

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 100, April 4, 1891 eBook

Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 100, April 4, 1891

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PUNCH,

Or the London charivari.

Vol. 100.

April 4, 1891.

MR. PUNCH'S POCKET IBSEN.

(CONDENSED AND REVISED VERSION BY MR. P.'S OWN HARMLESS IBSENITE.)

No. II.-Nora; or, the bird-Cage (et DIKKISVOeIT).

Act I.

A Room tastefully filled with cheap Art-furniture. Gimcracks in an etagere; a festoon of chenille monkeys hanging from the gaselier. Japanese fans, skeletons, cotton-wool spiders, frogs, and lizards, scattered everywhere about. Drain-pipes with tall dyed grasses. A porcelain stove decorated with transferable pictures. Showily-bound books in book-case. Window. The Visitors' bell rings in the hall outside. The hall-door is heard to open, and then to shut. Presently NORA walks in with parcels; a Porter carries a large Christmas-tree after her—which he puts down. NORA gives him a shilling—and he goes out grumbling. NORA hums contentedly, and eats macaroons. Then HELMER puts his head out of his Manager's room, and NORA hides macaroons cautiously.



Helmer (playfully). Is that my little squirrel twittering—that my lark frisking in here?

Nora. Ess! (*To herself.*) I have only been married eight years, so these marital amenities have not yet had time to pall!

[Illustration: “Boo!”]

Helmer (threatening with his finger). I hope the little bird has surely not been digging its beak into any macaroons, eh?

Nora (bolting one, and wiping her mouth). No, most certainly not. (*To herself.*) The worst of being so babyish is—one *does* have to tell such a lot of taradiddles! (*To H.*) See what I’ve bought—it’s been *such* fun!

[Hums.

Helmer (inspecting parcels). H’m—rather an *expensive* little lark!

[Takes her playfully by the ear.

Nora. Little birds like to have a flutter occasionally. Which reminds me—(*Plays with his coat-buttons.*) I’m such a simple ickle sing—but if you *are* thinking of giving me a Christmas present, make it cash.

Helmer. Just like your poor father, *he* always asked me to make it cash—he never made any himself! It’s heredity, I suppose. Well—well!

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[Goes back to his Bank. NORA goes on humming.

Enter Mrs. LINDEN, doubtfully.

Nora. What, CHRISTINA—why, how old you look! But then you are poor. I'm not. TORVALD has just been made a Bank Manager. (*Tidies the room.*) Isn't it really wonderfully delicious to be well off? But, of course, you wouldn't know. We were poor once, and, do you know, when TORVALD was ill, I—(*tossing her head*)—though I am such a frivolous little squirrel, and all that, I actually borrowed L300 for him to go abroad. Wasn't *that* clever? Tra-la-la! I shan't tell you *who* lent it. I didn't even tell TORVALD. I am such a mere baby I don't tell him everything. I tell Dr. RANK, though. Oh, I'm so awfully happy I should like to shout, "Dash it all!"

Mrs. Linden (*stroking her hair*). Do—it is a natural and innocent outburst—you are such a child! But I am a widow, and want employment. Do you think your husband could find me a place as clerk in his Bank? (*Proudly.*) I am an excellent knitter!

Nora. That would really be awfully funny. (*To HELMER, who enters.*) TORVALD, this is CHRISTINA; she wants to be a clerk in your Bank—*do* let her! She thinks such a lot of you. (*To herself.*) Another taradiddle!

Helmer. She is a sensible woman, and deserves encouragement. Come along, Mrs. LINDEN, and we'll see what we can do for you.

[*He goes out through the hall with Mrs. L., and the front-door is heard to slam after them.*

Nora (*opens door, and calls*). Now, EMMY, IVAR, and BOB, come in and have a romp with Mamma—we will play hide-and-seek. (*She gets under the table, smiling in quiet satisfaction; KROGSTAD enters—NORA pounces out upon him*). Boo!... Oh, I beg your pardon. I don't do this kind of thing *generally*—though I may be a little silly!

