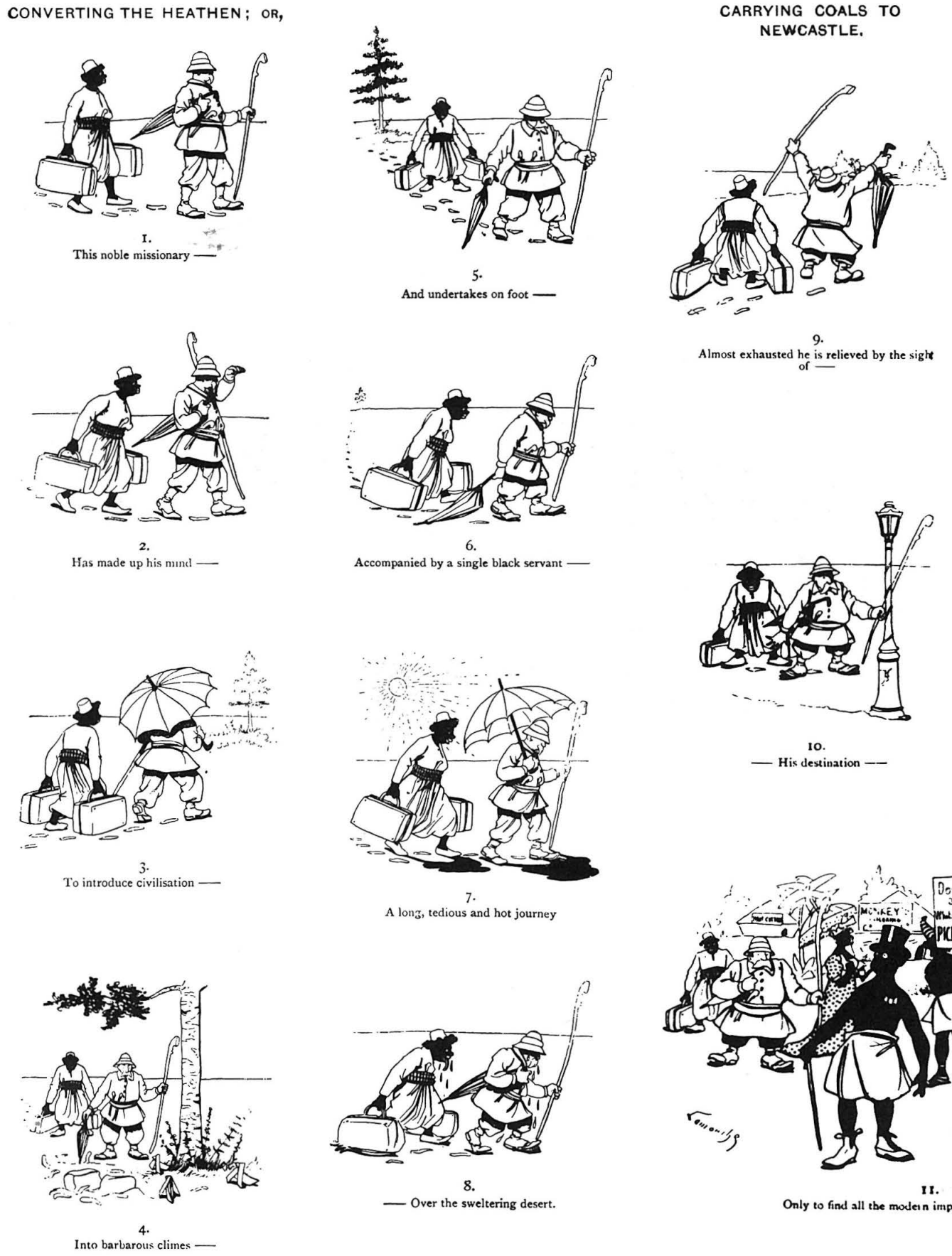


FIG. 12.29. Lamouche: "Converting the Heathen; or, Carrying Coals to Newcastle" (1893).

very name connotes a drug), as penetrating the English African colonies along with soap. The Pears soap advertisements, in all apparent seriousness, imagined the savage worshiping not just the product but also the advertisements for it, written, as if by a god, in huge letters on desert rocks to the slogan "The Formula of British Conquest." European consumerism was inscribed on the people, on their environment, on their history and art: as a page from an Austrian comic journal shows, Wasmuth's Pyramidal Corn Plasters have conquered not only the local population but the pyramid their ancestors built as well (Fig. 12.30).

Art set in Africa (cartoon, comic strip, and painting) aimed to conquer the appearance of Africa and the Africans, much as colonialists conquered their resources and labor. In his "conquering" mission (a role he had filled since Hogarth was arrested as a spy for drawing Calais Gate), the artist perceived himself as he was perceived, as an invader, to be treated accordingly. He is saved by the very skills and instruments that fitted him for his mission in the first place, and to him and his art the natives delightedly surrender themselves and their most precious resources (Fig. 12.31), of which the elephant tusks (*défenses* in French) here are a symbol, as the elephant is of the African continent itself, now rendered defenseless (*défense*-less). But not all Africans are so gullible; they are also capable of (literally) bursting through their artistic stereotype (Fig. 12.32). Back home, it is the horns of a bull that thus disrupt the landscape painter's canvas.

Artistic magic in Africa, forcefully visualized also by American strips of this period, is akin to scientific magic. Not only can the artist-explorer, unarmed except for a magnifying glass, that instrument of schoolboy science, overcome the king of beasts and symbol of Africa, the lion, but he can set two of them to fight and

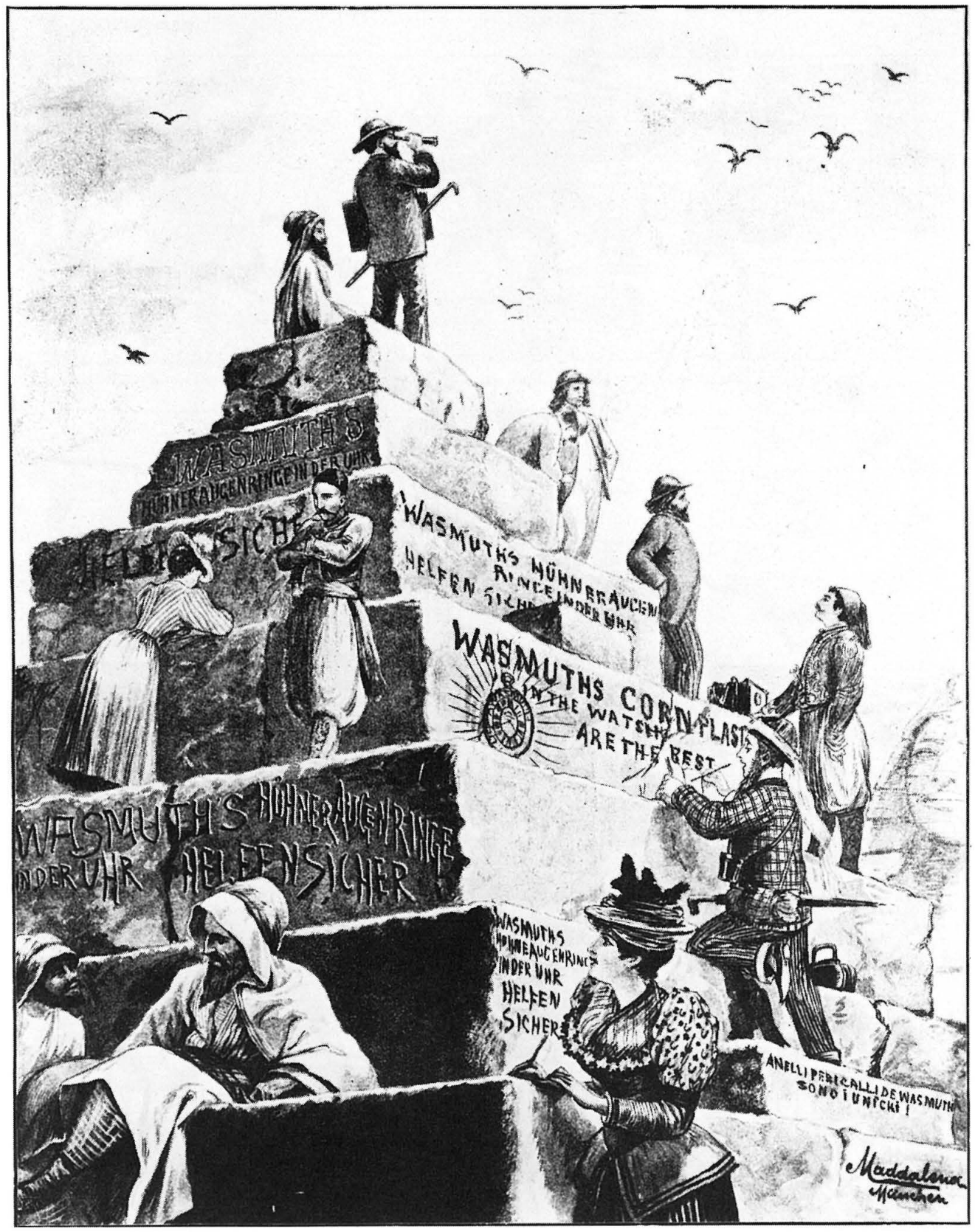


FIG. 12.30. King Cheops and Wasmuth (advertisement for Wasmuth's "Pyramidal" Corn Plasters, 1894).

devour each other, in imitation of the old imperialist strategy of divide and rule (Fig. 12.33). The white man here gets them by the tail (other strips, for instance those of Busch, develop this theme), just as the whites first got Africa, by the tail so to speak, through the Cape of Good Hope.

The lion—king of beasts and sport of kings, symbol of Africa, its savagery, its danger, its tamability by superior willpower—recurs in many strips, especially those of Oberländer. The lion became a favorite zoo and circus animal; like Africa, once savage and now an exotic attraction, the beast performed for the pleasure of Europeans. The natives, too, were exhibited like zoo animals. Art was now an act of will as well as skill, which we see in the Oberländer lion tamer who uses the lions to paint their own cage. An angry lion is baffled by his own caricature; his own ferocity, captured by the caricaturist *as such,* captures him (Fig. 12.34). In a mythic topos going back to Pliny and recurring in the comic strip of this period, the artist, master of natural appearances, can deceive nature itself. Oberländer shows a lion rushing at an artist who has erected his enormous panoramic canvas in the desert by an oasis; then suddenly it stops, baffled by the sudden disappearance of both artist and oasis, seeing only the empty desert painted instantly on the canvas.[31]

The trickster artist replicates not only natural appearances but even nature itself. In a Munchausenesque exploit, the colonialist deceives and captures an ostrich (Fig. 12.35). The trick here is of course that of the caricaturist, Gustave Verbeck (who became a virtuoso illusionist), fooling the eye of the human beholder, which is willingly fooled; no ostrich would be so foolish.

The comic strips set in Africa represent an international phenomenon, in which the United States, then just beginning to assert itself as an international imperialist power, as well as Spain, struggling to hold on to the last remnants of a once-vast empire, participated. Ironically, it is a caricaturist from Spain, a nation too weak to enlarge its claims on Africa, who leaves us an account of the colonial experience so extensive (over two hundred drawings) that we cannot recount and analyze it here. In brief, and to judge by the pages we reproduce here (see Fig. 14.4), the colonialist experience is a nightmare.

31. *Oberländer Album,* 7th ed. (Munich, n.d.), 4:38–39; 7:28–29, 35; 10: 53–54; 8:52–53.

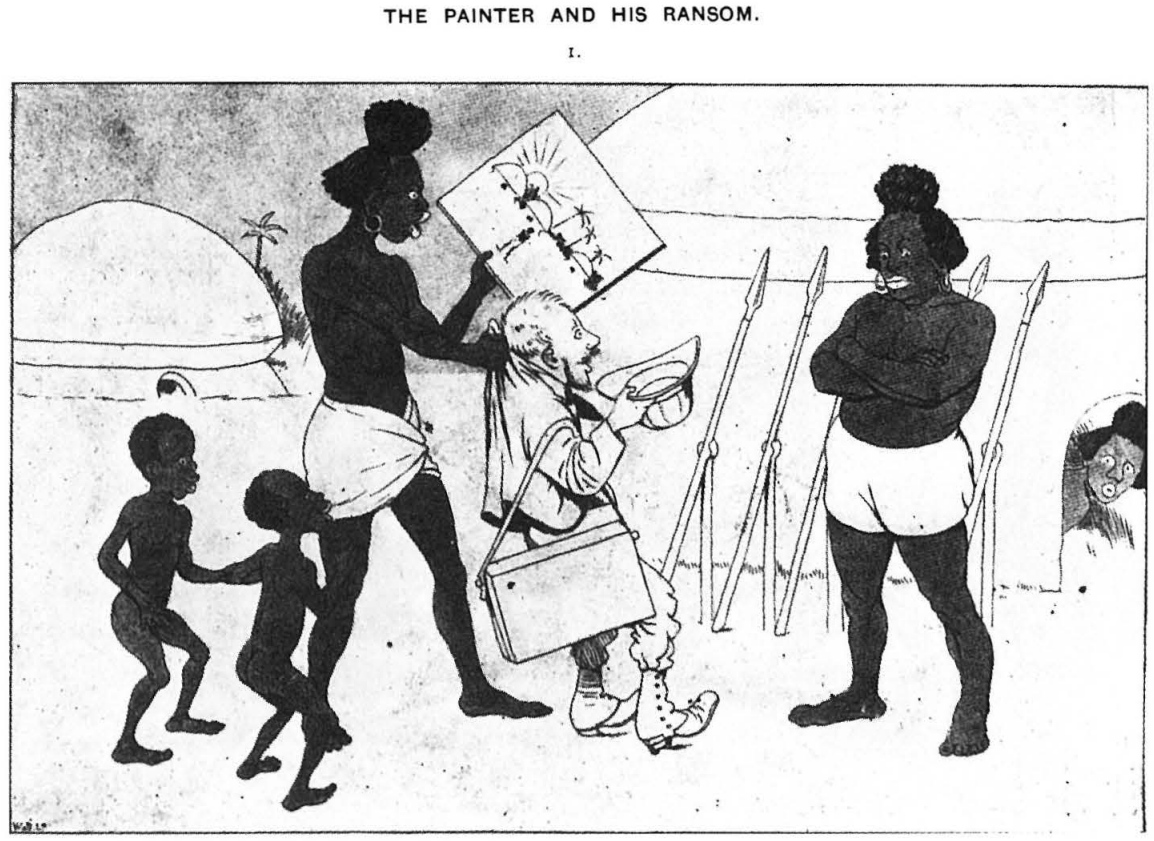


FIG. 12.31. Alfred Schmitt: "The Painter and His Ransom" (1892).

TO THE VERY LIFE.



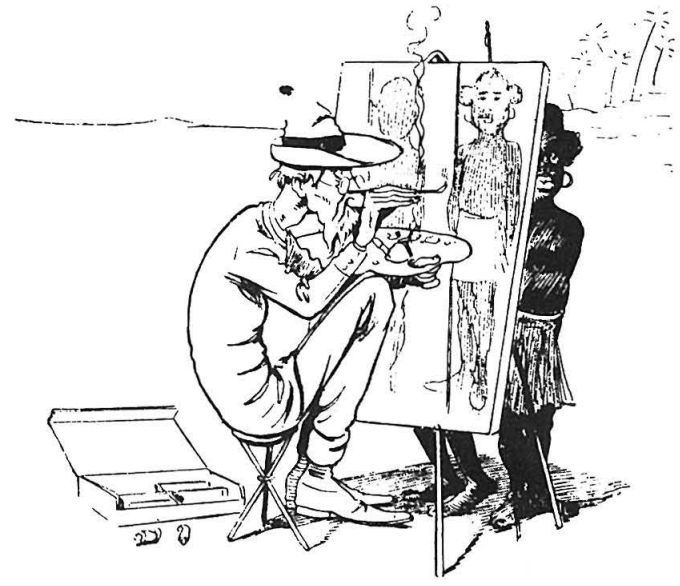
1.
At work in the Tropics



2.
Attending to the lights and shades.



3.
Proceeding apace.



4.
The finishing touches.



5.
Pleased with the result.



6.
Life-like beyond his expectation.

FIG. 12.32. Angel Pons: "To the Very Life" (1892).

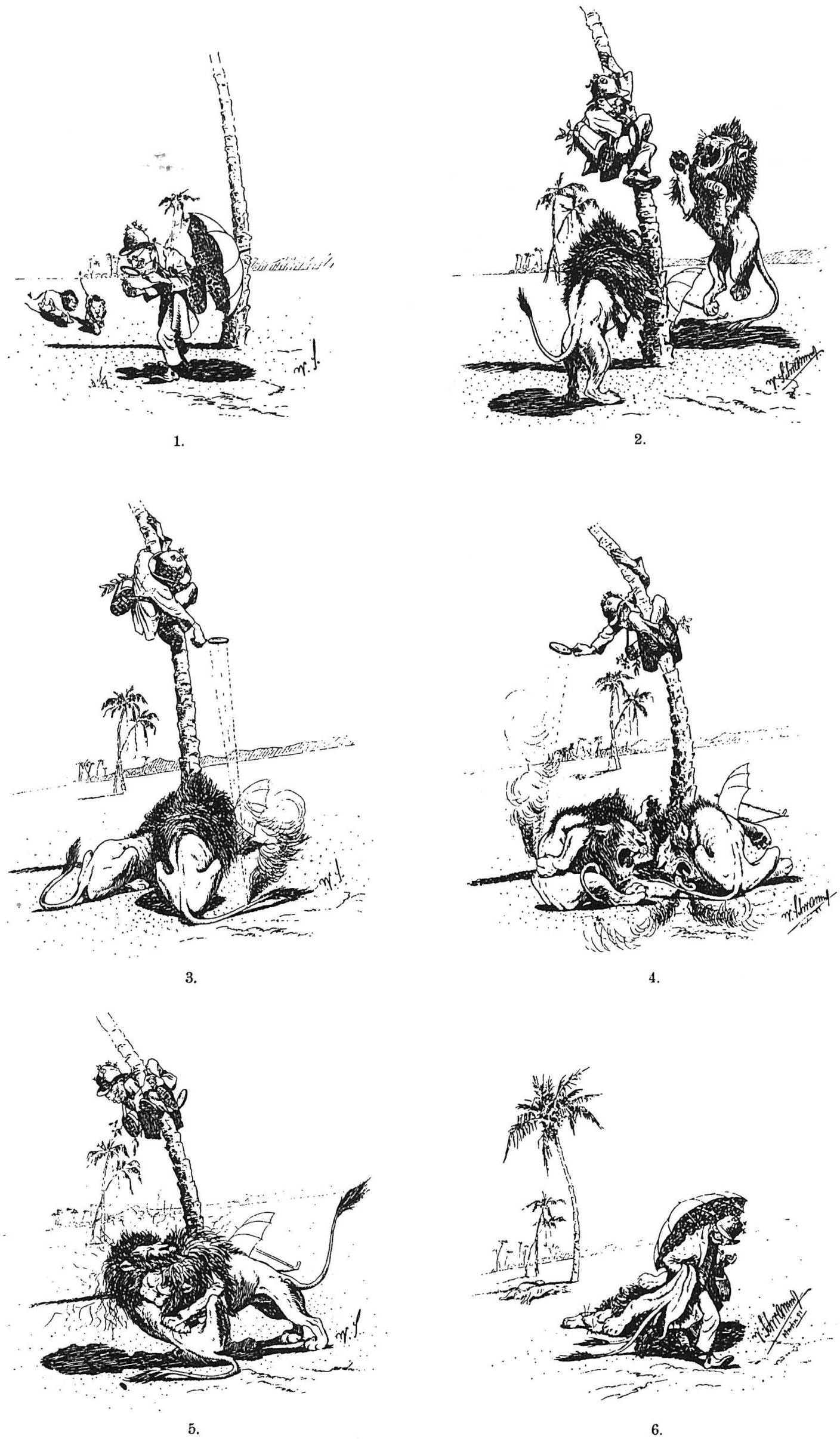


FIG. 12.33. A. Schramm: "The Magnifying Glass Saves a Life" (1893).

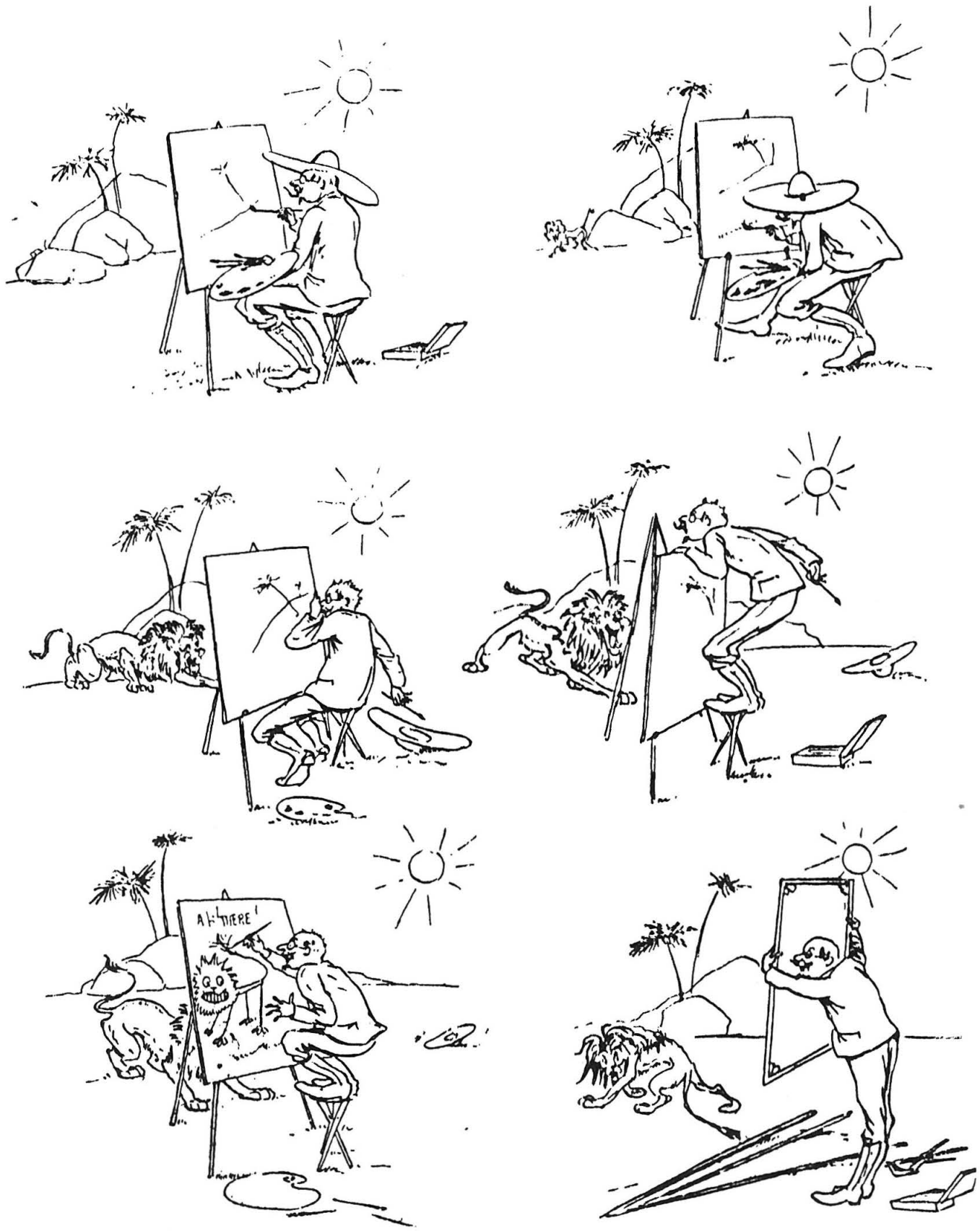
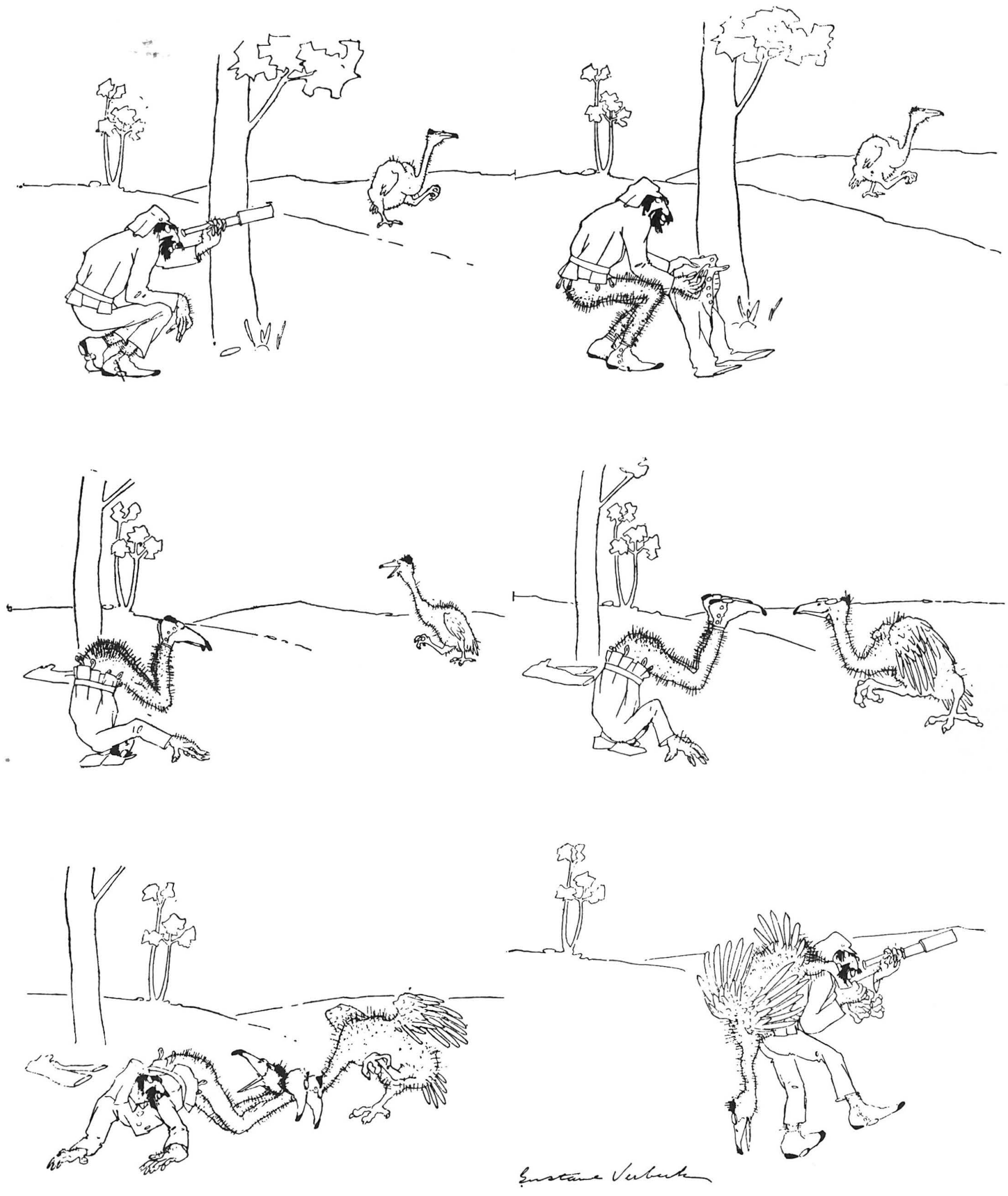


FIG. 12.34. "The Power of Caricature" (1887).

In its later, post–World War Two, phase, the comic strip best representative of imperialist ideology, that of Disney, is essentially about the quest for treasure, the product of the Third World; in the phase we deal with here, it is about the resistance and taming of the wild inhabitants, human and animal, of the undeveloped world. There is trickery in both phases; in Disney, the trickery is a moral one; here, it is graphic. Was the imperialist process and the rhetoric used to defend it, then, only so much trickery or "sleight-of-word"? Was the artist, too, a hoaxer, a conjuror using animals and savages as the instruments of his illusionism, just as generals used them to bring about the "necessary" metamorphosis of civilization? If domestic violence diminished in the late 1880s and 1890s (as some of our strips suggest), it was not so much eliminated as exported in the form of imperialism. Hunt the lion and the black instead of your class and national enemy. Africa was a safety valve for overpopulation and overproduction, for social overload generally.

Stylistically, caricature was prepared; it had "gone native"—become simpler, more primitive-looking—in the 1870s and '80s. It attempted the reconquest or recovery of childhood, a rejuvenation paralleling and intersecting with the high art of Gauguin, then with fauvism and Picasso. Imperialist states likewise aimed to absorb "infant states" in order to replenish their own impoverished economic and moral resources.

The return to evolutionary roots was for some caricaturists a conscious process. Willette's "preface" to a collection of his picture-stories, an explanation of their origin ironically dedicated to his schoolteacher (see Fig. I.3), is composed of drawings showing how the child's first clumsily formed letters, *a* and *b,* grow into a baby (*bé bé* into *bébé,* or "baby"), who turns into a moon, which is smudged as by the shadow of a streaking black cat, and thence into an already tainted child Pierrot. Practice verticals likewise turn into a stick figure, who becomes a Pierrot, violent, artistic, and cruel: the evolution of caricature, and the evolution of man.



Un procédé vraiment ingénieux pour capturer l'autruche, — dessin de Gustave Verbeck.

FIG. 12.35. Gustave Verbeck: "A Truly Ingenious Method of Capturing the Ostrich" (1893).

CHAPTER 13

ENGLAND, 1847–1895

Man in the Moon *and Other Comic Periodicals (1847–1867)*

The comic strip in 19th-century England into the 1870s and even beyond is a curious patchwork with no overall design and no dominant personalities. We have already noted the reluctance of the major comic artists and magazines to engage in narrative. The search for new formats summarized in Chapter 1 led to a search for new themes, which should be correlated with the popular literature of the period such as Dickens, whose early work with its episodic, knockabout comedy has, structurally and aesthetically, certain comic strip–like qualities (as for example Mr. Jingle in *Pickwick,* who speaks in breathless captions).

The first major repository of comic strips in England, the *Man in the Moon,* eschewed the *Punch* format, preferring the older sixty-four-page sixpenny-monthly design in small octavo or pocket-book (five-by-four-inch) size, with which Cruikshank and others had experimented in previous decades. Edited by the polymathic popular writer Albert Smith, it attracted some of the better graphic artists: Dickens's illustrator Phiz (H. K. Browne), Kenny Meadows, Henry George Hine, Thomas Mayhew—and Cham. Unlike *Punch,* the *Man in the Moon* carried a cut on almost every page, but its most distinctive feature was a remarkable pull-out plate, which folded five times horizontally and vertically to fit the tiny dimensions of the magazine. This peculiar outsize plate was designed to accommodate the new Töpfferian narrative.

The magazine started in the first issue (January 1847) with *The Life and Death of Don Guzzles of Carrara—A Panoramic Tragedy,* a self-contained tale in twelve scenes by Thomas Henry Nicholson. It is conventional romantic parody, with an illegitimate serenader of the fair daughter of the Baron von Blunderbootzen falling off his ladder and being thrown into jail, where he is reduced to eating his boots. He grows thin enough to escape by slipping through the prison bars and leaps to his death on the ground below. Some of the designs and motifs are fairly close to those of Cham, and indeed, in the absence of credit to Nicholson, the whole was attributed to the famous French artist, recently arrived in England. An elaborate apology at the end of the second issue clarifies the matter and announces the next "panoramic history" as Cham's work. Obviously autobiographical, *The Foreign Gentleman in London; or, The English Adventures of M. Vanille* (for more on Cham, see Chapter 3) ran only as long as Cham remained in England, however, and the demand for more of the kind was satisfied in the fourth number with a scenario and designs by editor Albert Smith, drawn on wood by Henry George Hine.

Mr. Crindle's Rapid Career upon Town is a remarkable effort in many ways, not least its length, running in nine parts and 140 drawings through to the end of the year—a little comic strip–installment novel. The work of a writer whose artistic skill has passed unnoticed, *Mr. Crindle* transcends Töpffer and Cham in its montage and use of pictography, *pars pro toto,* hyperbole, variable framing, and viewpoint (Fig. 13.1). In its admixture of disparate designs and effects, in the breakneck speed of its narration, it looks forward to Doré—who must have learned directly from it, for Philipon asked him to copy it in the *Journal pour Rire.* The changes Doré wrought in the narrative have already been noted, and we cannot retell the whole crazy-quilt story here, but its dreamlike and nightmarish character, to which the pictorial fragmentation largely contributes, gives it a place apart in this history. It is a wonderful amalgam of Töpffer and Cham, the jokes and tricks of Cruikshank, and perhaps the whole tradition of the caricature interregnum, wrought into narrative. *Mr. Crindle*'s popularity is attested by the demand for back numbers of the magazine; the reissue of the plates in a "stitched wrapper," or album (which I have not found); reviews of the magazine in the press (the phrases "inimitably ludicrous" and "grotesquely comic"[1] surely refer to *Crindle* rather than the other unremarkable cuts); and the quick succession of other, shorter, stories down to the September 1849 issue, so that of the first twenty-one issues, only one does not have a narrative strip (no. 18, which substitutes a series of parodies from Royal Academy paintings, including a "supposed portrait of Mr. Crindle").

The innovation was impossible to sustain in the long run, though. The plate was simply too expensive to produce and fold in by hand, it caused difficulties in the binding, and it was liable to tear and spoil, whether in the display stall, where it was vulnerable to curious fingering, or at home, where it was at the mercy of childish or adult carelessness. A lengthy notice in issue no. 21 explains some of this reasoning and tries to justify the suspension of

1. Cited in an advertisement in *Illustrated London News,* September 16, 1848.

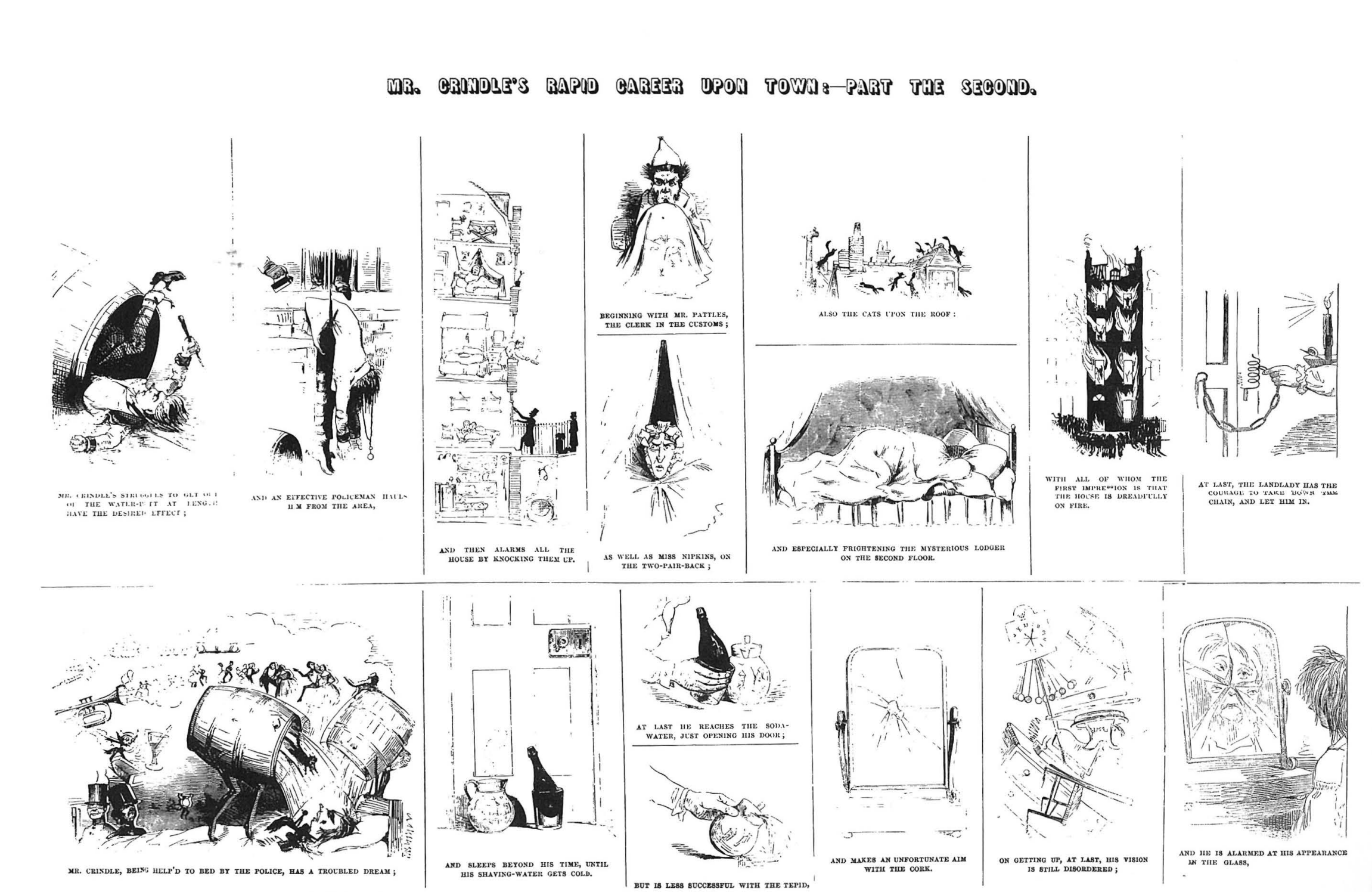


FIG. 13.1. Albert Smith and H. G. Hine: *Mr. Crindle's Rapid Career upon Town* (1847). Part 2.

the novelty, supposedly "at the request of a very considerable number of our subscribers." The editorial offer to compensate by raising the number of illustrations in the body of the magazine did not amount to much. Like so many magazines of the period, the *Man in the Moon* was probably financially shaky anyway, despite its boasts of wide readership. The value of the *Crindle* plates may be judged by the price of the album: two shillings, or almost half that of the nine full volumes into which they had originally been inserted. The magazine survived the suspension of the folding plate only ten months.

Mr. Crindle's first successor bears the hallmark of the same Smith-Hine collaboration and is quite as funny and graphically ingenious. *The Surprising Adventures of Mr. Touchango Jones, an Emigrant* was run in five parts during the first five months of 1848, when revolutionary upheavals all over Europe made emigration an attractive alternative—although the reason for adventurer Jones's own flight appears strictly personal: wife trouble. As the story evolves, however, his emigration becomes a fantasy bid for personal power, with its own political dimension which cannot be unconnected with the revolutionary agitation. After mythic visions on the journey (including the Flying Dutchman and a sea serpent), Jones lands on the shores of Quashybungo and immediately chases up a tree an ape that has robbed him of his umbrella. This symbol of civilization saves him from angry lions below, "with which providential escape we leave him to hang by the monkey's tail for thirty days." (The comic strip thus parodies serial novel suspense, something *Mr. Crindle* had done systematically.) When we return, Touchango Jones has fallen among the lions, but he scares them off with a potent weapon: the dreadful "Douglas Jerrold's Newspaper" (that is, *Douglas Jerrold's Shilling Magazine,* a rival publication). This journal also acts as a soporific, though, putting him to sleep, and soon he is captured by savages (Fig. 13.2). Miraculously saved from the caldron, then recaptured, he is discovered with the newspaper upon him, which, because it has campaigned against capital punishment, is enough to condemn him to instant execution. In a classic imperialist denouement, however, Jones is saved by the local queen, who falls in love with him, and the populace hangs his enemy, Bones, the nigger minstrel. And finally, Jones, "in terrific combat," kills the king and is himself proclaimed the new ruler.

This part was published in March 1848, just after the revolution in France, and shows the triumphant Jones taking over the slain king's "crown," which happens to be a pear-shaped bonnet. In the next episode, Quashybungo suddenly becomes France and Jones has acquired the pear-shaped head of king Louis Philippe, rendered famous by countless French caricatures. The prohibition of a banquet, a mob's storming of the royal palace, and the new king's escape duplicate major events of the revolution. But Jones escapes in a rather miraculous, Töpfferian way, via adventures with a whale, enhanced by an albatross and a balloon (from Cremhorne Gardens), which successively scoop him up. An accident to the balloon precipitates him through space, the skylight, and successive stories of his house and back into his bed, where he awakens (was it all a dream?) to be happily reunited with his wife. They resolve never to quarrel again but give themselves up to the unalloyed enjoyment of reading *The Man in the Moon*. This maga-

THE SURPRISING ADVENTURES OF MR. TOUCHANGO JONES, AN EMIGRANT.—PART III.



MR. JONES ON ESCAPING FROM THE CAULDRON, DIRECTLY FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF THE SERENADERS,



WHO, AFTER LOADING HIM WITH CHAINS,



BRING HIM BEFORE HIS MAJESTY THE KING;



BUT THE TYRANT ON BEING TOLD THE NATURE OF THE NEWSPAPER, FOUND UPON THE PRISONER, ORDERS HIM TO HANGED AT ONCE.



IN VAIN DOES MR. JONES ENTREAT THE KING'S ATTENTION TO AN ARTICLE IN THE NUMBER ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.



HIS MAJESTY MERELY TAKES A SIGHT AT IT;



AND A SOLEMN PROCEESSION CONDUCTS THE EMIGRANT TO EXECUTION: THE WAY BEING CLEARED BY THE KING'S BLACK GUARDS;



AFTER WHOM COMES BONES, PLAYING A DEAD MARCH;



SUCDEEDED BY A NATIVE HERALD ANNOUNCING THE CRIME AND PUNISHMENT,



WHO IS FOLLOWED IN TURN BY THE PRISONER, INCITED TO ADVANCE



BY THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF A BENEVOLENT NATIVE.



THE TAG-RAG AND BOB-TAIL CLOSING THE PROCESSION.



ARRIVED AT THE PLACE OF EXECUTION, THE QUEEN SUDDENLY ADVANCES,—ORDERS JONES TO BE SET AT LIBERTY, AND DECLARES HER LOVE FOR HIM;



BUT, THE POPULACE DEMANDING A VICTIM,—



BONES IS HUNG OUT OF HAND,



AND ALL GOES ON WELL, UNTIL THE FELICITY OF THE LOVERS IS INTERRUPTED BY THE APPROACH OF THE JEALOUS MONARCH,



WHOM MR. TOUCHANGO ENGAGES IN TERRIFIC COMBAT;



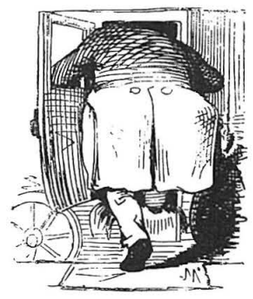
AND THE TYRANT BEING OVERCOME, THE QUEEN FAINTS IN THE ARMS OF MR. JONES, WHO IS PROCLAIMED KING OF QUASHYBUNGO.

FIG. 13.2. Albert Smith and H. G. Hine (attr.): *The Surprising Adventures of Mr. Touchango Jones, an Emigrant* (1848). Part 3.

HOW MY RICH UNCLE CAME TO DINE AT OUR VILLA.—PART III.



AT LENGTH—THANKS TO THE ENERGETIC PLEADING OF MY WIFE, WHO HAS FOLLOWED US TO THE STATION—WE ARE RELEASED.



AND A CAB BEING SUMMONED, MY UNCLE ESSAYS TO ENTER IN VAIN, BY REASON OF HIS OBESITY;



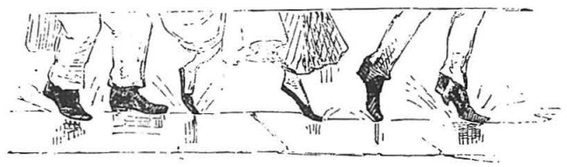
SO THAT HE IS FAIN TO CLIMB TO THE ROOF,



WHICH UNHAPPILY GIVES WAY,



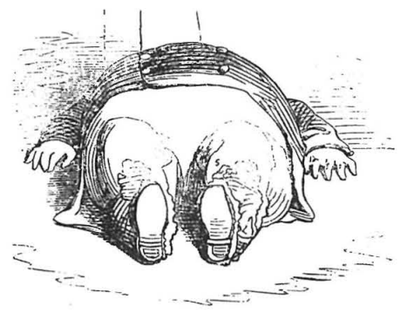
SQUEEZING MY WIFE AND MYSELF OUT OF ALL SHAPE;



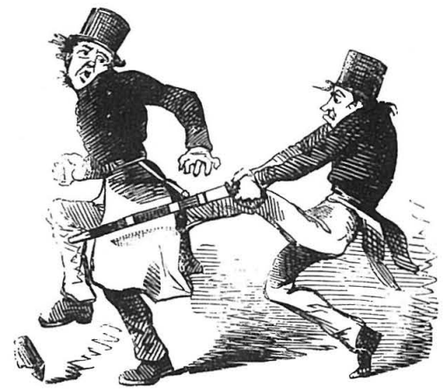
SO THAT WE ARE AT LENGTH OBLIGED TO MAKE OUR WAY ON FOOT.



AT THE DOOR OF THE VILLA, WE FIND THE POLICEMAN WHO LENT HIS COAT TO MY UNCLE, AND WHO ASKS, IN A STERN VOICE, FOR THE EIGHTEEN FIVE POUND NOTES CONTAINED IN THE RIGHT-HAND POCKET THEREOF;



AT THIS UNEXPECTED DEMAND, MY REVERED RELATIVE FAINTS RIGHT AWAY.



BUT, INDIGNANT AT THE ATTEMPTED IMPOSITION, I SNATCH, BY A SUDDEN MOVEMENT, THE POLICEMAN'S CUTLASS;



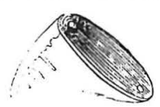
AND FORCING THE CRAVEN MEMBER OF THE FORCE ON HIS KNEES, I MAKE HIM CONFESS THAT THE POCKET IN QUESTION CONTAINED ONLY



PART OF A LEG OF MUTTON WRAPPED UP IN THE LAST WEEK'S "PUNCH,"



A BAD HALF-CROWN,



A DILAPIDATED POCKET-COMB,



AND A DITTO HANDKERCHIEF;



SO THAT WE INDIGNANTLY KICK THE SCOUNDREL INTO THE MIDDLE OF NEXT WEEK;



AND AT LAST GETTING HOME AGAIN—DROWN OUR SORROWS IN THE BOWL.

FIG. 13.3. Albert Smith and H. G. Hine (attr.): *How My Rich Uncle Came to Dine at Our Villa* (1848). Part 3.

zine, meanwhile, had in April "disarmed" the upheavals in France in a series of portraits called "Heroes of the Revolution," which show, in a style reminiscent of Cham, the revolutionaries as children playing at heroics.

The last of the *Man in the Moon* strips, called *How My Rich Uncle Came to Dine at Our Villa* (July–September 1848), reveals a class consciousness and hostility to the police that were certainly enhanced by the revolutionary manifestations (Fig. 13.3). The excessive obesity of the rich uncle, whose girth stands in direct relationship to his economic and social preponderance, cracks the thin veneer of respectability maintained by the poor nephew, the narrator. The uncle's weight collapses the slight floor, walls, and furniture of the house, which boasts the facade of a villa in a wretched dilapidated industrial suburb. The several plagues of rainstorms, blocked chimneys, insects, and dogs and cats are to be understood as both typical of a lower-class environment and a threat to the upper-class individual's comfort—and legacy, which must be the poor nephew's primary concern. Fittingly, these sufferings climax in the ultimate lower-class experience: the brutal arrest and jailing of the uncle (mistaken for a burglar), and of the nephew when he tries to rescue him. It is no accident that the nephew, found bearing his uncle's clothes, is jailed for fraud, that is, intent to impersonate a superior kind of person. The gallery of portraits of fellow prisoners give a sociopolitical panorama of the delinquency so feared by the lower middle classes: there are drunkards, spouse beaters, common criminals, "a personal friend of [Dickens's character from *Oliver Twist*] the late William Sykes, burglar and housebreaker," and a "Chartist patriot" who, although decently dressed, has Sykes's threatening and suspicious air.

The *Man in the Moon,* only moderately radical in its politics, thus expressed its hostility to the revolutionary demands of Chartism; but at the same time it showed an equal or greater hostility to the police who were called on to suppress Chartism. The narrator-nephew takes his revenge on the cop who arrested his uncle, and who compounds his misconduct by trying to swindle them after they are released. The nephew disarms the cop forcibly, exposing his lies and low nature[2] and kicking him "into the middle of next week," in images of a militance unique in the 19th-century comic strip. The finale, showing happy mutual drowning of sorrows in punch (Fig. 13.3), which could be taken as a kind of class conciliation, is offset by a preceding vignette showing the uncle falling through the roof of the cab and "squeezing my wife and myself out of all shape"—in the ancient, class-conscious tradition of the irreconcilability of rich and poor, fat and thin.

The zany sprightliness of the *Man in the Moon* strips, with their rare conjunction of Töpfferishness and 1848, was a flash in the pan. Several magazines followed, carried likewise on the tide of the great political reawakening, but these proved to be short-lived, premature experiments in cheap illustrated journalism, unable to stake out that market below the thriving *Punch,* which would not be viable until the 1860s and '70s. We note their contribution as curiosities and for the sake of completeness.

The *Puppet Show* (March 18, 1848, to 1849), at a penny for ten pages, was one-third the price of *Punch*. Sympathetic to Chartism and revolution, it started its brief existence with a visually uninteresting but politically highly contemptuous "Flight of Louis Philippe." Its chief art-historical merit is the introduction of Gavarni and his "Social Sketches" of low life, badly translated onto wood, to a broader, lower-class readership than that of the sixpenny *Illustrated London News* where he was primarily engaged.

Diogenes, which survived a little longer (1853–1855), at twopence for twelve pages, was more substantial than the *Puppet Show*. Critical of the Crimean War, for which it blamed neo-Napoleonic militarism and British complicity with it, *Diogenes* ran a parody (no. 120) by Matthew Sears of the "Shortly After Marriage" scene of Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode*. Here France is cast as the frivolous countess, who stretches carelessly below a fireplace surmounted by a statuette of the first Emperor Napoleon amid martial emblems; John Bull is the husband, staring morosely into space, over papers on the floor alluding to the "debauchery" of the siege of Sevastopol and the expenses of the war; and Diogenes himself is the conscientious steward, who departs in dismay, his numerous bills for social reform ignored.

The following week Sears started an extensive satire on the career of Louis-Napoléon called *Louis Petit and His Bird! A History More Wonderful than "Whittington and His Cat."* With over eighty drawings in eleven weeks, this series ran at a time of growing dissatisfaction with the interminable siege of Sebastopol.[3] The narrative follows Louis-Napoléon in a brisk and relatively factual way through his various abortive coups, his imprisonment, and his escape to England. Then, after a nine-year lapse and the deposition of Louis Philippe, he arrives in Paris and maneuvers his way into the army's good graces. By the end, France has realized the "Idée Napoléon."

