

THE SHILLING DAY.—GOING TO THE EXHIBITION.

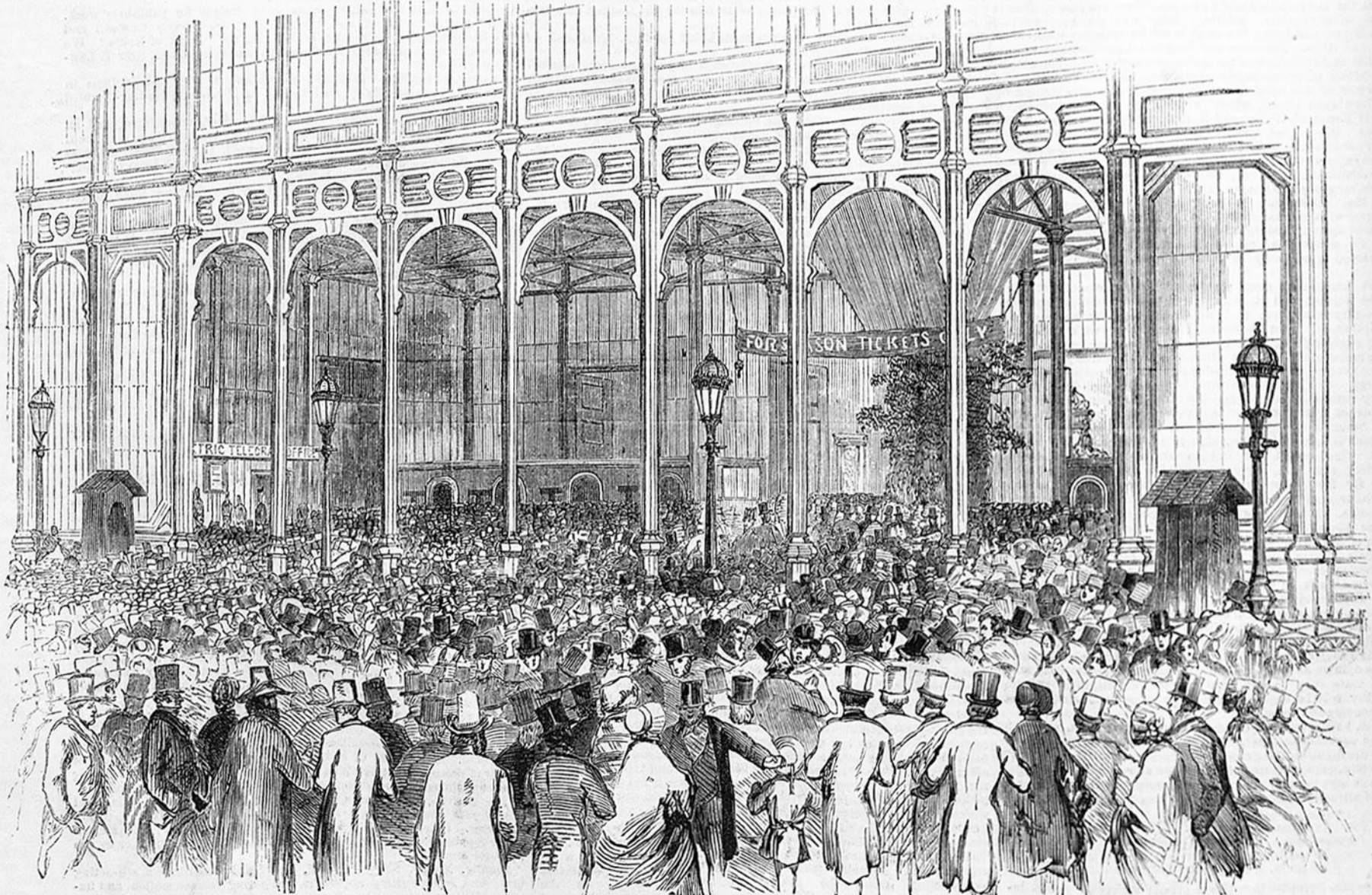
FIVE SHILLING DAYS AND ONE SHILLING DAYS.