Krogstad (*politely*). Don't mention it. I called because I happened to see your husband go out with MRS. LINDEN—from which, being a person of considerable penetration, I infer that he is about to give her my post at the Bank. Now, as you owe me the balance of L300, for which I hold your acknowledgment, you will see the propriety of putting a stop to this little game at once.

Nora. But I don't at all—not a little wee bit! I'm so childish, you know—why *should* I?
[*Sitting upright on carpet.*

Krogs. I will try to make it plain to the meanest capacity. When you came to me for the loan, I naturally required some additional security. Your father, being a shady Government official, without a penny—for, if he had possessed one, he would,

presumably, have left it to you—without a penny, then, I, as a cautious man of business, insisted upon having his signature as a surety. Oh, we Norwegians are sharp fellows!

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Nora. Well, you *got* Papa's signature, didn't you?

Krogs. Oh, I *got* it right enough. Unfortunately, it was dated three days after his decease—now, how do you account for *that*?

Nora. How? Why, as poor Papa was dead, and couldn't sign, I signed *for* him, that's all! Only somehow I forgot to put the date back. *That's* how. Didn't I *tell* you I was a silly, unbusinesslike little thing? It's very simple.

Krogs. Very—but what you did amounts to forgery, notwithstanding. I happen to know, because I'm a lawyer, and have done a little in the forging way myself. So, to come to the point—if I get kicked out, I shall not go alone! [*He bows, and goes out.*]

Nora. It *can't* be wrong! Why no one but KROGSTAD would have been taken in by it! If the Law says it's wrong, the Law's a goose—a bigger goose than poor little me even! (*To HELMER, who enters.*) Oh, TORVALD, how you made me jump!

Helmer. Has anybody called? (*NORA shakes her head.*) Oh, my little squirrel mustn't tell naughty whoppers! Why, I just met that fellow KROGSTAD in the hall. He's been asking you to get me to take him back—now, hasn't he?

Nora (walking about). Do just see how pretty the Christmas-tree looks!

Helmer. Never mind the tree—I want to have this out about KROGSTAD. I can't take him back, because many years ago he forged a name. As a lawyer, a close observer of human nature, and a Bank Manager, I have remarked that people who forge names seldom or never confide the fact to their children—which inevitably brings moral contagion into the entire family. From which it follows, logically, that KROGSTAD has been poisoning his children for years by acting a part, and is morally lost. (*Stretches out his hands to her.*) I can't bear a morally lost Bank-cashier about me!

Nora. But you never thought of dismissing him till CHRISTINA came!

Helmer. H'm! I've got some business to attend to—so good-bye, little lark! [*Goes into office and shuts door.*]

Nora (pale with terror). If KROGSTAD poisons his children because he once forged a name, I must be poisoning EMMY, and BOB, and IVAR, because *I* forged Papa's signature! (*Short pause; she raises her head proudly.*) After all, if I *am* a doll, I can still draw a logical induction! I mustn't play with the children any more—(*hotly*)—I don't care—I *shall*, though! Who cares for KROGSTAD?

[*She makes a face, choking with suppressed tears, as Curtain falls.*]

N.B.—The tremendous psychological problem of whether NORA is as much of a doll, a squirrel, and a lark, as she seems, and if so, whether it is her own fault, or HELMER's or Society's, will be solved in subsequent numbers.

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* * * * *

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.—At last by the authority of the L.C.C. his Grace of BEDFORD has been notified that within three months from now “Locks, bolts, and bars must fly asunder” in the parish of St. Pancras, where henceforth existence of all such obstruction is to cease. We hope that the gate-keepers, whose occupation is gone, have been amply provided for, as they will now have no gates, but only themselves to keep. *Mr. Punch* has persistently advocated the reform. And now, Gentlemen, how about Mud Salad Market, which, like Scotland in *Macbeth’s* time, “stands where it did”?

* * * * *

[Illustration: FASCINATION!]

“APOLLONIUS, by some probable conjectures, found her out to be a serpent, a Lamia; and that all her furniture was, like Tantalus’s gold described by HOMER, no substance, but mere illusion.”—*Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy*.]

