**Three Extracts from Mugby Junction for Shoddy Court**

**Effective Refreshmenting**

**from ‘Mainline: The Boy at Mugby’ – Charles Dickens (74-76)**

You should see our Bandolining Room at Mugby Junction.  It’s led to, by the door behind the counter which you’ll notice usually stands ajar, and it’s the room where Our Missis and our young ladies Bandolines their hair.  You should see ’em at it, betwixt trains, Bandolining away, as if they was anointing themselves for the combat.  When you’re telegraphed, you should see their noses all a going up with scorn, as if it was a part of the working of the same Cooke and Wheatstone electrical machinery.  You should hear Our Missis give the word “Here comes the Beast to be Fed!” and then you should see ’em indignantly skipping across the Line, from the Up to the Down, or Wicer Warsaw, and begin to pitch the stale pastry into the plates, and chuck the sawdust sangwiches under the glass covers, and get out the—ha ha ha!—the Sherry—O my eye, my eye!—for your Refreshment.

It’s only in the Isle of the Brave and Land of the Free (by which of course I mean to say Britannia) that Refreshmenting is so effective, so ’olesome, so constitutional, a check upon the public.  There was a foreigner, which having politely, with his hat off, beseeched our young ladies and Our Missis for “a leetel gloss hoff prarndee,” and having had the Line surveyed through him by all and no other acknowledgment, was a proceeding at last to help himself, as seems to be the custom in his own country, when Our Missis with her hair almost a coming un-Bandolined with rage, and her eyes omitting sparks, flew at him, cotched the decanter out of his hand, and said: “Put it down!  I won’t allow that!”  The foreigner turned pale, stepped back with his arms stretched out in front of him, his hands clasped, and his shoulders riz, and exclaimed: “Ah!  Is it possible this!  That these disdaineous females and this ferocious old woman are placed here by the administration, not only to empoison the voyagers, but to affront them!  Great Heaven!  How arrives it?  The English people.  Or is he then a slave?  Or idiot?”  Another time, a merry wideawake American gent had tried the sawdust and spit it out, and had tried the Sherry and spit that out, and had tried in vain to sustain exhausted natur upon Butter-Scotch, and had been rather extra Bandolined and Line-surveyed through, when, as the bell was ringing and he paid Our Missis, he says, very loud and good-tempered: “I tell Yew what ’tis, ma’arm.  I la’af.  Theer!  I la’af.  I Dew.  I oughter ha’ seen most things, for I hail from the Onlimited side of the Atlantic Ocean, and I haive travelled right slick over the Limited, head on through Jee-rusalemm and the East, and likeways France and Italy, Europe Old World, and am now upon the track to the Chief Europian Village; but such an Institution as Yew, and Yewer young ladies, and Yewer fixin’s solid and liquid, afore the glorious Tarnal I never did see yet!  And if I hain’t found the eighth wonder of monarchical Creation, in finding Yew, and Yewer young ladies, and Yewer fixin’s solid and liquid, all as aforesaid, established in a country where the people air not absolute Loo-naticks, I am Extra Double Darned with a Nip and Frizzle to the innermostest grit!  Wheerfur—Theer!—I la’af!  I Dew, ma’arm.  I la’af!”  And so he went, stamping and shaking his sides, along the platform all the way to his own compartment.

**The Wet-Walled Cutting**

**from ‘The Signalman’ – Charles Dickens (89-91)**

“Halloa!  Below!”

From looking down the Line, he turned himself about again, and, raising his eyes, saw my figure high above him.

“Is there any path by which I can come down and speak to you?”

He looked up at me without replying, and I looked down at him without pressing him too soon with a repetition of my idle question.  Just then, there came a vague vibration in the earth and air, quickly changing into a violent pulsation, and an oncoming rush that caused me to start back, as though it had force to draw me down.  When such vapour as rose to my height from this rapid train, had passed me and was skimming away over the landscape, I looked down again and saw him re-furling the flag he had shown while the train went by.

I repeated my inquiry.  After a pause, during which he seemed to regard me with fixed attention, he motioned with his rolled-up flag towards a point on my level, some two or three hundred yards distant.  I called down to him, “All right!” and made for that point.  There, by dint of looking closely about me, I found a rough zig-zag descending path notched out: which I followed.