Watts Phillips, the only pupil of George Cruikshank, novelist, dramatist, former writer-artist for *Punch,* and now the principal political cartoonist for *Diogenes,* introduced the comic strip to the magazine in its mixed, pictographic form with "How Mr. T. Square Prepared His Picture for the Academy" (June 1853), a farcical account of the frustration of artistic ambition. William McConnell followed in a comparable vein with "How Mr. Poppleton Enjoyed a Masquerade" (July), which deals with the elaborate preparations for the party, Mr. Poppleton's acquisition of the *débardeur* (stevedore) costume popularized by Gavarni, his rejection by the ladies, and a clearly symbolic fight with a "devil."

Other narrative and quasi-narrative series of 1853–1854 were run over large half-page designs of a humorous rather than comic character and relate to certain specific social issues: for example, "The History of Our Baby" (early 1853) is about the dangers of drugging infants with elixirs and cordials; "The Precocities of Master Sprinkle" (from April 30, 1853) is of the familiar "enfants terribles" variety; and "Mrs. Marigold and Her Marrying Daughters" (from May 6, 1854) is about the problem of having to marry off elder, less attractive daughters and hold back younger, prettier ones (here the problem is resolved by the favorite suitor's proposing to Mrs. Marigold herself).

In July 1855, Matthew Sears began a sequence of strips of regular layout entitled "Love's Martyrdom: As Exemplified by the Experience of the Hon. Capsicum Spoondle." This is another parody of romantic love: the hero falls for a creature he espies reading on the beach, suffers appropriate agonies, loses sight of her, searches for her, and finally approaches her by a combination of subterfuge and accident. But his fantasies of connubial bliss and prospects of an actual meeting are cut short by a cruel hoax perpetrated by the beloved's servants (this may be some kind of class revenge on an aristocratic type)—at which point the paper folded.

Concurrently, Sears ran "Mr. Popkins Determines to Discover an Explosive Agent Which Shall Put an End to the War," a fantasy combining weariness of the war with the idea of the inventor catapulted to fame. The effect of his kitchen-made concoction on people and property is terrific, but again, the series was curtailed by the demise of the magazine. In the last cartoon, Diogenes is shown formally surrendering his pen to Mr. Punch, acknowledging the failure of his bid for rivalry; the failure was also that of a peace-oriented journal at the height of the Crimean War.

Town Talk, which survived from May 8, 1858, to November 14, 1859, attempted the new format of a penny-paper with twelve pages. It carried one large political cartoon by Watts Phillips, as well as a second cartoon that was soon dropped to make room for William McConnell's *Adventures of Mr. Wilderspin on His Journey Through Life*. The paper's graphics point to strongly

2. One item in this exposure is the discovery on the cop of a "part of a leg of mutton wrapped in last week's *Punch*"—a sly dig at the rival magazine.
3. *Diogenes,* nos. 121–128, between pp. 154 and 252. The magazine is only occasionally dated; some issues (including no. 121) are missing from the British Library.

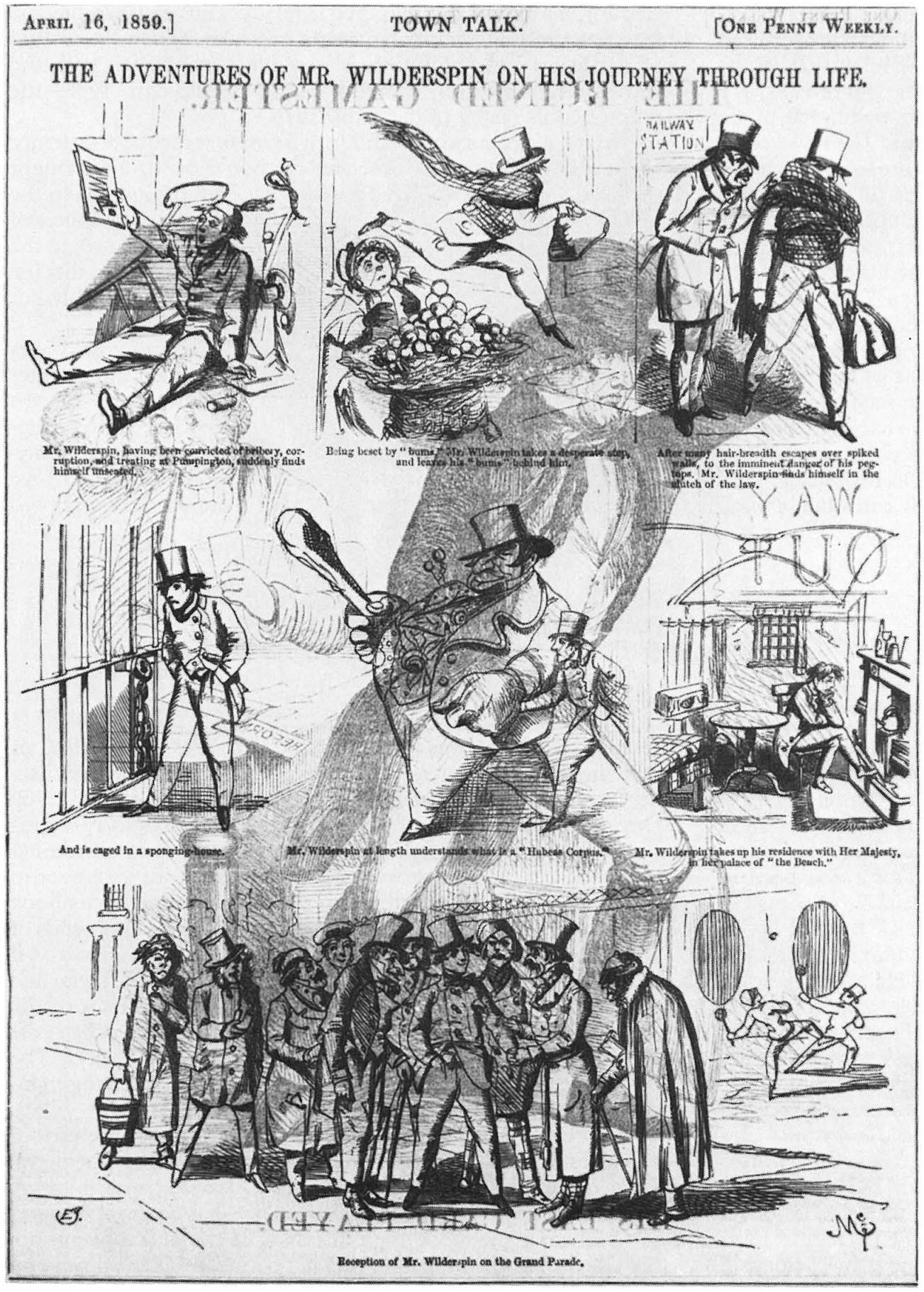


FIG. 13.4. William McConnell: *The Adventures of Mr. Wilderspin on His Journey Through Life* (1859).

radical, pro-poor, even socialist sympathies at a time when *Punch* had abandoned them. But it was not yet possible to sustain a penny comic-weekly, and changes evident in the last issue (enlargement to sixteen pages and doubling of the price) failed to save it.

McConnell had joined the *Punch* staff in 1850, where he was remembered for his fierce cartoons against Louis-Napoléon; feeling ill paid and ill treated, however, he soon left, dedicating himself mainly to book illustration until his premature death from consumption cut short a promising career.[4] *Mr. Wilderspin* ran for an extraordinary twenty-three successive issues (December 11, 1858–May 16, 1859), with 184 drawings. Here McConnell disciplined the wilder eccentricities that characterized the English strip in mid century, and settled into a more regular rhythm, with fuller settings and an altogether more realistic mode possibly influenced by Doyle's *Tour* (1854; see below), but much more succinct. *Wilderspin* is essentially an episodic work, with one episode per weekly page, occasionally connected with the next. The hero is a "railway clerk with ideas above his station" (this train of punning is sustained throughout), which he is able to realize through a legacy of five thousand pounds—as long as it lasts. His passage through life is far from the hectic, breakneck career of a Crindle; rather, he experiences an altogether credible, evenly paced, and balanced mix of pleasures, opportunities, disappointments, and sufferings, the flow of which is steadied by the artist's concern for a certain level of social documentation—Pierce Egan plus Henry Mayhew. It is true that the majority of the motifs—the new fancy clothes of the "heavy swell," the cattle market with its monstrous

4. Spielmann 1895, 460–461.

prize animals and attendant tipsters, the backstage tour of the ballet, the dinner party with matrimonial opportunities jeopardized through physical clumsiness, an attempted love affair that results in a challenge to a duel (prepared for and fought, but revealed as a hoax), flight to a hostile France—all seem quite traditional, as are the swindlers, sharpers, garroters, and cutpurses. The novel component is the protracted political interlude of six pages, which carries Wilderspin from his selection as reform candidate for his native Pumpington, through his boisterous campaigning, to his induction into Parliament and the lobby to repeal the so-called Taxes on Knowledge—the very taxes that raised the cost of production and distribution of journals like *Town Talk*. These are Trollopian touches, conveying not a little fascination with parliamentary procedures, with which the comic strip so rarely dealt.

But Wilderspin, who has sacrificed the rest of his fortune to his political ambitions (as did so many young men at this time: vide Trollope), finds himself accused and convicted of "bribery, corruption and treating"; he is unseated and jailed with others found guilty of financial fraud (Fig. 13.4). On his release, penniless, and after another failed amour that only earns him a black eye, he takes the sensible rather than romantic exit: he marries a creditor, his mature but moneyed landlady. Thus ends happily the story of the mid-Victorian (would-be) rake, which, a mixture of daydream and nightmare, is very much consonant with the "downwardly-upwardly" mobile lower-middle-class type, the quintessential reader of the comic strip.

In our reproduction from *Mr. Wilderspin* we make no attempt to mask out an otherwise unrelated cartoon showing a distraught gambler, "his last card played," which has bled through from the other side of the page. He not only reminds us of the cheapness of the paper the magazines used in their effort to cut expenses to the bone but also stands as a symbol of the reader's own sense that life itself was a gamble in which, like Wilderspin, one invariably got cheated.

In *Comic News,* a very short-lived penny-paper of eight pages that appeared Mondays (1863–1864), McConnell ran another continuing character under the title "The Adventures of Mr. Swellington Fipps,"[5] but this series was colorless and conventional. The well-named *Will o' the Wisp* was yet another short-lived paper to run comic strips, albeit of a lackluster kind.[6] An awareness of the mode existed, but as yet there was no capacity to develop it.

Punch

Mr. Punch (as the magazine liked to personify itself) generally stood too much upon his dignity to feature comic strips. His major contribution is to have started Doyle's *Pleasure Trip of Brown, Jones and Robinson,* which was remembered in an 1883 obituary, along with *The Manners and Customs of Ye Englyshe* (see Fig. 4.5), as Doyle's masterpiece.[7] Richard Doyle was born in 1824, the son of John Doyle, famous as the author of some benignly caricatural political portraits signed "HB." Because his father prevented him from getting an academic training, Richard's drawing retained a genuinely amateurish feel. He became known for his comic graphics at the age of seventeen and from 1844 through 1849 teamed with John Tenniel as political cartoonist for *Punch*. The new *Punch* covers of 1844 and 1849 were his design (the later one was kept unchanged for over a century). From 1846 he established a personal mode with childish-medievalized drawings, and he acquired real popularity with *The Manners and Customs of Ye Englyshe* (1849–1850; see above, p. 106). *The Pleasure Trip of Brown, Jones and Robinson* followed in July 1850, with eight quasi-narrative episodes based on a conventional calendar of social activities. In November the trio were launched as regular tourists abroad, but after two episodes on the Rhine, Doyle, a devout Roman Catholic, quarreled with the editors over *Punch*'s hostility to the pope and quit. "At the time of the papal aggression, Mr Punch was prodigiously angry; and one of the chief misfortunes which happened to him at that time was that through the violent opinions he expressed regarding the Roman Catholic hierarchy, he lost the invaluable services, the graceful pencil, the harmless wit, the charming fancy of Mr Doyle."[8]

Thereafter Doyle avoided working for comic or satirical magazines and made his living as a book illustrator, in which he was particularly effective with fairy tales. The crude contour style he had established was picked up by John Tenniel for a while in "Punch's Anniversaries," comic history designs which did not get very far. Tenniel soon abandoned attempts at series and opted for the shaded, cleaned-up, more Germanic style suited to the dignity of his role as *Punch*'s principal political cartoonist.

The *Pleasure Trip* he had started in *Punch* became, starting afresh, *The Foreign Tour of Messrs. Brown, Jones and Robinson, Being the History of What They Saw, and Did, in Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy* (1854) and reached the considerable length of 172 drawings. Modifying the crude "medievalizing" outline style for which he was known, Doyle here uses a limp contour with internal shading as well as the standard perspective, scenery, and settings of realistic illustration. The work is marked by Doyle's own sedateness of temper and unwinds in a lazy, discursive way with large, loosely connected drawings, some containing too much text (and Doyle was no writer). This is not a comic strip but a humorous picture-story, an illustrated journal-sketchbook such as might have been conceived by any one of the thousands of British tourists who flocked abroad after 1848. It is almost as if Doyle aspired to a typical mediocrity of presentation, style, and perception, for his *Tour* embodies perfectly the tourism of the middle-class "masses," being unfocused, curious rather than passionate, and passively consumptive of novelty and variety. The protagonists are no heroes, only three friends rather lacking in individuality and character.

Flat commentary of typical sights and customs of the various countries and towns visited are personalized by little incidents, none of which develops imaginatively. Trivial complaints are mixed with more serious embarrassments, but the pace is never too hectic nor the mood nightmarish. The trivial complaints are the usual ones of the genre, relating to inconvenient travel and hotel arrangements, but here spun out in tedious detail. Physical adventure is limited to falling harmlessly off a donkey and down a mountain slope. The more serious embarrassments are of a political nature, and this is where the *Tour* sparks interest. Starting at the commonplace level of customs and passport examination, they rise twice to outright arrest. The first arrest takes place in a small but militaristic state (Baden), where the big Jones roughs up a midget sentry who dared to threaten his dog with a bayonet. This incident comes off, in the context, as mildly critical of a form of British arrogance abroad, to which the Baden authorities prop-

5. Seven issues, August 15–September 19, 1863; occasionally front page.
6. September 1868–March 1869. This is the first English magazine I have found to draw copies from abroad: "The Rivals, a Romance of Regent's Park" (April 24, 1869) is copied from a wordless strip by Crafty from *La Lune* (1867), about a husband murdered by a rival, who is caught in flagrante delicto; "Emma's Uncle Obadiah" (June 5, 1869) is based on a rich uncle/poor nephew contrast derived from Wilhelm Busch. Both are drawn in the style of, and are probably by, Charles Ross.
7. Spielmann 1895, 458.
8. Thackeray, quoted in Hamburg n.d., 20.



FIG. 13.5. Richard Doyle: *The Foreign Tour of Messrs. Brown, Jones and Robinson* (1854). "Verona" [Brown arrested].

erly take exception. The manner in which Her Majesty's local representative resolves the matter, however, also redounds to British bullying of a diplomatic kind. The politically naive Doyle probably thought both Jones's violence and the diplomatic bullying perfectly normal behavior for Britons abroad.

The second arrest is more serious, and quite undeserved. It conforms to an old tradition of artists being accused of spying because they have innocently sketched some military "secret": here an Austrian detective in Verona confiscates Brown's sketching stool as a suspicious weapon, and Brown finds himself arrested for drawing fortifications and making "libelous" sketches of Croat soldiers (Fig. 13.5). This time the matter is improbably resolved by the imperial governor, who turns out to be a distant relative called Field Marshal Lieutenant Count Brown.

The flatness of the narrative is oddly unrelieved by amorous adventures, which otherwise in caricature or travel tales were de rigueur. This fact may be explained partly as a personal reticence on the part of the notoriously shy bachelor artist and partly by the moment in mid-Victorian culture, when Eros was least admissible.

Punch's contributions to the comic strip are relatively sparse. In 1853 John Tenniel, in a style reminiscent of Doyle, started a short-lived series featuring Peter Piper. In "How Mr. Peter Piper Enjoyed a Day's 'Pig-Sticking' near Burhampoor, Bengal," the plump little imperial clerk is saved from the terrors of wild boar, tiger, and "crocodile" by his "Syck" servant, though he ultimately does succeed in sticking some tiny piglets.[9]

Strips in *Punch* tend to be clustered in the mid 1850s and late 1860s, duplicating, with the single exception of *Mr. Wilderspin,* that great hiatus we found in France. The themes of the *Punch* strips are trivial and commonplace: hunting, travel, volunteer military training, and so on. Falling in the late 1860s, very possibly under the stimulus of Busch's themes and narrative formats, though not his graphic line, are a number of strips by George Du Maurier, *Punch*'s dominant social humorist of the age. These are characterized, unlike his single social-humor cartoons, by a taste for the bizarre, exotic, and Darwinian (for Du Maurier's post-1870, truly Darwinian strips, see pp. 293–294): a missionary in

9. *Punch* 24 (1853): 91, 101, 111, 121, 140, and 141.

Africa is swallowed by a cassowary; a Tom Tit of a husband marries a giantess, who protects and dominates him; Yankees fix an eagle as a gamecock, and it devours its opponent; a giant guardsman conducts a love affair in a most obscure way;[10] the wordless "Philosopher's Revenge" (see Fig. 15.61) pits music against philosophy (and is obviously inspired by Busch).

Ally Sloper *(1867–1879)*

Ally Sloper is Europe's first really enduring serialized comic strip and cartoon character. He is a sociological phenomenon. A figure of apparently proletarian origin, Ally Sloper moved essentially in the lower service sector to which any worker might aspire. But his relationship to this sector is that of exploiter, cheat, sharpster. Thus he is both a satire on a sector serviced by the very lower middle class which is his primary audience[11] and at the same time an endearing justification of naughty but commonplace fantasies of living by one's wits rather than by real work.

Lower-middle-class culture had been reluctant to deal with the idea of labor, whether industrial or agricultural. Dickens's novels, with their refusal to countenance or understand the idea of labor in general, much less organized labor, as a central, positive, productive social force (see *Hard Times*), are sufficient testimony of this.[12] But Dickens did have a very clear idea of the forces that impede work and that inspire the work ethic: poverty, hunger, disease, and social injustice, which rendered masses of people idle and marginal. Ford Madox Brown, too, even as he extolled the noble laborer in his famous painting *Work* (1852–1865), contrasted him with the various kinds of degraded worker, idler, and beggar.[13] What Brown does not depict are those manifestations of lower-class alienation from real work that the bourgeoisie found so threatening: cheating and stealing. As a cheat, an indirect sort of thief, the "charming" Ally Sloper serves to defuse the threat, but he also justifies it, implying that there is a bit of the cheat in all of us.

Elite critics such as Carlyle, Ruskin, and Morris condemned what Karl Marx engaged to explain scientifically: work under the industrial system had become degraded both as a process and as a product. Capitalist social relations, according to Marx, were the institutionalization of the cheating of the working class. More or less consciously knowing themselves to be cheated, the lower classes cheated back the only way they knew how: at each other's expense. The comic magazines, produced and consumed by people close to routine labor and the service sectors where cheating was commonplace, saw this process from within—*Judy* with apparent complaisance, *Fun* with some bitterness.

The degradation of the old manual crafts under the industrial system, especially in the building trades, was the theme of a sustained satirical campaign in the *Judy* rival *Fun,* where James Sullivan launched his series *The British Working Man,* which in some ways is a response (not least in its comic strip format) to Ally Sloper. In *Fun,* with its professed pro-Gladstonian politics (quite the opposite of *Judy*'s), we find a systematic satire on the idea of cheating by those very sectors on which the lower middle class depended for their outward show of status: the builders for their houses, the retailers for their food and clothing. Sullivan castigates unionization within the working class as nothing less than an attempt to legalize the right to slipshod work, idleness, selfishness, and exploitation of the private customer generally. Ally, the archindividualist, would never have joined a union; his form of social collaboration is limited to occasionally concocting swindles with Iky Mo. The big cartoon in *Judy* shows outright hostility to unions in general, despite (or perhaps because of) the degree of social respectability they had achieved. The purpose of unions, according to *Judy*'s conservative political line, was to strike and threaten to strike—that is, to achieve absolute and legal justification of the right not to work at all.

Ally Sloper first appeared in *Judy* the year of that paper's founding, in 1867. As a cheap (twopenny) rival to *Punch* and *Fun, Judy* appealed to a lower class readership than either of its rivals, and particularly, as the name implies, to women. At least two of the staff cartoonists were women. In its populist opening address, *Judy*'s platform was marked Protection (not "Rights") of Women. The journal's feminism was not at all political but rather social, favoring a type of cartoon showing witty and poised young females scoring off conceited and impudent men.

The year 1867 was also that of J. S. Mill's *On the Subjection of Women* and the Second Reform Bill, which almost doubled the male franchise. *Judy* promised special devotion to the "weak and helpless" and to a working class whose very existence, as a distinct class, was threatening to a precariously situated lower middle class. *Judy*'s audience was fluid, restless, and uncertain of its own identity, a mixture of lower middle class and upper working class more anxious, probably, to leave the working class than identify with it. In terms of party politics, *Judy* campaigned forthrightly for "Conservatism of the Truest and Bluest";[14] Disraeli was the hero, Gladstone the villain. The new magazine, in the arrogance of its youth, even accused *Punch,* which certainly was no radical, of a senile lack of traditional patriotism.

But *Judy,* whose enlarged audience depended on advances in education among the lower classes, was a fierce champion of the Compulsory Education Bill of 1870, the first national act dealing with primary education. The children who benefited from this would become readers of *Judy* and, in the 1880s, its even more popular and cheaper (one penny) successor, *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday.* They would also, thanks to labor agitation, have more money and more leisure—the means to buy and the time to read the magazine.

Ally Sloper was conceived by the comic novelist, dramatist, and former civil servant Charles Henry Ross and developed by his wife, Marie Duval, who did the overwhelming bulk of the drawings. The name is well chosen: to "slope" meant to abscond without paying, especially the rent ("slope down the alley"). The week before *Judy* showed trade unionism as Death leading workers into the abyss of starvation (August 21), Ally Sloper first trod the boards, in the form he was basically to retain all his long life of sixty-six years: elderly and gangly, bald, disheveled, with a bulbous potato nose, and often flushed as with drink. He bore two sartorial hallmarks, which were almost characters in themselves with adventures of their own: a bizarre and battered stovepipe hat and an outrageous umbrella.[15] The degraded symbols of bourgeois respectability, they become on the head and in the hand of Sloper symbols of disreputability. His premier performance announced his whole future: "Some of the Mysteries of Loan and

10. Missionary: February 22, 1868, pp. 80–81. Giantess: January 6, 13, and 20, 1866, pp. 6, 22, and 32. Yankees: May 29 and June 12, 1869, pp. 222 and 248. Guardsman: July 10 and 24, and August 7, 1869, pp. 3, 32, and 45. All in *Punch.*
11. For the lower middle classes in Britain, see Crossick 1977.
12. See the analysis of Dickens and labor by George Orwell (1954, 88ff.); and Hauser n.d., 4:122–128.
13. See the exemplary analysis of Brown's painting by Boime (1981).
14. "Election Address", preface to *Judy* 3 (October 1868).
15. Houfe (1978, 228–229) mistakenly attributes the invention of these props to Baxter, the later "perfector" of the character.

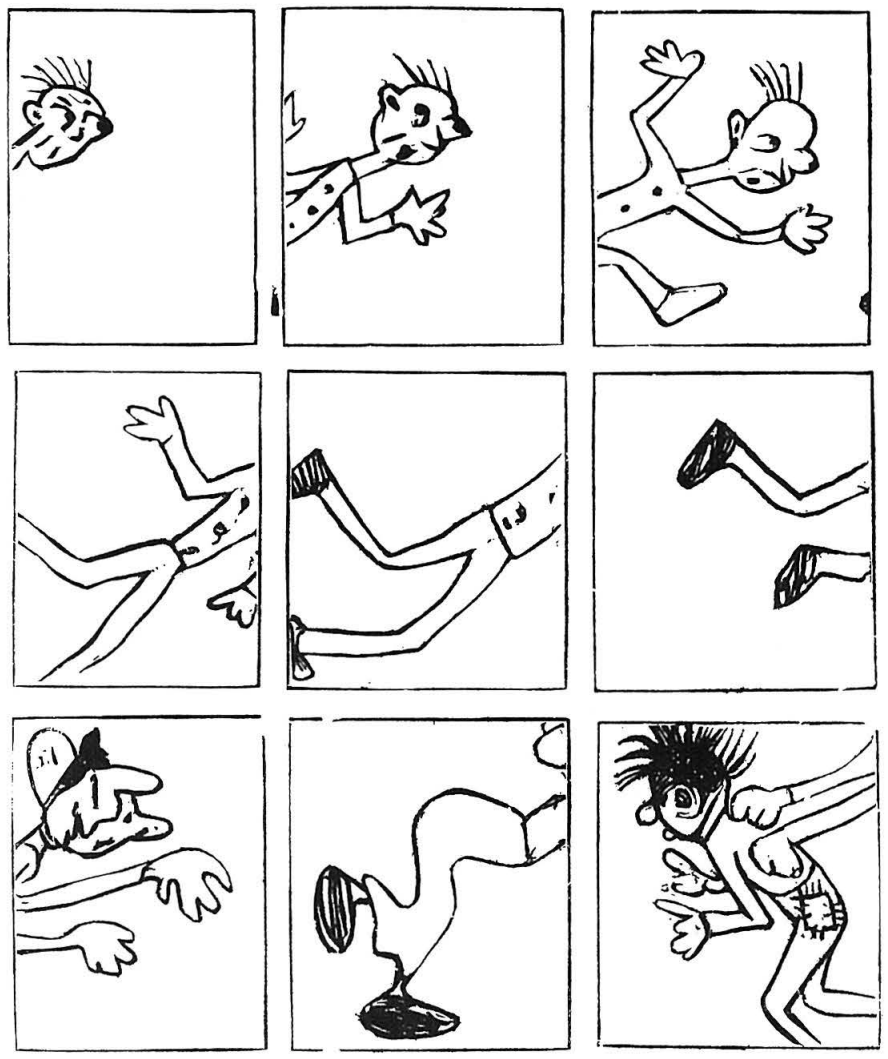


FIG. 13.6. Marie Duval: "Ally Sloper Off to the Wars" (1870).

Discount." He was accompanied to begin with by a sidekick, Iky Moses, who was Jewish but rather less sharply caricatured and who, never independently interesting, in time vanished.

After five brief appearances (August 14–October 9, 1867), Sloper was suddenly dropped, only to reemerge two years later (December 1, 1869) as *Judy*'s "official correspondent" from the new Suez canal. His reappearance was probably connected with Ross's assumption of full editorial control of *Judy* and his marriage to Emilie de Tessier, an eighteen-year-old French girl who soon took over the drawing under the pseudonym Marie Duval.[16] Thereafter, Ally Sloper established himself as a regular, scoring a particular success as *Judy*'s own correspondent to the Franco-Prussian War, where he conducted himself with exemplary cowardice and knavery (Fig. 13.6). After a high-density period (1870–1872) with close to sixty distinct appearances, Ally Sloper tapered off to the rate of about a dozen a year down to 1877, when he began to fade away. The total number of strips published during this period may be set at over 130 (an exact figure is hard to calculate, because of the fluid format, including single spot cartoons). A first one-shilling collection of over seventy of the strips was published in 1873 under the title *Some Playful Episodes in the Career of Ally Sloper, Late of Fleet St., Timbuctoo, Wagga-Wagga, Millbank and Elsewhere with Casual References to Iky Mo, Pictorially Portrayed by Marie Duval and Verbally Explained (with Moral Observations) by Judy's Office Boy* [i.e., Ross]. A second sixpenny collection appeared in 1877 as *Ally Sloper's Book of Beauty,* a scrapbook of jokes, cartoons, and about thirty-five strips more or less attributed to or invoking Sloper. Sloper had meanwhile conned himself into the editorial bosom as factotum-cum-contributor, and he haunted the office like the publisher's bad conscience. With his advancing celebrity and pretensions as a *littérateur,* he figured prominently in most of the prefaces to the half-yearly volumes of *Judy;* that for volume 10 (1871) cites his petty swindling as one of the events of the year, that for the next cites him as its author. The publication in 1873 of his first "Great Work," *Playful*

16. The only reliable source on Duval is also the earliest: Clayton 1876, 2: 331–333, where she is recognized as the only truly comic and caricatural woman artist in Britain (and, one may add, in Europe). For a more complete treatment of her work, and the denial of her authorship in favor of her husband, C. H. Ross, see Kunzle 1986.



A TRAGEDY IN FLEET STREET.

These Illustrations, from the gifted Pencil of A. SLOPER, represent JUDY'S Office Boy going out on the quiet when he thought the Ever Young and Lovely had her back turned. Also the spirited way in which the Ever Young and Lovely gave chase and fetched him back.

FIG. 13.7. Marie Duval: "A Tragedy in Fleet Street" (1876).

Episodes, caused "one half of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom to suffer from a severe attack of Sloper-on-the-Brain."[17] By the late 1870s he was the claret-bottle-nosed gray eminence behind the editorial throne.

In 1876 he was given an additional format—a full page of regular, more or less biweekly, text with several small and very childish illustrations (also, I believe, by Duval; Fig. 13.7) describing his first attempts to elevate himself into higher society. These were to bear fruit in his final incarnation, in the magazine named after him. Threatening in a New Year's resolution of 1877 to go teetotal and reform, he seemed to have exhausted himself and retired from the pages of *Judy;* but his popularity was too great for him to be abandoned altogether. Hailed by trade and press as "extravagantly funny,"[18] he was lauded by a relatively independent source in 1876 as a "pronounced character and familiar friend, like Micawber."[19] By that year, Ally had acquired new status in *Ally Sloper's Comic Kalendar,* a smaller (penny) year-end publication, which continued annually in huge editions until 1888 (the first number, for 1876, had sold 120,000 copies by December 1, 1875), to which were added special midyear issues in similar format called *Ally Sloper's Summer Number* (1880–1884) and a larger, one-time-only sixpenny job called *Ally Sloper's Comic Crackers.* These, with their pictorial emphasis and mix of strips, jokes, and verse scraps, are the true precursors of the *Half Holiday.*[20]

Ally Sloper is imagined and treated by Ross-Duval as a real-life character, an entrepreneur who sells cheap consumer goods (the "torpedo" cigar, for instance); and the public collaborated in the fantasy. He is not only the primary actor in "his" publications, but also their instigator, writer, producer, and proprietor. His creators here play half-guiltily and wholly humorously with the idea that Ally Sloper—whose specialty, even raison d'être, is the practice of fraud—is himself a journalistic impostor, at a time when the Bohemian subculture of popular publishing was rife with them. He is the shameless publicity stuntman for Judy, who, as the editorial persona, must preserve dignity and decorum. A decade later, *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday* was to be a pioneer in circulation hype and publicity tricks, with premiums, giveaways, and collateral merchandising of all kinds. Umbrellas, walking sticks, pipes, toys, sweets, kites, fireworks, and especially watches were marketed under Ally Sloper's name and given away with the magazine.[21] The real extent of Ally's popularity at the earlier date is hard to determine, but *Judy*'s claims for it, although surely exaggerated, must have a foundation in fact. The popularity was hyped as wild notoriety, which was all part of the fun, and *Judy* attributed to the mob represented as attacking the editorial offices at "73" (Fleet Street) two distinct motivations: to get Sloper, the universal cheat—that is, to recover their money or wring his neck; and to get *Ally Sloper*—to enjoy the journalistic phenomenon that seemed to justify and render innocent their own dishonest fantasies.[22]

On the basis of promised sales of his publications, Ally gets credit at the bar, but this is the least of his tricks, for his whole editorial participation is premised on the hope of getting paid without having to work. He constantly draws or tries to draw his salary twice over; when he gets the office boy to write his contributions for him, he absconds with the boy's wages to boot. And he engages in the familiar journalistic practice of reporting on events before they happen.

He may even be viewed (extrapolating somewhat) as a satire on the journalistic tendency to batten frivolously on sensations and public misfortunes. In one of his earliest important activities (which was unusually sustained, lasting nine episodes), Ally is sent to report on the Franco-Prussian War (see Fig. 13.6). In highly serious, indignant political cartoons, *Judy* sided with the French against the Germans, but Sloper sides only with himself and engages in ruthless petty exploitation of the conflict. He robs corpses and sells secrets to and steals supplies from both sides; from the safety of a pub he writes of whizzing bullets as if he were braving them himself at that moment. He is the antithesis of the heroic adventurer-reporter incarnated in Henry Stanley, who had just departed to find Livingstone in Africa. Later, in 1872, when Sloper sets off on this same quest and to probe with his umbrella for the source of the Nile, he becomes a satire of British imperialism in Africa: he "civilizes" the natives by teaching them the shell game—but he ends up losing and gets his ears cut off (Fig. 13.8); he opens up a loan office, the better to cheat the natives; and he kills a tiger by accident.

Ally Sloper is also a satire on the populist politician whose promises are fraud. Duval shows him as "Another Working-Man's Candidate"—shied at with rotten eggs (February 18, 1874). W. G. Baxter, author of the later, mature, version of the strip, will introduce him to the public, in a grander incarnation orating in Hyde Park, as Sloper the Friend of Man—the charlatan drumming up buyers for his magazine, ignoring the crowd's banners, which read "The Rights of the People," "Reform," and so on. On November 21, 1885, he is elected member of Parliament for Shoe Lane and appointed prime minister and first lord of the Treasury. He packs the cabinet with family and friends and proposes a list of reforms, all of which are totally self-interested, frivolous, or absurd. But we have now entered a new epoch, and a format—the single cartoon—that lies beyond the scope of this book.

17. *Judy,* November 5, 1873, p. 30.
18. The *Bookseller;* cited in an advertisement in *Judy,* December 2, 1873.
19. Clayton 1876, 2:332.
20. I have found one Ally Sloper title that was advertised as having been published but is not in the British Library or the U.S. National Union catalogs under this title: *The Ups and Downs of Ally Sloper,* 218 illustrations, selling for sixpence, and advertised in *Ally Sloper's Summer Number* (1882), p. 20.
21. Neuburg 1977, 233.
22. *Judy,* October 1, 1879. On September 10 the magazine had published a hostile review of the *Ally Sloper Comic Kalendar,* calling it an imposition on the public. The cover of *Ally Sloper's Comic Crackers* (1883) shows Sloper, a pretty girl (Miss Sloper?), and the boy Sloper opening up a chest containing various commercial hoaxes.

SLOPER IN SAVAGE AFRICA.



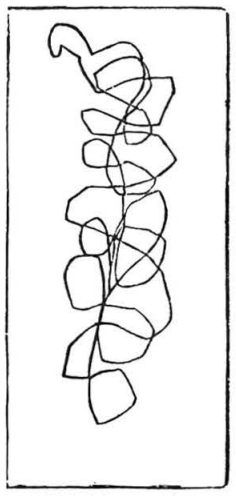
1. Sloper crossing the country. Unseemly levity of blacks in the rear.



2. Sloper, in an unguarded moment, uncovers his head. Panic among the blacks.



3. Sloper finds the source of the Nile He always did go to the bottom of things.



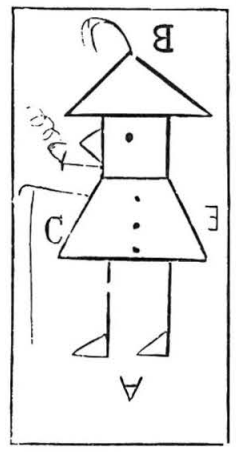
4. This is Sloper's sketch of the course of the Nile, showing the source discovered by himself. In its present state it seems to require explanation.



5. Picture of Mrs. Sloper (the African one). "Hallo! I say——" But then, after all, perhaps, one must conform to the customs of the country. Only she might have been a little better looking.



6. Portrait of Sloper sitting in council. Drop your eye on the peacock's feather.



7. Another plan of the Nile. Judy sincerely trusts her valued contributor is not up to his larks.



8. Model in wood of an African beauty, who had many offers, but died at last of a broken heart.



9. Model (also in wood) of another African beauty, celebrated alike for her romantic adventures and the rigidity of her principles.



10 Sloper improves the native mind. He teaches the simple savage a pretty little game with three thimbles and a pea.



11. The simple savage is excited when he loses.



12. Sloper hears for the first time of a fine old African institution, called cutting off the extremities. We leave him in the hands of the executioner.

FIG. 13.8. Marie Duval: "Sloper in Savage Africa" (1872).

Ally went through several distinct formats: as the hero of a regular strip in a magazine; as the hero of the strips collected in books; as the author (and illustrator) of his own column of social comment in a magazine; and as the supplier of factitious unity, and titles, to one-penny annuals of miscellany. He reached his apotheosis in the penny-weekly magazine that bears his name and promised a new world of leisure: *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday,* over which he would genially preside, chiefly in large single cartoons initiated by Baxter, during a long life (1884–1923). But the new Ally brought with him formats from the past. First, close to one hundred of the previously published strips from *Judy,* with others also by Marie Duval, were rerun over the first three years. This "free" material no doubt helped in financing the venture at the start. From July 26, 1884, W. G. Baxter's version of Ally took over two-thirds of the front page, and on November 8 was enlarged to full width, thenceforth its permanent status. Then, for some months from February 6, 1886, a trio of very small scenes was added below the large Baxter cartoon, relating Ally Sloper to some topical or strictly seasonal news item. All signatures were removed, including Duval's; only Baxter could sign his work. With Baxter, Ally Sloper is a pygmy become giant; large front-page designs seem physically to command purchase of the new penny-paper, which, to cut costs, had dispensed with the usual dust cover.

It must be admitted outright that Ally Sloper in the 1870s is but a crude improvisation, a sketch in a book of random-looking scribblings and jottings, compared with the mature Sloper who, as fleshed out by Baxter during the first two years of *Ally Sloper's*



FIG. 13.9. Marie Duval: "The Very First Original Oyster-Eater" (1879).

Half Holiday and continued, after Baxter's premature death, by W. F. Thomas,[23] became a household word. We have here a whole, virtually unacknowledged, epoch of late-Victorian genre art, comprising elaborate, multifigured compositions. These impressive designs do not, however, present a narrative continuity. Their only unity is the character of Ally Sloper himself and his entourage. Fortunately, the finer nuances and rich ambiguities of this mature Sloper and his audience, in terms of both class and social ideology, have been brilliantly analyzed by Peter Bailey, who inevitably scants that early version which alone belongs here.[24]

The contrast between the two Slopers is striking, as are some similarities. The *Half Holiday* gives much broader social scope to the scoundrel, who from a seedy layabout of evident proletarian origins becomes a gay arriviste, a kind of "gent"; though his gentility is still obviously spurious and grotesque, he is able to operate in a whirligig of fashionable and popular festivities, entertainments and pleasures, living, as it were, in an eternal half holiday. This Sloper's world is porous, expansive, inclusive. The larger sociopolitical horizons open up for him: he becomes the low-born invader, and indeed impersonator, of the high and mighty. He also functions like the traditional big cartoon, commenting (although seldom seriously) on the topical issues of the day.

The *Judy* Sloper, in contrast, seems cramped, sordid, secretive, penumbral. He is no artiste but merely a small-time operator of the swindle, which becomes its own reward (as seen in the frequency with which he is punished). In the mature version, punishment is much less conspicuous, and jail is the occasional misfortune rather than the logical outcome. The noncontinuity of the format facilitates this release from the old moral narrative structure. We are dealing with an altogether different relationship to sensual pleasures and real leisure. The early Sloper tries to finagle advantage from the demand for leisure activities, whereas his later incarnation aspires to enjoy these activities himself, and often actually succeeds. These are depicted by Baxter and Thomas with joyful zest, in the expansive format that facilitates what the (literally) narrow confines of the abbreviated strip prohibit. But the change must also be read in terms of a change in actual social conditions between 1867 and 1884 (the years, as it happens, of the Second and Third Reform Bills, as Bailey observes) and a great absolute increase in leisure: more leisure for more people, as real wages rose, working hours were shortened, and the Saturday half holiday was institutionalized.

The first Ally Sloper is essentially the loner, out to defraud the odd individual; later he takes on a whole society and its institutions. He becomes positively gregarious, a philanderer and family man in constant quest of escape from family constraints; he acquires a daughter, Tootsie, a music hall actress courted by the aristocracy—and an important contribution to the success of the paper, especially among female readers. She is another editorial persona (extracts from her diary fill the lengthy captions describing her father's activities); she is Judy rejuvenated. There was no way that this quintessential, idealized glamour girl (like Sloper, a prototype in another genus of popular culture that has lasted down to our own day) could have fitted into the style and format of the strip, although the type in itself was not beyond the capacities of Marie Duval as an artist.

In neither version is Sloper a truly working-class or socially rebellious figure. In both he is, as Bailey remarks, the "minor deviant challenging Victorian pretensions of respectability, operating on the fringes of legality"; but the mature Sloper has, in a sense, made it, and he exudes the debonair freedom touched with majesty of the "man of the people," elected on the suffrage of millions of *Half Holiday* readers. Embryonically in the strip, more frequently and assertively in Baxter/Thomas, he campaigns as the antipolitical, more or less anarchistic populist candidate with only two social demands: abolition of all restrictions on the sale of liquor, and obligation to buy his magazine. These interests cut across class; in Bailey's well-chosen words, Ally Sloper both collapses and elasticates class distinctions and their corresponding ranges of experience.[25]

By the late 1880s, Ally Sloper's pretensions to social notoriety, first announced in *Judy,* were realized. He was believed to be a real living person, like Pickwick and, a little later, Sherlock Holmes. He became the prototype of the new commercial popular culture, the first to be widely merchandised à la Disney. At the

23. Thomas began to take over in September 1886, in an excellent imitation of Baxter's style; Baxter's last Ally Sloper, together with other drawings, appeared in December.
24. Bailey 1983.
25. Ibid., 11, 26.



Frantic struggles of the Very First Original, who knows that the tide is coming in rapidly.



One last terrific effort! The strange beast gives way at the roots.



The Very First Original escapes with life, the strange beast still holding on like—anything!



The V. F. O. surprises his family upon his return home. "Oh, mother! what 's happened to father's nose?'



The medical authorities of the period sit upon the V. F. O., and decide that the nose must come off, too!



Joy! Joy! At a critical moment the strange beast opens his mouth of his own accord. General rejoicing! (Fireworks not yet invented.)

[MORAL.—*Eat as many oysters as you like, but don't try to open them with your nose.*

same time, he could count upper-class art-world luminaries such as William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones among his fans, and several distinguished writers grew up on him: G. K. Chesterton, H. G. Wells, Montagu Summers, and the cartoonist H. M. Bateman.

Ally Sloper, the lower-class arrivé on the social scene, is the fulfillment of an earlier promise. The sense that the promise (or demand), however offhand in appearance, had a serious side was picked up as early as 1876—significantly, by a woman writer on women artists, Ellen Clayton, who observed that Ally, "irresistibly droll" and "absurdly comic" as he certainly is, carried "an undercurrent of serious reflections, sometimes with a touch of strange pathos."[26] This "strange pathos" may derive from our recognition that this social primitive, drawn in so primitive a style, represents a newly literate social sector attaining to real cultural and political self-expression: a self-aware sector with a newfound voice, on the move, looking ahead.

Even without lavish settings, we understand that the early Sloper got around. Ross and Duval probably had greater opportunities for European travel than Baxter or Thomas, with whom our hero, when not sent abroad on an (untypical) political mission, is confined to London and the round of seaside resorts. Ross and Duval show him in Le Havre, Baden Baden, and Switzerland, where the natives, in true Sloperian spirit, put out stuffed chamois on wheels for the tourists. England, of course, is London, but only vaguely. The range of the *Judy* Sloper's activities at home, for all their lack of topographical specificity, shows a certain picaresque, Macaire-esque social sweep, touching if not embracing the worlds of sport, art, theater, the military, commerce, law, and public services such as employment, detective, and matrimonial agencies, and of course restaurants, where the experience of being cheated was the most commonplace of all. Sloper appears as a spiritualist, teacher, magic lantern operator, and comic journal publisher. He is the inventor of a shaving machine that chops everyone up (one of the few references to technology or an industrial process). But Sloper never engages in grand industrial enterprises like Robert Macaire, who addresses an altogether wealthier audience. His fraud remains petty: begging on false pretenses, stealing spoons, cheating poor children. He is always getting bounced (in the *Half Holiday* he sports after his name the letters M.F.K.O.M.I.E., Most Frequently Kicked Out Man in Europe), and he often lands in jail.

Graphically, Marie Duval's early Sloper has charms of a vanguardist kind. The episodes are usually brief, truncated, fragmentary, arbitrary, incoherent, inconsequential—qualities a 20th-century aesthetic has learned to value. The episodes are broken links in a tenuous chain, or rather flow, of semi- and nonevents, throwaway gags with often little point to them, as brief as the modern gag strip but eschewing its careful structure. Yet embryonic gag strips they are, and appealing not least because of the childish crudity of their style. The Duval style is quite homogeneous and consistent with respect to Ally Sloper, and one can see it rubbing off on other *Judy* artists. Unlike the sophisticated Baxter or Thomas method, that of Duval looks genuinely childish, random, a doodle on the office pad, somewhere between a child who knows no better and an adult who can't be bothered, and as such admirably suited to Ally Sloper, a vagabond and lumpenprole before he became a regular "gent." But this was not a style arrived at—or at any rate maintained—by accident, for there are drawings signed by or attributable to Duval that range from the cruder still (infant stick figures and primeval scribbles; see Fig. 13.7) to more conventional, popular illustrational styles. Duval

26. Clayton 1876, 2: 331–332.

also liked to draw pretty fashions and women, with the occasional side glance at Grévin.

This is not the place to speculate on the significance of the fact that Ally Sloper, ex-proletarian, social primitive, lower-middle-class impostor, was popularized by a woman, the only caricaturist in Europe of a gender proletarianized and primitivized (not to say infantilized) by exclusion from the male-dominated workplace. Duval's graphic experiments, especially in the vibrations, oscillations, shriveling, exploding, and general discombobulation of bodies and body parts (see Figs. 15.31–35), suggest a happy aesthetic frivolity and disrespect for academic norms, which, given Ally's characterization, may be extrapolated as disrespect for the conventional (male) view of work, artistic and other. Her "silly" drawings hardly look like the product of real artistic labor. *Judy* was a magazine oriented more specifically toward women than was either *Punch* or *Fun;* and, although it cannot be described as progressive, it did contain elements that can be described as subversive. Duval's Ally is subversive in a way that the later version was not. Like many youthful subversives, after having fought 'em, he decided to join 'em. His form of work in the early 1870s was playful cheating as a way of life; fifteen years later, it was the quest for high-class pleasure per se. Both constitute disguises and distortions of a work ethic that had come to be contested.

Models for the Ally Sloper style were Richard Doyle and Wilhelm Busch, the work of the latter possibly known to Duval independently of the first English edition of his Bilderbogen, which appeared in 1868. There are in Duval linear shortcuts, degrees of simplified foreshortening, and a nonchalance in handling figures hurtling through the air that can only have come from the German artist. Unmistakable borrowings of Busch motifs, moreover, figure in both Ally Sloper and other Duval strips. (Since everyone stole from Busch, the relative self-restraint of the light-fingered Sloper is to be admired, for with respect to the treasure trove of Busch's motifs, he appropriated no more than some showering and barbering.)

Like no other English artist, Duval played with Busch's principles of graphic innovation, but without imitating his highly sophisticated, rotund rhythms. Curious about visual distortion as derived from photographic error, reflection in spoons, and changing and high viewpoints, she also experimented with partial views and bizarre frame cutoffs. She shows awareness of oriental effects, the elegance of which represents the antithesis of her own style, and at one point reveals what may have been a conscious source of inspiration (although it was not to permeate European art until much later): African sculpture (see Fig. 13.8, a page that presents a veritable panorama of graphic styles). Duval was among the first to do Darwinian metamorphoses (and show Darwin as a monkey), and she was quite a dab at Royal Academy parodies.

Duval was also aware of French models in subject matter, as the *Judy* engravers point out in their memoirs.[27] She occasionally used French in captions and titles, spelling Sloper "Slopaire," for example; and in "Un Milor anglais" (February 27, 1878), she wrote the captions entirely in correct and idiomatic French. It is hard to determine whether what appears to be a zanily English transformation of German farce and violence may not have some French ironies buried in it. Just once Duval made a foray into the broader, multifigured scene and the longer, coherent story. Called "Sloper Slayer of Wolves,"[28] it is set in Normandy or Brittany and was obviously inspired by Léonce Petit, who had recently started his immense series in the *Journal Amusant* (see Chapter 7).

The Duval style was used in many other strips and single cartoons in *Judy* and is positively dominant for much of the 1870s, the vast majority of the signed drawings in this style bearing Duval's initials or signature. Ross edited and published at least two collections of non-Sloper strips from *Judy:* in 1872, *A Book of Comicalities,* in which Duval is also prominent; and in 1879, *A Shillingsworth of Moonshine (with Tin Thunder at the Wind), Being a String of Strange Stories Some Awfully True and Others Awfully Otherwise,* containing a miscellany of nearly fifty strips, most by Marie Duval, arranged in three groups. "Births, Bright Beginnings and Sanguine Try-Backs" starts with what must be the first prehistoric-man gag (Fig. 13.9), surely Darwinian in inspiration; "Marriages, Spoonings, Moonings and Sorrowful Subjects" has a collapsed version of the famous episode from Busch's *Pious Helene,* when she is caught writing a love letter; and "Deaths" includes an illustration of cats derived from Manet's frontispiece lithograph for Champfleury's *Les Chats*. These two volumes must be the first collections of comic strip miscellanies.

McNab of That Ilk *(1876–1888)*

The second continuing character born in *Judy,* and continued in *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday,* is McNab. This irascible Scot can claim a primacy of his own: he is the first major ethnic stereotype of our survey, created by James Brown, evidently a Scot himself familiar with Scots custom and Scots dialect, which is used throughout. McNab first appears on March 1, 1876—after Ally had passed his peak in the magazine—under the Sloperish title "A Little Clothing Difficulty in the Highlands; Mr. McNab Cheats His Way to a New Coat." At this point, Brown's draftsmanship, though somewhat more professional than that of Ross or Duval, is still crude-looking. McNab gradually asserts himself in *Judy* as a character and a name, under the running title *McNab of That Ilk,* at a slow rhythm of six full-page strips the first year and three or four each for the years down to 1880, then tailing off to one per year through 1884, to a total of about twenty-four.