The day of the great folks, and the day of the little folks—the day of the peach-coloured *visites* and the gaudy *mousselines de laine*, and the day of the cotton prints and the handkerchiefs at 1s. 11 d.—the day of the shiny boots, and the day of the ancle jacks with hob-nails—the day of the newest paletot, and the day of the most primitive smock-frock—the day of vanills, ices, and wafers, and the day of hunches of crust and lumps of meat and liquid refreshments in small bottles—the day of languid lounging and chatting, and the day of resolute examining and frank amazement—the day of the West-End of London, and the day of all the other ends of the earth—the five shilling day in fact, and the one shilling day, come—pass each before us, with your votaries; exhibit each your phenomena and your usages; introduce us each to your train of company; tell us, each, your comparative value; read us, each,

your separate lesson: for you have and you present, each of you—crown day and twelpenny day—your distinct train of appendages and characteristics. Sunday in the world is not more unlike Saturday, than Saturday in the Exhibition is unlike Monday. On one day, society—on the other, the world. On the one day, the Nave crowded in such fashion as opera corridors and Belgravian saloons are crowded, and the aisles and galleries empty. On the other day, the aisles and galleries crowded, and the Nave a thoroughfare—a street—swarming, bustling, pushing with loud voices and brusque movements; and people who have sharp elbows, and can use them, and who push along as in Fleet-street or in Cheapside, intent upon going somewhere, determination in their muscles and purpose in their eyes—the energetic business-like march of this energetic business-like nation.

And first—as they have had their earlier innings in the great game of the Exhibition—we take the five-shillingers. On Saturday St. James

fairly ousts St. Giles; the latter worthy, but unfashionable saint, taking, however, ample revenge on at least four other days of the week. As becomes his gentility, St. James, upon his particular morning, gets up late, and ringing for his valet, looks over the morning packet of cards and letters, announcing "at home" and, in the vernacular, "dancing teas," when, after profoundly meditating on how he intends to "employ each shining hour"—whether he will lounge away the day in the Club or the sweet shady side of Pall-mall, or whether he has any pasteboards to leave, or whether he shall fly from the gauds of the world, which are vanity, and solace himself, with a quiet stroll through country elms branching over the greensward, winding up with a dinner at the Toy or the Star and Garter, which is also vanity, but never mind that the brilliant idea perhaps strikes him that he will order out his eab, or saunter across the Park, and while away the hours in the "Palace;" as he imagines so does he act. Loungingly and listlessly does he mark



THE SHILLING DAY.—EXTERIOR OF THE EXHIBITION.