The cutting was extremely deep, and unusually precipitate.  It was made through a clammy stone that became oozier and wetter as I went down.  For these reasons, I found the way long enough to give me time to recall a singular air of reluctance or compulsion with which he had pointed out the path.

When I came down low enough upon the zig-zag descent, to see him again, I saw that he was standing between the rails on the way by which the train had lately passed, in an attitude as if he were waiting for me to appear.  He had his left hand at his chin, and that left elbow rested on his right hand crossed over his breast.  His attitude was one of such expectation and watchfulness, that I stopped a moment, wondering at it.

I resumed my downward way, and, stepping out upon the level of the railroad and drawing nearer to him, saw that he was a dark sallow man, with a dark beard and rather heavy eyebrows.  His post was in as solitary and dismal a place as ever I saw.  On either side, a dripping-wet wall of jagged stone, excluding all view but a strip of sky; the perspective one way, only a crooked prolongation of this great dungeon; the shorter perspective in the other direction, terminating in a gloomy red light, and the gloomier entrance to a black tunnel, in whose massive architecture there was a barbarous, depressing, and forbidding air.  So little sunlight ever found its way to this spot, that it had an earthy deadly smell; and so much cold wind rushed through it, that it struck chill to me, as if I had left the natural world.

**Lamps the Poet**

**from ‘Barbox Brothers’ – Charles Dickens (8-10)**

A greasy little cabin it was, suggestive to the sense of smell, of a cabin in a Whaler.  But there was a bright fire burning in its rusty grate, and on the floor there stood a wooden stand of newly trimmed and lighted lamps, ready for carriage service.  They made a bright show, and their light, and the warmth, accounted for the popularity of the room, as borne witness to by many impressions of velveteen trousers on a form by the fire, and many rounded smears and smudges of stooping velveteen shoulders on the adjacent wall.  Various untidy shelves accommodated a quantity of lamps and oil-cans, and also a fragrant collection of what looked like the pocket-handkerchiefs of the whole lamp family.

As Barbox Brothers (so to call the traveller on the warranty of his luggage) took his seat upon the form, and warmed his now ungloved hands at the fire, he glanced aside at a little deal desk, much blotched with ink, which his elbow touched.  Upon it, were some scraps of coarse paper, and a superannuated steel pen in very reduced and gritty circumstances.

From glancing at the scraps of paper, he turned involuntarily to his host, and said, with some roughness—

“Why, you are never a poet, man!”

Lamps had certainly not the conventional appearance of one, as he stood modestly rubbing his squab nose with a handkerchief so exceedingly oily, that he might have been in the act of mistaking himself for one of his charges.  He was a spare man of about the Barbox Brothers’ time of life, with his features whimsically drawn upward as if they were attracted by the roots of his hair.  He had a peculiarly shining transparent complexion, probably occasioned by constant oleaginous application; and his attractive hair, being cut short, and being grizzled, and standing straight up on end as if it in its turn were attracted by some invisible magnet above it, the top of his head was not very unlike a lamp-wick.

“But to be sure it’s no business of mine,” said Barbox Brothers.  “That was an impertinent observation on my part.  Be what you like.”

“Some people, sir,” remarked Lamps, in a tone of apology, “are sometimes what they don’t like.”

“Nobody knows that better than I do,” sighed the other.  “I have been what I don’t like, all my life.”

“When I first took, sir,” resumed Lamps, “to composing little Comic-Songs-like—”

Barbox Brothers eyed him with great disfavour.

“—To composing little Comic-Songs-like—and what was more hard—to singing ’em afterwards,” said Lamps, “it went against the grain at that time, it did indeed.”

Something that was not all oil here shining in Lamps’s eye, Barbox Brothers withdrew his own a little disconcerted, looked at the fire, and put a foot on the top bar.  “Why did you do it, then?” he asked, after a short pause; abruptly enough but in a softer tone.  “If you didn’t want to do it, why did you do it?  Where did you sing them?  Public-house?”

To which Mr. Lamps returned the curious reply: “Bedside.”