Despite the relative infrequency of his appearances compared with Sloper, McNab attained sufficient popularity to be featured in a *Judy* shilling-volume of 1883, called *Hotch-Potch (English and Scotch). A Gathering of the Clans, Tartans, and Plaidies (The McNab Included). The Scenery, Chiels and Lassies by "Judy's" Artist. The Guide-Book Business by Charles H. Ross.* The Scot on the cover appears to endorse John Begg Lochnager Whisky, a firm that took a full-page advertisement inside. Thus drink helped sell the drunkard, and vice versa. The best part of the book is certainly the McNab strips, which are reproduced almost complete as a set. Ross, disclaiming responsibility for the reprobate Scot, notes (p. 16) that after his popular triumph in *Judy* "it was . . . decided that his fragments (it is a wonder, considering his frequent falls from giddy heights, that there were any recognizable fragments left) should be collected together and stitched up."

The McNab strips were rerun, again like Ally Sloper's own, in *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday* (August 1885–January 1888). Afterward, in recognition of his achievement, so to speak, McNab is accorded the honor of getting sloshed with Sloper, a "red-letter day" for him (February 26). He was then dropped until the end of the year (November 26), when he could be revived "by popular

27. Dalziel and Dalziel 1901, 320, with reference to Ross. Ellen Clayton (1876, 2:331–332) credits her with having drawn for "three or four English, French and German journals." Can she have misremembered some statement by Duval about her having drawn *from* French and German sources? I have found nothing resembling her style on the Continent.
28. Appearing first in *Judy,* September 8, 1875, then in *Ally Sloper's Book of Beauty* (1877).



FIG. 13.10. James Brown: *McNab of That Ilk* (1877). "Cutting, but True."

demand." But the promised hookup with Sloper does not materialize, nor are the promised "marvellous Adventures and Hairbreadth escapes" as amusing as before. Brown, who now was regularly signing his work in full, had adopted an unrecognizably different, sloppier, and quite charmless style, with shorter and truly wispy incidents that seldom went beyond three scenes, starting and ending at random. By peering closely at this uninviting stuff, one can make out that McNab is still engaged in his perennial feud with the Muckle Laird, begun in the very first installment.[29] The McNab of the early 1890s is, in the final analysis, much less interesting than the Irishman—also a stereotypical fighter, with a penchant for dynamite—who regularly occupies six scenes in the middle of the back page, a space now exclusively reserved for serial strips.

Physiognomically, McNab is distinguished by his glaring eyes and wild, spiky hair and beard. In his Scottish dress (large beret, short jacket, and kilt without sporran), he appears small and wiry, of indeterminate age, certainly younger than Ally but bearing the Scottish title "the Elder"—an elder in a constant state of childish tantrum. He has large, heavily shod feet, which he uses as an effective weapon, and is always armed, like Ally, with an umbrella, which unlike Ally's harmless article is often improved by fearsome spikes at the tip (Fig. 13.10). McNab has no family, it seems, but lives on his own in a forlorn hut in a wild, barren, mountainous part of Scotland so isolated that he has to walk fifty miles to get his boots repaired—but close enough to neighbors' property to be constantly quarreling with them.

His principal enemy is the Muckle Laird, the big landowner whose tenant he presumably is and over whose vast territories he is apt to trespass. Other foes are the minister, Farmer McSwine, the distiller–pub owner McBung, gamekeepers, anyone sent to arrest him, and, last but not least, his own sidekick, Tammas McParritch. Sometimes he is even declared an outlaw (the lord provost offers the princely sum of two shillings for him, "Dead or Alive"). His chief vice is whiskey, but he is never too drunk to take punitive or evasive action or to threaten homicide on the slightest provocation.

Unlike Ally Sloper's London, McNab's Scotland is a land generally without police. Legal restraints are strictly local and usually ineffective. There is no jail. Enemies are free to fight out their differences to the death or some other form of immobilization. (Because death as such is not portrayed, temporary annihilation

29. One has to assume that the artist had completely lost touch with a character he had created twelve years before and was constrained to perform an unwelcome task. It seems unlikely that he was at this date merely trying to out-Sloper Sloper in slopiness. Or could the artist be another man altogether? Many of the early *Judy* McNab strips were signed with the interlaced initials "JSB"; four in 1878 are inexplicably signed with a prominent "MIST."

of some kind is to be assumed.) This is a world of paranoia conducing to lethal preemptive strikes. So volatile is McNab's fury that it sometimes turns against himself; when physical threat and bartering of his worldly goods (boots, hat, umbrella, and whiskey bottle) fail to satisfy a creditor, he tries suicide, then flight, until finally he is floored by a kick from his own mule (November 14, 1877). He is the victim of his own violent temper as well as the malice of others, the victimizer of both himself and his fellows.

Socially, McNab is the underdog vis-à-vis the Muckle Laird, but the nature and outcome of their combat is not determined by any prior social or economic advantage; McNab's spiked umbrella is a match for the Laird's scythe. One of the charms of *McNab* is its unpredictability; the action is capricious, in the manner of an artist unwilling to decide in advance where he is headed. The later, degenerate, form of the three- or four-scene sequence is a view through the keyhole, as it were, offering an overheard scrap of scandal, the fragment of an ongoing quarrel that is subject to wild and ingenious exaggerations.

Closer study might reveal a pattern in the character of the fighting: in the choice of terrain, the range of weaponry, the variation of escapes and punishments. McNab's favorite weapon is a shotgun that fires an avalanche of French nails (called "French-nailing," this, naturally, was always done from behind the victim's back). He also makes use of exotic techniques such as "vaccination" by means of a hot soldering iron and roasting with a flaming furze bush. Although guns are used, with all manner of violent impact, we never see any blood flow as we do in Busch. The feelings are of fury and humiliation rather than physical pain; people get knocked unconscious, trapped in barrels, hurled into the abyss, but they are never visibly maimed. There is also much childish kicking and dunking. And because Scotland, for the southerner, was the land of rain and snow, fighting also takes place under neck-deep water, continuing through snowdrifts and floods, which devastate the countryside and demonstrate how individual conflict prevails over natural disaster. All this, moreover, long before the animated film.

McNab is more the true social rebel and primitive than Sloper. He is the stereotypical Scottish drunkard, blasphemer, and Sabbath breaker, whom the authorities try in vain to discipline. But just as his drunkenness never prejudices his capacity for physical action, so it never impairs his vocal gifts for blasphemy, or rather (since the *Half Holiday* had the religious sensibilities of readers to consider), picturesque imprecation. To the Laird: "Take that ye bunion-faced bullfinch (or: sturgeon-faced grampus), and gang to grass with the geese." It is understood, by the way, that McNab never merely speaks: he either mutters in resentment or roars in fury. *McNab* represents the consistent introduction into the comic strip of direct speech, in a vivid and vociferous form.

McNab is about gratuitous, naked anger, and as such may be deemed to appeal to particularly intense feelings of frustration and impotence, from which (vicarious) violence offers the only relief. Ally Sloper, in comparison, seems well socialized and harmless. Moreover, the stereotypically wild Highlander McNab appeared at a time when Scotland was being rapidly turned into the playground of the English. He is the caricature of a typical Scottish smallholder, who had reason to be angry: starved of land, displaced in favor of deer for shooting, he had begun to refuse to pay his rents or to respect property rights. The Scottish crofters' reputation for lawlessness grew until, in 1882, they revolted in a more organized, but relatively nonviolent (thus un-McNabbish), fashion and formed the Highland Land League in opposition to such Whig "Muckle Lairds" as the duke of Argyll. McNab may be a response to the failure of the Gladstonian liberals, who governed Britain from 1868 through 1874 and counted on Scotland as an electoral bulwark, to deal with Scottish grievances.

Sullivan and The British Working Man

Fun, founded in 1861 with Thomas Hood as editor, boasted in its preface that its cheap price put it in the same class as a penny-newspaper or a penny-collar (the price was later raised to twopence). In 1870 it was bought for six thousand pounds by the Dalziel brothers,[30] who went on to buy *Judy* two years later. The first graphics were poor Leech and Doyle imitations, with an emphasis on lower-class and street life. William Brunton, for one, used Doyle's outline style for Doyleish subjects—half-page overviews of crowded popular gatherings and recreations, which originally ran under the series title "Letters from Nigh Latitudes." These drawings, although never as amusing as Doyle's, were considered successful enough to run regularly on a weekly basis (with one short interruption) until 1869. Brunton also did series in medieval silhouette and, in 1863, Chinese style, as well as a few precocious *japonaiseries* in 1865; later he adapted his Doyleish overviews to Petit-like perspective and Busch-like contour[31]—a true Victorian eclectic. Meanwhile, in 1863–1864 during Brunton's absence, the future librettist William Schwenk Gilbert made his debut, affixing his initials to tiny bizarre drawings and one comic strip.[32] He returned in 1867, now signing his work "Bab" (from February 2), and six months later he started his illustrated "Bab Ballads." It is regrettable that Gilbert never developed into narrative his real graphic gifts, which ranged from primitive scribbles to strongly characterized social types, from the realistic to the highly grotesque and weird. He shared, however, in that taste for the primitive which, as we know from Duval in *Judy,* appealed to the lower-class public.

The addition to *Fun* in the late 1860s of large serious political cartoons by T. Barnard (replaced in the 1870s by Gordon Thompson) and otherwise more substantial drawings on domestic and foreign affairs, including the Poor Acts, bespeaks an intelligent and aware readership sympathetic to Gladstonian and Cobdenite reform, which read newspapers and was thus prepared for the relative political sophistication of James Sullivan.

The childish style, appealing in itself, also served as an antidote to the serious cartoons, anesthetizing readers, moreover, to painful political events and violence too close to home. Like *Judy, Fun* showed ambivalence and embarrassment toward the Franco-Prussian War. This emerges in foolish comic strips (the first in the magazine) akin to *Ally Sloper,* with the frank admission that, like Ally, the staff, taking refuge in reporting for the worthless *Farthing Fibber,* was afraid to approach the theater of war itself.

On August 20, 1870, Brunton depicted a bloody battle in a crude, childish, Doyle-Bayeux style—"the personal account of a correspondent who wasn't there," and for good reason: the military on both sides had orders to shoot news reporters. The Chinese style served a similar purpose of distancing events from reality (November 5).

To judge by the timing, it was the Franco-Prussian War, together with the Commune of 1871, that stimulated the social consciousness of James Sullivan. He began his topical strips (displacing Gilbert-"Bab," who went off to collaborate with a different

30. Bailey 1983, 8.

31. An unmistakable borrowing of Buschian swagger occurred on June 22, 1867 (p. 162).

32. From October 17, 1863, to December 17, 1864, notably in illustrations to "The Comic Physiognomist" series, which was revived in 1867; the comic strip, "Our Own Correspondent at the Guildford Fight," appeared on April 2, 1864. The only other comic strip by Gilbert I have found is "Mr. Peters Takes a Bath at Boulogne" (*Tom Hood's Comic Annual* [1871], pp. 96–97).

Sullivan) in early 1871. These built slowly, and in a weird, inconsequential, and fragmentary mode like that of *Ally Sloper.* Very frequent by 1875, when Sullivan started his thematic series, *The British Working Man,* by 1880 they were appearing weekly, in the favored position first of back page and then of center page. Sullivan strips continued thus into 1893, when he was finally "promoted" to *Punch.* In the meantime, however, he had inspired an imitator (W. Houghton, from 1886) and three or four other artists to attempt the genre, including the regular political cartoonist Gordon Fraser (from 1888). The tendency to group captions at the bottom of the page, shared by Sullivan and his imitators in *Fun,* was obviously an attempt to approximate the effect of the wordless Franco-German strip.

Sullivan was remembered as "the immortal depicter of humors and amenities of the 'British Workman' [*sic*] and for many years the incarnation of *Fun.*"[33] *The British Working Man,* launched in 1875, was indeed his best-known strip series, reaching fourteen "phases" in an album of 1878. It was followed in 1876 by *The British Tradesman,* also in fourteen parts in *Fun,* and published as an album by January 1880. These albums, each of which comprised 104 pages with as many strips, included other series, notably *Grandmotherly Government* (thirteen parts, *Fun* from 1874) and *The Complete Builder-Landlord* (ten parts, *Fun* from 1878).

The dominant theme of these strips is cheating. Ally Sloper cheated on and from the social fringe; Sullivan's workers and tradesmen cheat at the very core of work- and marketplace. Like Ally and McNab, they are mockeries of the work ethic. In form, the Sullivan strips are more regular than those of Duval: five or six scenes per page, or strip, separated by squiggles that come off as a kind of signature. They are slight narrative extensions of cartoon situations, generally eschewing gratuitous farce, fantasy, and violence. As if in keeping with his serious, documentary intent, Sullivan seems to repress an instinct for livelier, more emphatic contours, maintaining instead a rather monotonous and visually unadventurous style. (Later, in illustrations to his own writings of the 1890s and evidently under the impact of art nouveau, the artist did allow his graphic stylization to develop in quite playful directions.) In a preface to his collected *British Working Man,* Sullivan apologizes for his draftsmanship, fearing it a poor justification for his social prejudices. This preface, in fact, supposedly written by his victims (who are also his audience), charges him with lack of wit and "glaring imperfections," and concludes that the artist, "Before he goes and sneers at those / Absurdities that fetter / More honest folks, should mend his jokes / And draw a little better."

Mediocre as the art all too often is, the satire is original in both nature and scope, coming at a time, in the 1870s, when industrial development in England was entering its mature phase. Criticism of capitalist relations, muffled during the boom years of mid century, now became more strident; the demand for amelioration of urban conditions increased; the government of Gladstone, whom *Fun* supported, pressed the first waves of legislation through Parliament. And the lower middle classes, the magazine's primary audience, lonely, atomized, and frustrated in their new urban redoubts but with a new sense of their own numerical strength, strove to disengage themselves from the working class.

> In feverish hordes the suburbs swarmed to the polling booths to vote against a turbulent proletariat. . . . He [the homeowner] has difficulty with the plumber in jerry-built houses needing continuous patching and mending. His wife is harassed by the indifference or insolence of the domestic servant. . . . He would never be surprised to find the crowd behind the red flag, surging up his little pleasant pathways, tearing down the railings, trampling the little garden; the "letting in of the jungle" upon the path of fertile ground which has been redeemed from the wilderness.[34]

The world of Sullivan is also ridden with a quintessentially petty-bourgeois fear of the class out of which many had only recently risen, an attitude shared by *Fun*'s principal political cartoonist, Gordon Thompson, who, at the time of working-class violence against foreign scab labor, showed the "Sham-British Workman" sitting on his employers, to the motto "To labour is to prey" (a pun on "To labour is to pray," *Laborare est orare*).[35] Against the hardening manifestation of the political power of the the working class—the Democratic Federation of 1881, the Socialist League of 1884, and the great demonstrations and strikes of the late 1880s—Sullivan continued his attacks, but with diminishing vigor. "Some more British Workmen" (1888) did not get far; Sullivan even found himself giving, in "On Aliens and Strikes II—The other side of the question," a view sympathetic to the worker. "'Another British Working Man'—and very tired you must be of them, Reader, dear" registers not only the author's own but also his reader's anticipated weariness of the topic. As many satirists coming to terms with their own ineffectiveness do, Sullivan resorted to the notion that the British worker was a living joke with an infinite variety of tricks in his bag; thus, to satirize him was redundant.[36]

But these petty bourgeois are also engaged in an internecine war, against members of their own class upon whom they are dependent for essential services. The shopkeepers, for example, in the spirit of laissez-faire competition, the "Darwinian" struggle for survival and advantage, are also given to cheating—with more grace and guile than the workers, it is true, but it is cheating nevertheless. In the same social category as the shopkeepers are the builder-landlords, the little entrepreneurs who speculate in the £100–£200 jerry-built housing of the new suburbs, seeking, in complicity with the workmen they contract, to maximize their profits with shoddy work.

The fine stratifications of status and life-style within the lower middle classes were expressed through differences in food, clothing, furnishing, and housing—consumer goods in the widest sense. The less domestic property these classes had, and the more effort they had put into acquiring it, the more obsessed they were with it. Here, in the immediate physical environment of the social ritual, lay the marks of relative social success or failure. Sullivan strips, however, are not about the display or use of status symbols but about the difficulties attending their acquisition or maintenance—difficulties caused by the recalcitrance of the artisans responsible for the physical production or servicing of these symbols, a working class deemed hostile to the interests of the upwardly mobile small property owner. Thus, the class struggle is here defined as between the producer/servicers and the user/consumers of the symbols of power. Each group calls on the government to protect them, the former demanding the legalization of unions and the right to strike, the latter wanting building codes and inspections.

Many of the crafts involved in the building trades were proud, and protective, of their skills. Threatened by mechanization, monopolistic manufacturers, and market factors that valued speed over quality, they sought to defend themselves through unionization. Gladstone's government bowed to decades of pressure. The Trades Union Act of 1871 legalized unions and gave them the protection of the courts. In 1875, the Employees and Workmen Act put "master" and "men" on an equal legal footing, and the Trade Union Act allowed peaceful picketing. The Factory Act of 1878 fixed a maximum fifty-six-hour week.

Sullivan's attack on the working class in *The British Working Man* is that of a lower middle class identified with the bourgeoisie. The artist feared the strength of unions (which he saw as specifically British), their demands for better pay, shorter hours, and the right to bargain and strike. For Sullivan, as for most of the bourgeoisie, unions were motivated by simple greed and laziness. Thus, the hard-working, nonstriking (scab) family man is upbraided by the union man, in the "vulgar" dialect relatively new to the comic strip: "The Amalgamated Society of Working

33. Spielmann 1895, 567.
34. Masterman 1911, 66–67; quoted in Crossick 1977, 29.
35. *Fun,* November 7, 1877, p. 191.
36. *Fun,* October 2 and 30, 1889; January 27, 1892.

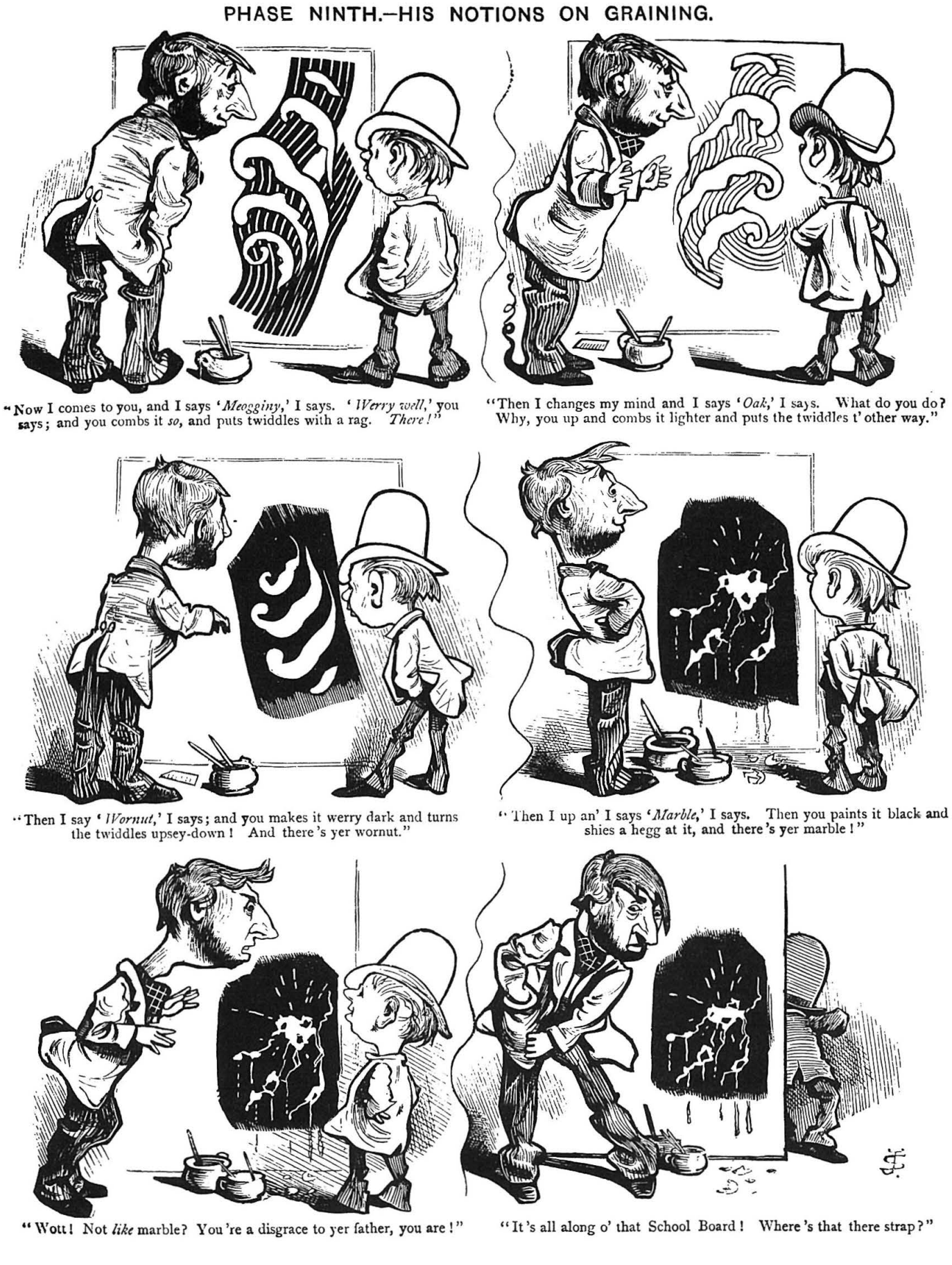


FIG. 13.11. James Sullivan: "The British Working Man. Phase Ninth—His Notions on Graining" (1876).

Men says as we're to 'ide all yer tools an' tie one of yer 'ands behind yer, cos nobody aint to do more work than nobody else" (p. 10). The purpose of unions was reduced to that of asserting the worker's right not to work. Delegates to the Philadelphia World's Fair of 1876 return with only one overriding reaction: disgust at the restrictions in America on the right to strike (p. 12).

The designer William Morris, a passionate socialist, was at this time (1878–1880) in his lectures to workers denouncing the "cheap and nasty" products flooding the market, "the ill-built wall of ill-made bricks," the wallpaper of "mangy gherkin on a horse-dung ground," and pleading for the restoration of craftsmanship.[37] But where Morris blamed capitalism and the machine, Sullivan blamed the worker himself—not, of course, the factory worker, but the surviving craftsworker, forced to cheapen production in order to compete.

Morris readily admitted the essential justice of Sullivan's satire on shoddy workmanship, but in ambivalent terms that betray an awareness, not shared by Sullivan, of the systemic oppression and alienation that took the pleasure—and quality—out of the old tradition of once-beautiful, honored, and profitable craftsmanship. Morris is reacting here specifically to Sullivan's albums, which he may well have bought at the railway bookstall on the way to Birmingham to deliver a lecture to students and practitioners in the arts and crafts. This passage from the lecture of a leading poet, reformer, and polemicist, for whom caricature as such hardly came within the realm of art at all, is too valuable not to be quoted in full:

> There is a very clever book of pictures now being sold at the railway bookstalls, called "The British Working Man, by one who does not believe in him,"—a title and a book which make me both angry and ashamed, because the two express much injustice, and not a little truth in their quaint, and necessarily exaggerated way. It is quite

37. Thompson 1977, 247–249.

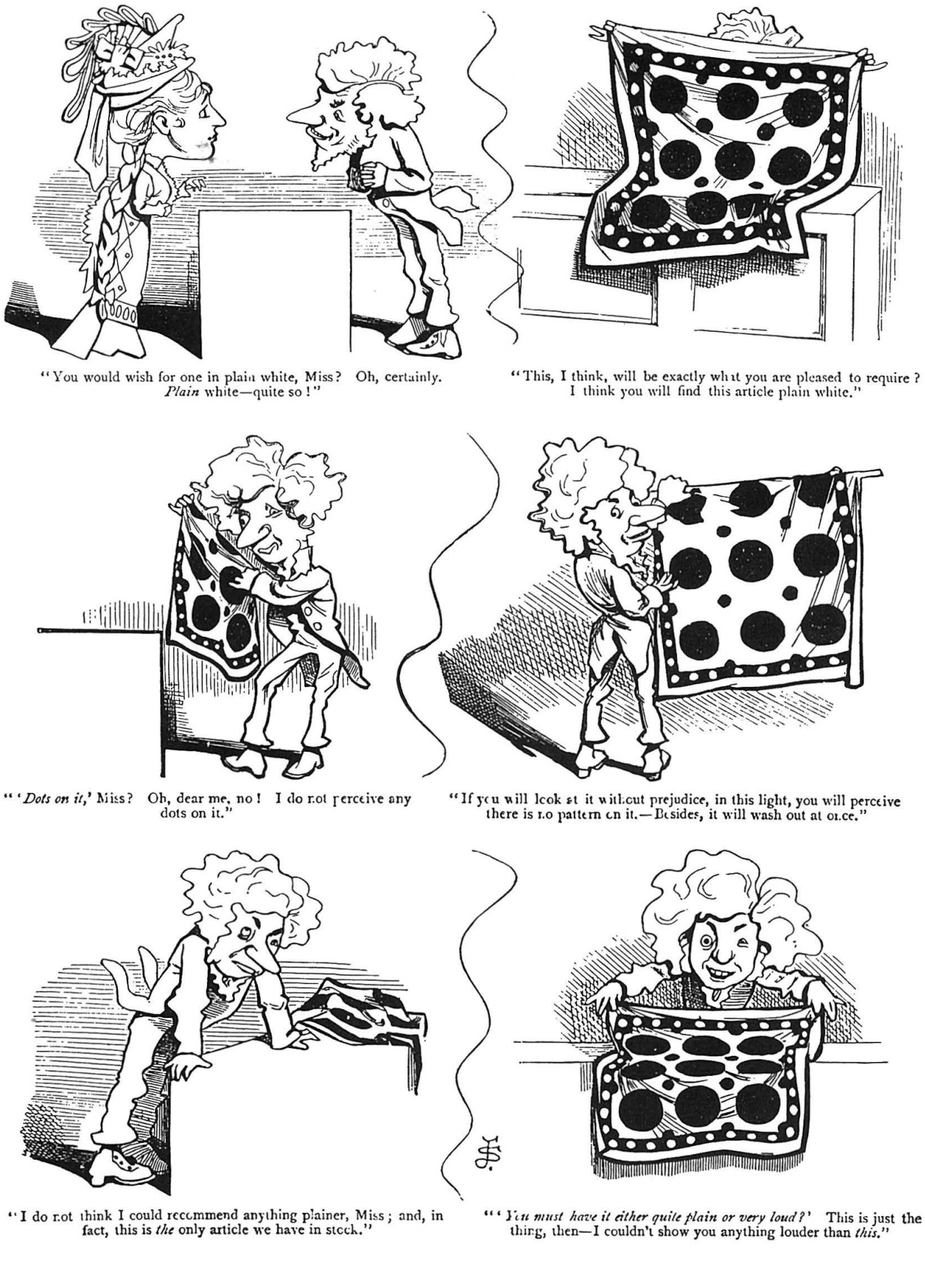


FIG. 13.12. James Sullivan: "The British Tradesman—The Art of Convincing" (1876).

true, and very sad to say, that if any one now-a-days wants a piece of ordinary work done by gardener, carpenter, mason, dyer, weaver, smith, what you will, he will be a lucky rarity if he get it well done. He will, on the contrary, meet on every side with evasion of plain duties, and disregard of other men's rights; yet I cannot see how the "British Working Man" is to be made to bear the whole burden of this blame, or indeed the chief part of it. I doubt if it be possible for a whole mass of men to do work to which they are driven, and in which there is no hope and no pleasure, without trying to shirk it—at any rate, shirked it has always been under such circumstances. On the other hand, I know that there are some men so right-minded, that they will, in despite of irksomeness and hopelessness, drive right through their work. Such men are the salt of the earth. But must there not be something wrong with a state of society which drives these into that bitter heroism, and the most part into shirking, into the depths often of half-conscious self-contempt and degradation? Be sure that there is, that the blindness and hurry of civilization, as it now is, have to answer a heavy charge as to that enormous amount of pleasureless work—work that tries every muscle of the body and every atom of the brain, and which is done without pleasure and without aim—work which everybody who has to do with tries to shuffle off in the speediest way that dread of starvation or ruin will allow him.[38]

Sullivan portrays individually mason, tiler, carpenter, plumber, glazier, painter, and paperhanger, trades requiring varying degrees of skill but united in their determination to get the best pay for the worst workmanship. Their genius is for botching and postponement, not fulfillment of work. They fake work, as the painter fakes wood veneers. They resist competition from "intelligent" and foreign workers (again, scabs), whom they beat up.

38. Morris 1882, 61–62. My thanks to Anne Canright for bringing this passage to my attention.

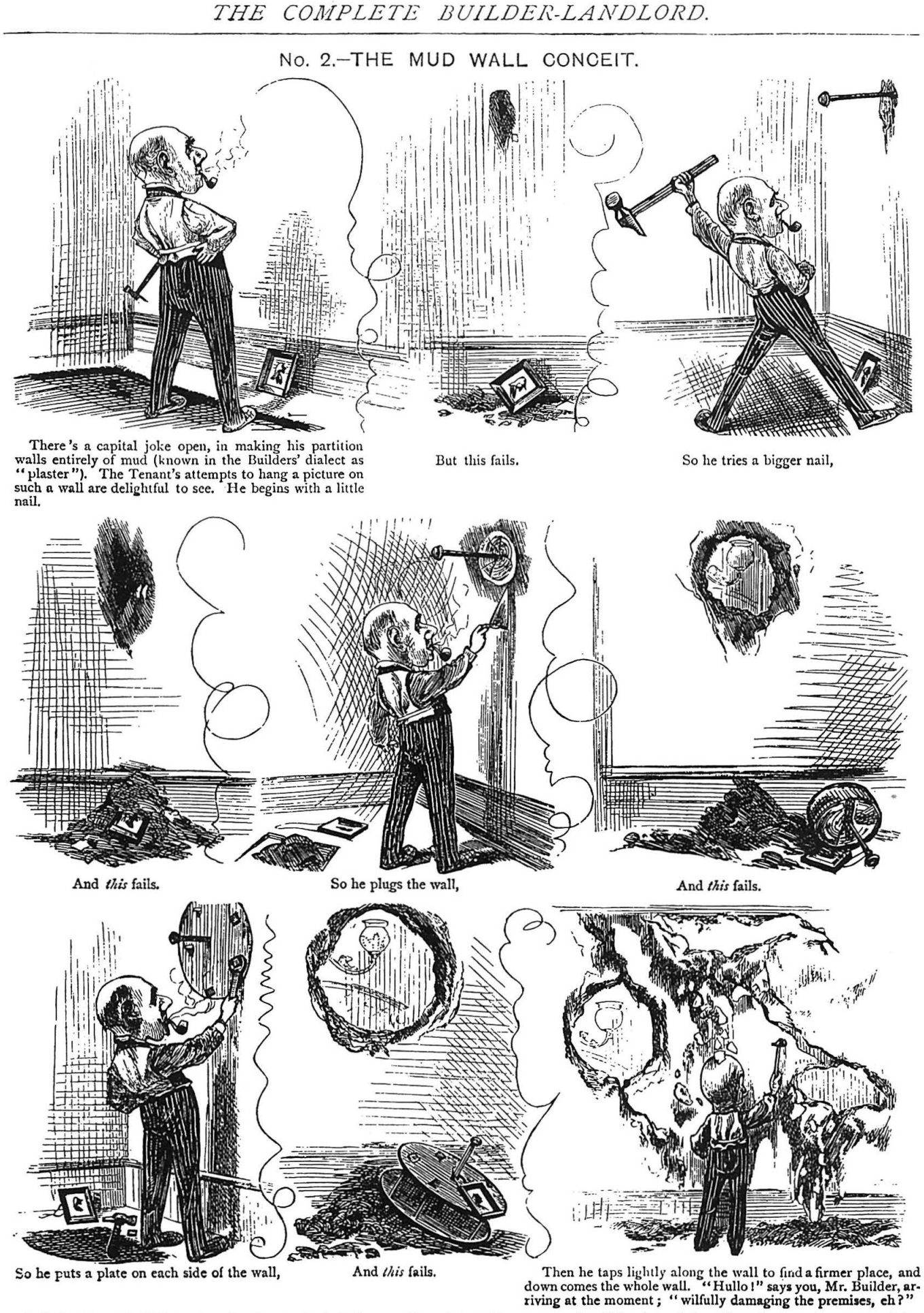


FIG. 13.13. James Sullivan: "The Complete Builder (By One Who Has Been a Tenant). No. 2. The Mud-Wall Conceit" (1878).

They are hostile to education (Fig. 13.11, last scene) and incapable of learning, renewing skills, or adapting to new conditions. Both arrogant and ignorant, they impose their ideas on their clients, reversing the traditional employer-employee relationship. Emblematic of a general attitude and method is the glazier who bashes a round window frame into a misshapen square in an attempt to accommodate the only shape of glass he has (p. 11).

As his materials are inadequate, so are his tools—when he remembers to bring them. Sullivan's worker is a parody of the Marxian concept of the industrial worker alienated from the materials, tools, and products of his labor. Blaming and forgetting tools, borrowing and ruining those of his patron (who, significantly, may be a well-equipped handyman himself and thus a connoisseur of good workmanship), the workman here embodies the ongoing process that has ruined him as a class, or else forbodes individually his imminent proletarianization, when he will own no tools at all but be tied to someone else's machines (pp. 6, 8, 17). His alienation could express itself in outright destruction, if not of the tool or machine itself, then (and typically with Sullivan) of the product. Shoddy work has its own built-in tendency to self-destruct; it may even destroy a previous phase of work, causing a whole building project to unravel: "The party who does the gutters and undoes the slates—The party who does the slates and undoes the garden—The party who does the garden and undoes the paint—The party who does the paint and undoes the furniture"—and so forth. Even the foreman, who is supposed to coordinate and discipline the workers under him, is an accomplice to their negligence (p. 4).

The British tradesman too, like the British workman, is represented by those specialties with which the lower middle class had most contact and which dealt in the prime necessities of life: food and clothing. In the first category, for the most carnivorous na-

tion in Europe the butcher is given priority (he appears first, and returns again later), followed by poulterer, wine merchant, and restaurateur-innkeeper. The second category is led by the hatter, who appears twice, and who expects heads to fit the sizes, and people to accept the styles, he happens to have in stock; he is followed by the tailor, haberdasher, and shoemaker. In addition, two strips deal with furniture vending.

The mode by which shopkeepers cheat is of course different from that of laborer or artisan, but there is much in common: shoddy goods, lifetime (literally) delays in delivery, and total disregard for the customer's wishes (Fig. 13.12). The sales pitches—which range from the truly cunning to the outrageous rhetoric of aggrandizement and false representation, even downright dishonesty—have become institutionalized in the armory of advertising in our own time and would correspond here to an early individualistic phase in the art of consumer manipulation, when capitalism first began to produce in excess of demand.

The "complete builder-landlord," in the series of that title,[39] bridges workman and tradesman. Probably a former artisan himself, as a contractor of laborers the builder-landlord reproduces (and in a sense produces) their vices on the scale of the small shopkeeper. Like the individual artisan he skimps on materials; the party walls he builds are so flimsy that they set neighboring tenants at loggerheads, and they collapse if one tries to drive a nail into them (Fig. 13.13). He fills the garden soil with waste rubble, places unsafe cisterns directly over beds, runs unhealthy drainpipes in unsightly routes along internal walls, provides door bolts that yield to a burglar's fingertip, and installs handles that come off the door on the first turn. His staircases are so steep and narrow that guests become stuck and can never be extricated. Sullivan offers one remedy, one revenge: put the builder-landlord into your living room and asphyxiate him with his own gas system.

The small as well as the big entrepreneur profited from a traditionally laissez-faire government, which only in the 1870s and 1880s began concertedly to legislate aspects of public hygiene, by means of sanitation and building codes, in order to protect the populace from the worst. In 1874–1875 the new Disraeli ministry put through an Artizan's Dwellings Improvement Act. The period in question was one of undoubted progress in this regard, which only served to whet Sullivan's satire of rising expectations. "Grandmotherly Government" (again, in the like-named series)[40] is a bland face in a mobcap to which various bodies are applied, most commonly that of an average MP. Ignoring serious matters, the British government is shown to be dedicated to trivia and the concocting of bills whose hallmark of authenticity is incomprehensibility. In this Sullivan follows the Dickensian model of satire on parliamentary endeavor. Some of the bills are repressive and invasive of privacy—one, for instance, sought (in reality) to limit the individual's right to drink whenever he pleased, a subject that roused Ally Sloper to rare moments of direct political militance and ultimately helped bring down Gladstone's ministry. Sullivan shows himself in progressive colors with regard to women's rights, against which "gentle battering-ram" Grandmotherly Government barricades herself in panic (p. 65).

The correction of abuses really deleterious to public health would be, implicitly at least, the responsibility of government. These abuses were endemic to industrialization from the beginning (and much before), and many continue to this day. Cartoonists had been complaining about the noise, dirt, and crowding of cities for generations. Sullivan deals specifically with industrial pollution of the atmosphere, water, and environment by smokestacks, gasworks, and sewage pipes; the apparent freedom factories and railway companies had to buy up the very light and air in the neighborhood of their operations; the depredations of gas companies, which cause sulphur incrustation on everything and everyone within range (p. 80). Other matters of social concern still topical today include unsafe public buildings, adulteration of food, judicial caprice, prison conditions, police-condoned brutality to immigrant workers, government-leaked secrets, destructive restoration of artistic monuments, overloading of cargo vessels, slow postal service, vandalism of public amenities, penny-pinching philanthropy, and thieving tourists. This enumeration also serves to remind us that the better artists working for upper-class magazines like *Punch,* such as George Du Maurier or Charles Keene, could not claim nearly so wide a range of concerns. In this sense, *Fun* shows us a lower middle class that read the newspapers, followed Parliament, and cared—not just from a position of narrow self-interest, but in a publicly responsible way, and motivated by both conservative and reformist ideals.

Sullivan's seriousness sets him off from other comic strip artists of the period, but this is not the whole of him, for he had his own delicate, deadpan sense of the absurd. There is something surrealistic, even Kafkaesque, about the young clerk to whose fleshy back a small dog affixes itself, unobtrusively but irremovably. A tiny wagging tail defies all attempts at coverup, and the clerk, taken as something less than a man, suffers social rejection accordingly.[41]

The Penny-Weekly: Moonshine, Pick-Me-Up, Funny Folks. *The Halfpenny Comic*

The twopenny *Fun* and *Judy* had to compete with two penny-weeklies that deserve brief notice for the quantity, if not the quality, of their comic strips. *Moonshine* (1879–1902), England's first successful penny-paper, carried, from 1882, a continuous series of six-sceners by Athelstan Rusden, a fairly versatile artist who, in apparent imitation of James Sullivan, treated the theme of bungling and swindling craftsmen, tradesmen, and shopkeepers. In this enterprise he was later joined by Horace Morehen, with his series "Popplestone's Purchases" (1887). Rusden also did slight narratives based on topical events, as well as occasional animal strips, which became very popular in the late 1880s. (Two Rusden strips of technical interest are reproduced in Figs. 15.53 and 15.54.) *Fun* had an animal expert in Ernest Griset, who also did some strips. The outstanding animal-strip artist, however, was James A. Shepherd, who started in *Moonshine* in 1888 before going over to *Punch* in 1893. (He was replaced in *Moonshine* by Louis Wain, also a whimsical expert with animals.) Shepherd's anthropomorphic creatures engage in the social round of sport, club, and barroom and are drawn with the firm, elegant, elastic contour of budding art nouveau. His gift was for gradual, nuanced, expressive developments rather than narrative incident proper (Fig. 13.14). The interaction between one angry or animated interlocutor and another who remains indifferent or evasive is common at this period and represents a retreat from (or sublimation of) the old physical hyperactivity and into expressive verbal dialogue with carefully tuned mimic effects.

The physically distinguishing feature of *Pick-Me-Up* (1888–1909) was its use of better, glossy, magazine paper, as opposed to the newsprint used by all the other penny-papers. Graphically it was generally more vanguard than its competitors, with a taste for the Japanese style. It copied systematically from U.S. and French sources, particularly the *Chat Noir* and Caran d'Ache, who could command up to three full pages for a single strip. The Negro jokes and strips introduced from the United States around 1890 must have appeared novel to the British public. Against the full page given to the French, the American strips tend to be reduced to edge spots and are sometimes quite literally bent into the corner. In the 1890s, its piracy from abroad continuing unabated,

39. *British Tradesman,* 55–67.
40. *British Tradesman,* 95–104.
41. *Fun,* October 6, 1880.

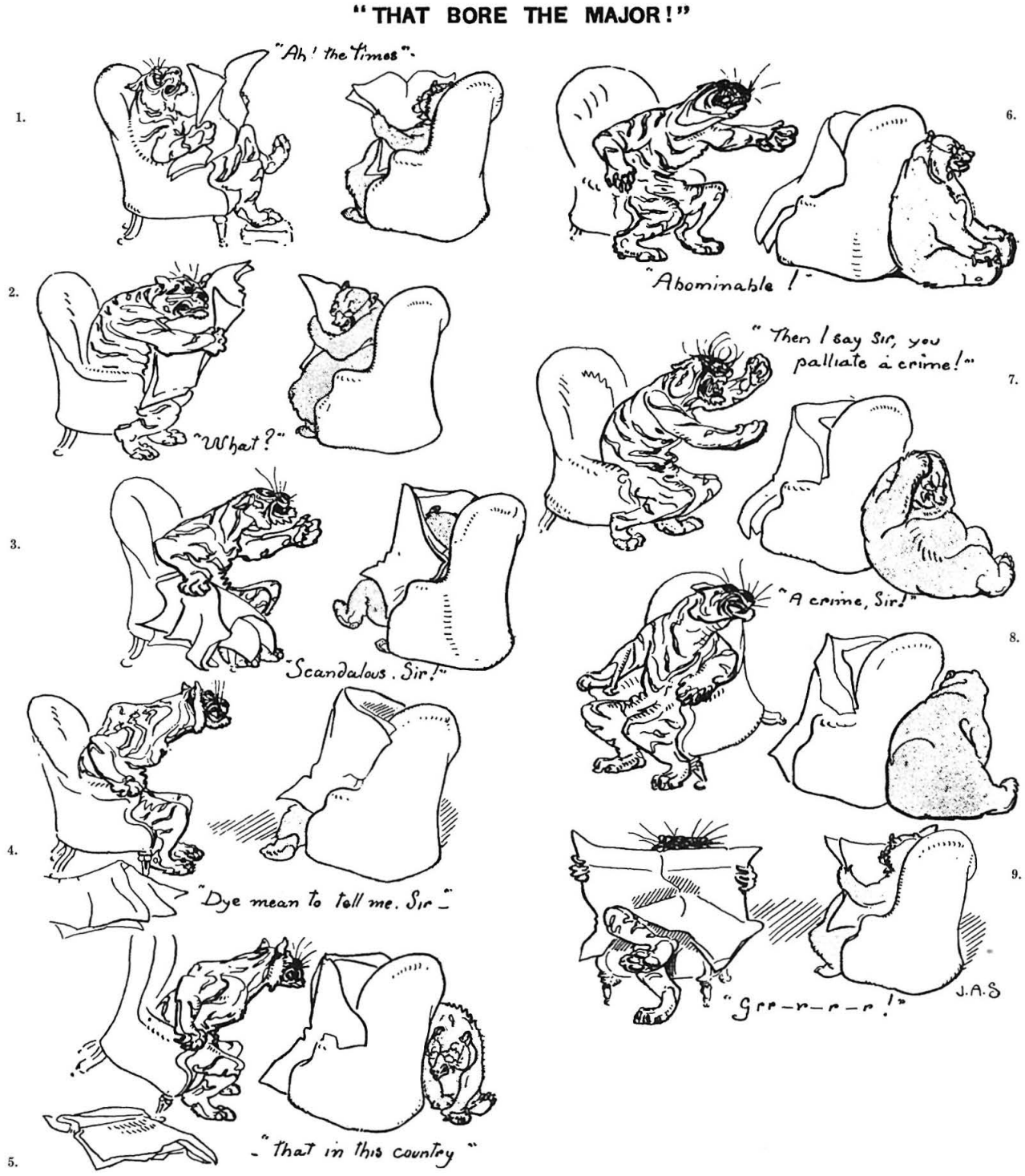


FIG. 13.14. James A. Shepherd: "That Bore the Major!" (1893).

Pick-Me-Up had the gall to print over the masthead: "All our sketches are specially drawn for *Pick-Me-Up,* and persons reproducing them become liable under the Copyright Act." Neither of the first two art editors, Raven Hill or Leslie Willson, although good artists themselves, could create or find original comic strip concepts. The best Raven Hill could do was a Willette-style Pierrot in love (March 9, 1889). René Bull has been compared, with scant justification, to Caran d'Ache;[42] Phil May started in *Pick-Me-Up* (1891–1893) before graduating to *Punch,* and Thomas Theodor Heine made his English debut there (July 16, 1892, presumably pirated) before becoming a star of *Simplicissimus*.

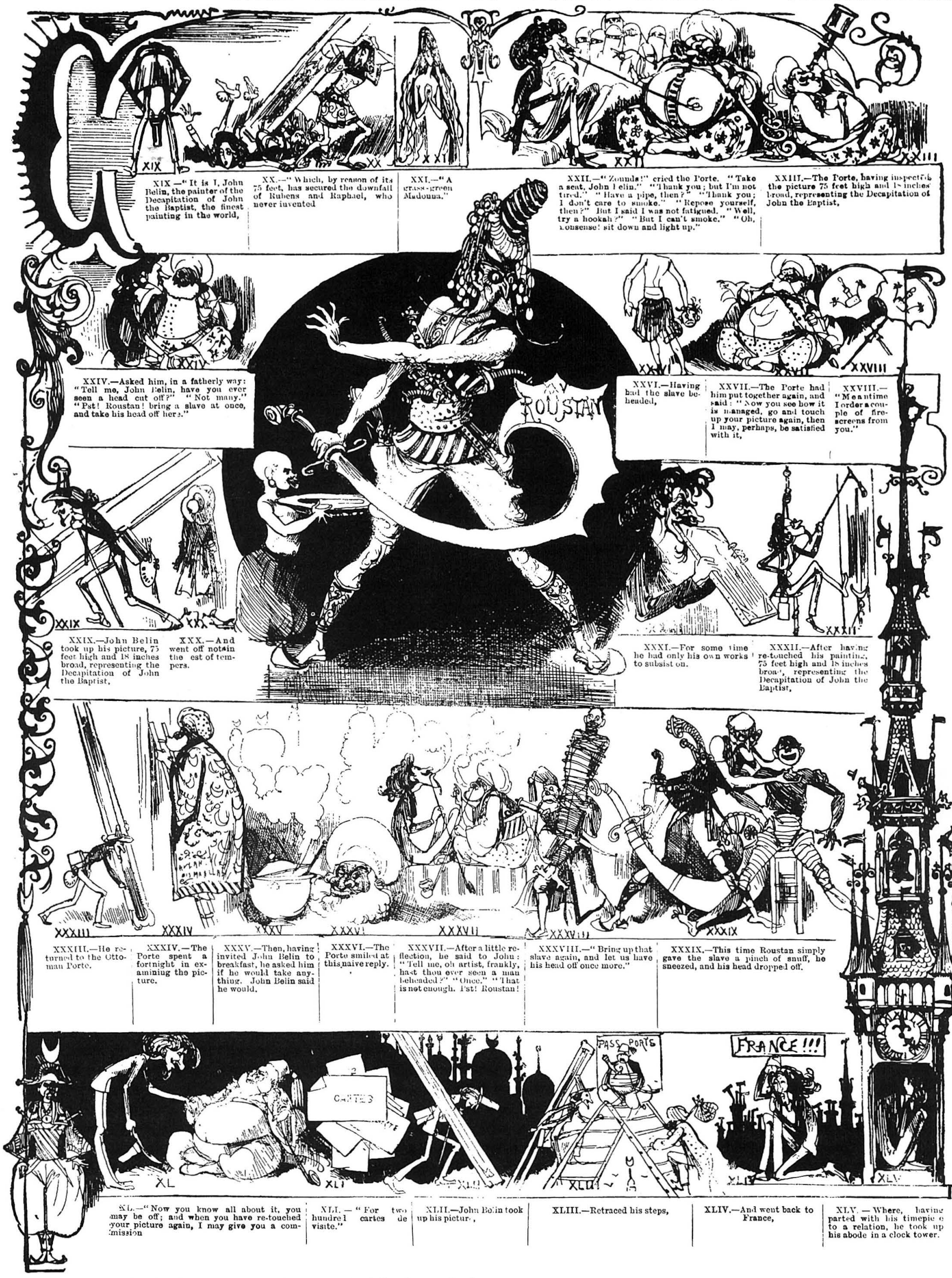
Pick-Me-Up went in for extraordinary circulation hypes, in which the comic strip itself was mobilized. Apart from the universal habit of taking material from abroad for free, the magazine maintained its cheap price by attracting an unusual amount of advertising (including from abortionists) and developing a circulation that apparently reached 250,000 by 1890. (*Ally Sloper's Half Holiday,* by contrast, seemed to manage without advertising.) Much ingenuity went into getting *Pick-Me-Up* readers themselves involved in winning new subscribers and sending in coupons that made them, supposedly, a kind of shareholder (on February 15, 1890, the grand sum of £217 4s. 2d. was distributed as "dividend" to 1,783 persons). There were also guessing competitions, puzzles with money prizes, and lotteries, some of doubtful legality. Major advertisers such as Lever Brothers, Beecham Pills, and Bovril joined in the fray, offering premiums and sponsoring contests through the magazine; *Pick-Me-Up* pushed products bearing its own name (cigarettes, tea, and whiskey) through direct advertisements in cartoon or comic strip form; and editorial comic strips featured, sometimes quite deviously, competitions and commercial products. The neatest of these editorial strips uses a favorite *Fliegende Blätter* theme of a *Schaukelbad* (rocking bath) that turns completely over, and it is called, in honor of a heavy advertiser, "Mr. McDougall's Rocking Bath" (November 21 1891).

With *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday* we entered a new era in comic illustrated journalism—the penny-weekly in a much larger format, that, indeed, of a small newspaper. The comic penny-weeklies of mid century, we remember, had been much slighter in size, and very short lived. British historians cite *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday* as the true ancestor of the comic, thinking, apparently, of its increasing pictoriality; in size, the modern comic is nearer to *Moonshine*. But *Ally* had a predecessor in the same large format and em-

42. By Houfe 1978, 250.

THE LEGEND OF JOHN BELIN.

[Continued from Last Week's Number.



XIX.—"It is I, John Belin, the painter of the Decapitation of John the Baptist, the finest painting in the world,

XX.—"Which, by reason of its 75 feet, has secured the downfall of Rubens and Raphael, who never invented

XXI.—"A grass-green Madonna."