A LAMIA, this? Nay, obvious coil, and hiss most unequivocal, betray the
Snake;
As fell ophidian as in fierce meridian of Afric ever lurked in swamp or
brake;
And yet Corinthian LYCIUS never doted on the white-throated charmer of
his soul
With blinder passion than our fools of Fashion
Feel for this gruesome ghoul.

Poor LYCIUS had excuse. Who might refuse worship to Lamia, “now a lady
bright”?
But foul-fanged here, fierce-eyed, a shape of fear, the serpent stands,
revealed to general sight,
A loathly thing, close knotted ring on ring, of guise unlovely, and
infectious breath;
And yet strong witchery draws to those wide jaws
Whose touch is shameful death.

See how the flattering things on painted wings, foolish as gnat-swarms
near the shrivelling blaze,
Flock nearer, nearer! Forms, too, quainter, queerer, frog-dupes of folly,
rabbit-thralls of craze,
Butterfly triflers, gay-plumed would-be riflers of golden chalices, of
poisoned flowers,
Flitter and flutter in delirium utter,
As drawn by wizard powers.



Oh, "Painted Lady," Summer coverts shady, the greenwood home, the sweep
of sunny fields,
A butterfly befit; but where's the wit that mire-befouled to the
swamp-demon yields?
Oh, birds of Iris-glitter, black and bitter will be the wakening when
those gaudy plumes
Fall crushed and leaden, as your senses deaden
In poisonous Python fumes!

Ye *gobemouche* creatures of batrachian features, who "go a-wooing" such
a fate as this,
Have ye no vision of that doom's decision? Have ye no ear for rattle or
for hiss?
Salamambo's craving, morbid and enslaving, was sanity compared with your
mad love,
As well the swallow the fierce shrike might follow,
Or hawk be chased by dove!

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Tantalus' gold is all such Lamias hold; 'tis Devil's dice such Mammon
vassals throw;
A sordid fever fires each fool-believer in the gross glitter, the unholy
glow.
Vile is your Dagon! Circe's venom'd flagon embruted less than doth the
Lamia's wine,
Than Comus' cup more perilous to sup—
As snakes are worse than swine.

The poet's snake enchanted, who so flaunted her borrowed robes amidst the
daffodils,
Hath piteous touches. She, from Fate's clutches, free some brief space,
"escaped from so sore ills,"
Moves our compassion. But this modern fashion of Snake Enchanter looks
unlovely all.
Greed's inspiration its sole fascination.
Low selfishness its thrall.

"A Serpent!" So the Sophist murmured low, and "LYCIUS' arms were empty of
delight,"
LAMIA had fled! Would that some sage cool head, some modern APOLLONIUS,
with the might
Of sense magnanimous, would banish thus the bestial Lamia of our later day,
Whose fascination draws a noble nation
To sordid slow decay!

* * * * *

DANTE NOT "IN IT"!—The Italian language is to be excluded from the Indian Civil Service Examination. "The story is extant, and written in very choice Italian," said *Hamlet*, and SHAKSPEARE knew that the reference would be intelligible to his audience. But *Hamlet* "up to date" in this "so-called nineteenth century" would be compelled to give the speech thus, "The original story, I believe, is written in the Italian language, with which none of us here are acquainted." But, after all, the candidates may be inclined to adapt the Gilbert-Sullivan words and music to the occasion, and sing

"So, in spite of all temptation,
At the next examination
They'll bar I-tal-i-an!"

Though, years hence, it may happen that they'll be sorry they weren't compelled to get up Italian as one of the subjects.

* * * * *

“O WOMAN, IN OUR HOUR OF EASE!”—which line would make a suitable motto for our very useful, chatty, and interesting weekly contemporary entitled *Woman*. *A propos* of “headings,” the only one in the above-mentioned publication to which objection can possibly be taken “on the face of it” is “Wrinkles.” Wouldn’t “Whispers” be better? It is quite enough for *Woman* to appear with lines, but it’s too bad that wrinkles should be added while she is yet so young.