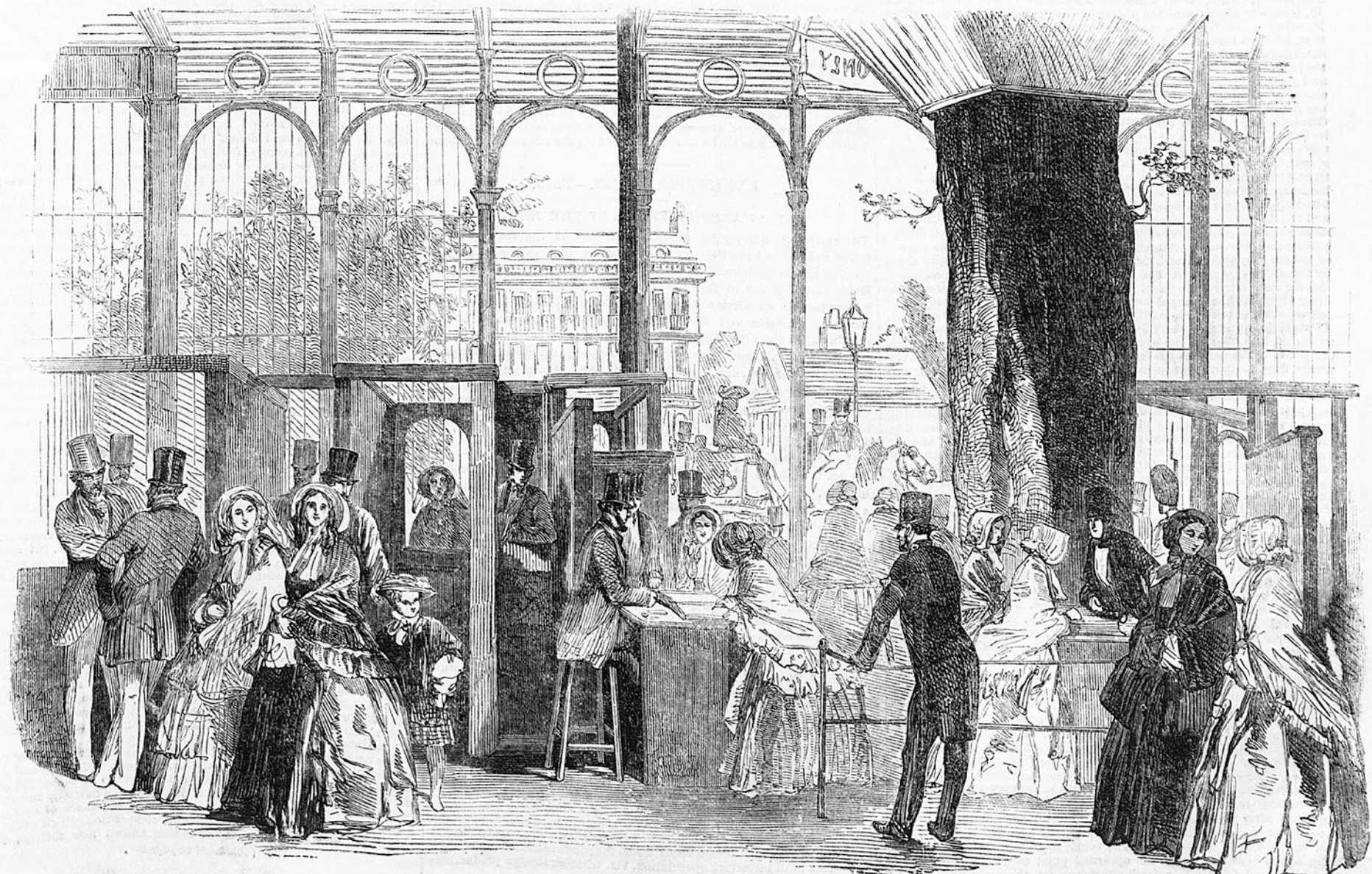


AGRICULTURISTS AT THE EXHIBITION.

that singularly tall flagstaff, with that very small flag—large pocket-handkerchief size—which graces or does not grace the southern summit of the Transept. Loungingly and listlessly does he saunter across the magic threshold, and leave behind him the treasure of his autograph in a beautifully gentlemanly scrawl, backed by a high-life flourish or an aristocratic blot; and then, gazing around with a calm grace of patronising dignity, and an expression indicating that, "by Jove, the thing is very well in its way," he silently loses himself in the lightly rustling, and gaily but lowly talking throng of promenaders. No eagerness, mark you; no flutter of curiosity; no immediate plunge into one of the departments, irresistibly seduced by malachite, or statues with lace on their faces, or beds which look like young cathedrals. Why, he has seen all these things before. He has not missed a single day, from that on which her Majesty walked forwards and the Lord Chamberlain walked backwards from England to Canton,

and from Canton to New York, until, of course, until the irruption of the shillings broke into what were becoming his daily habits, and for a space turned him out. Do not let us lose him, however. Mark how the Saint, in his light paletot and glazed boots, saunters observingly through the perfumed throng. He has already nodded to a score of people, and said, "How do? Fine day," to a dozen. Then he strays from party to party of the gayest lady-birds under the glass. He loses himself in the accustomed ocean of small talk about balls and parties and concerts and operas, and all the piquant scandal and all the staler gossip of the great world. He wonders what they are going to do with the Building; he wonders whether they will let people ride in it. He don't suppose they'll stand drags. He wonders if they'll keep the organs in, and the Crystal Fountain. He wonders where that sparrow is, that they say is in the Exhibition. He wonders whether any new things have come in since last Saturday. He understands that So-and-So has

purchased so and so, and that Thingamy has given an order for a duplicate of what's its name. He wishes they had made the Building all arched, like the Transept. He'd have done it, if he had had anything to do in the matter. He finds it very hot; but believes they say it is hotter in the gallery; and wonders why Mr. Paxton don't find some means of cooling the air, icing the fountains, or driving a cold blast through the organs, or something of that sort. Now and then, with a couple of ladies on his arm, he may saunter carelessly into France or Austria, to see the prettinesses of furniture and decoration. Lady Jane wants to look at a candelabrum for the dining-room in Park-lane, or the Hon Mrs de Smythe, wishes to secure a glittering piece of marqueterie for the drawingroom in Belgravia or Tyburnia. In some cases, the jewellery has still lingering charms. The nose of the unhappy Koh-i-noor has been dreadfully put out of joint; but there are Hope diamonds and black diamonds, and marvellous emeralds and amethysts, which still reflect in



THE FIVE SHILLING DAY AT THE EXHIBITION.