XXII.—"Zounds!" cried the Porte. "Take a seat, John Belin." "Thank you; but I'm not tired." "Have a pipe, then?" "Thank you; I don't care to smoke." "Repose yourself, then?" But I said I was not fatigued. "Well, try a hookah?" "But I can't smoke." "Oh, nonsense! sit down and light up."

XXIII.—The Porte, having inspected the picture 75 feet high and 18 inches broad, representing the Decapitation of John the Baptist,

XXIV.—Asked him, in a fatherly way: "Tell me, John Belin, have you ever seen a head cut off?" "Not many." "Pst! Roustan! bring a slave at once, and take his head off here."

XXVI.—Having had the slave beheaded,

XXVII.—The Porte had him put together again, and said: "Now you see how it is managed, go and touch up your picture again, then I may, perhaps, be satisfied with it,

XXVIII.—"Meantime I order a couple of fire-screens from you."

XXIX.—John Belin took up his picture, 75 feet high and 18 inches broad, representing the Decapitation of John the Baptist,

XXX.—And went off not in the best of tempers.

XXXI.—For some time he had only his own works to subsist on.

XXXII.—After having re-touched his painting, 75 feet high and 18 inches broad, representing the Decapitation of John the Baptist,

XXXIII.—He returned to the Ottoman Porte.

XXXIV.—The Porte spent a fortnight in examining the picture.

XXXV.—Then, having invited John Belin to breakfast, he asked him if he would take anything. John Belin said he would.

XXXVI.—The Porte smiled at this naive reply.

XXXVII.—After a little reflection, he said to John: "Tell me, oh artist, frankly, hast thou ever seen a man beheaded?" "Once." "That is not enough. Pst! Roustan!

XXXVIII.—"Bring up that slave again, and let us have his head off once more."

XXXIX.—This time Roustan simply gave the slave a pinch of snuff, he sneezed, and his head dropped off.

XL.—"Now you know all about it, you may be off; and when you have re-touched your picture again, I may give you a commission

XLI.—"For two hundred cartes de visite."

XLII.—John Belin took up his picture,

XLIII.—Retraced his steps,

XLIV.—And went back to France,

XLV.—Where, having parted with his timepiece to a relation, he took up his abode in a clock tower.

FIG. 13.15. G. Montbard (pseud. Ch. Aug. Loye): "The Legend of John Belin" (1874).

phasis on pictures: *Funny Folks* (started December 12, 1874), with eight large (sixteen-by-eleven-inch), four-column pages on poor-quality paper, printed with cuts on front, back, and center pages. *Funny Folks,* owned by James Henderson, adopted as its motto "Satire Without Malice and Fun Without Vulgarity," and as a subtitle "A Weekly Budget of Funny Pictures—Funny Notes—Funny Jokes—Funny Stories." But the old tradition of the serious cartoon still maintained itself, with a dignified front-page political allegory (amid lesser comic cuts) by *Judy* cartoonist James Proctor. The comic artists whose work was used to launch the magazine, however, were foreign: Wilhelm Busch and G. Montbard. Five Busch Bilderbogen stories were copied over full pages in the first four issues, with two more two months later (credited simply as "from the German"), all in a format approximating that of the original Bilderbogen. Other German sources—Oberländer, Lossow, Schliessmann, Kunz, Bechstein—follow, and then, beginning in 1876, the work of French artists, including Pépin, Léonce Petit, and some relatively erotic pieces. These were sometimes headed "Funny Sketches of French Funny Folks," which is credit of a kind.

Busch may thus be said to have unwittingly served to launch the new style of comic journal, the cheapness of which, to start with and to a degree up to the end of the century, depended essentially on piracy from abroad. Piracy was facilitated by the systematic application, for the first time, of photomechanical processes (used by *Funny Folks* for Busch), which saved the expense of redrawing and engraving by hand. The attraction of Busch reached already in his own time far beyond Germany, and it was surely the magazines which plagiarized him, rather than the few—and not demonstrably successful—foreign book-length editions that did the most to spread his characteristic themes and style (if not his name, which was usually omitted), throughout the United States and Europe. The tally of Busch copies in magazines up to 1896 that I have seen (certainly incomplete) is as follows: over 130 sequences (whole stories and excerpts), involving 50 different Bildergeschichten, distributed as follows: over 64 from English magazines, 19 from the United States, 15 from Portugal, 11 from France, 6 from Austria, 5-plus from Italy, 4 each from Holland and Russia, and 3 (parodies) from Germany.[43]

Henderson gradually became able to find and finance more native material for *Funny Folks,* although copies from Europe and the United States continued. The first native English artist to draw regular strips in *Funny Folks* (from 1880) was Warwick Reynolds, recruited away from *Judy.* Running six to eight scenes, his work aims at topical political and social commentary, and at *faits divers* rather than creative narrative. In the early 1880s, in concert with cartoons by John Phillips Stafford, Reynolds adopted a mildly anti-imperialist stance with respect to the Zulu war. A regular Irish cartoon couple, Mr. and Mrs. Hooligan, introduced in the early 1890s, do not make it into narrative strip form.

The most interesting original *Funny Folks* production is the "comic fancy page," four full pages in the first four issues by the French caricaturist G. Montbard,[44] entitled "The Legend of John Belin, Painter of a Picture 75 Feet High by 18 Inches Wide Representing the Decapitation of St. John the Baptist" (Fig. 13.15). The layout is exotic, a complex design reminiscent of medieval illumination, with capricious architectural-ornamental framing and "marginalia" strewn loosely across the page. This arrangement and the story that follows are of a humorous sophistication quite beyond English artists working for the cheaper magazines at this time, and possibly beyond the audience too; for alas, after this brief foray into comic art, Montbard dedicated himself to the no doubt much more lucrative field of news illustration. His parody of medieval legend is conducted with a mixture of graphic and verbal tricks not unlike Doré's *History of Holy Russia* (see Chapter 5)—foolish puns and syllepses, anachronisms, literalized metaphors, balladistic repetitions, formal declamations, and, not least, a debonair handling of the macabre, all executed in the most swashbuckling French manner.

The crowded, random layout of Henderson's *Funny Folks,* and its habit of clipping pictures (and no doubt verbal jokes and other text) from published sources, corresponded to a new tendency called "scrapbook journalism,"[45] of which George Newnes's unillustrated but enormously successful *Tit-Bits* (1881), composed of paragraphs culled from the press at large and stitched together haphazard, was the pioneer. In 1883 Henderson brought out another penny-comic called *Scraps* ("Literary and Pictorial, Curious and Amusing"), of a format identical to that of *Funny Folks* and appearing on Wednesday instead of *Funny Folks*'s Saturday. Here again, especially at the beginning, the better strips are borrowings from abroad, chiefly Germany. The native artist's resentment of this foreign competition surfaces in a strip that tells the story of an artist who copied from another magazine: foolishly, he brags about it to his friends, whereupon he is arrested for fraud and jailed with hard labor (January 12, 1884). Complaints about editorial tyranny, poor pay, foreign competition, and the general difficulty of coming up with good jokes are quite frequent in the strips and jokes of the period. The strip form begins to degenerate as the essentially single-panel joke is artificially extended into a sequence—often, it seems, merely to fill up space.

In this company, even the less-than-brilliant Athelstan Rusden and Frank Springett stand out. Springett invented in 1887 a sporadically recurring couple, Major O'Bang and Colonel Slasher, who quarrel incessantly over their shared garden wall. By about 1890 some better artists appear: Harry Furniss, Alfred Gray, W. R. Orton, W. T. Parker, and Julius Baker.

Ally Sloper's Half Holiday, when it arrived in 1884, quickly overtook both *Funny Folks* and *Scraps,* if one is to believe its claim to have the "largest circulation of any illustrated paper in the world." It was followed within a few months by another Saturday paper, *Illustrated Bits,* founded and edited by T. H. Roberts, which came to be the chief repository, quantitatively, of the comic strip. This magazine, too, started off with heavy pirating from German artists (Busch appeared in each of the first five issues, some blithely signed "Godfrey McCall"), then took to soliciting from amateur artists among the readers. Even here there was plagiary. Later, from about 1888, credit was sometimes given to the source: *Fliegende Blätter, Journal Amusant, Chat Noir,* and Frank Opper in the United States; and by 1890 the borrowing was institutionalized as a regular feature headed "Illustrated Bits of Foreign Fun," reaching on occasion as far afield as Australia and Russia. Good native strips appear only with Harry Furniss, first in 1886, more frequently by 1893, when he was joined by René, Max Cowper, and particularly the prolific Harold Piffard.

In 1887, having quarreled with the Dalziels, proprietors of *Ally Sloper,* C. H. Ross started a rival called *C. H. Ross's Variety Paper.* Despite the collaboration of Archibald Chasemore and Baxter (who did an excellent array of lower-class types, including a character called Choodle, sedulously plugged on page one as a rival to Ally, who gave away five-shilling checks as Ally gave away watches; see above, p. 10), and despite the usual borrowing from abroad, especially of Busch, the venture, amid a dearth of quality native strips, lasted only eight months.

A distinct group of four penny-illustrateds not normally associated with caricature, the boys' adventure magazines (a genre often known as the "penny-dreadful"), had meanwhile opened their doors to humorous illustration. The pioneer of the group, all published by Edwin J. Brett, was *Boys of England,* which started in 1866. From 1868 it carried a regular back-page comic strip, starting, as one would expect, with an exotic adventure: "Benjamin Podger in the Himalayas" (four issues, September–October 1868). From 1872 there is a heavy infusion of Wilhelm Busch (with eleven Bilderbogen up to 1877, and another four in 1882), and few native strips. The back-page comic strip became weekly in 1882, with continuing foreign support, but petered out again in the late 1880s. A thirty-six-part series of imitation child drawings called "Freddy's Slate" (1884–1885) is not truly narrative.

43. See Kunzle 1987.
44. Pseudonym for Charles Auguste Loye (1841–1901). After working for several French magazines, he moved to England in 1870 and drew for the *Graphic, Vanity Fair,* and the *Illustrated London News.*
45. See Gifford 1976, 7. This study provides excellent bibliographical coverage of the ins and outs of the early comics. Also useful, especially in terms of reproduction, is Aldridge and Perry 1971.

An early companion magazine, *Young Men of Great Britain* (1868–1886), also has intermittent back-page strips, with a few Busch copies (1882–1883), as does *Our Boys Journal* (1876–1883), including six pages of Busch in 1878. *Boys Comic Journal* (1883–1889) also regularized the trend in a back page called "Sam Sly's Comic Picture Gallery," which is also heavily dependent on foreign sources, mainly from the United States.[46]

Another milestone in the history of cheap journalism occurred in 1890, when the halfpenny *Comic Cuts* was launched by twenty-five-year-old Alfred Harmsworth, later the press baron Lord Northcliffe. Ten years earlier he had worked for Henderson, and soon had become rich from his own (unillustrated) *Answers,* which claimed a million weekly readers; he even at one point tried to buy *Ally Sloper.* Harmsworth's halfpenny was immediately successful, and at a circulation of 430,000 was soon outselling *Answers*. It later became strictly a children's comic, lasting as such until 1953 (I well remember it as a child).[47]

Intended to cut into the market for the penny-paper, *Comic Cuts* had a masthead with the sensationally cheap price featured as prominently as the title, to which was added "really a penny paper" and "100 laughs for ½d." This price was made possible by improved printing technology (the Linotype machine was invented in 1886) and further reduction in paper quality, page size (from the penny-paper's eleven-by-sixteen to nine-by-twelve), and, presumably, pay rates for contributors. It also engaged in wholesale theft from five-year-old copies of *Scraps,* for which Henderson sued.[48] Being composed of smaller designs, comic strips were easier for the less-skilled artist to knock off than cartoons; thus the balance of single cartoons to strips now shifted further in favor of the latter, with around six four-to-ten panel strips of various shapes and arrangements strewn around or fitted into an already crowded and confused page layout. There are ministrips so much reduced as to lose definition and impoverished in advance by paper bleed-through. Finally, like all other papers, *Comic Cuts* was dependent on foreign matter—which did not, however, prevent it from printing dire threats against predators.

In July 1890, five months after *Comic Cuts* first appeared, Gilbert Dalziel entered the halfpenny market with *Funny Cuts,* edited by Gordon Hood and dominated by the strips of Alfred Gray. Harmsworth immediately (within two weeks!) countered this move with a *Comic Cuts* stablemate called *Illustrated Chips* (with Max Cowper strips), and at the same time Henderson, already the proprietor of four penny-weeklies, entered his halfpenny candidate, *Snap Shots,* composed entirely of U.S. material. These three rivals, with various imitators, managed to thrive, despite an attempt at a distribution boycott on the part of newsagents, who made only half the profit on selling the halfpenny-weeklies and feared that these would undercut the market for the penny-weeklies.

Many of the penny- and halfpenny-weeklies appealed to their readers for contributions, both original and found elsewhere. Clearly, demand far outstripped supply; the gap was generally filled from abroad. With *Snapshots,* Henderson tried to cut through the jungle of borrowing from America by monopolizing and copyrighting this source. The *Snapshots* masthead advertised "Humorous Pictures and Amusing Reading. Chiefly from Advance Proofs of Current American Papers by Exclusive Arrangement." But since this and his other penny-weeklies evidently failed to absorb all the available American material, and because he saw an advantage in establishing a copyright on the remainder, Henderson began the next year (1891) to publish the *Comic Pictorial Sheet,* "printed, published and copyrighted" by him, with an added note: "Pictures in this sheet are the absolute English Copyright of James Henderson the Publisher and their Copyright is reserved throughout the British Dominions."[49]

The nadir of the always low-quality halfpenny market was reached in 1891 with *The Joker. The World's Comic,* in contrast, a halfpenny companion paper to *Funny Cuts,* maintained the same slightly superior standard as *Funny Cuts* and frequently ran a line along the bottom of the page disclaiming exploitation and plagiarism: "We are no 'sweaters.' Everybody who draws and writes for *The World's Comic* is British and well paid for his work." In 1893 the magazine was merged into *Larks,* another halfpenny-paper started by Dalziel, which, together with *Funny Cuts,* claimed sales of six hundred thousand per week.

The halfpenny market was not glutted, however, and in 1893 Harmsworth added his third in the genre, called the *Wonder* (later renamed *Funny Wonder*). This paper started out large, perhaps as an attention-getting device, before reverting to the standard economically viable size, where it continued on an absolutely rock-bottom quality level. By now the halfpennies dominated the field, and they soon drove out two major penny-papers; *Funny Folks* retired in 1894, and *Illustrated Bits* the following year, leaving *Scraps,* in a modified form, and *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday,* which finally expired in 1923 in a takeover by fetishist magazines.[50] All this may appear to be of no more than bibliographical interest, but turning the pages of these ephemera in a confetti shower of disintegrating fragments left me with the sad feeling that, unless immediately microfilmed, an important record of the childhood of a major children's medium will soon be lost forever.

It is nowhere more evident than in the comic strips (as compared to the cartoons, which were easier to devise—all that was needed was a verbal joke or witticism) that the whole phenomenon of cheap comic papers in England depended from their inception on the availability of foreign sources which could be plagiarized at will and without fear of legal repercussions. Even if charges were pressed, they did little to halt the process, for tracing a drawing's origin could prove most complicated. In 1890 a lawsuit was instigated over a (prose) story that supposedly originated in England, was plagiarized in the United States, and then was re-plagiarized back to England: it emerged that the story had originally been pirated from a German source.[51]

If cultural industries follow the general pattern of industry, such dependency comes as less of a surprise. By the end of the century England's productive capacity in many key areas over which she had long held sway was being seriously challenged by Germany and the United States. Earlier, British writers such as Dickens had had cause to complain of U.S. piracy; now the roles were reversed, and in a manner that presages that massive dominance in so many branches of mass culture achieved by the United States in our own century—with the big difference that the world now pays for its U.S. imports.

Harmsworth claimed, with his new, cheap comics, to be luring the working class away from their traditional addiction to the "penny dreadfuls," a much abused and certainly very violent literary genre.[52] Thus the comic strip was institutionalized in England as the backbone of a medium designed to civilize and tame classes considered all too prone to violence; for the violence of the strips, usually incorporated as farce, was of a safely trivial and asocial kind. How ironic, then, that a mere sixty years later in the great "horror comics" scare of the early 1950s the comics themselves, at a time when they had become exclusively children's fare, should be accused of *causing* violent behavior and subjected to severe legal sanction.

46. See Carpenter 1981, 57–60. I am indebted to the author for personal clarification of certain points.
47. See Gifford 1975, 9. Aldridge and Perry (1971, 45) call it the "great" *Comic Cuts*.
48. According to Gifford 1984, 13ff.
49. Priced at sixpence, in the form of a very large, uncut, folded page (as I found it in the British Library), of variable size and periodicity, with drawings and captions printed separately, this oddity has the appearance of a proof sheet, theoretically available for sale in order to establish a copyright, but not intended for the public. The price of sixpence seems too high for the public at large and too low to constitute a resale of the copyright to other English magazines or papers. (It was incorporated in 1904 into *Snapshots*.)
50. See Kunzle 1982, 268.
51. Pickard 1961, 110. The Chace Act of 1891, the first U.S. international copyright act, had no discernible effect on the magazines under discussion (see Nowell-Smith 1968, chap. 4).
52. See Pickard 1961, 98–99; see also Pound and Harmsworth 1959, 114–116, which records Harmsworth's claim never to have published "a solitary line of reading-matter unsuitable to the most refined home circle."

CHAPTER 14

SIDE STREAMS

Austria

The Austrian strips of this period are predominantly political, and persistently so, as nowhere else in Europe. The installation of a "bourgeois ministry" in 1868, the ascendancy of liberals, and the new, if limited, parliamentary representation and power served to mitigate press censorship, thus permitting a level of critical freedom in domestic and foreign affairs that was perhaps greater than anywhere in Europe outside Britain. The effectiveness of this criticism, however, is another matter, for politics in the Austro-Hungarian empire was mired in bureaucratic inertia. Karl Kraus's dictum seems valid for a whole era: "Prussia is a place where one is free to move, but one's mouth is gagged. Austria is an isolation cell, in which one is allowed to scream." The historian of Austrian caricature recognizes that "criticism remained mostly on the surface. The bitter topical adages of Grillparzer and the equally bitter aphorisms of Nestroy remained isolated SOS cries, which echoed unheard."[1]

Foreign affairs became the enduring domain of the strip, eloquent testimony to the extroversion of Austrian political life. The "national problem" of Austria—that is, the problems of the various restive nationalities composing the Austro-Hungarian empire—was regarded as international. In the later 19th century, as the empire began to unravel, Austrians became increasingly aware of their country's geographic and historic role as "the conciliator and mediator between the Latin-Germanic world of the European West and the Byzantine and Slavic worlds of the East."[2]

The extent of the advertising carried by the Austrian caricature magazines—which, at up to three and a half out of eight pages, not counting the advertising supplements, exceeded that of their counterparts to the west—and the nature of that advertising, much of it relating to high finance, tell us that the readership included the wealthy elite, and probably the inner circles of administration and government. Yet the announcements of lotteries and the printing of entire railway timetables tell us too that the readership was also large, and popular. Indeed, the extent of readership is to be judged not by the total number of individual subscribers but more specifically by the number of café owners who subscribed, for the café was a "Volksparlament" where it was the custom to read a dozen papers and then discuss them with other patrons.[3]

The high tide of the political strip, which ran from the late 1860s through the 1870s, coincides with that of the "German ascendancy"[4] in Austrian life, that is, the domination of German liberal politicians and intellectuals in Vienna, incarnated first of all in the Dresden-born Count Beust (foreign minister, then chancellor from 1866 to 1871). Artistically, the German Wilhelm Busch is the dominant influence in caricature; in the 1880s the French influence, present from the start, asserts itself, and the political strip as a whole declines in favor of erotica. The best all-around caricaturist was a Czech, Karl Klič, who combined French and German caricatural traditions.[5]

Bismarck was then politically dominant in central Europe. The fear of offending him, together with the need to cooperate with German imperial policies after the defeat of 1866, is reflected in caricature: he is never shown as truly tyrannical or wicked, much less humiliated, though he is freely represented as an ungainly, unattractive figure, with the famous three hairs sticking up from his bald head. (According to one joke, it was the fear that he would angrily pull out this precious identity label that prevented caricaturists from going too far.)[6] In the end, the towering, awesome figure of Bismarck was a valuable commodity to the caricaturists, who liked to pretend that he was one of their primary "collaborators" in a situation of mutual dependency: they relied on him for material, and he looked to them for ironic affirmations of his power.[7]

1. Hakel 1975, 12.
2. Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in his essay "The Austrian Idea," cited in Kohn 1961, 49.
3. Hakel 1975, 10.
4. See the chapters thus titled in Taylor 1948.
5. According to Hakel (1975, 28), a magazine in Czech for the large Czech minority in Vienna called *Česicek* (begun in 1866), which I have not seen, specialized in "picture stories in the manner of humorous *Moritaten* [murder-ballads]."
6. *Kikeriki,* April 12, 1877.
7. In a cartoon of October 25, 1873, Bismarck makes a personal visit to the *Floh* offices to give thanks for making him world famous and known to every Viennese child.

The humor magazines, despite bouts with government censorship, could survive only through collaboration with the authorities. Their most virulent cartoons followed the antipapal, anti-Jesuit line of Bismarck, Wilhelm Busch, and the Austrian government, which in 1870 abrogated the concordat of 1855. Six months before Busch's *Saint Anthony of Padua* (January 30, 1870), the *Floh* started its own narrative series ridiculing Jesuit and Catholic superstition: a crude libel on Saint Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order. In 1872–1873, at the time of the stock market collapse, critical attention was diverted to focus on financial speculators and bank directors. Throughout, however, the military remained generally immune from caricatural attacks.

Although we cannot here assess the balance of dissent and collaboration in the caricature magazines, it is certain that the government censors both respected and feared them and frequently intervened in their affairs. The little pioneers, *Figaro* (1857) and *Kikeriki* (Cock-a-doodle-doo, started in 1861 by the radical O. F. Berg [pseudonym for Ottokar Ebersberg]) often had reason to complain of the censorship. *Kikeriki* summed up the plight of the press in the early 1860s, prevented as the magazine was from living up to its masthead vignette showing all classes running in terror from a thunderbolt-wielding cock. A strip entitled "Proof of How Difficult It Is to Publish a Paper" lists the targets that are off limits, including church, military, and the foreign ministry. "Even if one closes one's eyes . . . , if they [the caricature magazines] dare to represent this or that sovereign and those targeted [portrait of Bismarck] are wont to laugh at themselves, these are considered journalistic excesses, which many a foreign minister is not likely to take calmly."[8] The problem of ambassadorial sensitivities was endemic. The much-censored *Kikeriki* editor spent five days in jail in 1867 at the instance of the Prussian ambassador because he continued his opposition to Prussia after the defeat of Austria and the peace of 1866. Even the *Kikeriki* offshoot, the *Junge Kikeriki,* founded in 1882 with the motto "Scherz ist Balsam" (Fun Is Balm) and a policy of avoiding personalities, was confiscated several times in 1883.

The first manifestation of the new regime of 1868 was the Sunday weekly the *Floh* (Flea), in larger (eight-page), newspaper format, founded by Josef Frisch and Moritz Deutsch. It promised, optimistically, to act in "total freedom" and to be "the payment, the revenge which the peoples have long owed those in power," "the flea of the people" against the government fleas, a paper for all and, independent, against all.[9] The very first number was confiscated, and, the magazine being constantly denounced to the police, further confiscations followed intermittently, with the editor jailed at least once. But the journal flourished and could boast, in a Buschian strip called "The Flea Hunt," a victory over an attempt at suppression instigated by an arrogant, bankrupt German princeling (Fig. 14.1). The *Floh* could soon claim a circulation of around twenty thousand and liked to represent itself as a factor to be reckoned with in diplomatic negotiations and as a source of information for the powerful (see Fig. 14.2).

The journal's principal artist was Karl Klič, a Czech born in 1841 who, after working in his father's photographic studio and starting a Czech-language paper in Prague, came to Vienna to work on *Der Floh*. Here he introduced color, for the first time in Europe, on a regular basis to a weekly illustrated. The process was called *Irisdruck:* two colors of lithographic ink were rolled from opposite sides and thinned gradually to create a third tone in the middle, which the printer could handle in one extra printing. This coloring system was applied to the regular Klič front-page portraits of Viennese and foreign personalities, cultural and political, which were drawn in a striking, realistic, and not unflattering manner.[10] The combination of large front-page chromolithographic portraits and regular comic strips was to characterize Austrian caricature magazines thenceforth. In 1872 Klič left *Der Floh* (of which he had been listed as co-publisher since February 1871) to start a magazine of his own, *Humoristische Blätter von Karl Klič,* the use of his own name bespeaking some celebrity. He was replaced for some months at the *Floh* by French artists—Bertall, Robida, Grévin, and Gill—presumably by special arrangement, for they are not merely credited but vaunted. Native artists were soon found, however, in Hugo Ströhl, ex-*Kikeriki* artist Carl von Stur, and twenty-two-year-old (in 1874) Hans Schliessmann, who would also work for the *Fliegende Blätter,* as would another *Floh* contributor, Theodor Grätz of Munich. The most prolific comic strip artist after 1875 signed his work "Th. Z," presumably for Theodor Zajacskowski, who in 1883 became the magazine's editor.[11] Klič returned to the *Floh* at the end of 1878 but did not actively resume comic strip production. In 1889, by which time the magazine's graphics were in marked decline, Klič was in Lancaster, England, working as an intaglio printer. Credited as the inventor of "inlaid linoleum" and the perfector of heliogravure, Klič is remembered chiefly (in the Czech literature) as the inventor of rotary intaglio printing.[12]

The first imitator of the *Floh* was another Sunday paper called the *Bombe* (Bomb), edited by Karl Floh (briefly, in 1870, listed as editor of the *Floh*). "Laci v. F" (Ladislaus von Frecksay) served as chief illustrator, though he was replaced for a while by the less-spirited Th. Z; both imitated the French. Then came the *Humoristische Blätter von Karl Klič* (1873), owned and published by Klič and Berthold Spitzer and edited by Adalbert Platzer. This journal carried a welter of strips by Klič (to 1878) and Th. Z, some of them social. The seizure of the magazine on March 1, 1874, and the compulsory excision of a caption to the front-page portrait (an event narrated in a comic strip) testify to the capriciousness of the censorship.

The 1870s represent the high point of the Austrian political strip, with the Franco-Prussian (1870–1871) and Russo-Turkish (1876–1878) wars acting as particularly fruitful catalysts, for the Austrians posed as neutral observers in both. The 1880s saw an invasion of French erotic styles and subjects derived from Grévin in the *Charivari* and Montaut in the *Vie Parisienne*. Even the *Bombe* was by the 1870s already veering in this direction, and the trend culminated in the founding of *Wiener Caricaturen* in 1881. Although this publication opened with the familiar rhetoric of "lashing out equally against the Right and Left, upward and downward" and claims of being both "biting" and "elegant," in practice it limited itself to the elegance of the boudoir and an endless display of cocottes in corsets. Social-erotic subjects were simply not conducive to narrative elaboration; the occasional political topics still dealt with strike a jarring note of reality amid all the fetishist underwear centerspreads imitated from the *Vie Parisienne*. The courtesan, together with her client, was an openly targeted audience.[13] This Viennese handling of light subjects may have struck a French historian of caricature as all too heavy,[14] but it went far beyond what any magazine in Germany dared risk.

Most of the major Austrian caricaturists were affected one way or another by Busch, who was variously copied, imitated, and transposed. He was apotheosized by Carl von Stur on a cover of the *Floh* (August 8, 1874) as "Meister Busch" surrounded by his creations. Klič's is the most creative adaptation of Busch, especially in the stylization and foreshortening of poses, to which he adds a debonair, rather French whimsy and delicacy, iced with amusing calligraphic squiggles and loops (Fig. 14.2). Like Busch,

8. *Kikeriki,* April 6, 1865.
9. Third specimen number, December 13, 1868. Hakel, however (1975, 28ff.), refers to the *Floh* as "much more harmless and less biting [than *Kikeriki*]," and as backed by the publisher of the official *Tagespresse,* the liberal Moritz Gans von Ludassy.
10. Wrongly referred to by Grand-Carteret (1885, 353) as "portraits-charge," which connotes exaggeration.
11. Grand-Carteret (1885, 443, s.v. "Floh") also conjectures this identity. Zajacskowski is not listed as such in Thieme and Becker 1907ff.
12. See *Österreichisches biographisches Lexikon, 1815–1950* (Graz-Cologne, 1965), vol. 3, p. 400. See also Albert 1927, although this work says very little on Klič as caricaturist.
13. See, for example, *Wiener Caricaturen* cartoon of December 2, 1888, where a cocotte refuses to see any clients, preferring to lie abed with the "edifying" pages of that magazine.
14. Grand-Carteret 1885, 356.

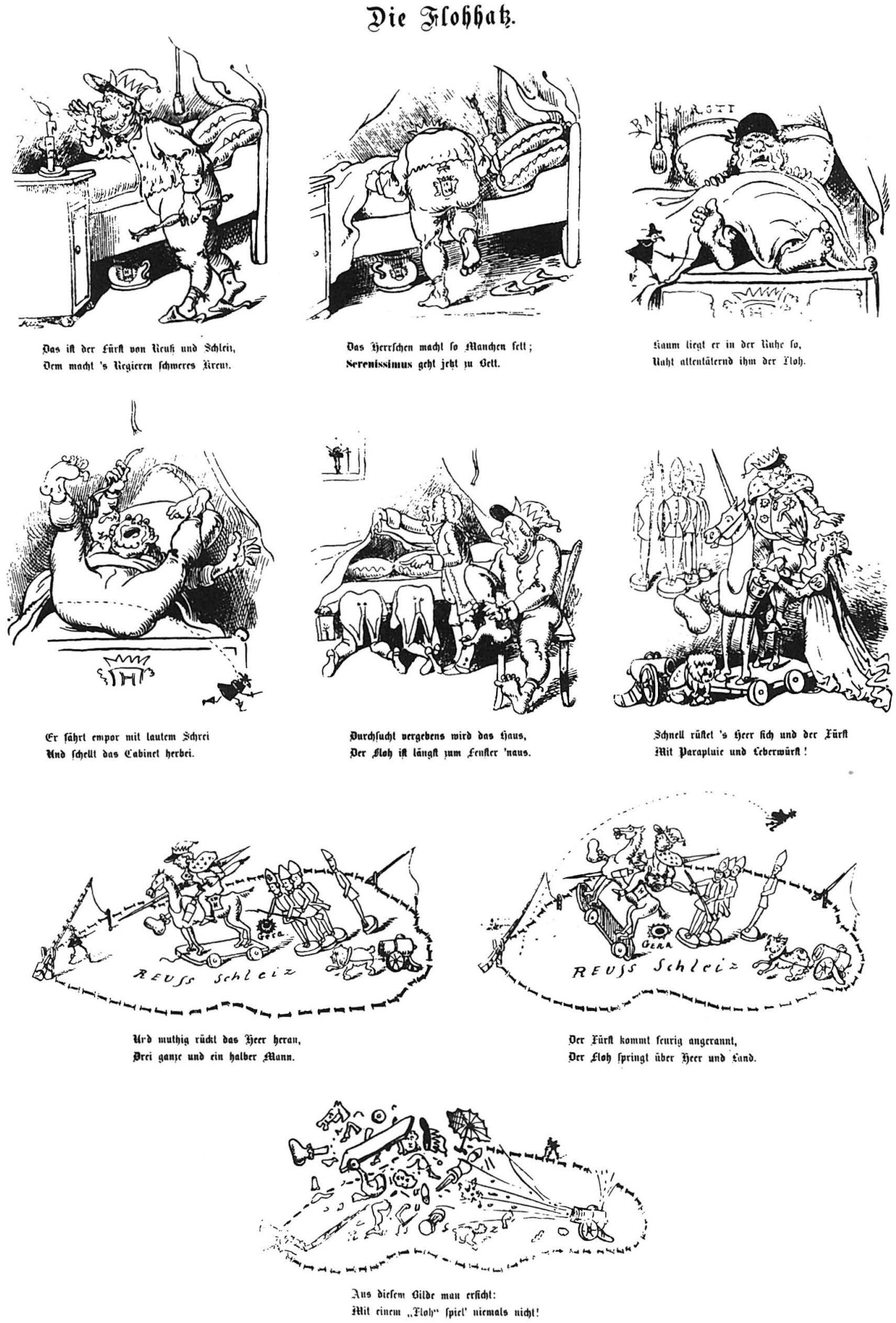


FIG. 14.1. Karl Klič: "The Flea-Hunt" (1869).

"This is the Prince of Reuß and Schleiz,
For whom ruling exacts a heavy price.

As a ruler you tend to get well fed,
Serenissimus now goes to bed.

He's barely found his rightful rest
When a flea comes near on a murderous quest.

He screams and leaps up for the bell
To bring the cabinet pell-mell.

The house is searched through, but in vain,
The flea has scrammed through the window pane.

Army and Prince are armed, by golly,
With liver sausage and a brolly.

See the army bravely forward press,
Three whole and one-half men, no less.

The Prince rides forward full of vim,
The flea vaults over land and him.

From this picture you can see
Never to mess, not with a 'flea'!"

Klič chose to reveal the "tricks of the trade," and he engaged in Buschian radical stenography.[15]

Carl von Stur represents a coarsening of Busch's manner; he did, however, show pronounced skill in the mimicry of posture, which may be connected with his youthful experience as an actor. Also a portrait painter (like many of the caricaturists, for whom the front page was an excellent advertisement), he took to caricature "out of despair" to support his indigent mother.[16] Whereas many artists commanded several styles, one "straight" and others caricatural, Theodor Grätz, in the *Bombe* alone, proved himself a veritable chameleon: for political narrative he joined others in using Busch, though less creatively than Klič; for the cocotte he used Grévin; for street and crowd scenes, Léonce Petit; and for political cartoons, John Tenniel. Laci v. F also pastiched Daumier. In style, if not in the borrowing of whole strips, Austria was as internationally minded as England.

A major philosophical influence at the time was Charles Darwin, who, like Busch (and as the only Englishman I found so honored), was vouchsafed a cover portrait (April 30, 1882) by way of obituary. That year, moreover, saw a particularly marked incidence of Darwinian metamorphoses ("Frei nach Darwin"—freely after Darwin), when his theories of struggle for existence, selection, adaptation, and inheritance came to be illustrated by the political moment and, in 1876–1877, during the Russo-Turkish War, when the Russian helmet was transformed into a dove of

15. See, e.g., his "Maulstudien," *Floh,* December 4, 1870.
16. Wurzbach 1880, 214.



FIG. 14.2. Karl Klič: "Chronicle of the Week" (1870).

Von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen (Leopold),
Was the nicest kid you ever did behold.

Prim seeks a king; but lo, the foot
Gives him the order of the boot.

Prim runs to Count Bismarck, to see if
He hasn't some kind of princeling up his sleeve.

The Spaniards at the prospect of the boy
Dance a month nonstop for joy.

Napoleon and Gramont complain bitterly
When they see it written in the *Flea*.

Gramont now gets frightfully mad
And writes, dear Bismarck, this is really bad!

Nor is the peaceful Beust too glad,
And writes some letters, this is really bad!

Bismarck, unmoved, writes all along
Come now, you get me all—quite wrong.

Bismarck and Napoleon feel
The answer lies in sharp, cold steel.

peace and the abundant Serbian pig turned miraculously into all-too-scarce cannon.[17]

The Buschian repertory of tricks by *böse Buben* (naughty boys) seemed infinitely adaptable to the misbehavior, dissidence, and quarrels among parliamentarians and nations. The bad boys of Belgrade and Cetinje (Yugoslavia) are punished for tormenting the Turk; the bad boys of Poland and Bohemia are rolled flat by the barrel of the German language;[18] the bad boys of Britain and Russia torment the Afghans. Busch's funny little mystery of the screaming baby (*Der Schreihals*) was adapted twice by the same artist in the same magazine, but at an interval of nineteen years and to very different situations, first in Russia, then in Bulgaria.[19]

The impact of Busch, profound as it obviously was, should not, however, be exaggerated. If the poor frog of Turkey, crippled by superpower storks, has Buschian contours, the motif may have come directly from native lore and native Bilderbogen, which also provide the model for balladic crime strips (*Moritaten*). Commonplace cartoon metaphors, based on incidents in social and domestic life, were simply given a narrative extension: war-torn Russia woos the daughters of Frau Austria; he wins the mother's sympathy, but when he takes advantage of the vulnerable Slavia, her sister Hungaria denounces him—alas, too late: the three women will have to raise the horrid hybrid offspring.[20] Familiar incidents in home or office conceal discreet political allegories, overt identification being unnecessary for a politically aware audience.

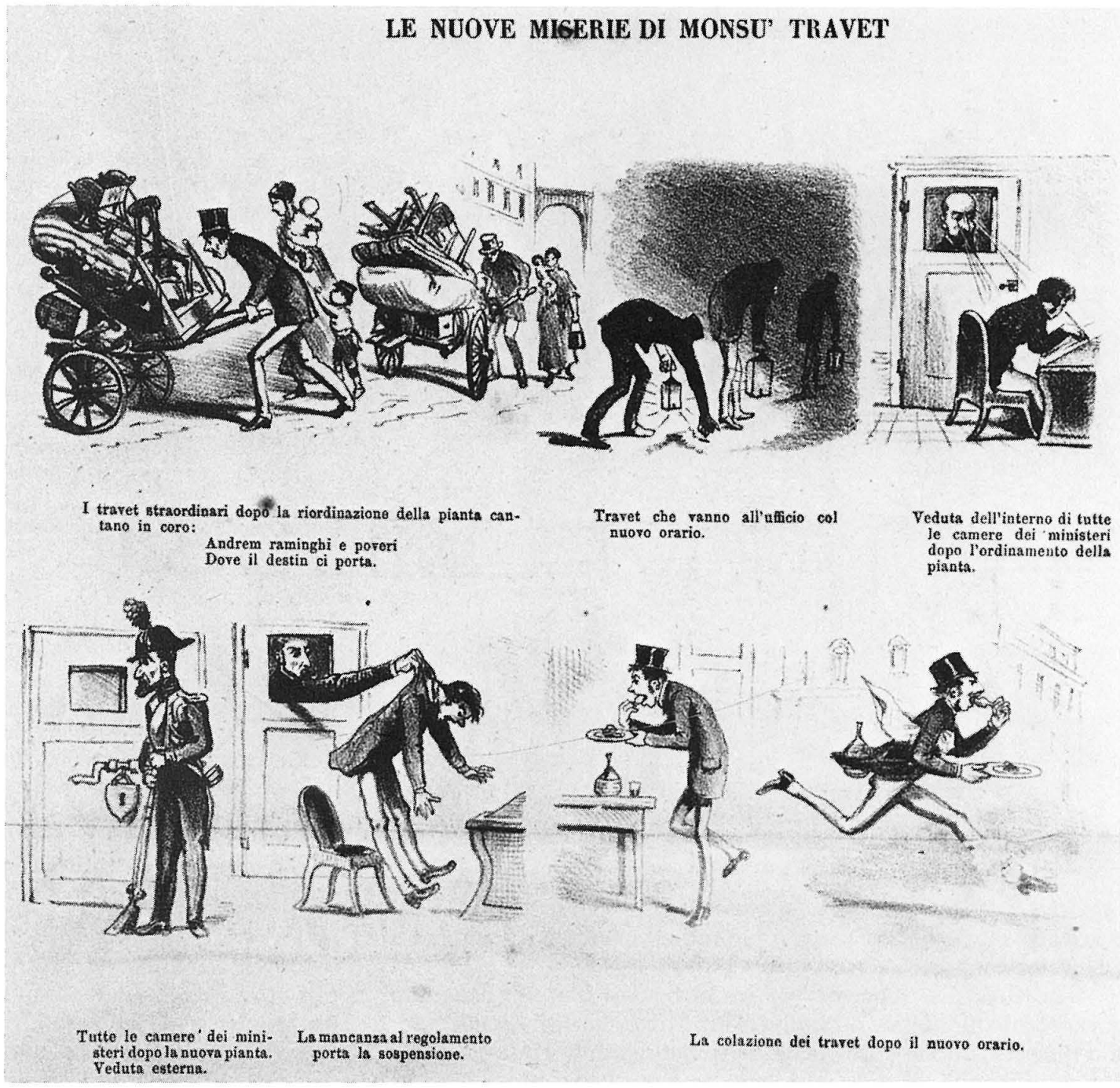
Too numerous to allow for a thorough reading here, too allusive to be readily comprehensible, the Austrian comic strip seems to have offered important political commentary at a time when the genre had abandoned this task in the rest of Europe. The overt political role that Busch had assumed briefly in the early 1870s was developed in Austria, where artists dealt with individual public personalities whom cartoonists elsewhere (except in England) were obliged to treat with kid gloves. But this politicization could not survive the European-wide institutionalization of caricature and the comic strip in the 1880s.

Italy

The 1848 revolutions brought into being the first Italian satirical illustrated periodicals. One of the few to endure from this period was the twice-, then thrice-weekly, four-, then eight-page *Fischietto* (The Whistle), published in Turin, capital of the kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia. Because the caricature journals of Turin and other Italian cities followed the moderate, liberal, antipapal (and mildly anticlerical—see front endpaper), antirepublican, anti-radical, pro-unification, and generally modernizing policies of the Piedmontese prime minister Count Cavour, it is hard to see them as "plagues and cancers of the state," as Ruskin did.[21] The *Fischietto* was nevertheless subject to frequent censorship in the 1850s and was banned outside Piedmont; indeed, the *fisco* (tax authorities; here, censors) was recognized as an all-too-regular "contributor" and credited with too many blank pages. The principal artist, Francesco Redenti, who was influenced by Cham in both style and the use of the *rivista mensile,* or monthly review of topical events, made a specialty of miscellanies of small vignettes, as well as of fashion plates.

Pasquino, also of Turin, started out in 1856 proclaiming itself as nonpolitical, and thus distinct from its rival, with which it maintained friendly relations. On June 26, 1859, though, it dropped the designation "non-politico" from the subtitle and

17. *Floh,* July 16, 1876.
18. Bad boys of Belgrade: *Bombe,* July 9, 1876. Bad boys of Poland: *Floh,* March 21, 1886.
19. Th. Z. in the *Floh,* September 19, 1875, and February 1894.
20. *Floh,* August 19, 1877.
21. For Italian 19th-century caricature in general, see Petrucci 1954. For Ruskin's view, see Ruskin 1884, 178.



joined in the effort toward unification, all the while continuing its French-inspired social emphasis. Color lithography was used regularly from the 1860s, and in an original way: for the new year 1872, for instance, in "Roses and Thorns—Caprices by Teja," the good moments were printed in red and the bad in black, more or less alternating, over thirty-seven small vignettes. *Pasquino* is the most interesting and the most prestigious of all the Italian caricature journals, with a great variety of graphics, most of which (as well, probably, as much of the text) are the work of Teja.

Casimiro Teja, born in 1830, dominated the journal from its inception in 1856 until his death in 1897 and was by far the best-known cartoonist in 19th-century Italy.[22] Although his larger drawings and faces are often touched by Daumier, the brisk, sardonic tone generally and the style of the smaller drawings derive clearly from Cham. But he did few narrative strips, and the few there are tend to be episodic and not causative. In 1871 (November 12) Teja critiqued, in word and picture, two Cham cartoons on the opening of the Mont Cenis tunnel between France and Italy; he used the occasion to render a singular homage, addressed "to the noble Cham, firstborn of the noble line of Noé, father of European caricaturists." In the accompanying text Teja testifies: "I embellished my schoolbooks with impassioned and profound studies based on the first impressions made on me by your humorous subjects. In all the almanacs, in the *Albums,* in the monthly reviews, I recognized in you my Cicero, my Plutarch, my Ovid, my Virgil, and the dynamic, numerical beating of my heart [for you] was met by the beating of the master's cane. I endured it, and laughed. My admiration grew with the years."

In the early 1870s Busch (along with Darwin) served briefly as another model for Teja, but this flirtation led only to some imitations and direct copies—two of the latter uncredited to the German source and brazenly appropriated as the Italian's own.[23] If Busch's work had been available and culturally meaningful to enough Italians, it might have generated picture-stories, as it did to such productive effect in Austria.[24] Meanwhile, one is left to argue, tentatively, that the poor showing of the genre at a time when caricature flourished in Italy has to do with the urgency of the political question, which left insufficient room for the free, imaginative expansion of social experience upon which pictorial narrative depends.

Teja's "Lawyer Mandibola" is a satire on the ruthless, opportunistic lawyer-politician who sweet-talks and cheats his electors, switches political parties, and becomes rich—all with an aggressive, mandibular smile. "The Transfer of Monsú Travet" shows sympathetically the personal discomforts suffered by a browbeaten ministerial employee when he is transferred from his Turin

22. See the anthology of Teja 1900.
23. "I concertisti" (January 16, 1870; reproduced in Teja 1900, 120 [no. 91]), copied from Busch's 1865 Bilderbogen *The Virtuoso*. "I galli" (March 26, 1871), derived from Busch's *Cockfight* of 1862. "Le tentazioni di Sant' A... Giovanni Lanza" (December 22, 1872), derived from the famous episode in Busch's *St. Anthony of Padua* (1870). The saint (here, Giovanni Lanza) is tempted by the seductions of the Chamber of Deputies, in the person of Quintino, to dismiss the Jesuits. "I nove dormienti" (December 29, 1872), based on Busch's sleeping figures, blames the various Italian cities for their lack of electoral zeal. Dates in parentheses are to *Pasquino*.
24. A Christmas 1887 supplement to the Milan *Corriere della sera* was filled entirely with unauthorized copies of Busch; but there was no Italian edition of his work. (For the angry reaction of Busch's publisher, Otto Bassermann, see Bassermann-Busch correspondence in the Wilhelm Busch Museum, Hannover; and Kunzle 1987.)

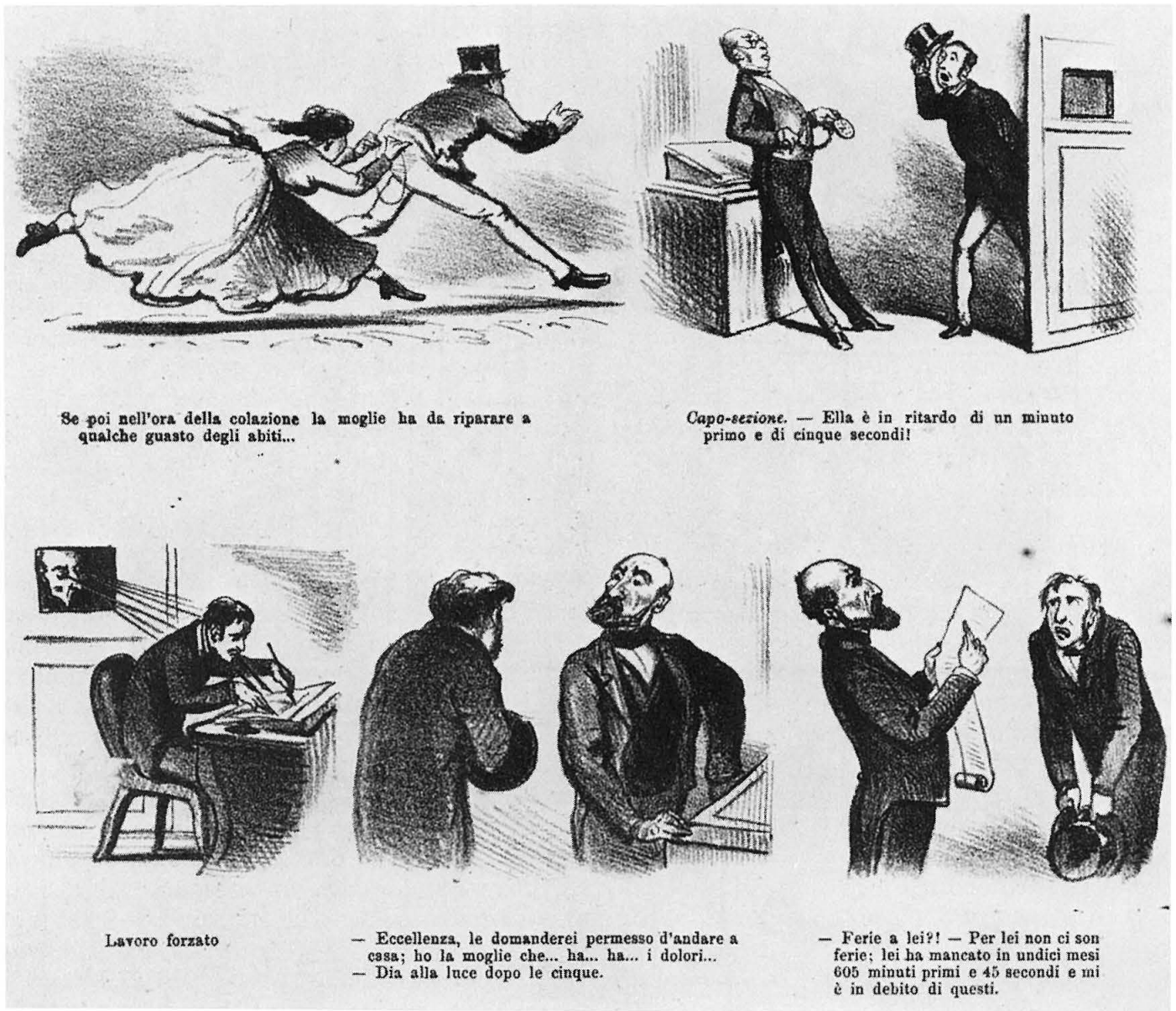


FIG. 14.3. Casimiro Teja: "New Miseries of Monsú Travet" (1870).
Moving out, vagabonds, after the reorganization of the offices. / Travet going to the office on the new timetable. / Inside view of all the new ministerial offices, after the reorganization. / Outside view of the ministerial offices. / Breaking the rules brings suspension. / The Travets' lunch on the new timetable. / And if the wife has some repair to make to clothing during lunch hour... / Section head: "You are one minute five seconds late!" / Forced labor. / "Excellency, may I request permission to go home; my wife has... er... [labor] pains..." "Let her give birth after five." / "Vacation for you! You don't get vacations; in eleven months you have missed 605 minutes and 45 seconds, and these you owe me."

office to Florence (Fig. 14.3). The context here is the controversy and unrest that arose when Florence was designated the capital of the new kingdom of Italy against the historic claims of Rome. The sense that Florence was the wrong choice also underlies another, oddly Töpfferian-looking strip about ministers unable to find space in a town so sanctified by art and history that nothing may be touched. But Rome in its current condition was no fit place for Italian patriots to make their capital. In his "Pilgrimage to Rome" (filling a whole issue—seven of eight pages—and published at the time of Garibaldi's second attempt to capture the city, which was frustrated by the French), Teja sees Rome as a foreign land, dirty and crawling with French military and priests of all nations, with real Romans nowhere in sight. As in Germany around 1848, Teja's travel experiences in 1860s Italy testify to a desire for national unification and a sense of expanding national-geographical horizons. Once the French, defeated in the Franco-Prussian War, were forced to withdraw from Rome and complete unification became a reality, *Pasquino* lost some of its seriousness of political purpose and surrendered partially to another kind of French invasion, that of the cocotte.[25]

Spain

The year 1873, when the chaotic and tragic first trial of republicanism was played out in Spain, saw the launching of the *Mundo Cómico* (Comic World, 1872–1876), in the format of the *Monde Comique,* and with imitations and credited copies of the saucy Grévin and a pastiche of Busch's *Crybaby.*[26] Artistic director J. L. Pellicer did some strips, as well as a Cham-derived "Revista del mes" (Review of the Month). Short lived like many of the Spanish caricature magazines in a market rendered all the more uncertain by the vagaries of censorship, the *Mundo Cómico* was followed by *Filoxera* (Phylloxera, 1878–1880), whose claim of a print run of twenty thousand stood at the head of the page of comically rendered advertisements. A series of "aleluyas electorales" (electoral broadsheets) used the grid format of popular imagery to comment on the stage-managed elections. Often the victim of censorship that acted both before and after publication,

25. "Lawyer Manibola": *Pasquino,* December 18 and 25, 1864. Sacred Florence: "Colonello Castellazzi . . . ," *Pasquino,* December 12, 1864 (see Teja 1900, 62 [no. 49]). "Pilgrimage to Rome": *Pasquino,* July 21, 1867. Another curious strip, "In Memory of King Teodoro, Essays on European Civilization" (June 14, 1868), indicts corrupt, war-ridden Europe, as experienced by a naive and innocent black man. *L'uomo di pietra* (Man of Stone, Milan, founded 1856) contains some strips in the early years, notably "The Stations of Austria" (April 7, 1860), which adapts, satirically and perhaps a shade blasphemously, the stages of Christ's journey to Calvary to the sufferings of Austria; and "My Prisons" (August 31, 1861), about the day of a political prisoner in jail.
26. "Una noche toledana," *Mundo Cómico,* November 1, 1874.