* * * * *

“CHARLES OUR FRIEND.”—Once again occurs an illustration of the applicability of Dickensian characters to modern instances. In last Thursday’s *Times*, by special Razzle-Dalziel wire, we read of the return of another great Arctic explorer, Mr. WASHBURTON PIKE, after having braved dangers demanding the most dauntless courage. Here, then, are two single gentlemen rolled into one: it is *Pike* and *Pluck* combined.

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* * * * *

[Illustration: BEATUS POSSIDENS.

"I'VE COME ABOUT A JOB. I HEARD THERE WAS A BOY WANTED."

"OH, YOU 'EARD AS THERE WAS A BOY WANTED, DID YER? THEN YOU'RE JUST TOO LATE, 'COS MASTER'S SOOTED!"]

* * * * *

WANTED FOR THE ETON LOAN COLLECTION.

1. The earliest specimen of the Birch. (*Suggested by a Merry Swish Boy.*)
2. Salt-cellar used for holding the Salt at Montem time.
3. Specimen of Haberdashery, from an Eton "Sock" shop.
4. Model of the most powerful "Long-glass" from "Tap."
5. Chips from the Earliest Block, with authentic history of Etonian Original Transgression, or "First Fault."
6. Documents tracing the connection between "Pop" and the Pawnbroking business.
7. Specimen of Lower Boy's Hat, with motto, "*Sub Tegmine Fag-It!*"
8. Portraits of Eminent "Sitters" on Fourth of June and Election Saturday in the early part of present century.
9. Scull of a "Wet-Bob" originally feathered.
10. A copy (perfect and signed) of another boy's verses. (N.B. Not very scarce.)
11. Portraits of eminent Landlords who, acting on SHERIDAN's advice, have "kept up the Xtopher."
12. Also, portrait, with life and times of the crabbed old Thames Waterman, known on the river as "Surly HALL."

[Any future suggestions that maybe sent to us will be entirely at the service of the Duke of FIFE and others, interested in promoting this most interesting exhibition.]

* * * * *

A PUBLISHER AND HIS FRIENDS.—In order to worthily celebrate the hearty reception, by the critics and the public generally, of this most interesting and successful work, the present representatives of the great publishing firm of MURRAY will give a grand banquet, and, with SMILES, will sing in chorus the once popular refrain, “We are a Murray family, we are, we are, we are!” *Prosit!*

* * * * *

TO THOSE IT MAY CONCERN.—In reply to several Correspondents, *Mr. Punch* begs to suggest that ANTHONY TROLLOPE would certainly have observed, “*I say Yes!*” had he been told that WILKIE COLLINS had written “*I Say No!*”

* * * * *

THE WAY OF WESTMINSTER.

(A STORY OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BAR.)

“You will not forget, Sir,” said my excellent and admirable clerk, “that to-morrow you have to appear before a Committee of the House of Commons, in the matter of the Glogsweller Railway Extension?”

[Illustration]

I glanced somewhat severely at PORTINGTON, but was gratified to find that his face was quite free from any suggestion of levity. I was the more pleased with the result of my investigation, as, truth to tell, the delivery of a brief in the matter of the Extension of the Glogsweller Railway Company had been somewhat of an event in my life. I had never before had the honour of practising at the Parliamentary Bar. So for months my mind had been entirely occupied with the date fixed for my appearance in the Committee Room of the House of Commons, known technically, I believe, at St. Stephens, as “upstairs.”

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“You will be sure to meet me there, to-morrow, PORTINGTON?” I observed.

“Certainly, Sir,” replied my clerk. “But, as I have to be down at the Mayor’s Court with Mr. CHARLES O’MULLIGAN in the morning, I daresay you won’t mind if I come with your sandwiches and sherry, Sir, at two, or thereabouts.”

