

## Sir John Tenniel

The national bard of Scotland wrote:—

"Wad some power thi giftie gie us  
To see ourselves as others see us."

And in these lines he exactly expressed the power that was possessed by the subject of our sketch. Sir John Tenniel was born on February 28th, 1820, and had reached the ripe old age of 93 years at the time of his lamented death. He was born when George IV. was the reigning sovereign and Disraeli and Gladstone were young men, and Dickens, Tennyson, Thackeray, Browning and Macaulay were alive, though their careers had not then commenced. He was for 50 years on the staff of "Punch," which he joined in 1850, and during the whole of that period he was only once absent from his post, and then only for a fortnight, which was spent on a visit to Venice. This was the only time in the whole of his life that he left the metropolis, a



Sir John Tenniel, Punch Artist Born 1820, Died 1914

favourite reply of his to the question why he did not travel being "London is good enough for me." He started life as an artist and exhibited in the Royal Academy the first of his pictures "The Fortunes of Nigel" being accepted in 1837. His first cartoon, "Lord Jack the Giant Killer," appeared in "Punch" on February 1st, 1851, and his last, "Time's Appeal," on January 2nd, 1901. Between these two dates innumerable pictures appeared from his pen and nearly all of them may be said to be immortal, for, on looking at them one realises that they are not only great works of art but amount to what one might call chrystalised history. They bring before the mind's eye in the most vivid manner possible the history and the feelings and emotions of the nation, besides being everlasting representations of the dress, manners and customs of the period. We only have to look at the famous cartoon "Dropping the Pilot," depicting as everyone knows the dismissal in 1890 of Prince Bismark by the German Emperor, to realise that Sir John Tenniel was not only a great artist

but also a great historian. Sir John Tenniel was a very great cartoonist and will be extremely difficult to replace. Some people have the idea that he was a caricaturist, but this is not so. A caricature deals with a person, a cartoon concerns itself about events, the persons who take part in such events being merely subsidiary. A cartoon is much more lasting than a mere printed page. It appeals to the human mind with greater and more lasting effect. A book is read, thrown aside and forgotten. Not so a picture, which is lasting, and its appeal is always fresh. A person who desired to know the history of English politics for the past



Dropping the Pilot—Punch

50 years would learn more, and in much shorter time, from a careful study of Sir John's cartoons than ever he would from the perusal of the dry facts of printed history. Sir John Tenniel's work amounts to the best text-book of the history of the Victorian era existent, and it is for this reason that it will live. In addition to his illustrations for "Punch" he will also be remembered with gratitude for his pictures in "Alice of Wonderland," and in "Through the Looking Glass," and in "Lallah Rookh," "Aesop's Fables," and "Ingoldsby Legends." Sir John's father was a teacher of fencing and in appearance the son was more of a soldier than an artist. He was of a very retiring disposition and seldom appeared in public.