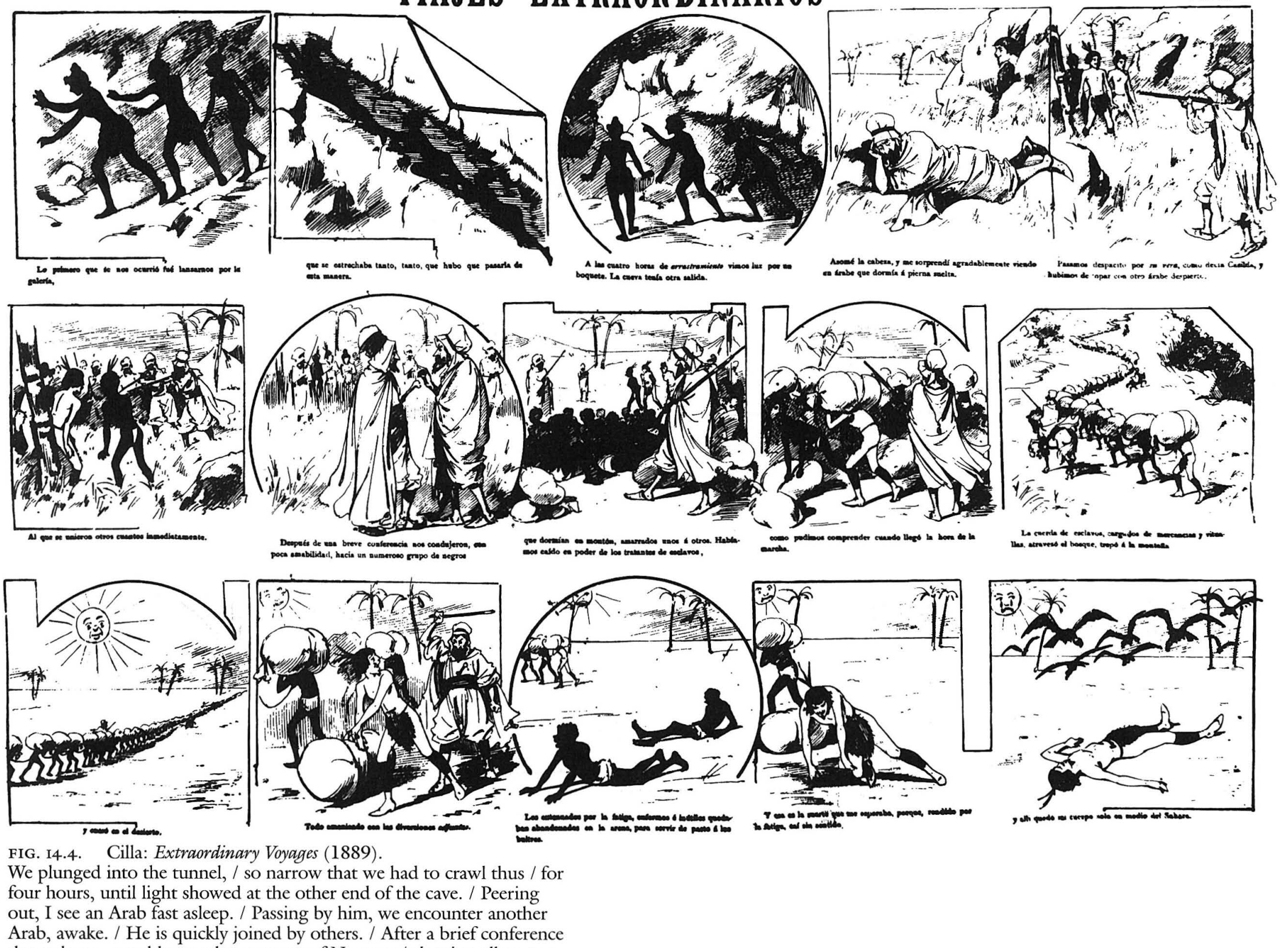


FIG. 14.4. Cilla: *Extraordinary Voyages* (1889).
We plunged into the tunnel, / so narrow that we had to crawl thus / for four hours, until light showed at the other end of the cave. / Peering out, I see an Arab fast asleep. / Passing by him, we encounter another Arab, awake. / He is quickly joined by others. / After a brief conference they take us, roughly, to a large group of Negroes / sleeping all on top of each other. We had fallen into the hands of slave traders, / as we realized when it came time to move on. / The slave gang, laden with goods and victuals, climbed the mountain / and reached the desert. / Threatened with *supplementary* entertainment. / The exhausted, the sick, and the useless were abandoned in the sand and to the vultures. / And that was to be my fate, for I too fell exhausted, and lay unconscious, alone, in the middle of the Sahara.

the magazine compared itself to the prostitute hauled before the authorities for a medical examination, and always in danger of not passing muster.[27] A press law of 1879 prohibited insult or ridicule of any public official and any criticism of the form of government and its fundamental institutions, even in allegorical disguise.[28]

The first magazine to survive was *Madrid Cómico* (1880–1923),[29] founded in the year when caricature may be said to have arrived, with the publication of the *Granizada* collection of Apeles Mestres (see below). The appearance the following year of an "authorized" Spanish edition of Wilhelm Busch[30] did much to orient *Madrid Cómico* and subsequent magazines toward the narrative form and style. *Madrid Cómico* hewed more to German (*Fliegende Blätter*) than French models. Directed by Sinesio Delgado and of high literary quality, its avoidance of politics helped it survive, and in this respect, as in its cheapness (fifteen centavos), it was a model for numerous successors. By 1883–1884 *Madrid Cómico* had established the comic strip[31]—usually the work of Francisco Ramón Cilla, whose first drawing, done at age fourteen, had appeared in *El Mundo Cómico*—in the privileged position of centerspread. Other regular comic strips were by Mecachis (pseudonym

27. *Filoxera,* September 5, 1880.
28. Gómez Aparicio 1971, 397.
29. According to Gómez Aparicio (1971, 620), *Madrid Cómico* was founded by Miguel Casan and, although anodyne and nonpolitical, "left ineradicable tracks in the literary and journalistic life of the late 19th century."
30. *Historietas ilustradas,* seven sixteen-page booklets published by C. Verdaguer in Barcelona, 1881, with the claim that the copies were obtained "at great cost." The Busch correspondence and literature make no reference to this Spanish edition, authorized or not, a copy of which is in the Biblioteca de Catalunya, Barcelona. Martín ([1978] 17) reproduces a cover page.
31. Volumes for 1881 and 1882 were not available in the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

of Eduardo Saiz Hermua) and an artist known as Moya. Cilla, who is said to have worked for fourteen magazines simultaneously,[32] played up to his popularity by constantly involving himself as a character in his stories (he cast himself as the hero of the immense *Extraordinary Voyages;* Fig. 14.4). Mecachis did his portrait for the magazine, and Cilla reciprocated with one of Mecachis. Likewise, Angel Pons did a portrait of Apeles Mestres[33] (for more on these artists, see below). Such comradely promotion among caricaturists was unknown outside Spain. It was born, surely, of a sense of collective achievement in establishing caricature and comic strip in a culture that had been wholly hostile to them.

In November 1884 Mecachis, then only in his early twenties, launched his own magazine, *La Caricatura,* with a masthead showing the word "Caricatura" traversed by a pencil around which a vicious snake coiled, promising a venom hardly in evidence. Like *Madrid Cómico, La Caricatura* used more or less flattering, regular front-page portraits-charges (caricatural portraits) of celebrities; but inside, the magazine was dominated by Mecachis's comic strip centerspreads, which, reversing the two artists' relationship in *Madrid Cómico,* relegated Cilla's strips to a single, but regular, weekly page. Judging by *Madrid Cómico* and *La Caricatura* alone (although other magazines did carry regular comic strips), together with the collections of Mestres and Pons, one is astonished by the prodigality of the genre in a country lacking a tradition of caricature. Although many French,[34] German, and even English originals were also incorporated, the vast majority of the strips are by native Spanish artists, and copying is never predominant as it was in England.

Mecachis put in his *Caricatura* two stories of extraordinary length, *The Wedding Day* and *The Spur of Jealousy,* before his venture foundered at the end of 1887. (His own "brilliant career" would be cut short by death in 1898, at age thirty-seven.)[35] His rival, Cilla, countered in *Madrid Cómico* with *Extraordinary Voyages,* at 241 drawings an absolute record for the whole period under discussion. After 1887 the four best Spanish caricaturists, Cilla, Mecachis, Mestres, and Pons, are to be found reunited in the very cheap (ten, then fifteen centavos for sixteen pages) *Semana Cómica* of Barcelona.

This considerable material offers a familiar international mix of themes: serenades, seductions, carnival adventures, marital quid pro quos, infidelities, drunkenness, undeserved jailings and police, and topical oddities from the press (*faits divers*). The specifically Spanish in all this is not immediately apparent. Larger current political concerns—the threat of civil war, political persecution, the anarchist bomb—are glimpsed, no more. Folklore is probably better represented than elsewhere in Europe, with some fantastic-gory-absurdist-medievalizing tales, including an extended treatment by Cilla that has a murderously jealous husband projected from his legendary origins into contemporary society and quixotically killing a stage villain, whom he takes for real.[36]

Religious themes, not surprisingly, stand out more clearly in Spain than elsewhere—miracles, devils, saints, clergy, all taken lightly, but not truly satirized as in Busch. Liberal anticlericalism, which the government generally suppressed, is conspicuous at the end of Cilla's *Extraordinary Voyages,* where the artist-hero recovers his woman from the elderly tyrannical ship's chaplain who had expropriated her, and tries to murder him in revenge. With the help of an influential devilish friend the artist escapes the particular humiliation of being boiled with the chaplain in the same caldron, persuading Beelzebub that his presence in hell is an error because the sins of *Madrid Cómico* are all venial. He is released, and the chaplain, who tries to follow him out, is yanked back where he belongs.

The military, another generally taboo topic, appears by way of exception. *El Primer Uniforme,* in the opening three numbers of *La Caricatura,* may be Mecachis's response to the first military strips by Caran d'Ache. The precociously arrogant officer-cadet who bravely slaughters some mice with his saber before going off to military school, or the painfully slow, senselessly cumulative, strictly bureaucratic reaction to a sentry's alarm at what turns out to be pigs,[37] was not exactly reassuring in a Spain still fearful of the military *pronunciamiento,* unable to contain Cuba, and all too aware of its military weakness and political corruption vis-à-vis other European powers.

An inspiration to caricaturists throughout Europe, Darwin was, in Spain, taboo. When, in an assertion of academic freedom from religious tutelage, the professor of universal history in Madrid gave a Darwinist inaugural lecture, the conservative reaction was extreme, and the police, invading university classrooms, shed student blood. Cilla (in person, as a jester) passively, "neutrally" observes the rector of the university in his agony of indecision on whether to resign or not.[38] The name of Darwin and the Darwinian "metamorphosis" may be missing from Spanish magazines, but Darwin's presence is still felt, for instance in Cilla's relatively shocking image of male apes embracing female humans—albeit black ones (*Extraordinary Voyages,* no. 10).

The notoriously corrupt and inept government bureaucracies—which the zealous king Alfonso XII was unable, and his complicit prime minister Canovas unwilling, to reform—could be attacked only in general, impersonal terms, without reference to actual graft. The endless waiting, the constant shunting from one office to the next for even the simplest procedure, such as collecting a registered letter, that commonplace experience which was to reach its apotheosis in the comic strips of H. M. Bateman in the 1920s, appears here in its basic form.[39] A sharper critique concerns the upward transmission of an urgent dossier, which is delayed by official caprice, idleness, and obstructionism.[40] The petitioner hands in the dossier as a prosperous, plump gentleman but ultimately exchanges proportions with the bureaucrat, who started out thin: thus does the political functionary fatten himself at the public expense.

The Spanish comic strip seems often to be itself tainted with a kind of bureaucratic inertia. Some of the longest—even (or especially) Mecachis's or Cilla's—observe a slow, deliberate, repetitive rhythm, comparable to that of Caran d'Ache but without his tautness of line and precision of moment. Sometimes, as in Caran d'Ache, the whole point is that nothing happens. The artist perversely tracks the trivial, unworthy, scarcely discernible: "that which cannot be spoken," to cite the title of a Mecachis centerspread of no less than twenty-one scenes, all about getting up in the morning and feeling queasy.[41]

Ellipses, vacancies, expressive silences, open the door to the vaguer, gloomier forms of symbolism—and the dream. This last, which seems a particularly Spanish realm, is markedly that of Apeles Mestres, born in Barcelona in 1854 and soon established as one of the primary literary stars in the new Catalan cultural renaissance. He is now remembered largely for his varied writings in Catalan, but in his early years he published several albums of caricatures and comic strips with captions in Spanish. In 1880 his collection called *Granizada* (Hail) appeared, drawn in brisk contours and bold foreshortenings owing something to Busch, and featuring (just before the *Chat Noir*) Pierrot and the black cat, who would also serve Mecachis as broad symbols of the human

32. Martín [1978], 29.
33. *Madrid Cómico,* September 23, 1883; August 4, 1884; and July 5, 1885.
34. Among many shorter French strips, Léonce Petit's *Procès de Joson Touzé* (see above, p. 169) was copied in an abbreviated, eighteen-scene "arrangement from the French by Mecachis (free translation)" under the title "Un pleito" (*La Caricatura,* November 3, 1886).
35. Gómez Aparicio 1971, 629.
36. "Tragicomedia," *Madrid Cómico,* in eight issues September 27–December 6, 1890.
37. "Servicio de campaña," *Madrid Cómico,* June 1892.
38. *Madrid Cómico,* October 12, 1884. The incident is recounted in Beck 1979, 173.
39. "La cédula," *Madrid Cómico,* May 28, 1892.
40. "Oficina del estado . . . " by Cilla, *La Caricatura,* December 1884.
41. *La Caricatura,* November 24, 1884.



FIG. 14.5. Apeles Mestres: "April" (1880).
"The absence of the donkey leaves them astonished. / And the night surprises them in despair. / But they decide to look for the deserter.... / And they climb the hill.... / and descend to the plain.... / Happily, at midnight, they find the donkey taking in the moon."

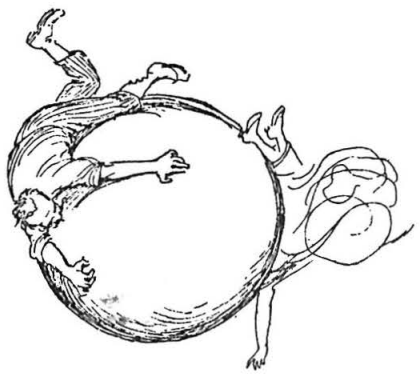
spirit. Mestres cast that very Spanish symbolic creature, the donkey, as the center of winsome idylls, as a psychological object, as a philosopher (Fig. 14.5). He also, like many later symbolists (and Mecachis) had a taste for the macabre: the medical student haunted by the skull he has stolen, the drunken barber who thinks he has cut off his customer's head. The prolific Mestres, author of "more than 40,000 drawings"[42] (many of them published as illustrations to his own, as well as others', works), ranged in theme from the blandly conventional and folkish—which opened for him the children's market—to Germanic farce, the world of art, and the oneiric, philosophical, and metaphysical. "From Heaven to Earth" has a man, bored in heaven, return to earth on a ray of light, only to discover that the rotation of the earth has made it become gradually smaller, and becoming smaller has made it rotate faster. The image of man clinging to the diminishing globe, now reduced to a dot between his fingers; of his saving himself from obliteration in the void by sucking through his pipe (Fig. 14.6) and turning himself into an aerostatic balloon; and of the balloon's deflation, which sends man crashing down through the skies, and out of bed, pitches us clear out of the commonplace realities of the 19th-century comic strip.

Previously published magazine strips are presumably the basis of Angel Pons's album called simply *Historietas* (1892), the term that has established itself in Spanish for the comic strip generically. The preface apologizes for the author's artistic inferiority vis-à-vis Oberländer, Busch, and (oddly) Du Maurier, but claims a certain priority in Spain for publishing a book "of this kind" (no mention of Mestres here). The twenty-three strips are of varying length and on miscellaneous topics; spread over 227 small pages, they are a tepid version of Caran d'Ache (many are wordless) and are characterized by a certain slow, meandering pointlessness. This quality, which we have defined as peculiarly Spanish, is actually more interesting than the tales of conventional farce and intrigue. (For a Pons strip borrowed by an English magazine, see Fig. 12.32.)

Spain's "masterpiece" in the genre is a tale entirely within the realistic-farcical tradition, but having a sinister, quasi-symbolic undertow of broader implications. Mecachis's *The Wedding Day* ran over seventeen centerspreads of *La Caricatura* in 1885 (Fig. 14.7). The bulk of the drawings, which move slowly and repetitively, as so often with Mecachis, are occupied in inordinate detail with commonplace nuptial ritual: the gallery of portraits of relatives and friends, their reception at the bride's house, the procession to the church, the banquet, parental advice, preparations for bed. This scenario is enlivened here and there with odd bits of superstitious behavior and the minidrama of a jilted lover of the bride fainting behind a pillar of the church during the nuptial mass.

Our attention is commanded by the doom-laden mood set from the start, when the groom awakens from a few hours of nightmarish sleep with a horrid runny nose (see Fig. 14.7, scene 7). Totally exhausted from the three-man effort of getting his boots on, he exhibits a worried, gloomy, or nervous and pained demeanor throughout. There are, moreover, concrete hints of impropriety to vitiate the proceedings. The priest, shocked

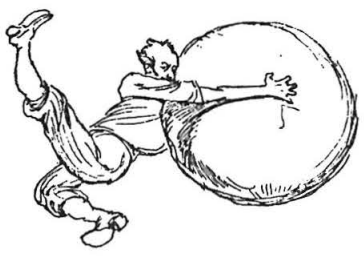
42. Martín [1978], 16; and *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada* n.d., 34:1099. Mestres's drawings were "scattered among a multitude of magazines over many years," according to Martín, who, however, gives no titles.



Ha llegado el momento de decir como en los melodramas: «¡ya no cabemos los dos en el mundo!...»



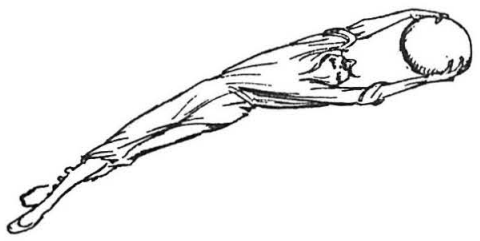
A duras penas, y aún bien agarrado con brazos y piernas, puedo sostenerme en él.



Esto se acaba... ¡Adiós, piernas! Ya no puedo sujetar al mundo más que contra mi pecho!



¡El globo ya no es globo! Es escasamente una bola que se escapa de mis brazos.



La bola se ha convertido en algo como un queso, que coge perfectamente en mis manos...



Y girando con mayor rapidez de segundo en segundo, el queso queda reducido á una pelota que sujeto enterita con una sola mano...



¡Ya no hay tal bola, ni queso, ni pelota! La tierra es ahora un punto que desaparece entre mi pulgar y mi índice.



¡El punto ha desaparecido ya! Pero ¡¡horror de los horrores! ¡Su movimiento de rotación me ha sido transmitido á mí que continúo girando, condenado á acabar tan miserablemente como la tierra!

FIG. 14.6. Apeles Mestres: "From Heaven to Earth" (1891). "The time has arrived to say, as in the melodramas: "There's no room for both of us in this world!" / With great difficulty I manage to hang on with arms and legs. / That's over. Goodbye, legs! All I can do is clasp the world to my chest! / The globe is no globe! It is barely a beach ball escaping from my arms. / The ball has become something like a cheese which fits perfectly in my hands... / And turning faster and faster with every second, the cheese shrinks to the size of a baseball I can clasp with one hand... / Beach ball, cheese, baseball—all gone! The earth is now a dot disappearing between my thumb and forefinger. / And now the dot has gone! But, horror of horrors! It has transmitted its rotation to me, who continue to turn, condemned to end as miserably as the earth! / But an idea comes to my rescue: I light my pipe and begin to suck, and suck again, and draw in smoke... and more smoke..."



Pero una idea salvadora estalla en mi cerebro: enciendo la pipa y empiezo á chupar y más chupar, y á tragar humo... y más humo...



7. Y comenzó á destilar de un modo atroz, como si los sesos se le hubieran [illegible] agua.



79.—Aunque hay que confesar que inútilmente, por que el novio no hacía otra cosa que moverse y mirar hacia atrás de puro nervioso que estaba, y la novia, por atender á limpiarse las lágrimas que á modo de uvas de cuelga caían de su descolorida faz, no paraba mientes en la lectura.

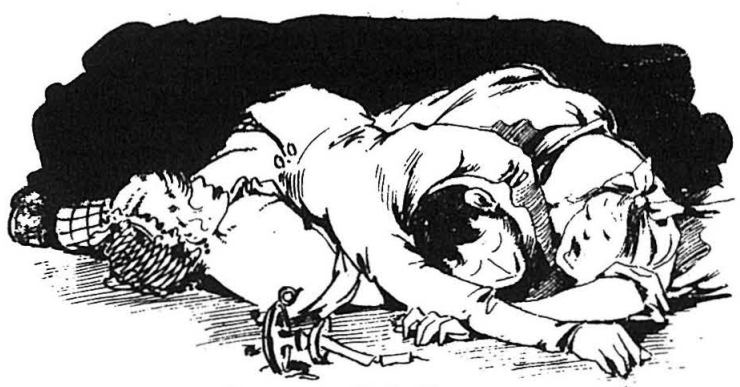


103 Después la falda.



111—Menudo escándalo hubiera armado a haber tenido campanillas en su cuerpo. Tal era el estremecimiento nervioso que se apoderó de él al asir el picaporte de la puerta de la alcoba.

(Se continuará.)



y ante cuyo espectáculo dió con su cuerpo en tierra, arrastrando la palmatoria en su caída y sumiendo en las tinieblas aquel espantoso drama.



Algunos de los cuales preguntaban: tintín: ¿Qué tal eh, se ha descansado?—y como los novios respondiesen:—¡Hombre, calle por Dios, si V. supiera!—todos se decían para sus adentros:—Me lo supongo...

¡¡Lo que son las apariencias!!

FIN

FIG. 14.7. Mecachis: *The Wedding Day* (1885).
[7] And his nose began to drip in a dreadful way, as if his brains had turned to water. [79] The nervous groom kept looking backwards, and the bride could not concentrate on the address either, for weeping tears that fell down her pallid face like bunches of table grapes. [103] Then the skirt. [111] He would have made less of a row if his body had been made of bells. Such was the nervous terror that seized him when he fingered the latch of the bedroom door. [130] He fell to the ground at the sight, pulling down the candlestick with him and precipitating that dreadful drama into the darkness. [147] "How are you, well rested?" "For god's sake, be quiet, if only you knew!" All thought to themselves, I suppose... That's appearances for you!

at the bride's confession, gives his blessing reluctantly (the groom, yielding nothing, gets off lightly) (scene 79). Her sin may not be limited to premature intimacy with the groom, for her garters, we learn, were the "gift of a cousin who according to evil tongues either did or did not do it [*tuvo o no tuvo*]" with her. This shocking and gratuitous interpolation justifies, as it were, the artist's own prurient lingering over the not-so-innocent bride's striptease: dress bodice, skirt (scene 103), petticoat, bustle, shoes, stockings, and finally the shapely corset confining bulging breasts—all have their own moment of divestiture in the manner of a fetishist *Vie Parisienne* centerspread. Quite an erotic liberation in Spain at this time. The bride is gently laid by her mother in the

soft bed (purchased on the installment plan at 2.50 pesetas a time), at which point the artist intended, discreetly, to end.[43]

But then his spoiling instinct for a "horrible drama" took over. The groom, shaking in nervous terror, stubs his candle out on the door to the boxroom (Fig. 14.7, scene 111) where he stumbles around awhile until he finally manages to locate the "right" room. Here he plants a "chaste and loving kiss" on the sweaty brow of the snoring "woman of his dreams"—who turns out to be the maid. She turns on him like a wildcat, which brings in the bride; collapsing in a faint, she drags down the other two, who also faint away, and thus the three of them remain until dawn, in a state of indecorous, senseless prostration, over seven identical compositions, the candle in the foreground sadly broken in two (scene 130). The maid carries the bridal couple, still unconscious, to their chamber and bandages up their heavily bruised faces until they look like mummies—in which condition they are greeted by the relatives and witnesses, whose reaction is obscure, or contradictory, or inappropriate, or else simply uncomprehending (scene 147).

Mecachis planned to continue the story with *The First Offspring*.[44] This tale started fifteen months later but did not get past two installments, which boded ill for a happy delivery: in a midnight emergency, the night watchman is reluctant, the doctor resentful.

In *The Wedding Day,* the relatives and witnesses (*testimonios*) who visit so early in the morning after the wedding night function residually as the witnesses who traditionally had to certify that consummation, here so horribly aborted, had actually taken place, in order to validate the marriage in the eyes of the church. The old custom of hanging out bloody sheets or underwear also once served this purpose. Just as most cultures have valued virginity, so have they feared impotence and sought magically and otherwise to protect the act of deflowering and consummation.

The liberals' demands for civil marriage for Catholics, granted in the revolution of 1868 but subsequently rescinded, rendered the very institution contentious. Recent Spanish history had given a heavy political charge to marriage, the consummation of marriage, and the making and legitimation of offspring. Queen Isabella II, the preceding Spanish monarch (not counting Amedeo of Savoy) and mother of the reigning King Alfonso II, had discredited herself and lost her throne in the revolution of 1868, not only because of her reactionary reckless government, but also because of her scandalous private life. "More sinned against than sinning" (according to more lenient modern historians), she had been married on her sixteenth birthday, as a result of contemptible French machinations, to her cousin Francesco de Asís. This effeminate young man was reputed to be impotent; he would therefore be unable to produce an heir, and so the crown would pass to the queen's sister and her husband, the duke of Montpensier, son of Louis Philippe, who were married at the same time as Isabella and Francesco. The upshot was a series of lovers for Isabella; nine children, all recognized by the prince consort (who did not even live with his wife and was rumored to be receiving from the government two million reales per child); and constant palace intrigues, chaos, military rule, repression, and prolonged civil war.

Spain thus paid dearly, both for the failure to consummate a marriage and for royal promiscuity. (The fact that Mecachis's groom blunders into an amorous approach to the maid points to another kind of comic scenario about infidelity or promiscuity.) Alfonso XII himself, despite his popularity, had to overcome the stigma of illegitimacy, problems associated with his own promiscuity, and, virile as he obviously was, his failure, after two marriages, to produce a male heir. The monarchy, indeed, was not expected to survive him, until it became known, as the king neared his end, that the queen was pregnant (and this time she would have a son). All this gave actuality to Mecachis's work. He may have planned the *First Offspring* sequel as a kind of compensation for having left the marriage unconsummated, but the promised offspring "aborted," as noted: the second consummation failed too, in its own way. To associate the fear of sexual impotence and immorality as manifested in *The Wedding Day* with the widespread fear that the Spanish government was at home a blundering and promiscuous incompetent and abroad (especially vis-à-vis Cuba) downright impotent would, no doubt, be going too far.

Mecachis followed up *The Wedding Day* with a visually dull twelve-part intrigue called *The Goad of the Jealous,*[45] which dragged through the whole of 1886. The intertwining of three strands of illicit amours at an upper-class country-house party got the artist so confused (or bored) that, after giving a diagram of the house with the various rooms of activity marked and trying to build up the suspense, he cut it short, disclaiming all knowledge of what happened that night and leaving the tale shrouded in mystery. Once again the proper climax, or consummation (here, a multiple one), is avoided, and the reader (assuming he or she cared) is left feeling cheated.

Mecachis was somewhat lacking in verbal and literary gifts. His captions are quite colorless and often far too long; in fact, some of his better short strips are wordless. He was also deficient in narrative imagination, as is apparent in the longer stories. His montage tends to plod along in half-length or medium shots. Cilla, by contrast, based his one extended effort, *Extraordinary Voyages,* on an altogether more exotic and action-packed scenario, and he cunningly disguised similar-looking scenes with different, fancily shaped frames (see Fig. 14.4). Cilla's quite realistic, illustrational draftsmanship is, however, much less lively than Mecachis's, whose strength lay in his linear craft, with its patterns of oscillation to show sudden movement and its simplifications, new to Spain and original enough by European standards: eyes mere dots; mouths often a perfunctory flick; profile a single, taut, unbroken line. Mecachis is also capable of brilliant series of casual, thumbnail characterizations. But his taste for the occasional metaphoric literalization of such phrases as "stretching an ear," "his heart gave a turn," or "he wracked his brain" seems archaic and jarring.

Cilla the storyteller and Mecachis the graphic innovator should have collaborated. Their exceptional excursions into ambitious, highly extended magazine serialization at a time when the trend in the rest of Europe was toward the short, one-page, gag seems to have been more the fruit of personal self-confidence, public prestige, and individual editorial power within the journal than of market demand.

Russia

From about 1856 Russia experienced a rapid growth in literacy, higher education, and periodical literature. Compared with western Europe, the country was still much retarded in the development of a middle class. But the increasing size of the bureaucracy and the advent of a relatively new social group, the intelligentsia, that embodied a growing concern for great social issues (emancipation of the serfs, the Pan-Slavic movement, the need for modernization and social reform, and so on) created a market for critical and satirical media. The market also benefited from a short relaxation of the censorship, although it cracked down again in the 1870s with the rise of terrorism, forcing many magazines, especially those publishing caricatures, into anodyne social commentary. These magazines proved a fertile ground for the development of the comic strip.

43. The eleventh number ends "se concluirá" instead of the usual "se continuará."
44. *El primer retoño, La Caricatura,* March 14 and 31, 1887.
45. *El aguijón de los celos, La Caricatura,* ninety-three drawings in twelve issues, January 18, 1886–January 6, 1887.

The first regular caricature magazine, *Iskra* (Spark), published in St. Petersburg from 1859, was shut down in 1873 after confiscation and suspension. The authorities considered periodicals carrying illustrations and caricatures as particularly threatening, for they were specifically excluded from the new, liberal press law of 1865, which freed journals published in St. Petersburg from prior censorship. Founded by the poet Kurochkin and the caricaturist Stepanov, *Iskra* is described as the best Russian satirical magazine of the period, and very popular with democrats.[46]

Although it carried no comic strips,[47] *Iskra* introduced the *revue du mois* miscellany of Cham and printed cartoons in a stolidly Germanic style. *Iskra* editor Stepanov also edited, for its first six, radical, years, *Budilnik* (Alarm Clock, 1865–1917), a larger, four-page (from 1870, eight-page) folio with two pages of advertisements. Between 1866 and 1871 this journal suffered the suppression of 132 articles and 243 drawings. After 1871, then, *Budilnik* dropped its polemical tone and half of its four thousand (as of 1865) subscribers and oriented itself toward conventional bourgeois tastes. Like other magazines that started in the 1870s, including *Maliar* (Painter, 1871–1878) and its sequel, *Shut* (Jester, 1879–1914), *Budilnik* used the flighty style and subject matter of Grévin, who was consistently either copied directly or imitated. It seems that the *gommeux* (dandy) and half-dressed cocottes of the *Charivari* and the *Vie Parisienne* were considered Russian types as well, which was no doubt good for the considerable French export trade in corsets, if not for Russian morals. French provincial and peasant life à la Petit was also popular, and Petit follower Lemouel had ten half-page drawings reproduced in *Budilnik* in 1891.

In foreign policy, Russia cultivated good relations with Germany. In 1881 the Dreikaiserbund (Three Emperors' League) binding Russia to Bismarck's Germany and Austria was renewed. The following year the three parts of Busch's *Knopp* appeared in a Russian edition.[48] In the early 1880s Busch and the *Fliegende Blätter* penetrated both *Budilnik* and *Strekoza,* but in 1885 *Budilnik* began to shift emphasis toward sympathetic portrayal of the poor and working classes and away from comic narrative. In 1887 the word "caricature" was dropped from the subtitle. *Budilnik* used Darwin, both directly[49] and, in the many metamorphoses run throughout the 1880s, indirectly.

A specifically Russian style rediscovered by *Budilnik,* in keeping with the growing interest among intellectuals for national folklore, was that used by Terebenef in his anti-Napoleon caricatures of 1812–1815, the crudity of which was deliberately enhanced in a series of colored reproductions (1884). Doré had already used the Russian folk print style in his *Holy Russia,* and now *Budilnik* employed the style and format of the "folk print" (*narodni kartinki*) in a denunciation of British anti-Russian maneuvers in Afghanistan (1878, no. 11). Neither the "narodnik" movement nor the publication in 1881 of Rovinski's great compendium of folk prints, *Russkie narodni kartinki* (for more on which, see Volume One of this history), had much demonstrable effect on Russian caricature magazines. The archaic styles looked quaint but were not reusable. Their range could be judged from an 1891 centerspread carried by *Strekoza* (no. 42) of the folk print exhibition organized by the committee of literacy in St. Petersburg, and redrawn by Ovod. One does, however, detect the residual structure of the folk tale in some of the strips (see Fig. 14.8).

The major repository of Russian comic strips is *Strekoza* (Dragonfly, 1875–1918).[50] Anton Chekhov made his debut here with short facetious sketches (he also wrote for *Budilnik*). Even less political than *Budilnik,* at its most prolific in comic strips during the late 1870s and through the 1880s, *Strekoza* offered distraction at a time of rising terrorism. At first all the drawings tried to vie with French Grévinesque froth; then passable imitations of late Daumier and Gavarni were added. Like *Budilnik, Strekoza* continued under French influence even after the German invasion of the early 1880s, which was marked by two curious Russifications of Busch: the transposition of his *Virtuoso* pianist to the harmoniade (piano-cum-organ) performer Glavach, and variations on the German's *New Year Hangover.*[51]

Although several different signatures appear, most belonging to quite competent, trained draftsmen—Porfiriev, Skworietz, Shpak, Lebedev, Komar, and Ovod—their styles are only just distinguishable, and never distinguished. They tend to humorous, flat illustration, barely enlivened by a trick or two picked up from the French and Busch. The majority of the strips vary in length from one-half to two pages, very rarely more; with scenes of identical size, they are monotonous in appearance and convey little sense of montage. The themes, however, properly analyzed in terms of the literature and mores of the period, could be revealing.

The conservatism of the magazine may be gauged from its attacks on the pretensions and extravagance of nouveaux riches and the upwardly mobile. It is luck that brings riches or success; and luck takes these away again. The rare strip about the worker shows him as isolated, idle, and apt to blame his tools for his misery (1883, no. 43).

Strekoza's is a comedy of everyday domestic life. A high proportion of strips are, as elsewhere in Europe, about courtship, rendezvous, lovers' rivalries, romance sabotaged by nature, and marital infidelities. Men are consistently humiliated by women; the fact that they are usually at fault cannot disguise a strain of misogyny, which comes out also in the mother-in-law jokes. Correspondingly, friendship between men is an important factor, although it can be jeopardized by rivalry for the same woman.

Despite the pervasive consciousness among the intelligentsia of Russia as a police state, the incidence of arrests and jailings in the Russian comic strip is probably no higher than elsewhere. The artist, innocently sketching in the country, is harassed by the police over his passport and jailed—on suspicion, one may guess, of being one of those many urban intellectuals who went into the countryside to stir up the peasants. A less innocent artist who goes self-destructively berserk has to be subdued and handed over by the locals. Germans, traditionally brought in to help run the Russian bureaucracy, were regarded with special suspicion and were ready targets for arrest. In "Unfortunate Words," which makes liberal use of German and German-accented Russian, four patriotic Germans are denounced on the absurd suspicion of a Russian busybody. After interrogation and a twelve-hundred-word telegram to Bismarck, they are released and vow to avoid talking German in public—and to learn Volapük as quickly as possible.[52]

The recurrence in German strips of clerks as protagonists was also characteristically Russian, as, for example, in the novels of Gogol. The clerk elicited sympathy as the unemancipated urban serf, emblem of poverty and oppression; and in the strips, his attempts to get on, or merely by, are usually frustrated. In the "Adventures of Yermil Kusmich," exceptional for its larger drawings and length (it continued over five successive weeks) and the wider horizons it offers, the clerk Yermil is clearly headed for disaster. Another clerk invites his boss to a New Year dinner, but it is ruined by a stray dog which the host, thinking it belongs to the boss, indulges. Yet another clerk-type, one with a large family, prudently takes out insurance against incapacitation but finds that it does not cover the series of mutilating accidents he suffers. He attempts suicide but manages only to lose a leg—which yet again

46. Dementiev et al. 1959, 376–381, 460–461, 537, 565, and 605–606, contains short accounts of the magazines mentioned here, concentrating on the literary side. I am indebted to Ayala Dollinger and Sergei Zamochnikov for translation from Russian texts.
47. In the volumes available to me, 1859–1863 and 1865–1868. An extensive but weak parody of Turgenev's *Smoke* (1867), with often preponderant text by Kurochkin and drawings by Volkov, in ten issues of *Iskra* (1868, nos. 8–45), was ignored at the time, as it has been since in the Turgenev literature.
48. *Knopp* was advertised in *Budilnik* 1882: *Adventures of a Bachelor* (no. 3, p. 38); *Secrets of a Happy Marriage* (no. 19, p. 239); and *Katinka: The Erotic Adventures of a Young Lady* (no. 49, p. 9). In each case the verse is attributed to "Marala Ierikhonskii" (pseudonym of Liodor Ivanovitch Pal'min).
49. Full-page cartoon in Darwin's defense, *Budilnik,* 1883, no. 14.
50. All volumes through 1892 checked, except 1878–1879.
51. "Glavachian harmoniade," *Strekoza,* 1880, no. 48; "After the Christmas Party," *Strekoza,* 1880, no. 52.
52. Artists: *Strekoza,* 1885, no. 35; 1881 no. 6. "Unfortunate Words": *Strekoza,* 1886, no. 32.

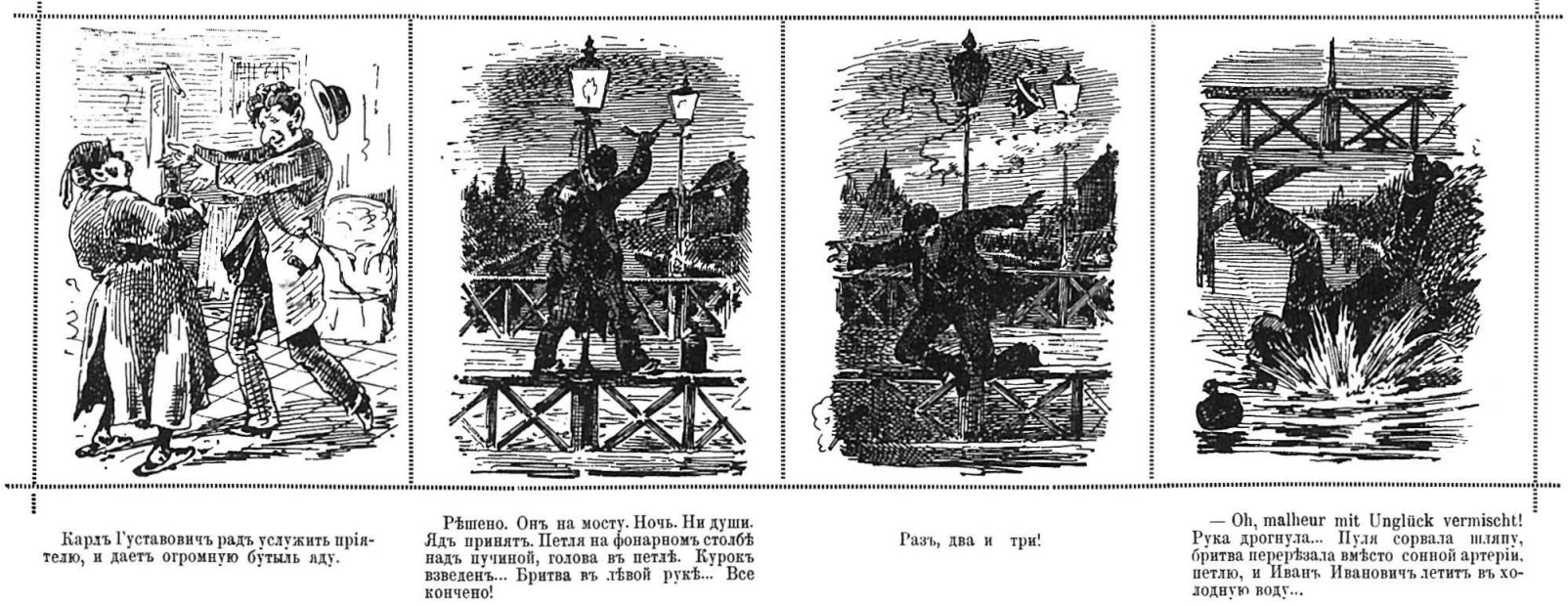


FIG. 14.8. Ovod (drawings) and Eugene (text): "Not My Fate" (1885).
Ivan Ivanovich asks for poison. / Poison, razor, noose—the lot! / One, two, three! / O woe and misery! His hand trembles, he shoots off his hat, the razor cuts the noose, and he falls into the water. / No luck—pulled out by a cop. / The poison is flushed out with the water. / The futility of life. / She accepts him after hearing of his heroism. This last attempt at suicide works.

is not covered by the insurance: there is no mercy for the socially mutilated.[53]

Suicide is quite common. In the familiar role of rejected, suicidal lover, Ivan Ivanovich (that is, Everyman, and perhaps a clerk) considers—and rejects successively as insufficiently foolproof—the classic expedients of razor, revolver, and poison. He then opts for all three at once, with hanging and drowning added for good measure. He still fails and is hauled out of the river by a cop, but his fate has so moved his beloved that she relents and helps Ivan Ivanovich successfully to commit the ultimate suicide by marrying him (Fig. 14.8).

From our incomplete sampling it emerges that the Russian comic strip is probably best regarded as a variety of literary anecdote or urban folk tale. The sprightly German and French models of caricature had little effect on the soberly illustrational comic strip styles, and the censorship prevented the intrusion of politics or truly satirical themes. This illustrational rather than truly comic style suggests that the comic strip in Russia is perhaps merely a graphic realization of popular short story formulae. Much as the vogue for Léonce Petit's pictorial *contes* overlaps with that for the masterpiece literary *contes* of Guy de Maupassant in France, in Russia the vogue for the comic strip overlaps with that for the short facetious anecdote, the new art form introduced by the young Anton Chekhov into humorous journalism of the 1880s. Surely this is no coincidence.

53. "Yermil Kusmich": *Budilnik,* 1876, nos. 24–28, with the story suspended. Stray dog: *Strekoza,* 1882, no. 1. Insurance: *Strekoza,* 1889, no. 24.

CHAPTER 15

MOVEMENT BEFORE MOVIES:

The Language of the Comic Strip

Hogarthian Setting. Töpfferian Montage. Buschian Movement. Synecdoche (Pars pro toto)

Ortega y Gasset was quite wrong when he asserted that modern art has left man out of the picture. At a deeper level it is social life that has eliminated man, by treating him as a commodity. It is for this reason that caricature could in the first place—had to—become an integral part of great art. It alone has made possible the acquisition of a new style; in other words, caricature has become "social nature." It is by this detour that great art has taken man as its subject—not as a human being, but as a contradictory being, in contradiction with himself and with his environment. And since this process of decomposition has gone hand in hand with the development of the machine the modern artist has been able to go farther than Daumier by replacing all organic elements (both physical and psychic) with mechanical analogies, with a system of general abstract relationships.

Absolute individualism and the basis of its style in caricature combine inevitably to produce a metaphysical view of the world, which we variously call "abstract" art or Surrealism. . . . Without the introduction of caricature, which has broken up the European tradition, Picasso could never have arrived at his affinity for Negro art.[1]

The development of a new visual language to express movement depended on the final disintegration of the Hogarthian model of large, complete, richly accoutred compositions. This process of disintegration was well under way during the Golden Age of caricature, which brought about the separation of two basic ingredients Hogarth had synthesized: (1) comic faces, varied either according to character and social type or in a grotesque, arbitrary, and virtually autonomous fashion,[2] and (2) expressive postures (as analyzed in various long strips by Bunbury, Woodward, and especially Newton).[3] A third basic ingredient of Hogarth, the setting constituted by a profusion of everyday but significant objects, is in these cases systematically eliminated, so that the face or posture is isolated, as if cut out against a blank background, and juxtaposed in regular, serried ranks of images on a single plate. The gain in formal and psychological interest, the fixing and broadening of expressive histrionic range, is achieved at the expense of narrative and moral significance, and often of topicality as well. When true narrative, morality, and topicality are aimed for, they tend to bring back the Hogarthian setting—more so in Gillray and Cruikshank than in Newton, with his children's paper-cutout effects of small groups with minimal settings.[4]

The Hogarthian setting, diminished, disintegrated, or eliminated in the Golden Age, was reintegrated into the post-Töpffer comic strip by means of more or less casually, more or less forcefully inserted close-ups of objects, and of trivial actions predicated on or caused (often accidentally) by these objects. The household things which Hogarth often used as narrative links and which Charles Lamb recognized as "living and significant things" become, if not actors and characters in themselves, virtually autonomous agents of destruction and humiliation (as, notably, in Busch). This change corresponds to a more active relationship to everyday objects on the part of a relatively servantless class who had to handle, serve, and fix things themselves.

The world of objects small and large, from thimble to building, once unified in the Hogarthian interior or street, is now spun out on a fine narrative thread. But settings do not disappear abruptly, completely, or permanently. The rich narrative of Töpffer, sparse as it was in its linear definition, required a modicum of localization. The Swiss, also a specialist in the illustration of Alpine views, inserts some pretty, atmospheric landscapes into his narratives. Building exteriors and interiors define basic locales without attempting to add character or comment of their own as in the English tradition. The tenuousness of Töpfferian geography aids the fluidity of his narrative line. Shading is scribbled in an atmospheric rather than spatial way, and for emphasis figures are frequently left isolated against a blank background. This sparseness of locale is also appropriate in a world where people are always getting lost. Töpffer's method announced itself in the opening to his first published story, *Monsieur Jabot,* where the hero practices his poses before a "society" constituted—to begin with—by us, the viewer, alone. Preening, turning, cutting attitudes (and later, a low-class cousin), Jabot believes he is cut out for higher realms; a figure literally cut out against a neutral background, he faces the theoretical social void (Fig. 15.1). The frames then fill with a social panorama of individuals, groups, and crowds, sitting, standing, dancing (see Fig. 2.7), moving in all di-

1. Raphael 1980, 129–130.
2. Kunzle 1973, 372 (figs. 12.20 and 12.21).
3. Ibid., 360–372, esp. figs. 12.5, 12.7, 12.9, 12.13, 12.14.
4. Ibid., 381 (fig. 12.31), 386–387 (figs. 12.37 and 12.38), and 368–369 (fig. 12.16).



FIG. 15.1. Rodolphe Töpffer: *Histoire de M. Jabot* (1835). "Monsieur Jabot, preparing for social success, frequents the public promenades. / Mr Jabot deems it appropriate to take an ice cream at the best local café. / Having eaten his ice cream, Mr Jabot resumes his posture."

rections; thus is established Töpffer's fundamental principle of variety in montage.

As we use the term here, "montage" means essentially the use of compositional variety. Töpffer's characteristic wavering frame lines enhance the fluidity of movement from scene to scene, and the occasional sudden or unsightly abutting of scenes with no intervening space makes for a sense of contiguity, and for jostling, abrupt transitions (jump cuts). Such techniques well convey the haphazard flow of (for Jabot, humiliating) encounters at a dance, which Töpffer interrupts, stabilizes, and punctuates with a recurrent, defiant "M. Jabot resumes his posture." A caesura of a dozen successive postures represents both a recapitulation of the hero's "brilliant" performance and a projection into the future. But that future soons spins out of control—the artist's as well as Jabot's: the montage accelerates on a single page, with five different characters performing different actions in different locales, in a succession quickened by a narrowing frame and, for the first time, a fundamental device by which a major part of a figure is cut off, leaving a retreating or arriving fragment. This is the principle of *pars pro toto,* or synecdoche, to which in the case of Jabot is added the "pictographic" focus on an inanimate (or here, all too animate) object—the gun (see Fig. 2.8). Töpffer is already, in his first published story, the master of the *pars pro toto,* which he develops into a musical rhythm and aesthetic all its own (see Fig. 2.28).

From *Jabot* to *Albert,* Töpffer develops a battery of montage devices, in an interlacing of narrative movement that remains nonpareil (see Figs. 2.14 and 2.15). The quavering contours of his figures, moreover, are instinct with movement, or at least lability, as are the deliberately incomplete, abbreviated facial expressions. Oscillations of contour, of the kind to be introduced by Busch, would have been superfluous.