I acquiesced, somewhat unwillingly. O’MULLIGAN shares with me the good offices of PORTINGTON, but generally contrives to secure the lion’s portion of his services. I had arranged—understanding that no adjournment was made for luncheon—that some refreshment should be conveyed to me during the day’s proceedings, so that my voice should lose none of its wonted resonance (owing to famine-produced weakness) when the time arrived for my advocacy of the cause of my clients. Those clients had, so to speak, but a collateral interest in the day’s proceedings. The great North-East Diddlesex Railway were promoting a Bill to carry a new line into the neighbourhood of the Glogsweller Extension, and my duty was confined to cross-examining one of the expert witnesses that I knew would be asked to support the G.N.E.D.R. To be candid, we had a goods depot near their suggested terminus, and were fearful that their proposed proximity would damage our mineral traffic. The matter was simple enough, but I had taken months in carefully studying a small library of charts, Encyclopaedias, and Parliamentary Blue Books, in mastering it.

On the morning following my conversation with PORTINGTON, duly robed (I had put on my wig and gown in Chambers), I travelled by hansom to Westminster, and presented myself at the side entrance to St. Stephen’s Hall. I had no difficulty in finding the Committee Room devoted to the consideration of the alleged necessities of the Great North-East Diddlesex Railway. It was a large and pleasant apartment, with a distant view through the windows of St. Thomas’s Hospital. At a horse-shoe table sat the Committee, some four or five gentlemen, who might have filled equally appropriately any one of the pews reserved in the Royal Courts for the accommodation of a Special Jury. I took my place amongst a number of my learned brethren, who were perfect strangers to me. The table in front of us was littered with plans, charts, and documents of all descriptions. A Q.C. brought with him a large bag of buns, and two cups of custard, and there were other refreshments mingled with the exhibits before us. On chairs at the side were Solicitors; at our back, separated from us by a bar, were the Public. On the walls were hanging huge charts, giving in pantomimic proportions the proposed progress of the projected line. In the corners of these charts were explanations why such a part was coloured green, or red, or blue. During the day’s proceedings an attendant was told off to trace the course of a counsel’s harangue by pointing out, with a lecturer’s wand, the various places referred to in his speech.

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I was gratified to find that the expert whose evidence it was my duty to test by cross-examination, was soon in the witness-box. He was a gentleman of considerable bulk, which gave one of my learned friends, who was the first to take him in hand, the opportunity of saying, that he was a “witness of great weight,” a remark which caused much laughter—even the Chairman of the Committee, a somewhat austere person, indulging in a stealthy smile at the ingenious sally. Such waggish flashes as this, I need scarcely say, were most welcome, and afforded, when they came, a pleasant relief to the necessary dryness that characterised, perforce, the proceedings. As the hands of the clock progressed, waiters carried into the Committee, various light refreshments, such as brandy-and-sodawater, sandwiches, and buns. My colleagues, too, when not actively engaged in the declamatory duties of their profession, partook of the viands with which they had provided themselves before the commencement of the day’s labours. Thus the cups devoted to custard soon were empty, and the paper bags, once occupied by buns, crumpled up and discarded. I gazed at the clock. It was past two, and I was getting terribly hungry. I felt that my voice was becoming weak from famine. This would never do, and might endanger my clients’ interests. I looked round eagerly for PORTINGTON. He was nowhere to be seen. I whispered to a colleague, “would the examination-in-chief last much longer?” and was told it could not possibly be concluded within a quarter of an hour. I made up my mind to hasten to a refreshment-bar I had seen in the corridor before I had entered the room, and hurriedly left my seat. I pushed my way through the public, and had scarcely got outside when I found my faithful clerk laden with sandwiches and sherry making post-haste towards me.

“Get back, Sir, as quick as you can,” he cried, as he thrust the invigorating ingredients of my midday meal into my hands; “run, Sir, run; I hope they haven’t noticed your absence!”

Rather offended at the peremptory tone adopted by my subordinate I returned to my seat, and was pleased to find that the examination-in-chief was nearly ended. I pulled myself together. I drank a glass of sherry and finished a sandwich. My voice was in excellent tone, and I felt that the crisis of my life had indeed been reached. I knew that it was now or never. I had this great chance of distinguishing myself by pleasing my clients and securing a practice at the Parliamentary Bar, which might mean hundreds, nay, thousands a-year. I imagined my children at Eton, my wife in a carriage and pair, my address in Grosvenor Place. All I had to do to secure these tardily-attained luxuries was to protect my clients by my careful attention to their interests. The moment at length arrived. I rose to cross-examine.