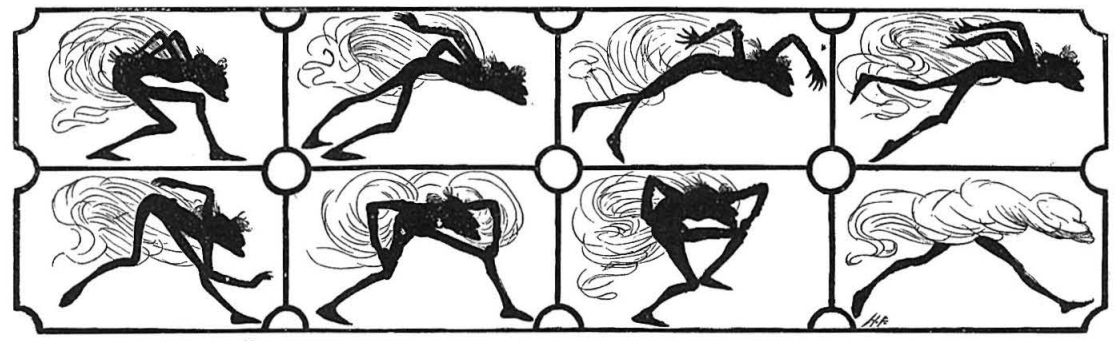
The graphic language, the grammar and syntax, developed by Töpffer was to underpin the whole subsequent development of the genre; but it was never again to be used with such sophistication. The process of adapting Töpffer to the wider market of French and English magazines involved, no doubt of necessity, simplification and standardization, as had happened already with Cham. But Töpffer banished forever the impulse, still manifested as late as 1844 by Cruikshank in *Mr. Lambkin* (*The Bachelor's Own Book*), to plan sequences in fully scenically composed *tableaux vivants*. Töpffer's major French follower, Léonce Petit, with his realistic anecdotes set in emphatically provincial and rustic environments, found a comfortable compromise solution: moderate variation of montage effects, scene shape (the frames are largely gone), caption length, and relationship between figures and settings.

In 1848 Töpfferian montage entered England, all too briefly, through the *Man in the Moon,* in a hectic form: scenes of varying shapes and sizes arranged crazy-quilt on a large broadsheet-sized plate (folded in) and with multiple variations of viewpoint: high, long, medium, and close up, narrowing down to *pars pro toto* and everyday-object focus; add to this metaphors, diagrams, blackouts, shadow figures, and we have a veritable kaleidoscope of devices derivable from the English caricatural tradition in general as much as from Töpffer. The air here is of childish disorder, rather different from the canny spontaneity of Töpffer. The *Man in the Moon* offers a fractured vision (literally—see the last three scenes of Fig. 13.1) befitting the great social fracture of 1848, whereas Töpffer's method is to interweave rather than break up, and to make montage a function of a certain idiosyncratic narrative logic.

The tendency toward aesthetic autonomy of graphic effects, visible in the *Man in the Moon,* reaches a climax in Doré's *History of Holy Russia,* which is a virtuoso summation of the artist's experience of caricature. In a comic album of extraordinary size, justified by a suggestive political moment, Doré displays a delight in the plastic, panoramic riches of a satirical graphic language expansive to the point of explosion. This delight may be compared with that of Rabelais, who influenced Doré's captions and whose coruscating language likewise overwhelms his initial satiric purpose.

Montage in Busch flows in a sober, regular, and controlled manner derived initially from the simplicities of the child's Bilderbogen. The *Fliegende Blätter* and Bilderbogen format of early Busch demanded scenes of similar shape running to a predetermined length. The summarily indicated viewpoint and locales tend to a uniformity that renders the occasional close-up all the more climactic. But within this relative uniformity, the developing action of the figures could be pinpointed with maximum precision, clarity, and legibility. *How* things happen is now as important as what and why, which in Busch is governed by a certain didactic predictability. The intensification of movement, the crescendo of violence that draws surrounding objects in its wake, is tracked with that sense of interval that Busch perfected (see Fig. 11.8; the "classic" example is the tale of the flea [Busch 1:184–192]). Busch's genius lay in his ability to impose absolute linear and conceptual control over actions and situations out of control. In diametric opposition to the facile, spontaneous, instinctive, and open-ended drawing and narration of Töpffer, Doré, and so many others before him, Busch spent much time sorting and sifting preliminary thoughts. Slowly and deliberately, he tightened action, line, and verse through untold stages (which, alas, he destroyed) toward a product that looked—and was—finished and immutable.

In their quest for a "science of movement" Busch and his generation may have found a rudimentary model in optical toys such as the phenakistoscope (admired by Baudelaire in his 1853 essay "Philosophy of Toys"). Certainly the sporadic use by comic strip artists of black silhouette figures, which became formulaic in the 1880s, must be derived from the magic lantern, for which Cham



NEW ZOÖPRAXISCOPIC VIEWS OF AN EMINENT ACTOR IN ACTION.

(*By Our Own Zoöpraxiscopist.*)

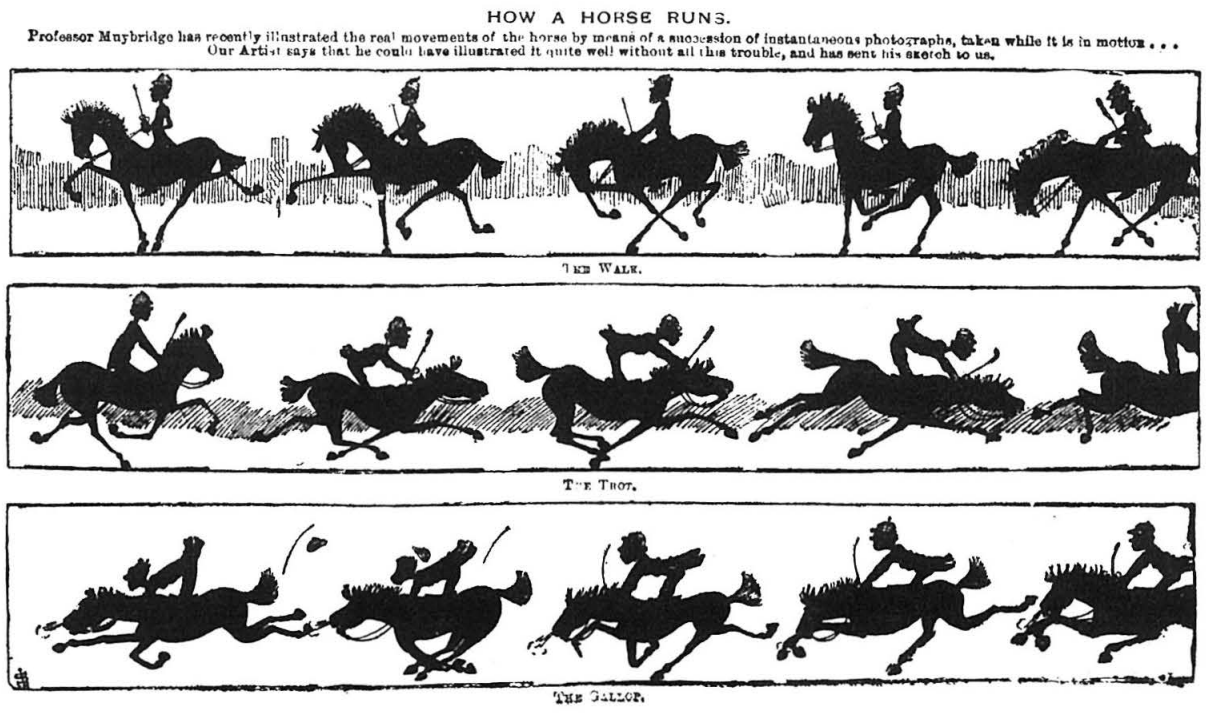
FIG. 15.2. "New Zoöpraxiscopic Views of an Eminent Actor in Action" (1882).



I. FAREWELL TO EARTH!—II. THE FLIGHT THROUGH SPACE!!—III. LAND AT LAST!!!

THREE HEART-STIRRING EPISODES IN A HITHERTO CALM AND UNEVENTFUL CAREER. (DESIGNED FOR MR. PUNCH'S "WHEEL OF LIFE," BY THE GRATEFUL SURVIVOR, PARTLY FROM THE DESCRIPTION OF NUMEROUS AND RELIABLE EYE-WITNESSES, PARTLY FROM TOLERABLY VIVID RECOLLECTIONS OF HIS OWN.)

FIG. 15.3. George Du Maurier: "I. Farewell to Earth! II. The Flight Through Space!! III. Land at Last!!!" (1868).



HOW A HORSE RUNS.

Professor Muybridge has recently illustrated the real movements of the horse by means of a succession of instantaneous photographs, taken while it is in motion . . . Our Artist says that he could have illustrated it quite well without all this trouble, and has sent his sketch to us.

THE WALK.

THE TROT.

THE GALLOP.

FIG. 15.4. "How a Horse Runs" (1889).



FIG. 15.5. Rodolphe Töpffer: *The Loves of M. Vieux Bois* (1839).

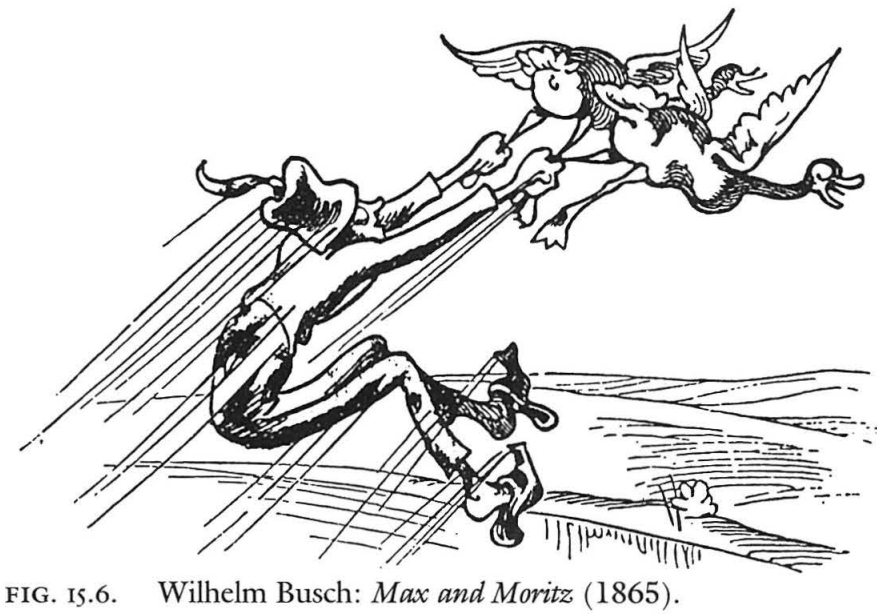


FIG. 15.6. Wilhelm Busch: *Max and Moritz* (1865).

did private "censorable drawings."[5] In the 1870s the photographer Muybridge and the physiologist of movement E. J. Marey set out to transcribe and determine with scientific exactitude all the transitional phases of commonplace movements in humans and animals. Knowledge of their work, percolating through the 1880s, accelerated a process caricature had already begun, and it then filtered back through the application of photographically rendered movement in optical toys such as the zoopraxiscope (Fig. 15.2).

Even before Muybridge had begun to record the phases of a horse's motion by means of a battery of cameras, a "Wheel of Life" optical toy had inspired Du Maurier to attempt a remarkable superimposition of three phases of a horse jumping a gate (Fig. 15.3—with the leg positions, of course, wrong). And even after Muybridge's photographs were known, that analysis of movement to which caricature laid so special a claim could be offered, with some justification, as a superior visual as well as comic effect (Fig. 15.4).

Even after 1870, when he transcended the confines of Bilderbogen and magazine illustration and attained permanently the much greater freedom of the book format, Busch preserved his sobriety of graphic montage. His experiments lay now in the relation, not of picture to picture, but of picture to verse. Here the counterpoint becomes highly inflected and sophisticated, and montage takes on an entirely different meaning; it is as if we had passed from the era of silent film to that of the talking and musical film. To the linear melody, for which he sought ever more pungent simplifications, Busch has now added a refined, condensed music of verbal comment.

Speed Lines. Patterns of Oscillation: Phasic/Analytic and Synthetic

In his concern to fix emotional extremes (fear, anger, pain) through physical action and postural extremes (falling, crashing, hitting), Busch realized that there were occasions when the posture did not match the intensity of feeling. How does one represent the essential *internality* of powerful sensations, the psychological component as well as the physiological (which itself is, of course, partly internal, invisible)? Can violent sensation and emotion be represented through means other than a series of extreme postures? Solutions to these problems, which would so fruitfully exercise 20th-century art, film, cartoon, and comic strip, were already offered by Busch; indeed, he pioneered certain of the most basic conventions of representation of movement and emotion we now take for granted: air currents, impact lines, speed lines, patterns of oscillation.

We may begin with that most commonplace of modern comic strip devices: speed lines. Töpffer, like artists ever since the Renaissance, knew that drapery carried by the wind or trailed by a running figure created lines independently suggestive of movement (Fig. 15.5); and speed lines external to the object occur automatically when the movement is through or from water or snow (Figs. 15.6 and 15.7). Yet the precise cursory code for the movement of dust or air displaced by a striding figure, for instance, came to Busch relatively late (Fig. 15.8). Doré's story of Hercules and the hind (see Fig. 4.9) offers a precursor to this effect. The speed line as such, embryonic in Busch, is applied in its modern, abstract, form by Willette in two ways: externally to the form, and integrated with it, so that the cat/shadow/speed become as one. Used consistently (and in forms even more extreme than that reproduced; see Fig. 15.9), the fleeing cat—the very act of fleeing—becomes the emblem of the *Chat Noir* magazine. A further stage is reached by an anonymous English illustrator who shows a boy and his toboggan swept into an almost abstract essence of speed (Fig. 15.10). Here the impression of speed is the sole raison d'être of the drawing, which is not part of a longer sequence. Like speed, impact, as of a body falling into water, can be expressed by lines that are at once visible and material (splashing water) and symbolic or conventional (currents of pain, sound, or displaced air). Busch was the first to use the spurting of blood as the all-too-

5. Ribeyre 1884, 86.



FIG. 15.7. Wilhelm Busch: *The Sledding Party* (1864).

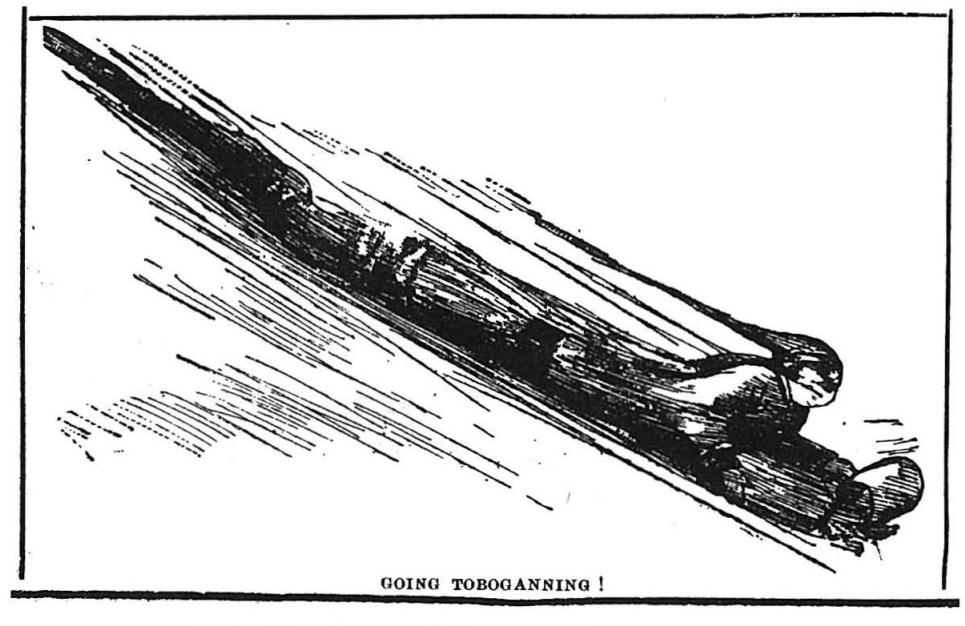


FIG. 15.10. "Going Toboganning!" (1891).

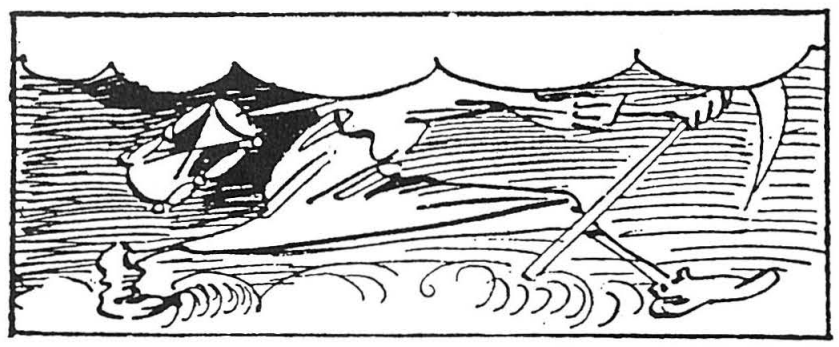


FIG. 15.8. Wilhelm Busch: *The Knopp Trilogy*. Part 3: *Julchen* (1877).

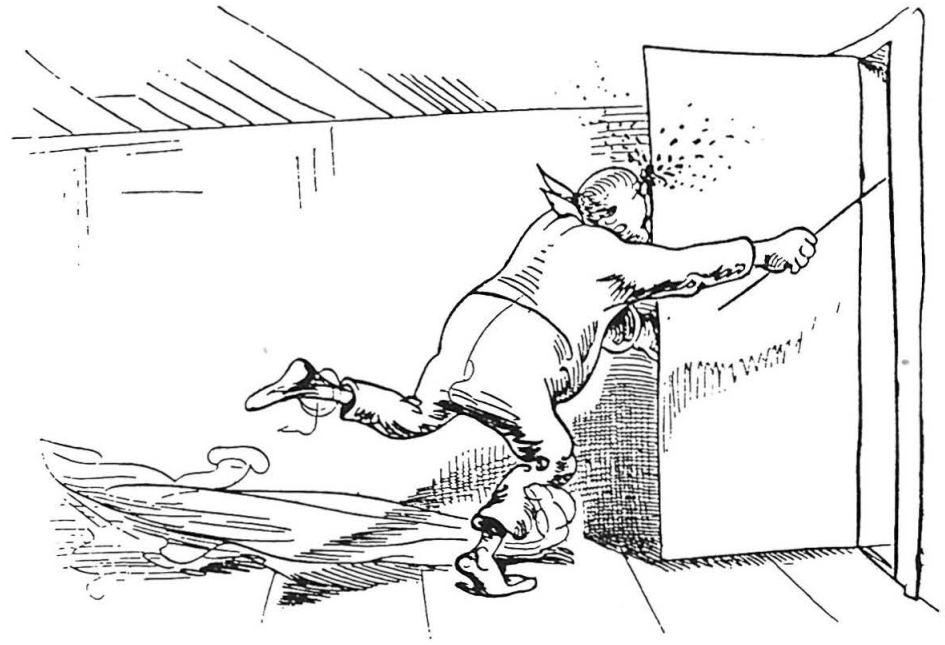


FIG. 15.11. Wilhelm Busch: *The Spectacles* (1870).



FIG. 15.9. Adolphe Willette: Fleeing cat (1882).



FIG. 15.12. Wilhelm Busch: *Pater Filucius* (1872).

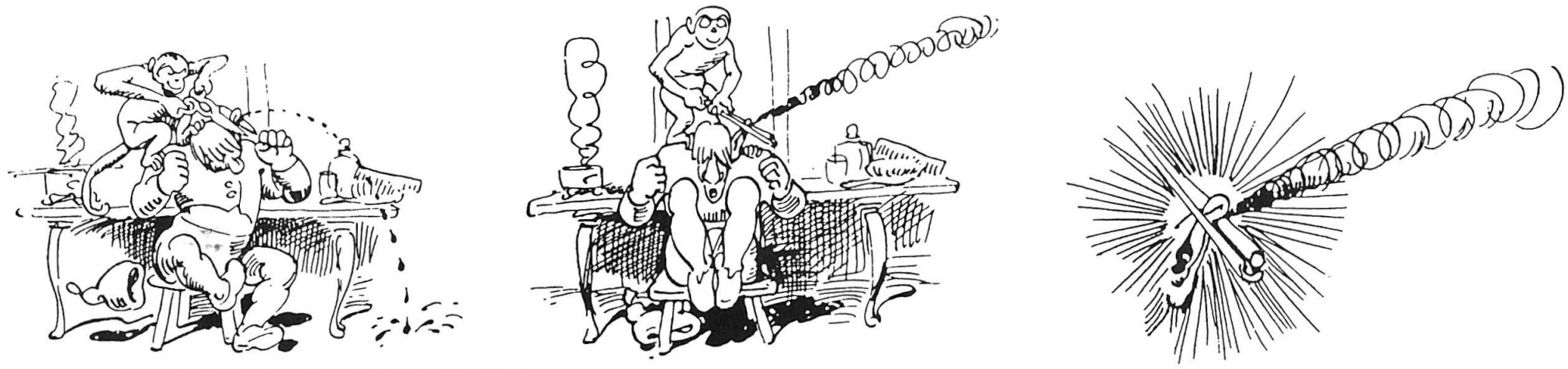


FIG. 15.13. Wilhelm Busch: *Fipps the Monkey* (1879).



FIG. 15.14. Wilhelm Kaulbach (1849). The 10,000 swords of Hau-Hau (satire on absolutism).



FIG. 15.15. Wilhelm Busch: *Balduin Bählamm* (1883).



FIG. 15.16. T.-A. Steinlen: "Horrible End of Bazouge" (1885).



FIG. 15.17. T.-A. Steinlen: "Burning Reality" (1886).



FIG. 15.18. T.-A. Steinlen: "A Reader's Impressions" (1885).



FIG. 15.19. Edvard Munch: "Tingeltangel" (1895).

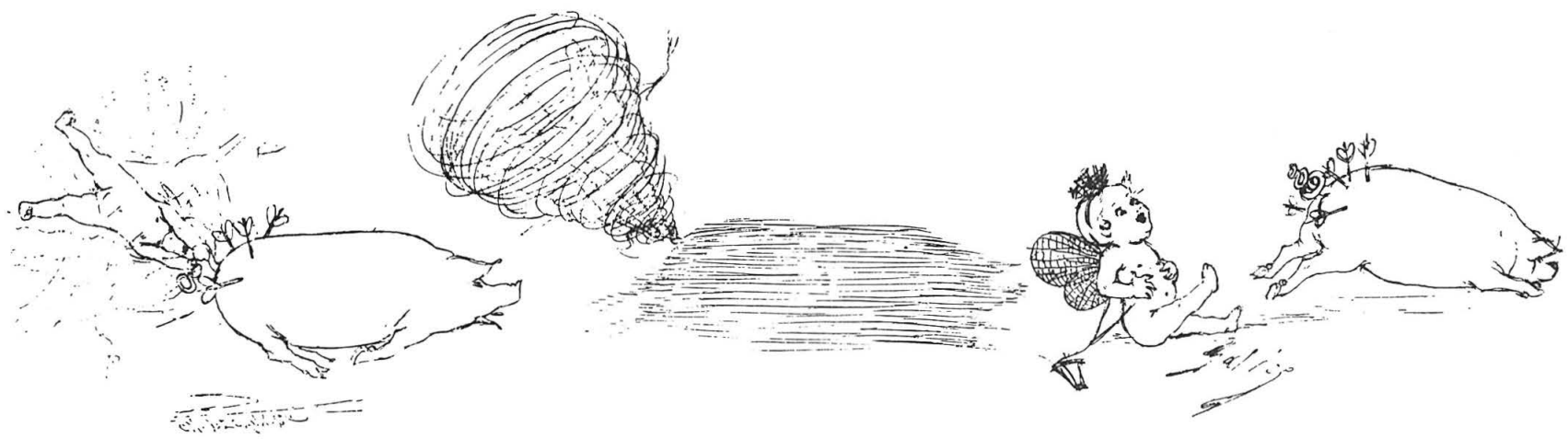


FIG. 15.20. Louis Galice: "Piggish Spring, Boulangist Fable" (1889).



FIG. 15.21. Wilhelm Busch: *A New Year's Eve Adventure* (1863).

material indicator of painful impact; in our example the man's collision with the door is enhanced and accelerated by the tablecloth caught around his legs, which functions as speed lines (Fig. 15.11). Elsewhere it is flying applesauce, graphically analogous to blood, together with the audacious foreshortening of the Jesuit's upthrown head, that expresses the shock of the unexpected blow (Fig. 15.12). Busch, in a progression from realistic to metaphorical, makes pain real and visible: from the rich arc of blood emanating from a cut ear and the spiraling steam (and pain) lines when it is pinched and singed, to the climactic electric explosion, with added aureole effect (Fig. 15.13). The close-up here functions dramatically to indicate how the total person is subsumed in a pain that "strikes, bores, and flows / into this one nodal point." Busch also used the aureole effect, symbolic of the light of a well-placed candle, to supplement oscillation in expressing the unique pain of tooth extraction (Fig. 15.15).

Busch's discovery of the oscillation pattern dates back to his *Virtuoso* of 1865, in which a pianist is shown to have (as in common parlance Franz Liszt was imagined to have) ten fingers on each hand, and eventually two pairs of seven-fingered hands on a body that itself bifurcates (see Fig. 11.14).[6] This amazing multidigitality is accompanied by other fantastic effects of movement that would have a rich future: the squirming handkerchief, the corkscrewing listener, and, at the end, the hair dripping with sweat in lines that seem also to represent speed or energy.

Having introduced the device, Busch used it sparingly: twice to represent the subjective state of drunken vision—a swaying candle (1867; 1:447) and a coatstand (1878; see Fig. 11.12)—and once to convey the agony of tooth extraction (1883; see Fig. 15.15). Steinlen, an admirer of Busch since 1870, when he saw Busch's tale of a drunken raven, applied the phasic/analytic oscillation device to a similar theme, with a blurring of lines closer to what I call "synthetic" oscillation (Fig. 15.16). Such patterns of oscillation had many expressive uses, from the delicate shaking of a paw by a cat that has burned itself on a cigar butt (Fig. 15.17) to the dramatic twirling of a stick by an angry newspaper reader—at which point we have reached completely circular motion (Fig. 15.18). All these examples precede by many years Munch's use of the device in 1895 (Fig. 15.19).

Planar oscillation finds its way fitfully into the comic strip of the 1880s. By 1889 we see it developed, through a cupid hanging on to the tail of a pig he has been tormenting, from phasic/analytic to synthetic and rotatory: a conic whirl that acts like a propeller as the bolting pig dissolves in a streaking shadow of pure speed lines (Fig. 15.20).

Rotation. Machines

The development from side-to-side oscillation to rotation or continuous/uniform circular motion, and thence to rotational-directional (that is, spiraling) movement, seems logical enough. Again we may trace it through Wilhelm Busch's rendering of subjective drunken vision, which already by 1863 was relatively systematized. The swirling of space around the bed, including the rocking of the bed itself, is rendered like a catherine wheel (Fig. 15.21). In Busch's later, more condensed, style, the rotation envelops and transforms the whole figure of the drunkard into an abstract whirl of subjectively experienced physical dissolution (Fig. 15.22). Busch also deploys spiraling motion in a fantastic, metaphorical manner. The Tartuffian Jesuit literally unwinds like a spring as the irate householder boots him out (in Busch's caption, he is "wirbelartig fortgeschafft"—dispatched in a whirl; Fig. 15.23); the unwinding is like that of an armature upon which the artist has stretched the priest's taut, bouncy contour (the verse, too, has this tensile rotundity). Circular motion is a component in much of Busch's work: Fipps swinging a dog around by the tail (3:234) or the wind rolling a hat through the street (3:484) are logical extensions of rotations already potentiated by the outlines.

By the 1880s, patterns of rotation—the spinning of wheels out of a variety of body forms—is common enough in comic art to suggest conscious awareness, perhaps even direct experience, of power-driven engines and industrial machinery generally, together with all the revolving drums, flywheels, propellers, and screws that such machines imply. The comic journal readership certainly included operators and supervisors of industrial equipment. Even the simple craft of the barber shop was mechanized by the introduction of electrically driven rotary brushes, which, shown by Du Maurier in the 1860s as wreaking havoc on the long hair of the artist, by the 1880s are actually grinding away the whole head of the customer[7] or winding up his whole body like a skein of wool on a spindle, in a shower of rotation lines (Fig. 15.24).

The social machine turns harder and faster too. A whirling dancer metamorphoses into a screw that penetrates the floor (Fig. 15.25); Grandville had turned the dancer into the less technological spinning cotton-reel.[8] An enraged balloon seller, whose balloon string has been cut by urchins, uses his stick as a propeller to drive the miscreants into the air after the balloons—incidentally demonstrating the superior capacity to fly of heavier-than-air power-propelled objects over traditional lighter-than-air flying machines (Fig. 15.26).

Rotation generates motive power. In another bizarre application of a physical law, conic rotation is shown to create suction, when the fencer's foil sucks in his opponent and vaporizes his body, leaving his spirit above and his clothes below (Fig. 15.27). Diagrams from technical manuals, increasingly the tool of self-improvement for the lower classes, make their way into the comic magazines and mass culture. The famous optical illusion I enjoyed as a child, in which the wheels of a bicycle, drawn as a series of concentric circles, appear to revolve when the page is slightly rotated (the so-called strobic effect), was already being used in a Pears soap advertisement of 1887. In one example technology, in the appropriately diagrammatic clarity of the drawing, mingles with the traditional comic strip absurdism in the underlying concept (not to mention the title: "Centrifugal Motion!"; Fig. 15.28). The idea of the bicyclist—himself the beneficiary of the latest technology—projected at great velocity through a pedestrian, so that both together constitute the spokes of a spinning human wheel, is more absurd than macabre, but it is also eloquent of a sense that mechanical forces have taken over the human body and human destiny. (Note also the change in viewpoint to clarify the moment of intersection.)

The purpose of industrial processes is to transform one raw substance and shape into a different and usable one. This was "scientific magic." It was also theatrical magic. Metamorphosing shapes and identities à la Darwin, performing graphic sleight of hand, the comic strip artist was like the magician or acrobat with an ever-expanding repertoire: the clown who instructs the lover to introduce himself into his sweetheart's home and heart by somersaulting into and becoming a pile of laundry (Fig. 15.29).

6. A caricature published just before his death (*Vie Parisienne,* April 3, 1886; reproduced in Storck 1911, 96–97) shows Liszt with four pairs of arms, and the piano disintegrating under the impact of his playing. The multi-armed figure was known through engravings of Indian deities (see Mitter 1977); Teja acknowledges these engravings as his source in his rendering of the hyperactivity of certain Italian politicians ("Il primo tiro . . . ," *Pasquino,* June 28, 1863). Earlier yet, Kaulbach had used it for his invented Indian deity "Wau-Wau," with his ten thousand swords and ten thousand arms to satirize German absolutism (see Fig. 15.14).
7. Du Maurier: *Punch,* March 31, 1866, p. 138. Ground head: *La Caricature,* October 16, 1886, p. 341.
8. Sello 1969, 1200.



FIG. 15.22. Wilhelm Busch: *Ungrateful* (1878).





FIG. 15.23. Wilhelm Busch: *Pater Filucius* (1872).

A BARBEROUS PROCEEDING: A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.

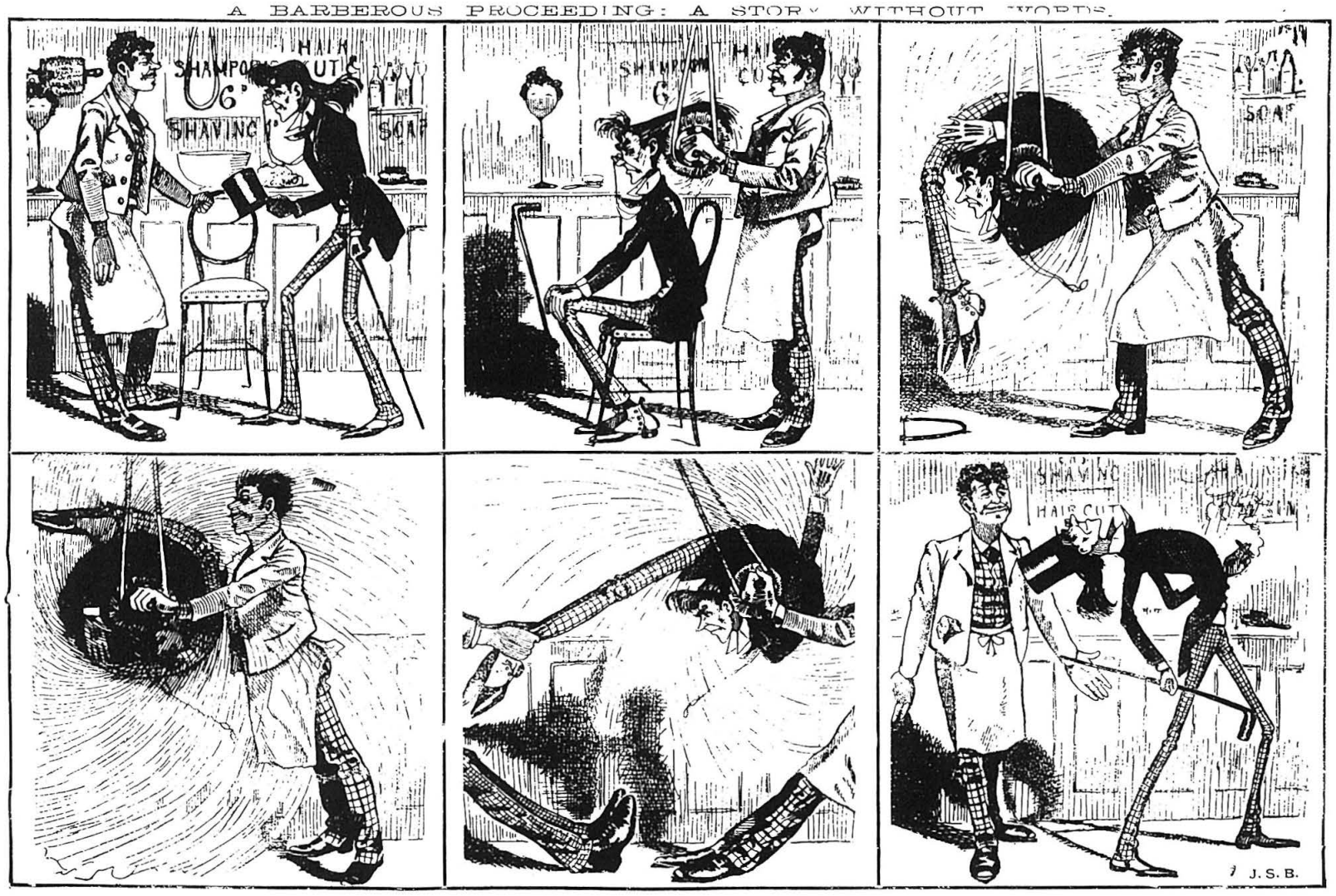


FIG. 15.24. J.S.B.: "A Barberous Proceeding" (1888).

The Shaking Contour and Other "Industrial" Deformations

Patterns of oscillation seek to codify degrees of physical motion. The problem posed above—how one represents the less visible, internal (e)motion of pain, shock, fear, and so on—is answered by Busch and his shaking contour. This technique stands at the beginning of a series of increasingly fantastic and imaginative transformations of the body plastic. The impact of a sudden stomachic on a hungover body system reduces it to a shivering jelly (Fig. 15.30). Taken a step further by Marie Duval (who knew the work of Busch), arm, face, nightcap, and shadow all contort as one into a shuddering grimace (Fig. 15.31). Marie Duval gave new twists to such effects several times in the 1870s before they became more common in the next decade: fear reduces a female figure to a combination of phasic oscillation and shaking contour (Fig. 15.32); a violent ejection reduces Sloper to india rubber (Fig. 15.33); a drying-out process after a binge imagines Sloper twisted like toffee in a machine (Fig. 15.34); and, at an extreme, the violence of a sneeze results in total discombobulation (Fig. 15.35). The common factor here is that when subjected to amplified external or internal stimuli, the body reacts not as an anatomical but as a graphic organism analogized with materials as



FIG. 15.25. Raphael Bordallo Pinheiro: "Episodes from the 'Cotillion' at the Naval Association Ball" (1880).



FIG. 15.26. Uzès (pseud. A. Lemot): "Advice to the Government" (1886).

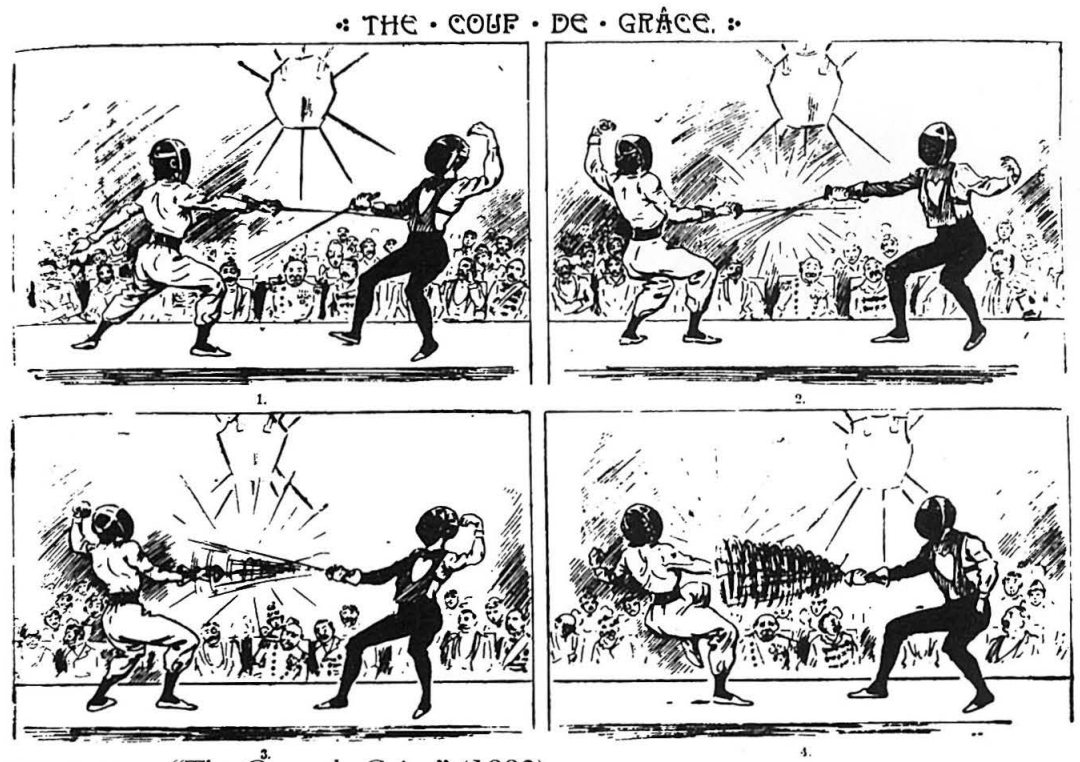


FIG. 15.27. "The Coup de Grâce" (1892).

alien as possible to solid human flesh and bones: rubber, rags, toffee, or a puppet, made of matchbox wood and wire, which crushes and splinters under impact (Fig. 15.36). To express a digestive spasm or intestinal liquefaction, the body unravels like a skein of yarn (Fig. 15.37). In some of these examples it is also as if the artist's hand had been jogged or thrown out of control by a personal spasm of pain.

The body is experienced as machinoid or a machinable substance, and both fear and fascination reside in the artist's rendering of the body as machined almost beyond recognition. Although we need not suppose familiarity with gruesome real-life mutilations in the factory or workplace (which were not publicized then as they might be today), the illustrated news magazine ensured awareness of explosions, whether deliberate (as in tunnel building, after Alfred Nobel invented dynamite in mid century) or accidental and catastrophic. Töpffer had already imagined a cross-channel steamer blowing all its occupants sky-high (*Festus,* p. 59); more typical of the artist, however, are the fantastic and genuinely comic self-explosions of a furious woman (see Fig. 2.5) or an overfed horse (*Vieux Bois,* p. 29). Graphically, these explo-

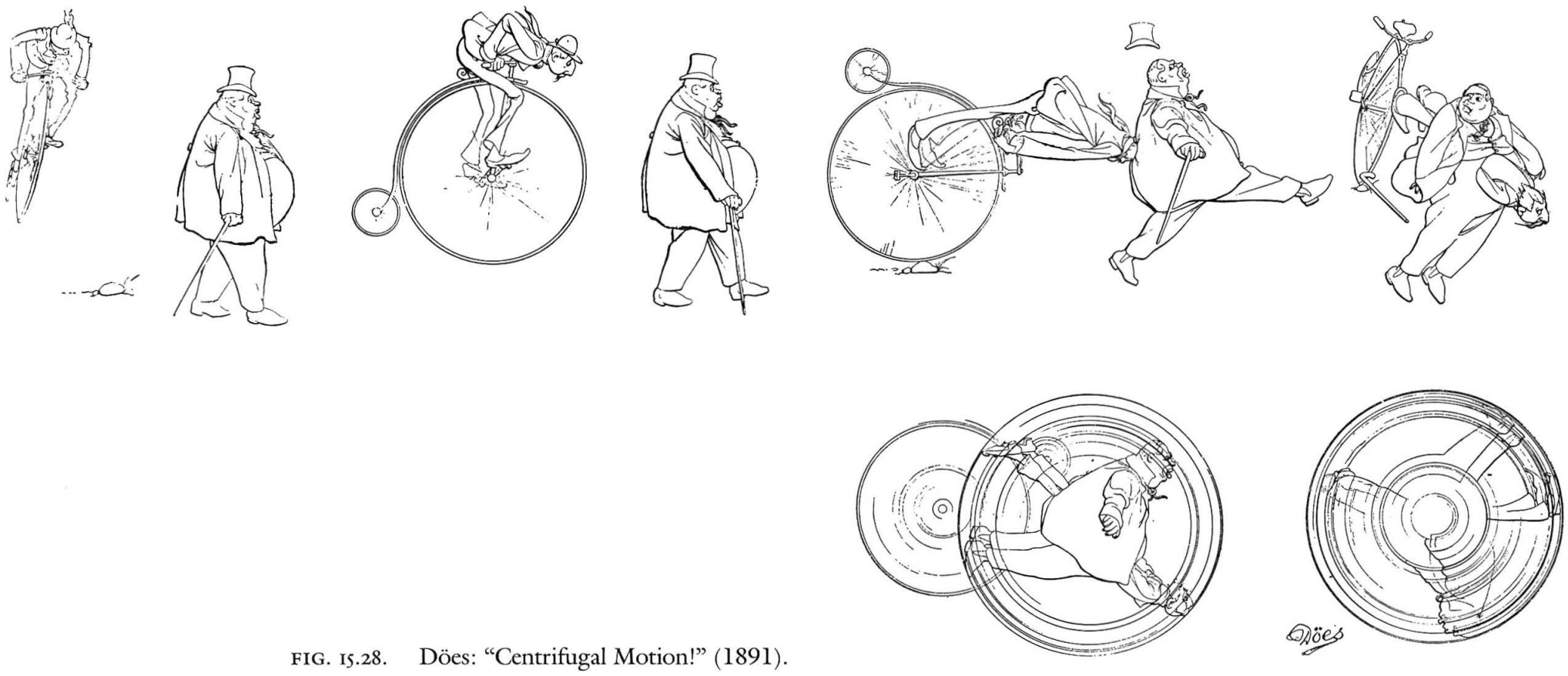


FIG. 15.28. Döes: "Centrifugal Motion!" (1891).

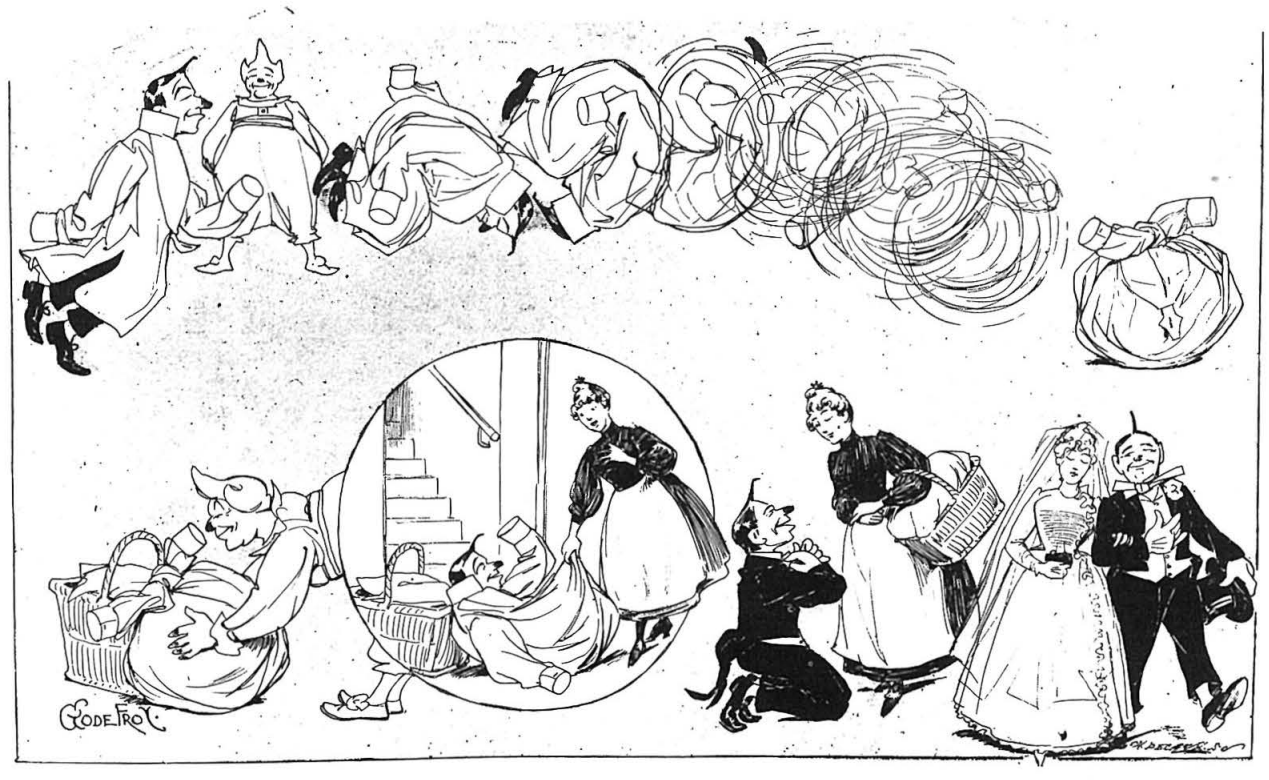


FIG. 15.29. Godefroy (pseud. Auguste Viollier): "The Marriage of Auguste" (1888).



Brrr!

FIG. 15.30. Wilhelm Busch: *New Year's Day Hangover* (1868).



FIG. 15.31. Marie Duval: "Portrait of Sloper as He Appeared After Gulping Down His Seidlitz" (1876).



5. Which it made her shook so, you couldn't count how many noses she'd got. Which the eggs were also much broken.

FIG. 15.32. Marie Duval: "Ghostesses" (1873).

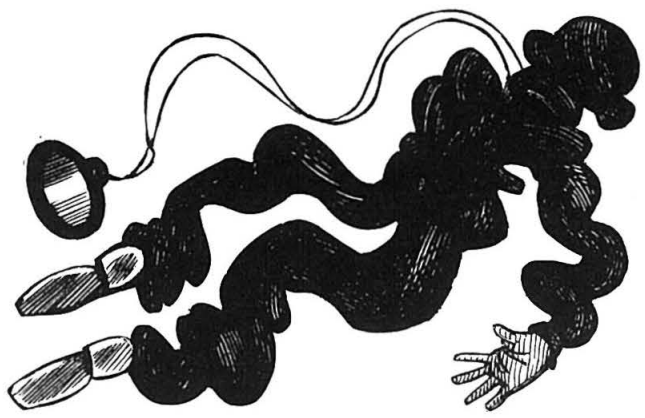


FIG. 15.33. Marie Duval: Ally Sloper kicked out (1877).



FIG. 15.34. Marie Duval: "Iky a Hero" (1871).



5. Portrait of the above after taking a deuce-and-all of a Pinch. E-e-e-c-c-c—h——ew! * * * dieu vous bénise, belle dame

FIG. 15.35. Marie Duval: "A Pinch of Snuff" (1874).



FIG. 15.36. T.-A. Steinlen: "Can you spare a dime?" (1885).



FIG. 15.37. Godefroy: "Interlude" (1888).

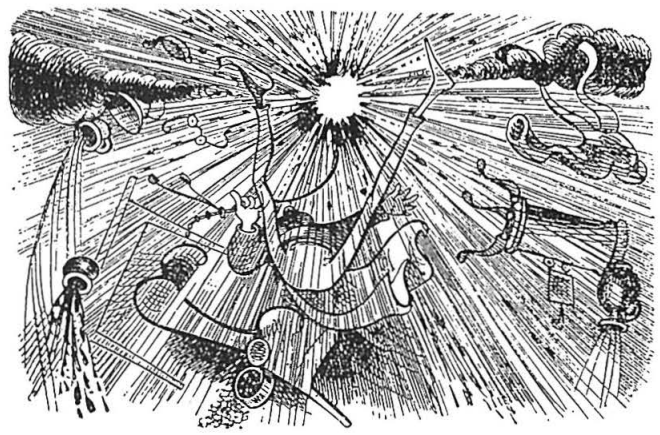


FIG. 15.38. Wilhelm Busch: *Max and Moritz* (1865).

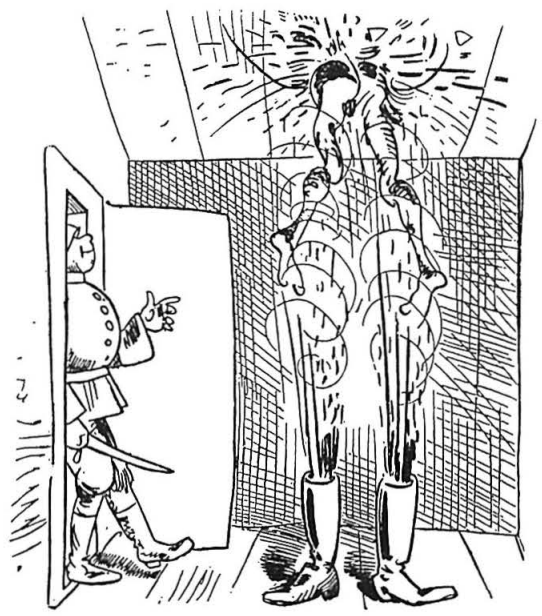


FIG. 15.39. Wilhelm Busch: *Monsieur Jacques in Paris* (1870).

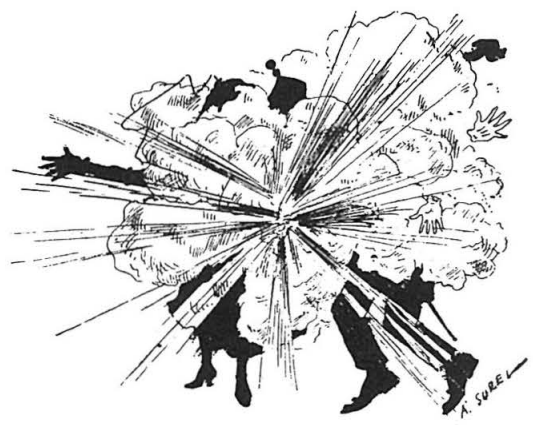


FIG. 15.40. A. Sorel: "An Explosion" (1886).



5. Then you press a little. That boy leaves off reading —— 6. Then you press—more. 7. And more!—and more!! —and more!!! 8. And mo——

FIG. 15.41. James Sullivan: "The New Demon Communicator" (1894).



FIG. 15.42. Wilhelm Busch: *Ice Peter* (1864).

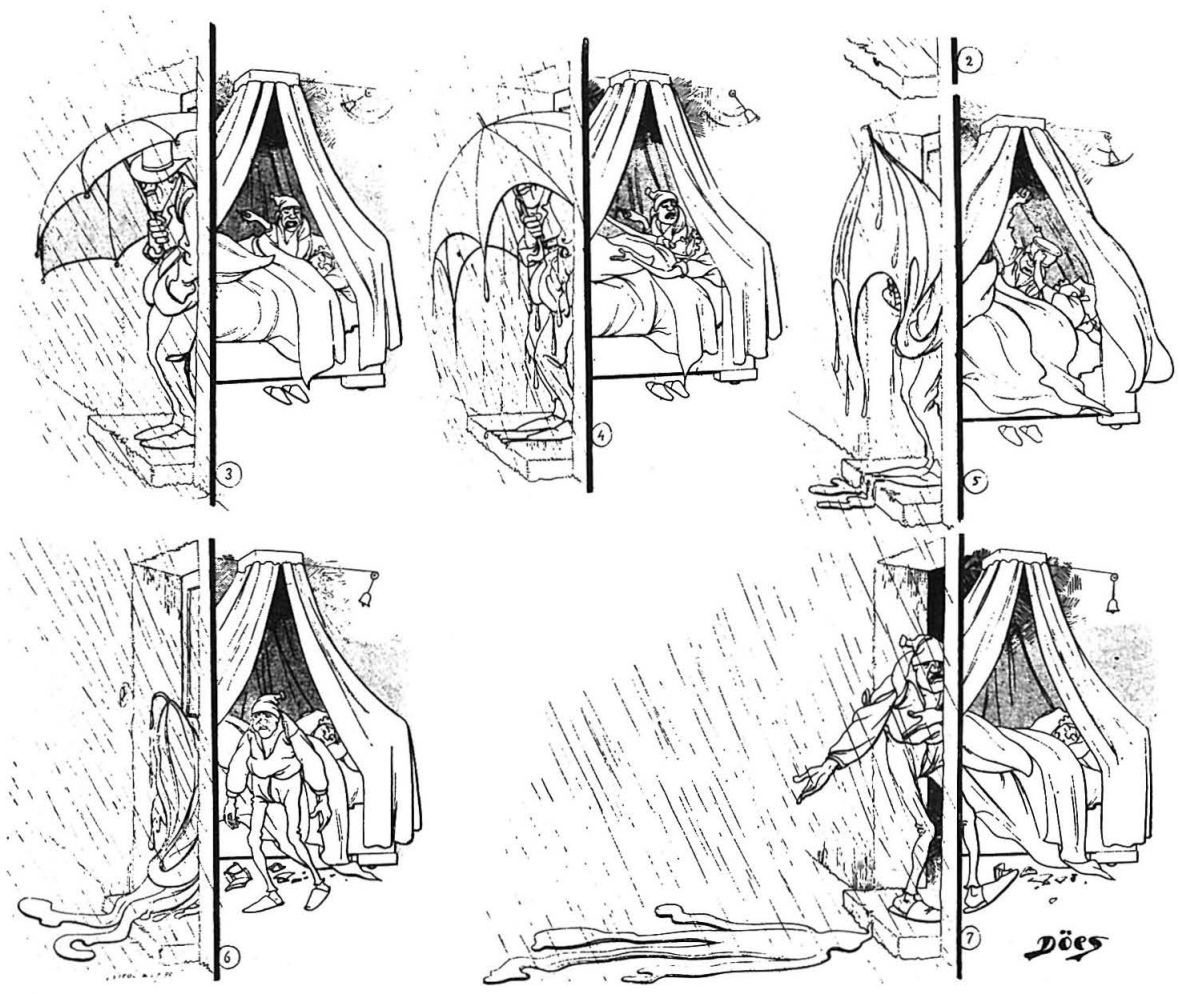


FIG. 15.43. Döes: "Should Have Said So Immediately!" (1889).

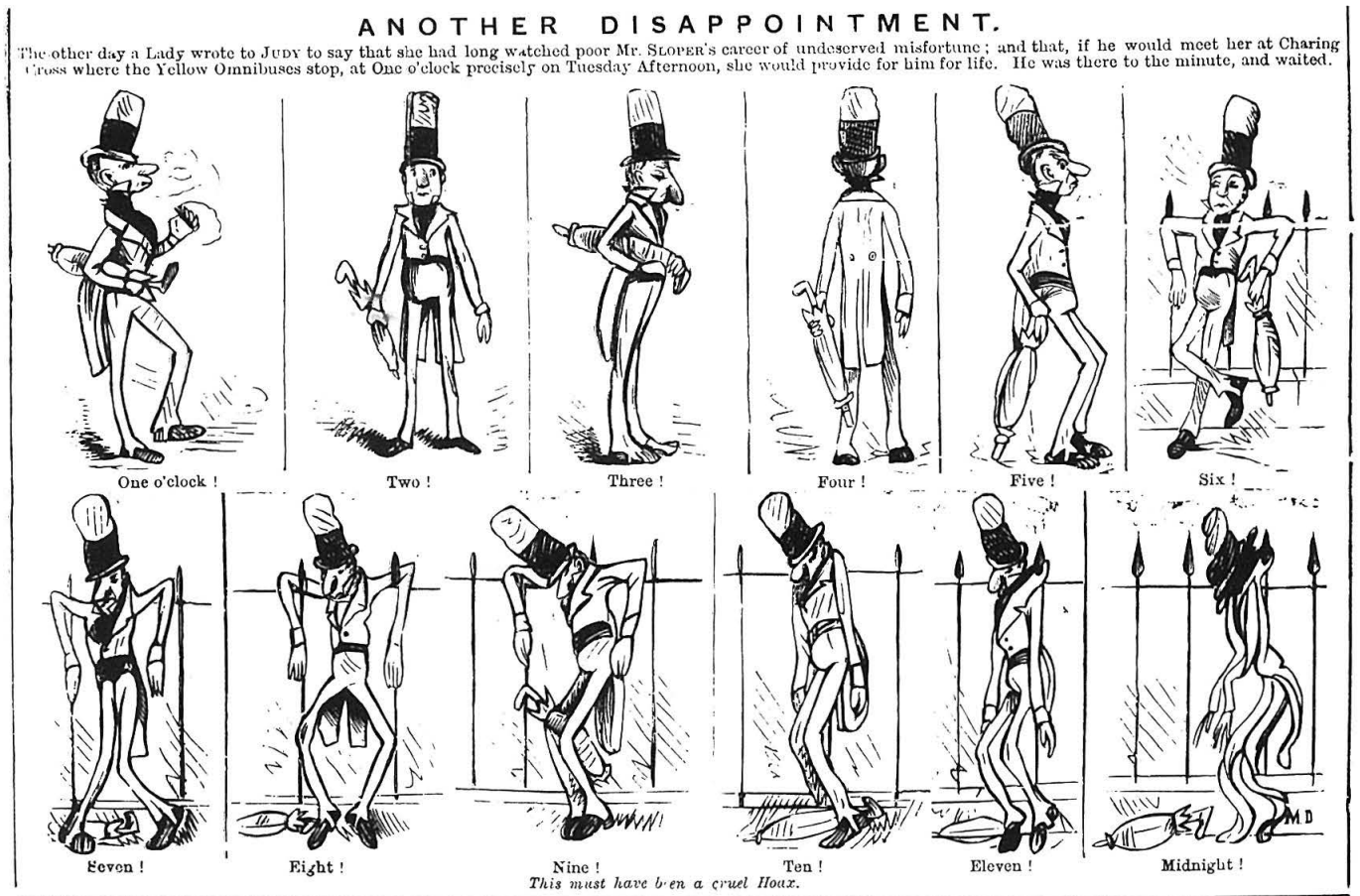


FIG. 15.44. Marie Duval: "Another Disappointment" (1872).

sions, like most before Busch, do not attempt to draw the spectator in. With Busch, in contrast, the blast emanates from a center of detonation set somewhat back and high, so that the schoolmaster's body and surrounding objects are hurled directly toward us (Fig. 15.38). The verse, too, starting with its own onomatopoeically explosive "Rums!!" imitates the effect.

Busch's schoolmaster (much to this child reader's relief) survives; not so the French *citoyen* in the siege of 1870, who in anticipation of the Russian attack fires himself like a rocket from his dynamite-laden boots (Fig. 15.39). He explodes on the ceiling, where spiral speed lines mingle with a shower of marks that one would prefer to see as expressive of sheer impact but, by comparison with the preceding drawing, where heads and bodies blown away from within spout similar marks, demand to be read as spattering blood and shards of flesh.

The popularity of balloons on the one hand (made possible by advances in rubber manufacture) and anarchist bombings on the other (facilitated by Nobel's invention) brought explosions even closer. In strips about anarchist bombs, however, the charges do not explode, usually because the suspect parcel turns out to be a false alarm (both of which—parcels and alarms—were often police provocations). The experience of a balloon bursting in one's face, especially when one is about to execute a delicate seduction, is alarming enough (Fig. 15.40), but with the domestication of electrical appliances, the home became a battlefield in a new sense. Take the simple house bell, now electrified: as the electrical charge is increased, the sound of the new "demon communicator" bell rises from tinkle to shriek, "frightful swearing," and bombing noises; meanwhile the poor messenger boy, who is the direct recipient of the charge, melts, shrivels, unravels, until the climactic explosion fries as well as blasts him (Fig. 15.41).

Heat and cold are other agencies of physical transformation to which the human body, imagined as an alien substance, is subject. In even the simplest households, heating and refrigeration techniques were used on food; when improved and applied on an industrial scale, these had profound political and economic impact (for instance, the British were soon consuming increasing quantities of meat shipped frozen from Argentina). In a Munchausenesque parody of a fairy or morality tale, the careless skater Ice Peter (1864) falls through the ice and develops icicles that, compelling aesthetic formations unto themselves, appear ironically as frozen speed lines, which totally immobilize the figure (Fig. 15.42). When concerned parents melt down the exterior ice, the human core melts also, like wax in a lost-wax process, to be scooped up and canned for a future meal.

"Freezing" and "melting" are such commonplace verbal descriptions for how cold or hot we feel that we are scarcely conscious of their exaggeration; for the 19th-century graphic artist, however, the literal interpretation of these figures of speech, especially (and as only the comic strip artist could) as something that *gradually* happened before our eyes, was a decisive step. Rain, on a patiently waiting figure, was imagined as capable of liquefying it completely (Fig. 15.43); and endless waiting, even without the rain, could have a liquefying—or is it a dehydrating?—effect (Fig. 15.44).

In the rural Germany of Busch, flattening, like freezing and melting, appears in the first instance as a culinary process. *The Bad Boys of Corinth,* who torment Diogenes in his barrel, get caught on a nail as the cask rolls downhill and flattens them (as Busch says) like dough under a rolling pin (Fig. 15.45; note also the scud marks thrown up by the barrel). Later, in its more industrially conscious phase, the comic strip imagines the human body violently flattened, stretched, twisted, kinked, or wrapped around a spinning drum (see Figs. 15.34 and 15.24). When whole social substances, or institutional structures, were being deformed and torn apart by capitalism in its most dynamic phase, it was logical to depict the constituent unit of those structures, the individual human body, as literally deformed by (or as if by) the real-life agency of that reshaping: the machine. Capitalism, as Karl Marx and William Morris complained, treats the individual worker like a machinable substance, like the machine to which he or she is enslaved. Herein lies much repressed social anguish, but also the purest comedy: comedy as understood, for instance, in a philosophical, psychological, and aesthetic sense by the philosopher of the process, Henri Bergson, whose treatise on laughter was published in 1900, and in a social sense also by Charlie Chaplin (born 1889).

This, of course, is the stuff of the modern animated cartoon, which inflicts otherwise unimaginable (that is, unbearably painful) woes upon the human body. These abuses, however, extreme as they are, may be experienced as reassuring: the body can suffer all this and still survive intact, defiant. According to the Freudian theory of the joke, laughter comes as a release from the fear we all have of physical injury and pain—and death. But more recently, taking up a Marxian view, Theodor Adorno has seen the sufferings of a Donald Duck not so much as offering relief but as teach-

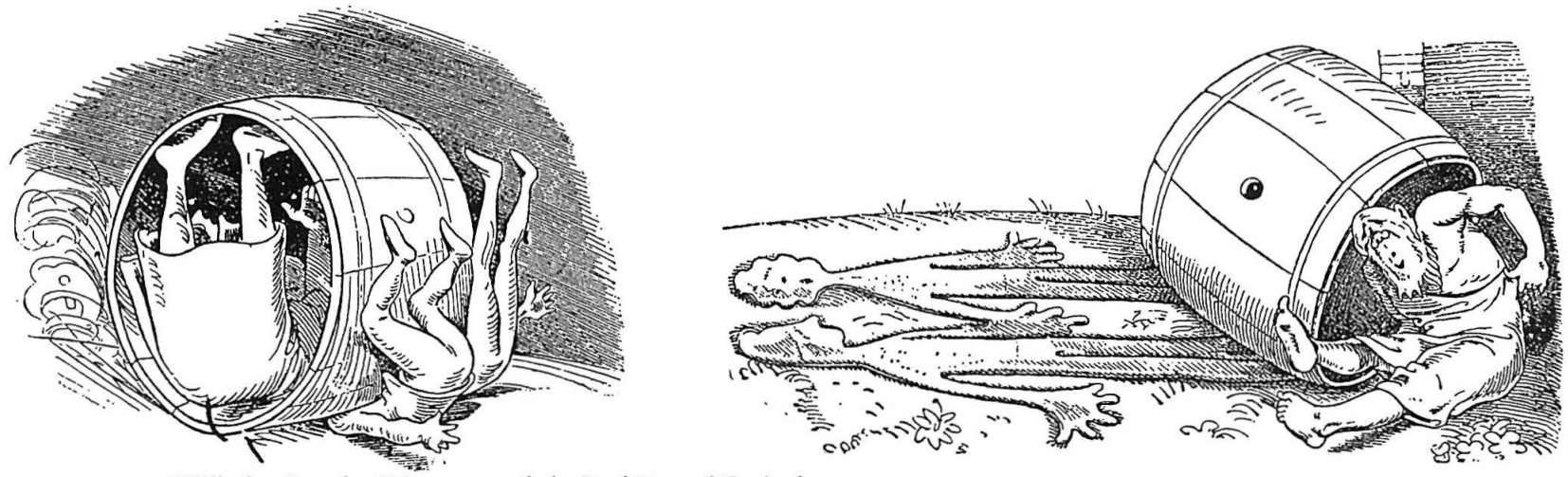


FIG. 15.45. Wilhelm Busch: *Diogenes and the Bad Boys of Corinth* (1862).

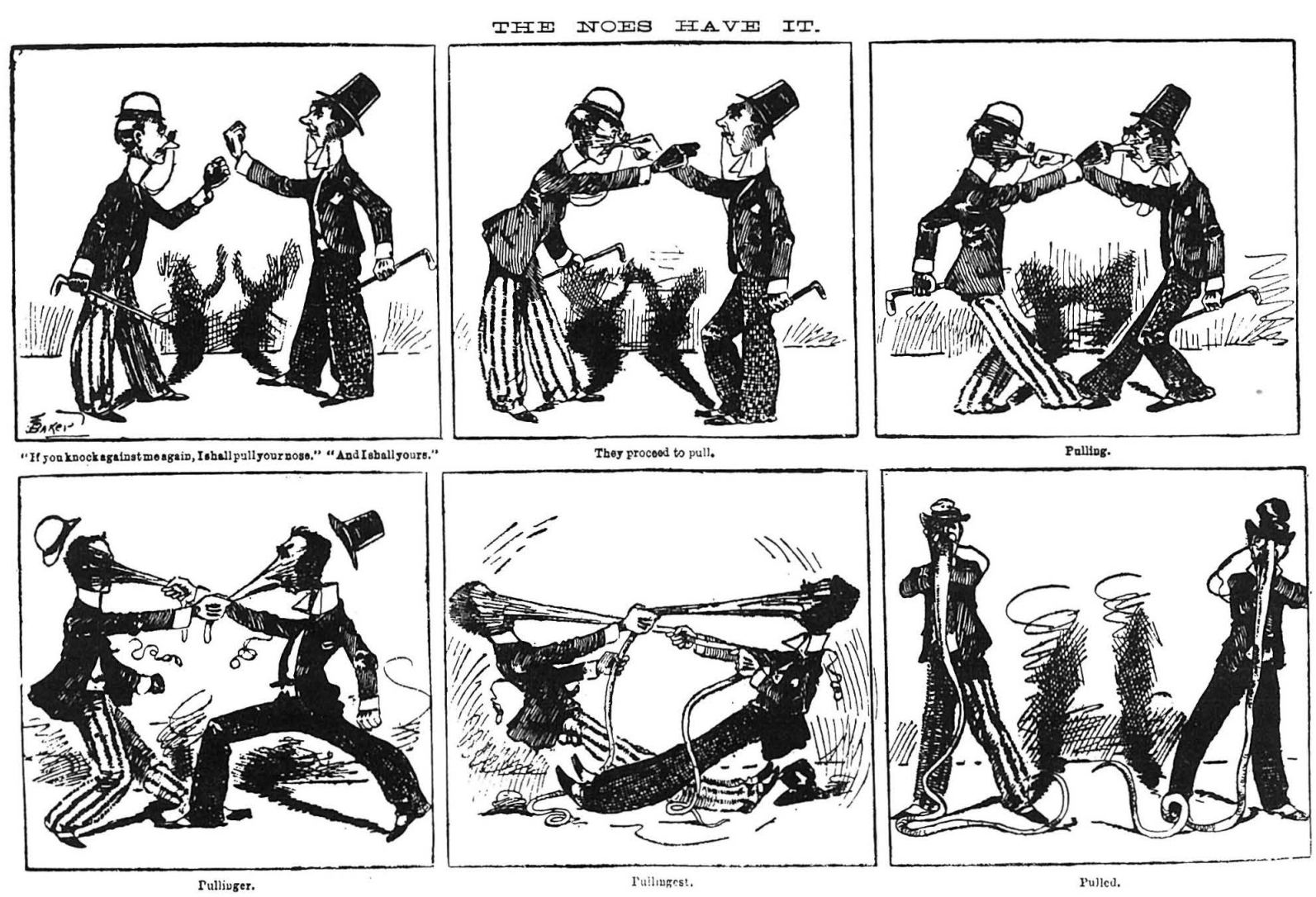


FIG. 15.46. Julius Baker: "The Noes Have It" (1889).

ing resignation to the constant beating, both moral and physical, that capitalism inflicts on the worker.[9] Might this not also be true in the period under discussion?

By a peculiar stretch of the imagination (the pun is functional), comic strip artists were able to show the body as fantastically extensible, as if made of a rubberized, reptilian substance (Figs. 15.46 and 15.47). In the late 19th century, rubber, already used in machinery and clothing, entered life at various levels. In 1888 John Dunlop patented pneumatic tires for bicycles, tricycles, and horse-drawn vehicles. Balloons and inflatable rubber toys became commonplace. Comic strip artists liked to show rubber toys as giving the illusion of reality; but their "trompe l'oeil" effects could deceive only an eye already attuned to the caricatural graphic as a valid "reality." In other words, the caricatural process was already a rubberizing one. The tricks of the trade in a graphic tradition that had always inflated and stretched body parts were replicated in music hall and circus, with the mind- and eye-boggling prodigies of rubber-faced and rubber-limbed clowns (often faking) and acrobats and contortionists (for real). The "rubber man" as dancer was immortalized by Toulouse-Lautrec in his posters for the Moulin Rouge cabaret, in a caricatural style adapted a priori to the purpose.

Photography was another mechanical means of stretching form. Two basic kinds of photographic distortion are at issue in the comic strip: the enlargement of forward-projected objects or limbs; and the blurring caused when the sitter moved during the necessarily long exposure. Busch demonstrates both effects in *All Honor to the Photographer, For He Can't Help It* (Fig. 15.48), the one imagined as a trick to emphasize the sitter's status, the other the result of an accident, rationalized by Busch with humorous generosity as fulfilling the aim of any good work of art: the incorporation at once of past, present, and future. We have already described the caricatural adaptation of the blurring or oscillation effect. Tremendous enlargement of forward parts, as observed in

9. Adorno 1946, 138.

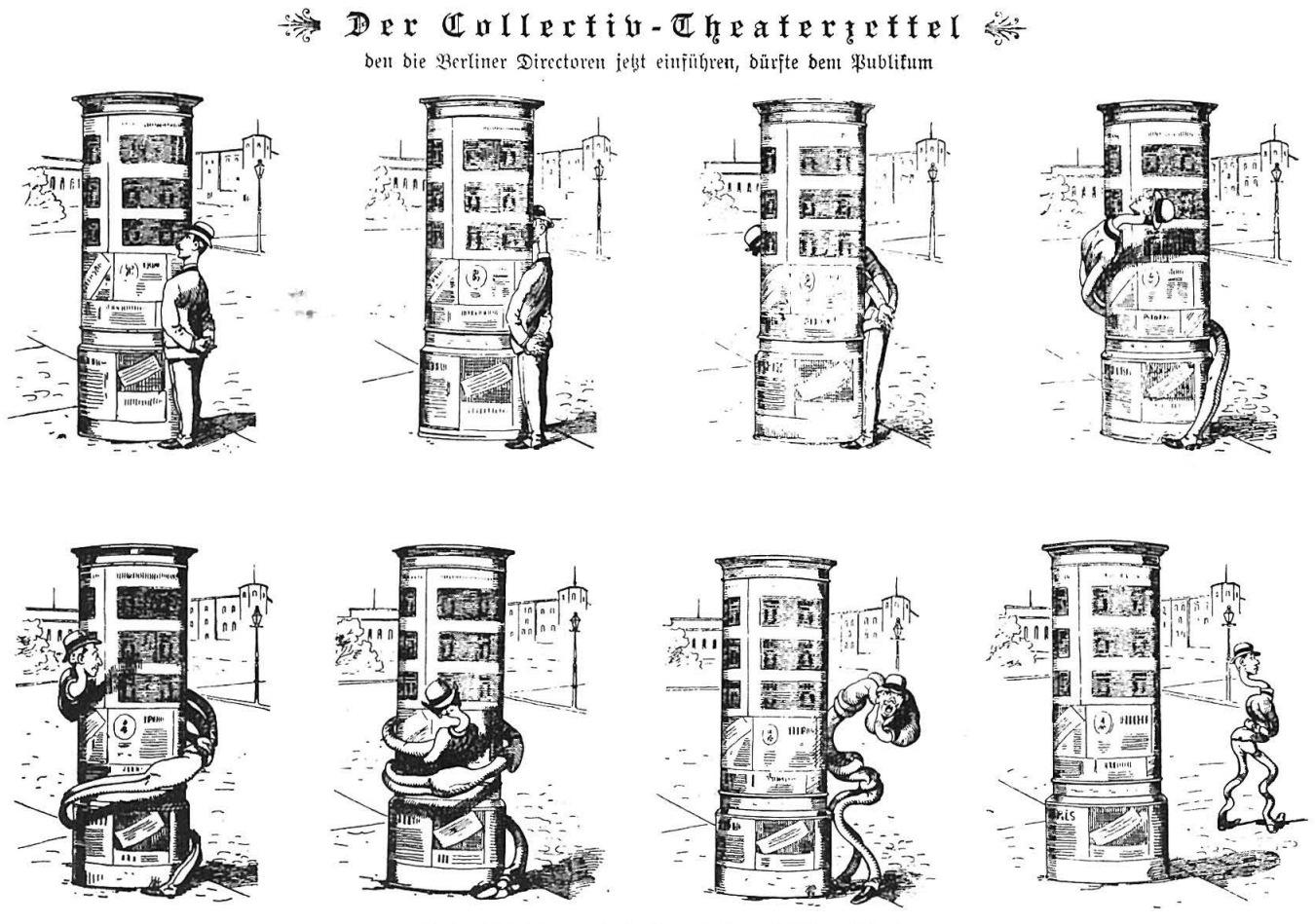


FIG. 15.47. "The Collective Theatrical Poster, Now Being Introduced by the Berlin Theaters, Could Present Some Difficulties of Viewing!" (1891).

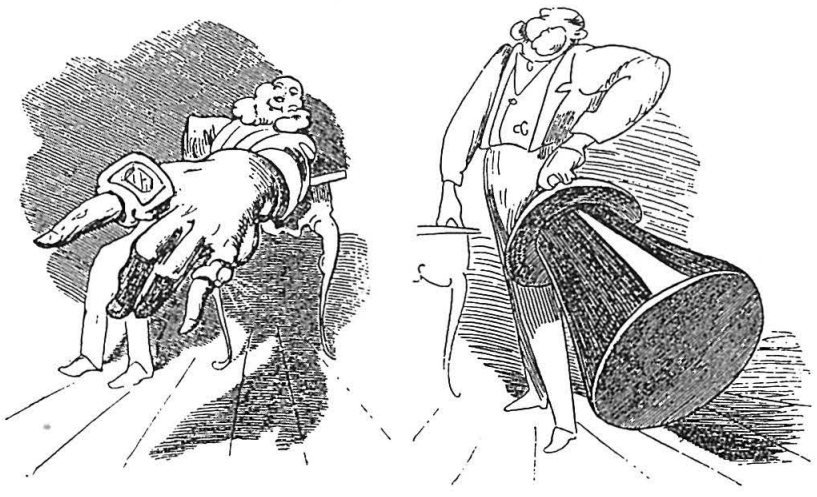




FIG. 15.48. Wilhelm Busch: *All Honor to the Photographer, For He Can't Help It* (1870/71).

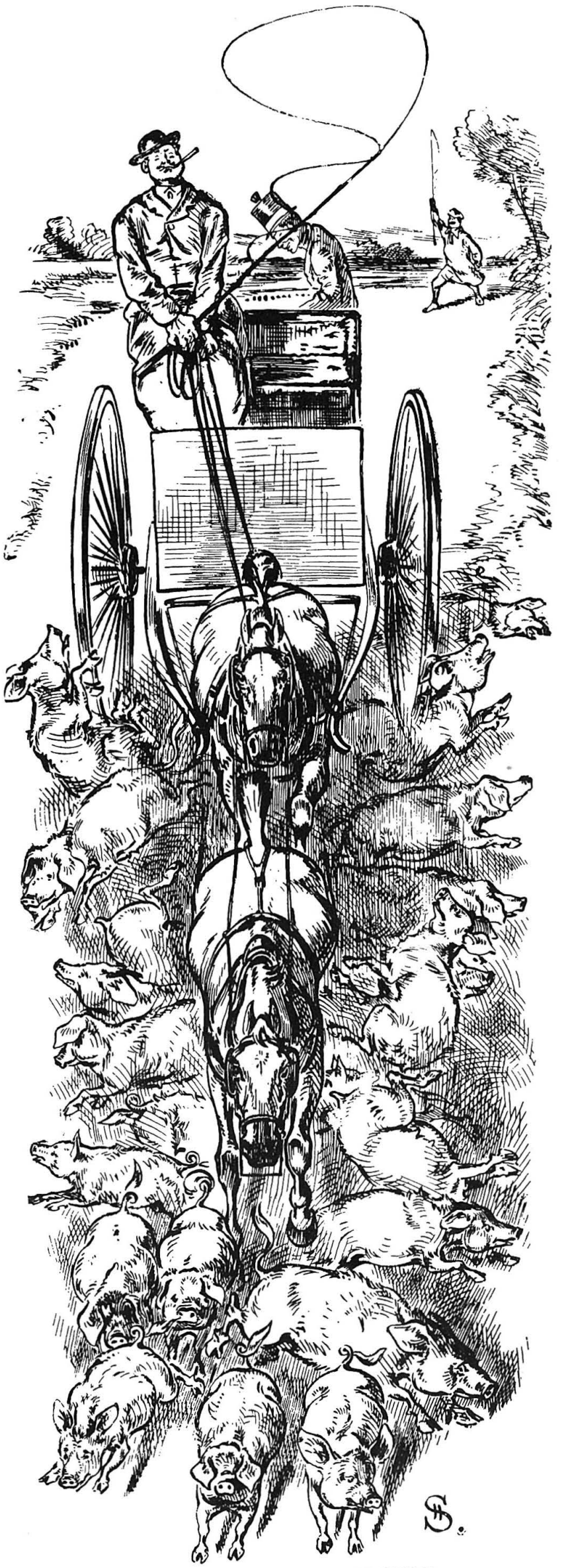


FIG. 15.49. Bertall (pseud. Albert d'Arnoux): "1854 pour Rire" (demand for New Year tips) (1854).



EVER SINCE POOR JENKINS MET WITH THAT ACCIDENT IN THE HANSOM CAB LAST FORTNIGHT, HIS NOCTURNAL SLUMBERS HAVE BEEN AGITATED BY A CONSTANTLY RECURRING NIGHTMARE. HE DREAMS THAT A MORE THAN USUALLY APPALLING CAB-HORSE BOLTS WITH HIM IN HANWAY PASSAGE (OXFORD STREET); AND CANNOT QUITE MAKE OUT WHETHER HE IS RIDING IN THE CAB, OR WHETHER IT IS HE WHO STANDS, POWERLESS TO MOVE, RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE INFURIATED ANIMAL.

FIG. 15.50. George Du Maurier: Jenkins's Nightmare (1868).



MARKET INTELLIGENCE: PORK LIVELY.

FIG. 15.51. "Market Intelligence: Pork Lively" (1887).

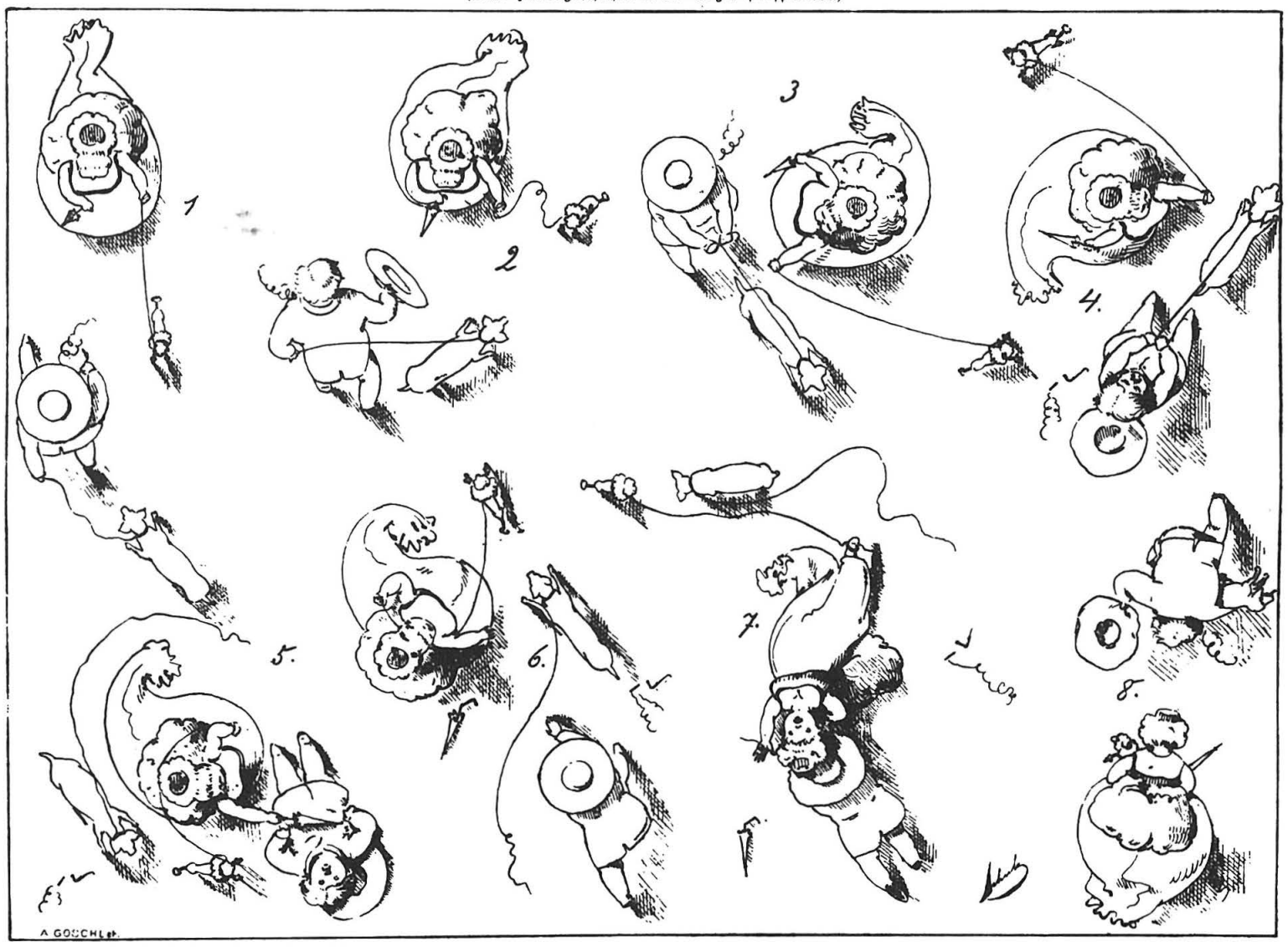


FIG. 15.52. Karl Klič: "Fipsi and Joli (A Dog Tale in Bird's-Eye Perspective)" (1873).

photography, had been used by earlier cartoonists, Bertall for instance (Fig. 15.49), and was already a relatively common technique for rendering a figure taking giant steps.[10] Bertall seems clumsy, however, when compared with Du Maurier's later, much more sophisticated, rendering in *Punch* (Fig. 15.50). We have here the *sensation,* rather than mere impression, of the horse charging at and over us, such as is integral to the nightmare (note the immobilized, knotted legs of the dreamer in the foreground) and was to be the aim of the earliest cinema, which, to the delight and terror of the spectators, filmed the head-on rush of the express train.

The related effect of a horse team passing beneath us was attempted later in the century by a monogrammist exploring the possibilities of changing viewpoint (Fig. 15.51). The shot starts high in the foreground over the pigs, which are not enlarged, and then sinks rapidly toward the back with the carriage, as if the roadway—or, according to some sense, vision itself?—were curved.

High Viewpoint, Changing Viewpoint, Changing Direction

The high viewpoint, or bird's-eye view, for which Grandville left some notable models in *Un Autre Monde* (1844),[11] was used in a moderate form by Doré and Doyle at mid century and from the start (1843) in the frontispiece to *L'Illustration,* "Journal universel," as an emblem of the "universality" and "overview" of its news coverage. The panoramic or bird's-eye view expresses, graphically, intentions that only the most capacious novelists—a Balzac or Dickens—could actually fulfill. Yet both writer and caricaturist operate from the idea that by taking sufficient distance one might approximate a kind of scientific mapping of the social totality. In the 1870s Zola began to depict the flow of crowds, and impressionists undertook high overviews of the bustling Parisian street.

Hitherto used sporadically as a special effect in comic strips, the bird's-eye view was applied systematically for the first time in 1873 to recount an eight-phase incident observed, as it were, from the top window of a high building (Fig. 15.52). The encounter between a lady and a gentleman accidentally tangled by their dogs' leashes, though unoriginal in itself, gains a special flavor from the geometric-diagrammatic plotting of movements, which only a bird's-eye view could undertake: a comedy of motions and *e*motions carried through interacting arcs, spirals, tangents, and vectors worthy of the abstract animated cartoon.

The graphically monotonous idea of the walking tour could be enlivened by ringing the changes on viewpoint and direction (Fig. 15.53). And perspectival distance could serve as the principal variable in an attempt to give life to the otherwise insufficient motif of a bolting horse, as the rider is carried diagonally forward, then diagonally back, then forward again and closer; finally, reversing direction through 180 degrees, he is pitched toward us over the horse's head, and the horse plunges vertically downward over a cliff (Fig. 15.54).

10. E.g., the Russian, ambitious to expand into the Mediterranean, stepping from Austria to Villafranca (*Kladderadatsch,* September 26, 1858).
11. Sello 1969, 1178, 1186, 1187.

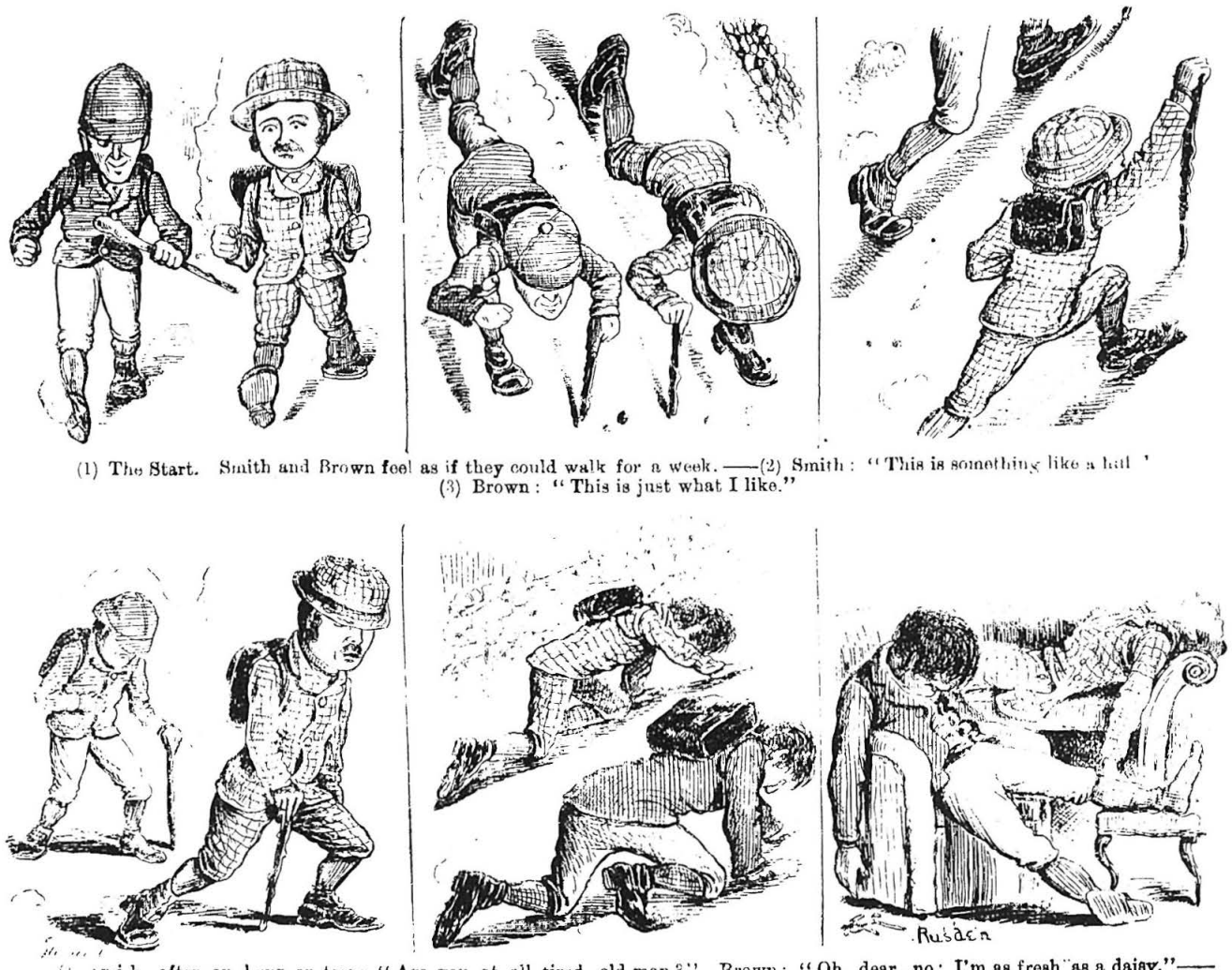
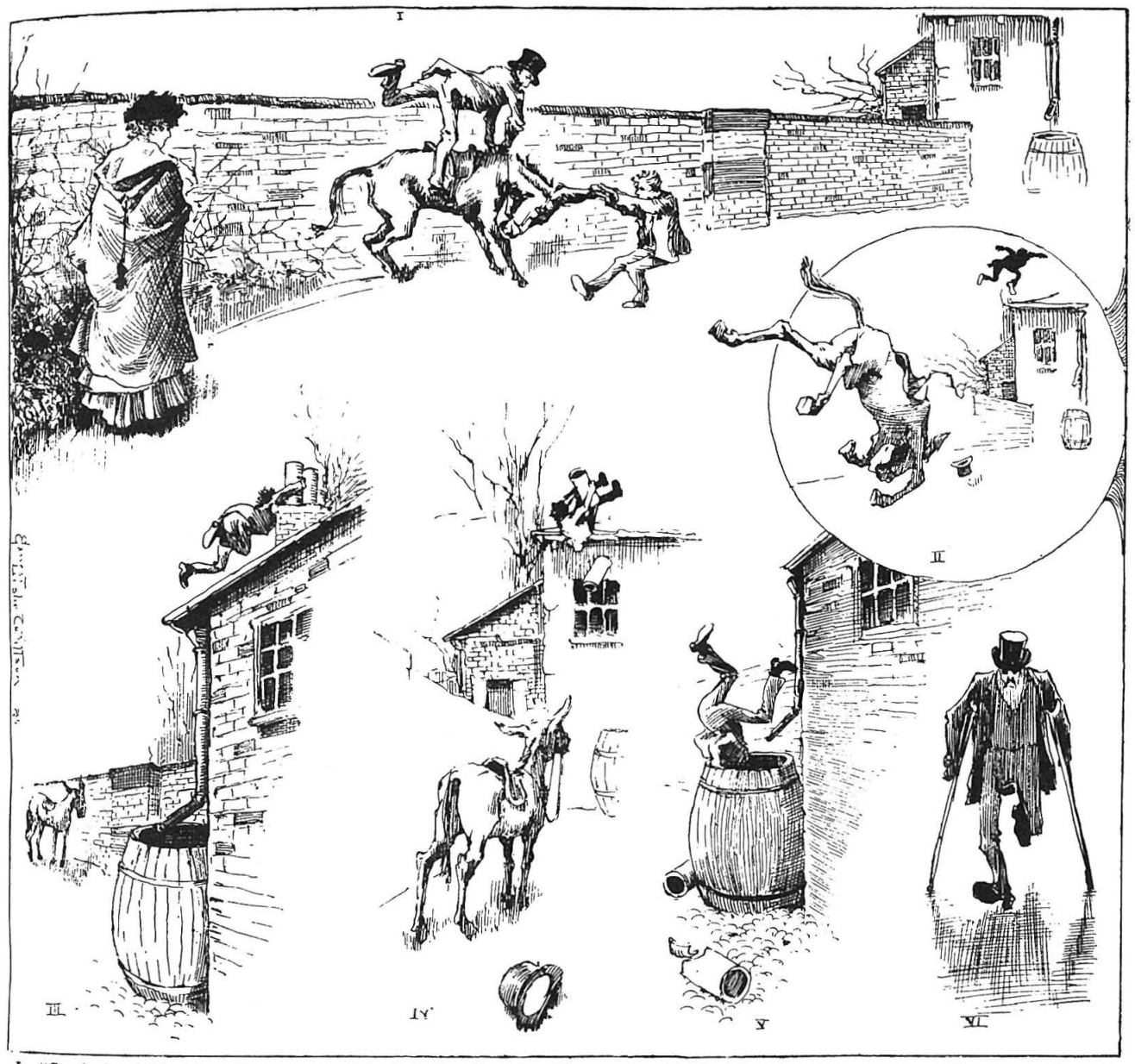


FIG. 15.53. Athelstan Rusden: "Our Walking Tourist—in Derryshire" (1883).



FIG. 15.54. Athelstan Rusden: "Half-an-Hour on a Seaside Horse" (1883).



I.—"Steady does it!' II.—"Up we go!" III.—"Hold on!" IV.—"Je-e-rusalem!" V.—Splash. "Whew!" VI.—"No more, thank you!"

FIG. 15.55. Ernest Willson: "The Contested Seat" (1886).

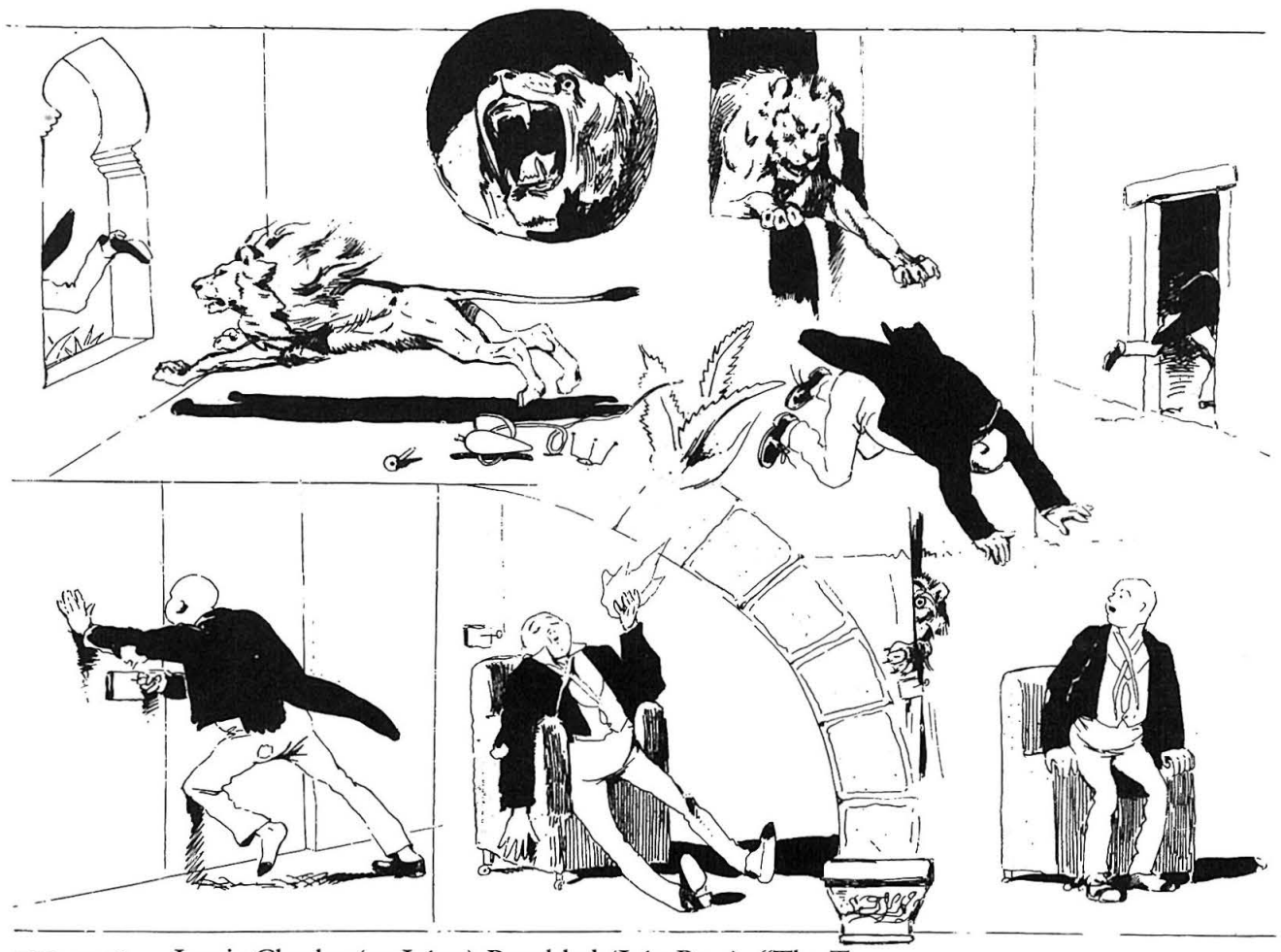


FIG. 15.56. Louis-Charles (or Léon) Bombled (Léo Brac): "The Tame Lion" (1886).