“And now, Sir,” I said; feeling that I was master of the situation, and that my voice had a magnificent resonance, which was striking terror into the heart of the witness before me, / am going to put a few questions to you!”

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"I beg pardon," said the Chairman, promptly—"you will do nothing of the sort. You were not present during the *whole* of the witness's

* * * * *

I could have wept! The momentary search for sandwiches and sherry had ruined me! Eton and Grosvenor Place vanished together (in the carriage and pair) for ever!

Pump-Handle Court. (Signed) A. BRIEFLESS, JUNIOR.

* * * * *

OLLENDORFF IN LONDON;

OR, THE COCKNEY'S FAMILIAR PHRASE-BOOK.

NO. I.—AT THE ESTATE AGENT'S.

Have you some nice houses to let furnished?—Here is our Catalogue, Sir.—I perceive that most of these are Queen Anne houses; "sanitation perfect;" where is the satisfactory explanation of the fine advertisement?—It is in Spain with the other castles (idiom).—What is "Queen Anne"?—Victoria comes first, Elizabeth second, but Queen Anne is (the) last.—Is then sanitation also something?—It is the little game of the big builder; it is all your (my, his, her,) eyes.—Can we have some nice furniture?—You can have (the furniture of) Chippendale, Sheraton, M'Adam, or Louis-Quinze.—It is too dear.—No, Sir; my brother bought it yesterday of the clever carpenter.—I was done by you or by your brother; I require a room for my mother-in-law (neuter).—The good mother-in-law sleeps in the chamber of boxes (box-room), but the evil mother-in-law prefers the best bed-room.—How many persons are you?—We are sixteen.—You are, indeed, suited, Sir; it is an eight-roomed house.—Is not the noble drawing-room smaller than we have a mind to?—On the contrary, it is very lofty. There is room near the chandelier.—Where is the "moderate-sized garden"?—It is on the leads with the broken flower-pots, the capital smuts, and the industrious cats (masculine or feminine).—Is it then much larger than a postage-stamp?—Decidedly not, Sir. It is also nearly as sticky. Much rain produces weeds.—Where are "the bath-rooms"? I only perceived a watering-pot.—Any rooms in which you put baths, are bath-rooms.—What is then the price?—The exorbitant client of the first-class agent demands four hundred guineas for the season.—It is too much.—He would take less in some minutes; but my commission will rest the same.—Here are "Commanding mansions," "Bijou maisonettes," and "Desirable residences."—It is not difficult; the mansion that has a back-staircase is commanding, the "Bijou" is for the newly-married, or the actress, but the "Desirable residence" is what you desire.—What is then the "square hall"?—It is neither round nor oblong; therefore it is square. It is likewise in a square.—Is it geometrically the same as the Bridge of Asses?—I do not know. Sir.—Where is the capital accommodation for the poor servants?—It resembles the dark kennel of the sad dog.—What are dilapidations and electric light?—The first, Sir, is what you break; the second is what breaks

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you.—If I were to let my own house, and then to myself take it, would it be on the same terms?—No, the buyer is usually sold, but the seller loves the first of April.—If another agent were to let my house, would you, likewise, expect commission?—Why not? I am the best friend of the little lawyer with the long nose.—I was inquiring of you about flats.—It were better that you should be *sharp*, Sir.—I was not born yesterday (proverb).—Right (adjective) you are, Sir; we will write (verb) to you till you take or let something, not alone I, but also some others; if you refuse me something, I will be very discontented.—Have you ever let well alone? (idiom).—We have let many things alone (bare), but you must, notwithstanding, pay for the fixtures.—I think I will be going.—Here are pens, paper, and a form of an attorney.—No, I thank you.—We shall not charge for this interview, but one must live.—I do not see the necessity (v. Anecdotes in Appendix).—The Necessity is the mother of the inventory.—Who is the Caretaker?—She is the great-grandmother of the superannuated laundress. She becomes sleepy during the Winter. Shall we send her to your house?—Not if I know it (expletive). Receive the assurance (insurance) of my highest consideration. By the bye (interjection), which is the topmost storey?—The topmost story is the last thing you have heard me mention. I salute you, Sir.