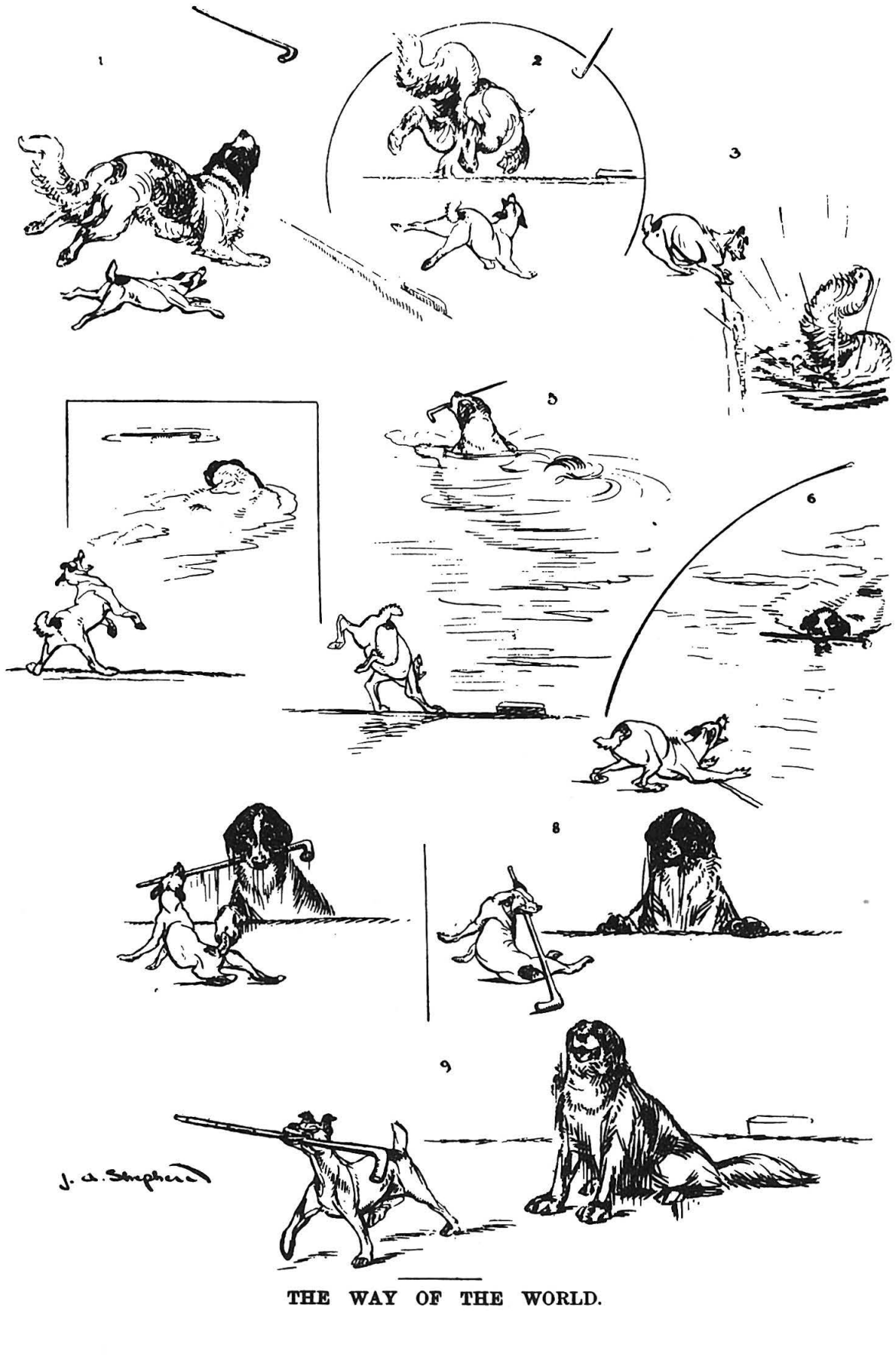


FIG. 15.57. James A. Shepherd: "The Way of the World" (1893).

Framing

Framing of individual scenes now becomes self-conscious and begins to assert itself against the simultaneous tendency toward the frameless design. In the example here (Fig. 15.55), showing an ornery donkey (which, like the bucking bronco, was always good for a laugh at the circus or in a comic strip), this new framing variable is injected into a system of changing viewpoints and directions. The "telescopic" roundel gives a foreshortened view from one end of what the next scene renders from the opposite end. New developments in book illustration offered models for novel frame designs, which are picked up by the comic strip artists from the mid 1880s. Cilla in Spain made a fetish of the variable frame shape (see Fig. 14.4), and experimentation in this area, as well as in viewpoint and distance, gave new visual life to otherwise outworn themes. A supposedly domesticated lion chasing a visitor in French North Africa becomes visually exciting when the chase is taken through a dramatic close-up—not so much of what *we* might see as of what the terrified fugitive imagines or has printed on his memory. As he is pitched down an archway that grows capriciously out of a framing column, fragments of lion appear out of nowhere or from behind a curtain that substitutes for framing (Fig. 15.56).

By the 1890s framing in itself represents movement of a kind and begins to compete with the story line. In an incident of typical tenuousness, the geometric pseudoframing becomes a series of abstract design interventions (Fig. 15.57). For an artist to both follow and break the frame convention becomes quite commonplace, and in two basic forms: when a figure or object invades or straddles the neighboring frame (Fig. 15.58), and when it crosses into the margin, to the point of vaulting into the journal title-space (Fig. 15.59). It is as if the old grid frame were sensed as a time barrier inconsistent with the fluid rhythm of contemporary life, an all-too-rigid and abstract compartmentalization of fictive spaces. As impressionism and postimpressionism allowed the amorphous quality of real-world optical experience to dissolve the



FIG. 15.58. S.D.: "The Puppy and the Dawg" (1888).



FIG. 15.59. "The Umbrella as Lifesaver" (1891).

pictorial space, so the comic strip, by ridding itself of the grid frame, was able to suggest continuity and interaction between the "real" space outside (in the margin) and the fictive space.

Having broken out of the frame—that is, out of fictive space into real space—the artist could establish complementary realms: that of the bicyclist careering out of the control of his fictive space into that of the workmen who are partly in his space and partly outside in their own gray-shaded space (Fig. 15.60; note particularly the vertical frame line to the right around which the middle workman wraps his elbow). The fact that the workmen's feet impinge from their gray space onto the white margin of the magazine page suggests yet a third spatial level, making for a design of considerable conceptual complexity.

Hostile Neighbors; or, The Consequences of Music

The various fantastic body distortions the caricaturists deployed could be categorized according to the Five Senses, that ancient series which in the 17th century had provided the Fleming Brouwer with a format for facial distortions. For Taste, we have Busch's bitter drink (see Fig. 15.30); for Sight, Grandville's voyeurs at the opera, whose heads are, literally, all popping eye;[12] for Touch, Steinlen's man squashed into a concertina (see Fig. 15.36); for Smell, Busch's boy-smoker who sets the whole room dancing (see Fig. 11.11), or the *pétomane* whose whole body dissolves in a fart;[13] and for Sound, the social nuisance generally of loud, unwanted music.

Such music had traditionally been associated with the street, as we know from Hogarth's print of the Enraged Musician and

12. Sello 1969, 232.
13. As in Radiguet, in *Chat Noir,* August 27, 1892.

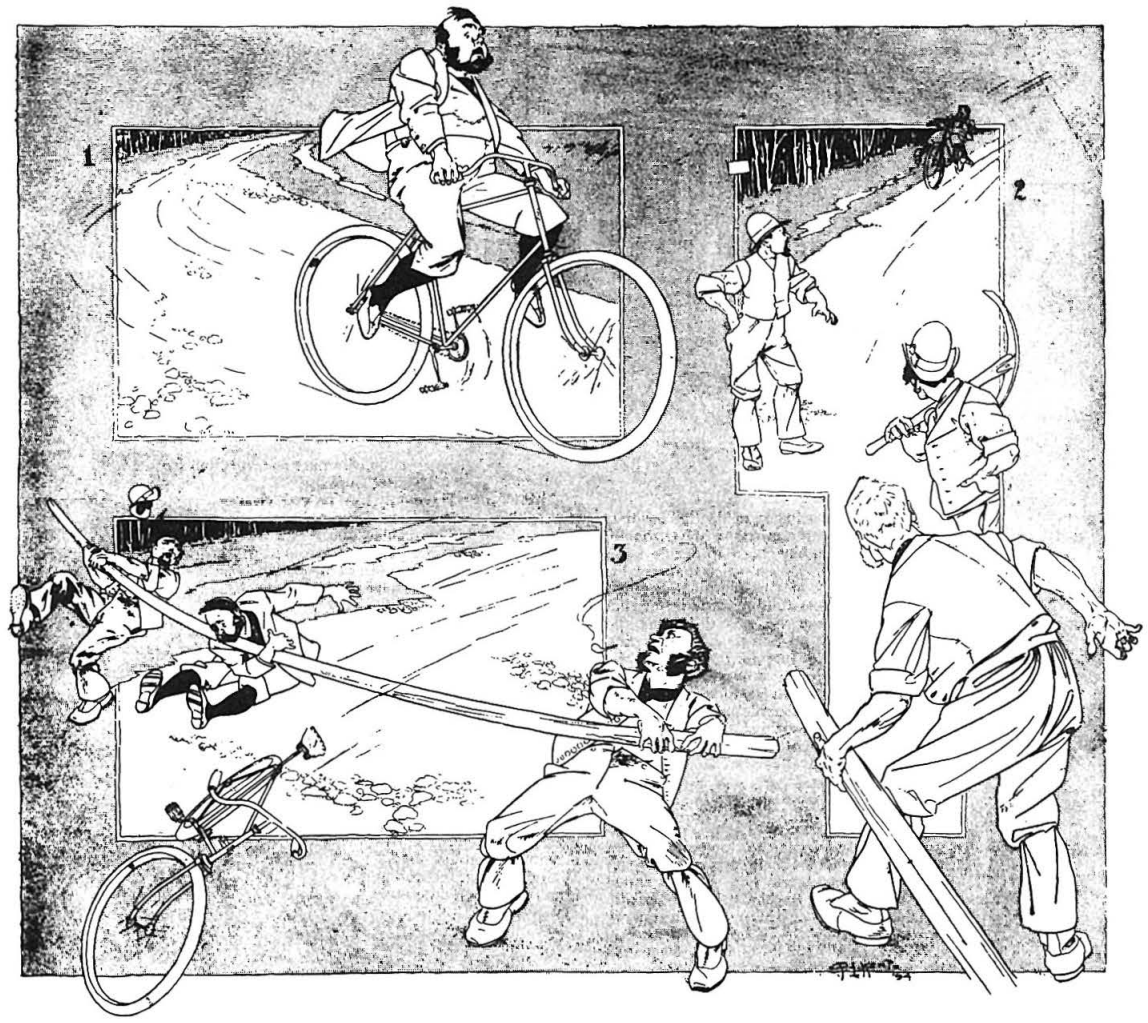


FIG. 15.60. Percy Kemp: "Adventures at the Pole" (1894).

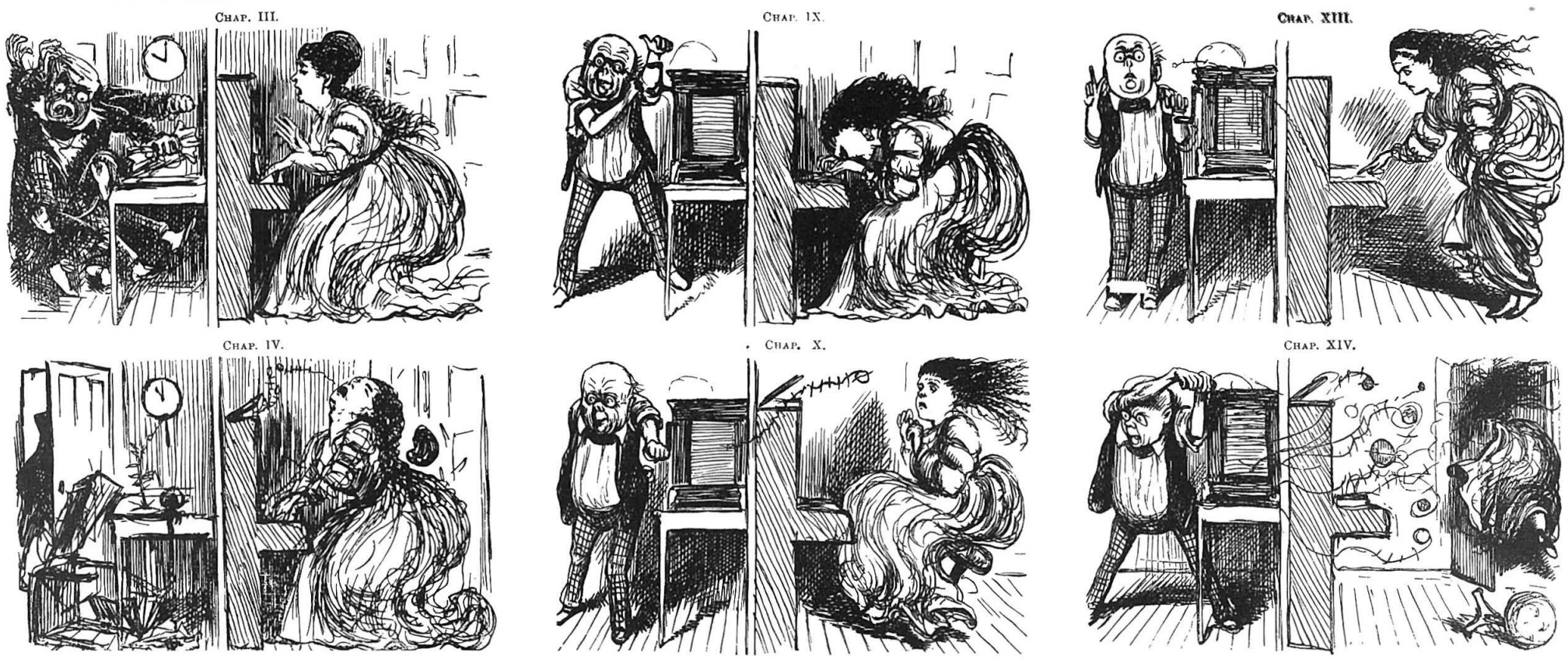


FIG. 15.61. George Du Maurier: "The Philosopher's Revenge" (1869).

the well-known aversion of caricaturist John Leech to hurdy-gurdies. It now invaded from all sides the petty-bourgeois tenant cramped into rooms with walls so thinly constructed as to offer no barrier to the neighbors' noise. It was the piano, above all, the necessary accomplishment of any young lady, that contributed most to the pervading sense of oppressive vicinage.

The graphic convention for musical sound stood ready-made in the standard musical notations. Such transformations had been the subject of famous fantasies by Grandville, who turned beams into gondolas, notes into figures, and a whole musical score into a swaying terrain animated with people. He also showed, as a terrifying example of industrialized music, a cannonlike tuba blasting the air—and listeners' ears—with a hail of notes,[14] an idea developed later by Karl Klič into an enveloping shower of lines, some forming serpents, to convey the effect of Wagner.[15]

The theme of music engendering war among neighbors was established by Busch's 1867 Bilderbogen *The Hostile Neighbors; or, The Consequences of Music* (1:470), in which the musician and the painter fight and ruin each other with their appropriate instru-

14. Sello 1969, 289–291, 1183.
15. Reproduced in Storck 1911, 415.

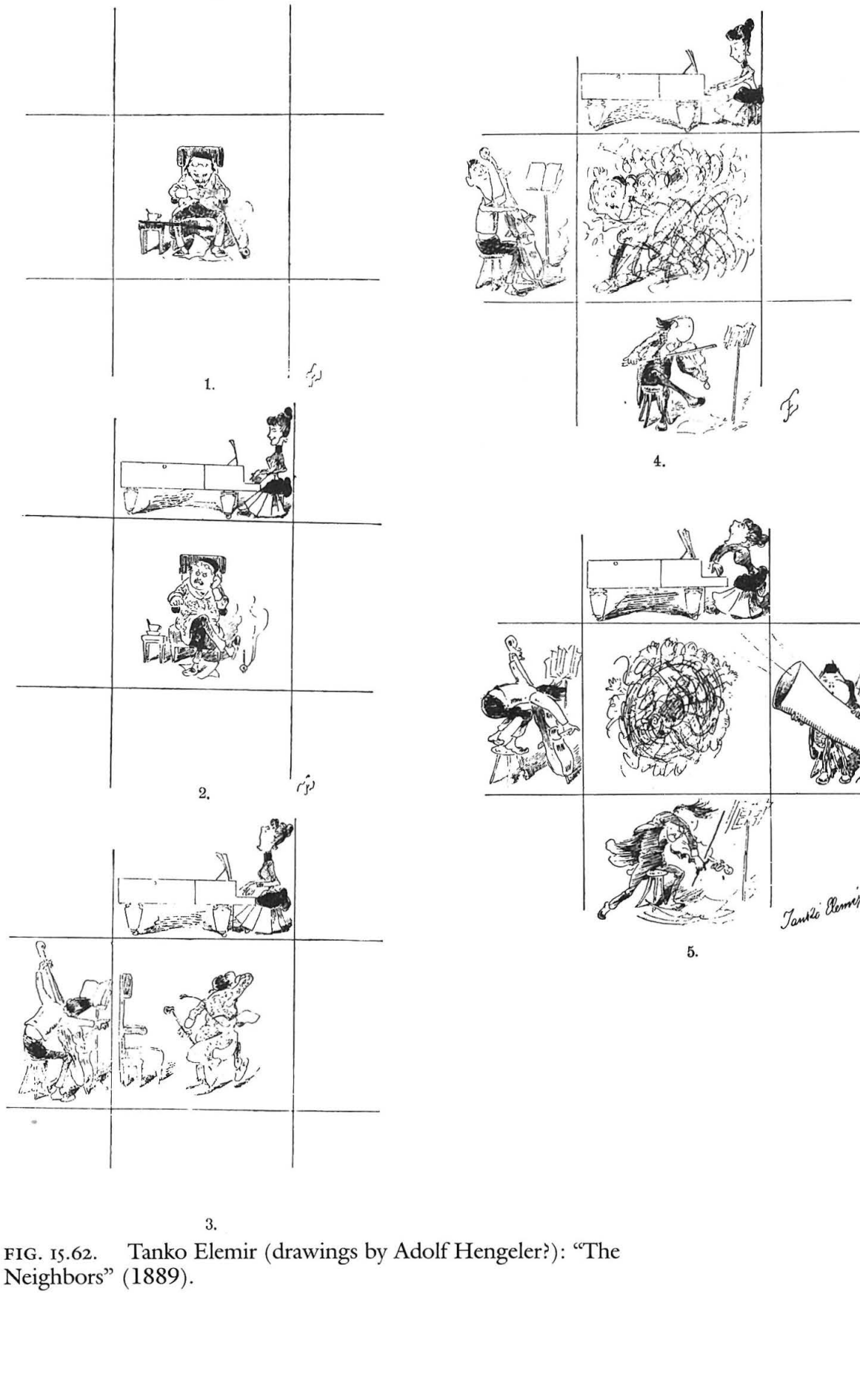


FIG. 15.62. Tanko Elemir (drawings by Adolf Hengeler?): "The Neighbors" (1889).

ments. Sound as such, however, is not yet visualized as a weapon. A few years later, in a Du Maurier strip, it is a philosopher who is driven into paroxysms of pain (represented with Buschian phasic oscillation) by his neighbor's piano and voice, the sound of which is represented as scraggly lines (Fig. 15.61). The philosopher retaliates by borrowing a hurdy-gurdy, at the first turn of which—a note at the end of a barred line—the pianist starts in horror, as if the note were a skeletal snake jumping out at her. After verifying that there is nothing in her instrument that could cause so horrible a sound, she retaliates with a mild *ping*. Thereupon the philosopher turns his hurdy-gurdy with such vengeance as to produce a cacographic cacophony that puts the enemy to permanent flight.

A French variation on this idea shows the painter defeating the Wagnerian piano with the superior sonar force of his hunting horn.[16] A German strip has the nervous poet gradually succumbing physically under the notes of the piano (as it were, a hail of bullets) from the apartment below, which strike him through the intervening floor, leaving him as dead.[17] Another German strip, on a grid reminiscent of tic-tac-toe, succinctly expresses a gradual cumulation of torments: piano above, bass left, violin below, and tuba right, the combination of which sends the peace-seeking individual in the middle into a catherine wheel of fury (Fig. 15.62).

Music engendered many kinds of graphic effects and distortions. The rapid movements of the conductor and violinist made for trembling and oscillating contours as well as linear shower storms. A Russian example adds, to a violinist, a remarkable set of different musically expressive shadows (Fig. 15.63): Saul Steinberg *in ovo*. Finally, returning to the rubber department, an English strip develops fantastic stretching, warbling, and explosions of a singer's neck (Fig. 15.64).

16. Faria, "Les Voisins terribles," *La Caricature,* August 15, 1885.
17. Schliessman, in *FB* 95 (1891): 134–135.



FIG. 15.63. "Joseph Joachim in Russia" (1882). A passionate sprinkle of sound / an evocative diminuendo / an alluring inward moan.

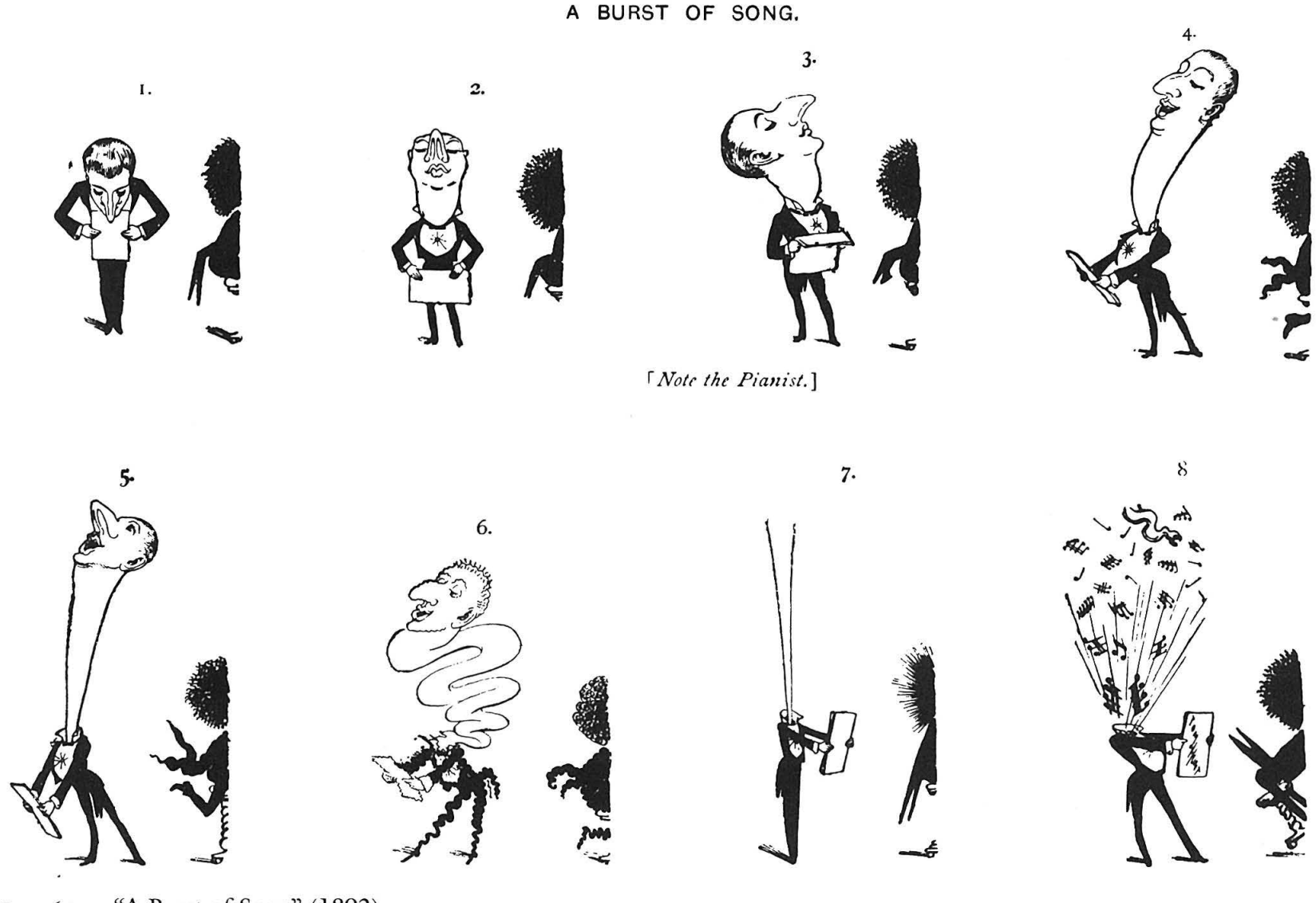


FIG. 15.64. "A Burst of Song" (1892).

The Dentist's Chair: New Twists to Old Torment

The caricaturists' search for a new visual language over the last two decades of the century produced a tendency to blunt realism and the sense of social conflict; the manner in which this occurred can be measured in the perennial theme of the toothache and visit to the dentist. (See the discussion of Cruikshank's *Tooth-Ache,* p. 25.) Whereas the numerous strips on this theme up to the 1880s focused on the agony of the toothache, the useless folk remedies, the ultimate recourse (after initial flight) to the professional, and subjection to an operation (all too often, catastrophic), in the 1880s this rich social context disappears, and we are left with a panoply of bizarre physical distortions that function more to display the artist's imagination than to act as real metaphors for violent fear and pain. They run the by now familiar gamut of effects: the flattening of the patient's head by a Herculean assistant during the extraction (Fig. 15.65); the stretching of the upper body by the force of the dentist's pull (Fig. 15.66); the spinning catherine wheel of a somersault by the "acrobatic dentist" after the tooth finally yields (Fig. 15.67); toothache-induced contortions so extreme that, observed by a circus manager, the sufferer is instantly contracted for an act (Fig. 15.68); and finally, the Englishman who, when the dentist fails, uses the home extraction technique. Booting the door closed, he is left, tooth in hand,



FIG. 15.65. Caran d'Ache: "An Unfortunate Start" (1884).

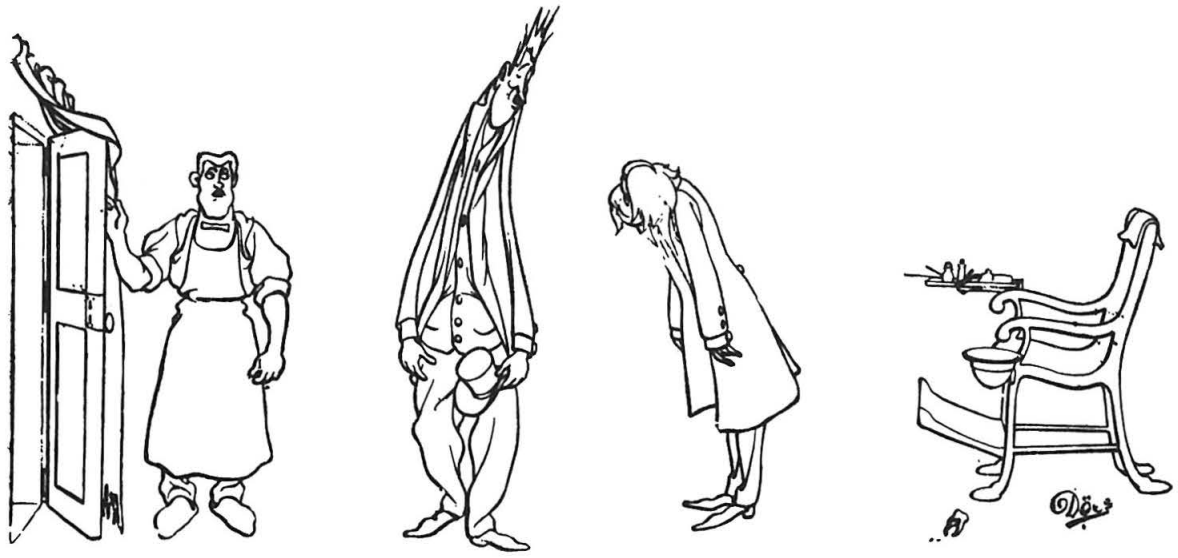


FIG. 15.66. Döes: "A Decayed Tooth" (1893).

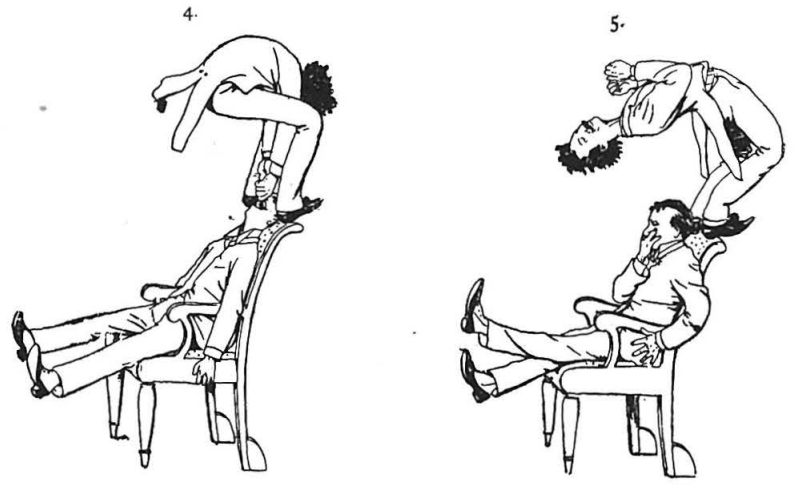




FIG. 15.67. Alfred Schmitt: "The Acrobatic Dentist" (1892).

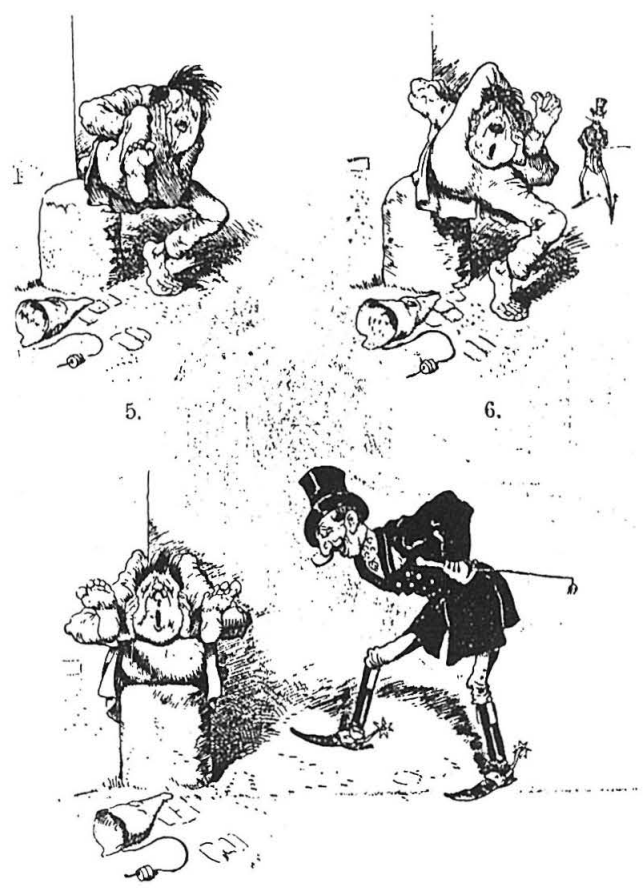


FIG. 15.68. Tanko Elemir (scenario) and Adolf Hengeler (drawings): "Through Toothache to Contortionist" (1889).

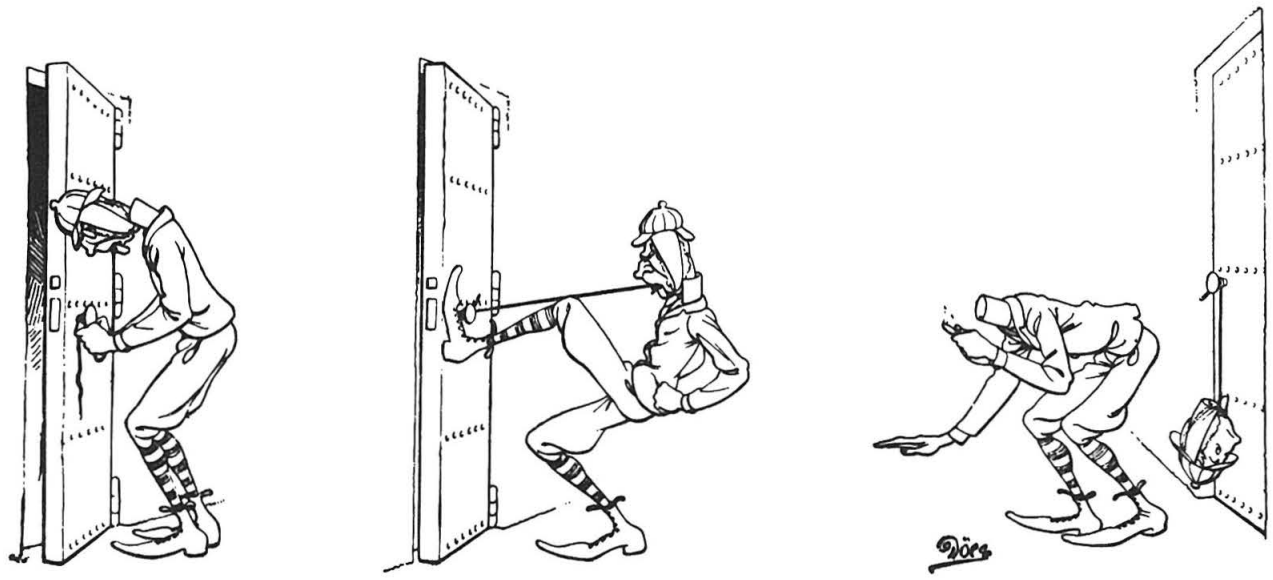


FIG. 15.69. Döes: "A Traveller's Tribulations: The French Dentist and the English Tooth" (1894).

looking helplessly for his head, which hangs from the doorknob (Fig. 15.69).

In the real dentist's chair, the increased use of anaesthetics toward the end of the century may have taken some of the pain and terror out of tooth extraction and thus facilitated the artist's hyper-aesthetics on a dread topic. But the traditional metaphoric meaning, in which the dentist was cast as a power figure (see his brutish form in Fig. 15.65) and the tooth as an emblem of power itself, is still present. In our group here, moreover, the artist himself is (also) a power figure, twisting, ex(abs)tracting human form. In Fig. 15.67 artist and dentist are one, performing graphic and literal, physical, tours de force. The self-beheading of the Englishman (Fig. 15.69) has a political point, too: it is a French revenge on an imperialist rival whose rapacity was symbolized by his toothiness.

Caption and Picture: Duet or Duel?

Caricature, like painting, traditionally depended on a prior literary text or idea. Many cartoons, even the best, like those of Gavarni and Daumier, were essentially illustration to a witticism. The later history of caricature, like that of painting, is partly the history of the struggle for independence from texts. As early as 1844 Grandville, in *Un Autre Monde,* had demanded "freedom of the pencil" (or image) from the "tyranny of the pen" (or word); and Baudelaire wanted Daumier freed from the "tyranny" of Philipon's captions. Yet graphic autonomy in caricature was not to be attained until the 1880s, with the advent of the wordless strip and the striving for a clarity of pure graphic and narrative expression that made texts superfluous. The purely graphic joke and the joke about graphic effects (à la Saul Steinberg) is a mid-20th-century phenomenon pioneered by the comic strip in the late 19th century.

Which came first, drawing or caption scenario? As a rule, as far as we can tell, it was the latter. But there are notable exceptions to the rule. Daumier habitually handed a completed drawing over to an editor to add a funny comment. Gavarni told how he drew first and then, after the proof returned from the printer, "interrogated" the figures, "listened" to their conversation, and "baptized" the picture with some moral illumination. This system of making both picture and caption complete in themselves virtually precluded the development of narrative continuities.

The thoughts that Gavarni captured in flight, on the street corner, in a salon, were much admired and quoted at the time on their own account, like couplets from Busch, and likewise praised for their compressed, cryptic, stenographic immediacy. Gavarni's prose captions convey the disjunctions, syncopations, casual dialectal omissions and distortions, all the *débraillé,* or sloppiness, of real-life exchanges.[18] In other words, his was a system of deft verbal caricatures added to drawings that, far from being stylistically caricatural themselves, presented the greatest refinement of line, shading, and texture. The elegant pretension of appearances is thus unmasked by the vulgarity and cynicism of plebeian or popular language and sentiment.

In the comic strip, the relationship of caption and picture tends to the reverse, with the picture unmasking the claims of the text. We know too little of the creative processes adopted by our numerous artists to determine where they lie on the continuum between absolute priority of drawing and absolute priority of caption or story line. Some artists must have worked from a preconceived plot, derived perhaps from an outside literary (journalistic) source; others would have made up the story as they went along, threading together vignettes found to be graphically amusing in themselves. From Töpffer's surviving manuscripts we can judge that his drawings often preceded the captions, but not by much; the gist of the text was already in the back of his mind, although he could not predict its extent (hence the insets and inserts). Basically, he seems in his working process to have surrendered himself to an imaginative flow that was inseparably graphic and verbal; hence the importance of his being able to draw and write with the one pen on the one surface (album paper or lithographic stone), picture and word equally ductile. Verbal drafts for scenarios composed presumably toward the end of his life when his strength was ebbing are gestures of intent, attempts to stimulate what I take to be the commoner and possibly less effective process of inventing a complete story beforehand.

Although the captions in the 19th-century comic strip all too often merely corroborate and duplicate what is, to our more visually conditioned culture, graphically self-evident, one may detect a tendency in the more satirically inclined and verbally conscious artists to use picture and word in a form of duel rather than duet. From the time the printed picture first entered journalism as news illustration, it carried an aura of truth and objectivity superior, it was claimed, to the written word, which was notorious for its deceptiveness and bias.[19] In a comic strip album that, although parodic, could claim a basis in real history—Doré's *History of Holy*

18. Edmond de Goncourt and Jules de Goncourt, Preface to Gavarni 1859, 2e dizain; and Paul de Saint Victor, Preface to ibid., 4e dizain, pp. 13–14.

19. See Kunzle 1979.

Russia—the author plays off *his* truth, as represented in the pictures, against the assertions of the captions, which are unmasked as the lies of official propaganda. Doré is saying, "Don't believe what those Russian historians tell you; take a look for yourselves." Töpffer also does this on occasion in his subtle and erudite way, playing off the romantic illusions in the captions, which are often crafted following a certain literary or bureaucratic afflatus, against the foolish reality of actual behavior revealed in the drawings. These are the poles between which humor is so often discharged, in Töpffer and elsewhere. The process is akin to children's scribbling in the margins of their pompous school texts, and may be traced back to the marginalia in medieval illuminated books, where the picture of human folly is contrasted with the divine text.

Generally speaking, the caption is content to remain subordinate to the picture; indeed, in point of quantity we make this part of a necessary definition of the comic strip as a genre, to distinguish it from illustration. But with Wilhelm Busch this relationship undergoes a change that is both qualitative and quantitative, to the point of bursting the bonds of our definition. The qualitative change, by which a single line of caption may demand as much attention as the drawing, was not arrived at easily but was the result of much labor on the verse and its relationship to the drawings. Unfortunately, insight into the mechanics is lost to us, since Busch destroyed his preliminary drafts.

The quantitative change is evident enough: having precociously pioneered the wordless strip at the beginning of his career, Busch settled into a traditional Bilderbogen format of one rhyming couplet for each of the predetermined number of pictures. His popularity allowed him to transcend this format with independently published little albums, in which fast sequences of picture, with or without couplet, alternate with variably sized blocks of verse. This verse sets the stage of traditional petty-bourgeois moralizing, the hypocrisy of which, gently ironized in the verse itself, is fully unmasked by the pictures. Busch, who meanwhile published an unillustrated volume of serious verse, laboriously honed his verbal, poetic skills to the level of his draftsmanship, to produce a synthesis of "visual mayhem and verbal acrobatics" that remains unequaled. His skill has earned him a "Shakespeare-Webster-and-the-Bible sort of household status in German-speaking countries," and repute as an "Ogden Nash and Thurber rolled into one, enhanced by the pen of a thoroughly de-Bunkered, freshly inspired Al Capp."[20]

It is not our purpose here to make an independent evaluation of Busch as comic poet. Walter Arndt states the case thus: "Busch has added a great store of saw-edged two-liners to the domestic medicine of the educated: sham-didactic maxims, lead nuggets of loaded homiletics, dressing-gowned or togaed apothegms in the folds of which a chill agnostic contempt for placebos kicks like pigs in a sack." Indeed, one comes gratefully to Arndt's edition of Wilhelm Busch, the first worthy translation and critique of the master in the English language, amid the dearth of criticism of the 19th-century comic strip, contemporaneous or modern. Arndt has come up with some fetching similes for the synthesis Busch raised to its apex: "binary rather than dual," "both duet and duel," "polyphonic and equivocal," "a contrapuntal dance," "a swift canter, verse and sketch driven two-in-hand," "the blending and mutual goading of the two voices"; and he has related it to Busch's own philosophical, psychic, and satirical dilemma, as "source and premier device of the complex comedy of sympathetic guilt and hyperbolic retribution through which the artist's existential conflict finds expression and relief." This personal "existential conflict" has, moreover, a sociopolitical origin and destiny which our survey was designed to explore. For Busch's cuts at "the hollowness of authority, the facile self-righteousness of the smug burgher on the defensive against the rebel principle in the shape of animal, child or free-questioning spirit" mirror "the profound inner conflict, still unresolved today, between safe but repressive authority and the half-stifled yearning for self-assertion, if not for civil and political liberties attainable only at the price of revolution."[21] The 19th-century artists and readers of comic magazines, in their sense of being caught in a vise between bourgeois and revolutionary aspirations, needed a dual form of art and literature based on ambiguity and equivocation, where it was as fortuitous and inescapable to rise and fall as in a game of snakes-and-ladders.

After Busch, attempts at literary finesse come as an anticlimax. No other artist of the late 19th century could command Busch's poetic gifts—least of all Christophe, with his mock-pedantic language so tedious to the adult reader today (see p. 187). The tendency toward the wordless strip, inaugurated by Busch and the *Fliegende Blätter* artists, was dominant by the 1880s and fully recognized. Indeed, for Willette, Steinlen, and Caran d'Ache it became an index of graphic mastery to dispense with conventional verbal clarification; Willette, particularly, sensed that captions would limit the meaning that images alone, and the gaps between them, left open and poetically suggestive.

The captionless image was condensed, and linear abbreviations compressed it further. Comedy was as much graphic as social; it resided in the representation of action as much as in the action itself. But we speak here only of a tendency established by the masters of the genre working at their best. The majority of comic strips, the meat and potatoes of the lower classes, settled into a routine of joke or anecdote literary in origin and part literary in form.

20. See Arndt 1982, 10ff.
21. Ibid.

CONCLUSION: THE COMIC STRIP, THE RAILWAY, AND TIME

The railways were a means of communication that facilitated other means of communication: telegraph, news report, news magazine, comic magazine. The railways changed consciousness and habits of consumption: of time and space, of eating, talking, and reading. Like most other forms of popular literature, the comic magazines were also "railway literature"—a term fraught in the 19th century with pejorative associations. The introduction of the railroad coincides with that of the new comic strip of Töpffer: the Liverpool-Manchester line was inaugurated in 1830. The *Man in the Moon,* the first magazine in England to carry comic strips (1847–1848), was sized like *Bradshaw's Railway Guide*. By the 1840s, railways in Britain, France, and Germany were carrying the new comic and illustrated magazines all over the country, and to their colonies, ex-colonies, and any land sharing the same language as well. The station kiosks became a major outlet for sales of popular literature. Between 1842 and 1847, the number of railway passengers in Britain rose from 23 million to 51 million; by 1890, 817 million traveled by train. The 471 miles of track in 1835 had by 1885 become 30,843.[1]

By 1848 in Britain, W. H. Smith (still going strong today) had secured exclusive rights to the sale of literature at railway stations. In France, the Messageries Hachette enjoyed a comparable monopoly by 1852–1855, with over 1,100 station stalls by the turn of the century and newspaper sales accounting for four-fifths of business.[2] Hachette launched the Bibliothèque des Chemins de Fer, as well as a number of popular writers whose output the elite critics considered dreadful. One of the purposes of this literature, in an age when accidents were frequent and much feared, was as an opiate, which was said to account for the sentimental, somniferous character of much of it.[3] Another kind of literature, including novels of adventure, functioned in the opposite manner: as a counterexcitant, to sublimate by imaginative incorporation the danger, speed, and stimulation of movement by steam and rail.

The comic strip, with its fast, irregular pace, its frequent stops and starts (publication in installments), and its physical freneticism—which often escalated into bizarre and terrible accidents and extreme violence between people—mirrored the (feared) railway experience, which was a metaphor for life. The comic strip both paralleled and cemented the railway experience: read en route, and especially at stops and changes, when there was nothing new to look at, it posited and connected life as a series of junctures.

Travel is a dominant mode of the comic strip, especially in the first generation (up to the 1850s), when the railways were relatively new and tourism, much of it organized by Thomas Cook and his like, first became a lower-middle-class recreation. Thus the tour quickly became a metaphor for social aspirations and mobility. Travel also fostered dreams of exotic escape and adventure, dreams that could turn into nightmares of frustration or develop into glorious fantasies of conquest in far-off places. As in dreams, the *process* of traveling (or of getting stuck or lost) is often the subject matter of the comic strip. Travel has been a mythopoeic metaphor of human existence from the most ancient times. For Romantics it was part of the individual quest for social and artistic freedom, for escape from the trivial, mundane, and ugly. Then, with "comic realism," it became part of the struggle for an identity within society, within triviality, mundanity, and even ugliness, which were now perceived as ultimately inescapable.

The tendency of the comic strip to shed text, encourage quick visual scanning, and compress the full message into a single page and a half dozen designs corresponded to the growth in the later 19th century of suburban lines with their frequently stopping trains. A comic strip or even a whole magazine could, like a bun, be consumed in the few minutes before trains and between stations. This is explicitly how Busch, to forestall would-be critics, declared that his work was to be enjoyed: "like a beer en route."[4] Indeed, many a paper then, as now, would be bought, read, and discarded en route, like a candy wrapper. The magazine thus consumed represented the fragment of an experience that included yet smaller fragments: short texts, cartoons, and comic strips, themselves composed of individual scenes. The very style of drawing was fragmentary, increasingly so as the century progressed and new shorthand codes, new abbreviations, new abstractions were devised. This tendency affected not merely caricature and popular culture but all the arts at every level, especially those of the vanguard (most notably, impressionism). Learning to live with appearances and a fragmented reality, the social commuter assembled the shards of experience into a new aesthetic.[5]

1. Pimlott [1947] 1976, 87; and Walvin 1978, 19.
2. Zeldin 1980, 8, 191.
3. *Chat Noir,* June 7, 1883, pp. 81–82.
4. Wiechert 1968, 36.
5. See, for example, Ueding 1977, 361; and Arndt 1982, 8b.

The need for faster and easier reading gave rise to the "titbits" format (and made the instant fortune of George Newnes with the paper of that title [1881]), a hodgepodge of text snippets that was more or less imitated and paralleled in comics. It encouraged the development of a type of comic strip that was no longer a real narrative with structure and moral point but the spinning out, like cotton candy, of the slightest incident, the most trivial experience. Under analysis, such strips tend simply to evaporate, but the concept of fragmentation must be taken seriously, and first of all as a physical fact of work and workplace experience. Many workers, clerical or laboring, had direct experience of only a part—sometimes a minute part—of the final product, which was precisely measurable in terms of cost. As wage earners paid by the hour, their work was regulated and measured to the minute by bosses, work schedules, and railway timetables (see Fig. 14.3).

Industry brought the "tyranny of the clock, the pace-setting machine and the complex and carefully timed interaction of processes."[6] Time was money, and mammon was God. The timepiece, especially in Germany, appears in the comic strip as both symbol and instrument of the bourgeois: of his ordering of the world, his punctiliousness, his discipline. Wall clocks, alarm clocks, and watches become actors in the minidramas relating to work. The free watches dispensed by Ally Sloper were symbols of self-discipline as well as status. When Busch's Julchen destroys her father's watch (3:164), she savages bourgeois order, just as the peasant profanes *the* symbol of bourgeois prudence and self-defense by ripping the city clerk Balduin Bählamm's umbrella (4:48). Many of the later strips are about subjection to time: keeping time, consuming and wasting time, being on time, producing on time. Representation of ongoing work is relatively rare, but time as the regulator of work and the determinant of its value is prevalent. The tyranny of time was introduced by urban, bourgeois man, and the strip that imagined a French community reduced to chaos because the village clock began to run backward was projecting the idea of mechanically measured life onto a milieu traditionally in tune with the rhythms of nature.[7]

Rodolphe Töpffer, born, bred, and working all his life in a Geneva already famous for its watches, smiled at the Swiss obsession with time and measured farcical events with farcical chronological exaggeration. His playful precision was akin to that of a contemporary historian who solemnly declared that the French troops withdrew from Geneva on December 30, 1813, after an occupation of "fourteen years, eight months, fourteen days, and thirty minutes."[8] Measured time is actually a comic intrusion into the picture-stories of Töpffer, where time flows hazily, intangibly, and arbitrarily. One has no idea how many days or months his tales occupy, and his use of flashbacks tends to give time a circular appearance. Here as elsewhere, Töpffer in pre-industrial Geneva has a pre-industrial concept of narrative. (Read him on a short trip by rail and you'll miss your stop.)

The railways also set up new parameters for social relationships, which both inform the comic strip and are elucidated by it. Increased travel by coach or rail meant increased opportunity for casual social contact and invited or necessitated conversations with strangers one would never otherwise meet. In this sense the railways were, as its eulogists claimed, a truly democratizing and integrating force. At the same time, the railway carriage was a place where physical proximity and spiritual separation were mutually reinforcing—and often in uncomfortable ways. Daumier, for one, has rendered unforgettably the anomie and petty irritations of those small cellular enclosures. Other comic strips set in railway carriages show both the negative and positive sides of interaction within random groupings of strangers: the tunnel ahead may generate dread that the suspicious-looking neighbor will rob you or slit your throat, or else happy anticipation of the opportunity to make a pass at the attractive lady opposite. The comic strip played on the idea of fortuitous encounters and the possibility of alliances resulting from them. But it punctured the myth that true (and, preferably, socially upward) romance depended on spying that pretty ankle or alluring eye on the beach, in the street, or in the railway carriage, where approaches were easiest. Although in real life the cartoonist John Leech followed an attractive stranger in the street and ended up happily married to her, the railway carriage courtship imagined in the comic strip tended to less happy outcomes. As in other "romantic" situations, where the encounter is determined by chance, caprice, or ignorance, terrible truths (the lovely lady's wooden leg, for instance) emerge after commitments are made.

It has been said that the cinema is the product of the railway experience and the demand for accelerated vision, a moving picture seen through a frame as it were through a train window; even the celluloid itself, running on little wheels and tracks, has been compared to the train on its great iron rail. Railway, movie, and comic strip accelerate but also abbreviate vision. The railway view is an abbreviated one that denies real contact with the landscape. In a train, the fixed point of observation and depth of vision that join the traveler to nature are lost; there is a sensation of traveling past, at a distance, rather than through. This effect is paralleled in the comic strip, where the action is speeded up through the use of constantly changing viewpoints and the elimination of landscape as well as other scenic and three-dimensional effects.

The comic strip offers a series of small, rapid, intense nervous stimuli, like the flickering on the cinema screen or the view from a train window. It sets the pulse of city life and seems to encapsulate a whole development of urban, industrial perception: the multiplication of visual impulses, the intensification of nervous stimulation, "the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions."[9] Such changeability and discontinuity were the physical experiences of lower classes with diffuse, unclear, distant, and ever-receding social goals. It was they who would shape and be shaped by the "popular culture" of the 20th century.

6. Eric Hobsbawn, cited in Walvin 1978, 5.
7. "L'Horloge de Bouquigny," *Monde Comique* 276 (1881–1883).
8. "Note Fillion avec une précision tout horlogère," in Binz 1981, 50.
9. George Simmel, cited in Schivelbusch 1977, 60.

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