* * * * *

TAKEN UPON TRUST.

(A FAIR-AND-UNFAIRY STORY, FOUNDED UPON A MAGIC ACT.)

[Illustration]

Once upon a time there existed two fatherless and motherless orphans, who were just old enough to work for their living. Unfortunately they did not know how to dig, were too proud to beg, and had conscientious scruples that prevented them from stealing. Besides, one of the two was a girl; and there were not many openings for her. And matters would have gone very hard with them, indeed, had not a distant, but benevolent relative, kindly died and left them as a legacy a sum of money, of which they were to have the interest until they attained their majority, when it was to be divided equally between them. They were overjoyed, and rushed to the executor, who happened to be a lawyer.

“Yes,” said the man of costs, “I am indeed charged with the execution of the trust, and for your own sakes I hope you will not give me much trouble, as I shall, under the conditions of the will, have to make you pay for it.”

And after he had entered their visit (which he called an attendance) in his diary, to be subsequently copied into a ledger, he bowed them out.

So the two orphans disappeared a little crestfallen; and they soon discovered that their legacy had the faculty of diminishing. The lawyer immediately transferred the money, which was invested in what he called "second-rate securities," into Consols, and this cost something, and considerably diminished their income. When the two orphans remonstrated, the lawyer said, that as he made scarcely more than out-of-pocket expenses in the matter, he did not feel justified in incurring the slightest risk.

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"I am only a simple girl," murmured one of the orphans, with a nervous blush; "but does not a recent statute give trustees power to invest the funds of their *cestui que* trusts in securities yielding a larger return than 23/4 Goschens?"

"Do not bandy words with me, Miss," replied the lawyer, angrily; "I shall act as I please, and if you or I ask for the estate to be administered, it will cost you a pretty penny."

"Which no doubt will find its way into your pocket," returned the maiden, simply. "But surely a 41/2 mortgage on real property can be obtained without risk, if you do not act contrary to the provisions of the Trustee Relief Act?"

But the lawyer was very angry, and threatened her that if she made any further complaint he would appeal to the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice, which would mean, probably, the absorption of the entire estate in a gigantic bill of costs.

So, with a sigh, the maiden and her brother retired. That night, as she was sitting over the fire, before retiring to rest, she had a dream, when a nice-looking old gentleman appeared before her, and asked her "why she was so sad?"

"Because we have a lawyer for our trustee, who is most unobliging, and expensive. I am afraid, kind Sir, *you* cannot help us."

"Do not say so until you have perused this scroll," he replied, with a benevolent smile, and he gave her a paper. "To-morrow, if your trustee again threatens you, and offers to retire, take him at his word. If I replace him, I will do all you wish—enter into mortgages, invest your capital to the best possible advantage, and make myself generally amiable."

"But how shall we pay you for so much kindness?" asked the now overjoyed maiden.

"By a tariff fixed by the Government. It will be my duty to do my best for you, and I shall have no personal interest in running up costs like the common (or garden) kind of family Solicitor."

So the next day, when the lawyer began to threaten to resign, the orphans took him at his word, and all that the nice-looking old gentleman had foretold came to pass. And when the orphans were getting the best possible interest for their money, at a trifling expense, the maiden looked at the scroll which had been given to her, and found it was inscribed, "The Public Trustee Act."

And, so far as the lawyer, who had been discarded, knew (or cared), the maiden and her brother lived happily ever afterwards.

* * * * *

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

More about DICKENS. By the loving hand of PERCY FITZGERALD the Bookmaker,—not sporting, but literary. Of making books, with PERCY FITZ there is no end. He is the king of the Bookmakers, *Per se Fitz*. This time it is the *History of the Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, published by CHAPMAN AND HALL, and “inscribed”—why not “dedicated?”—to HENRY FIELDING

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DICKENS, son of “The Only One,” the Master. *Interesting?* Of course it is, anything about DICKENS, specially in connection with the immortal *Pickwick*, must be interesting, and for chatty, gossiping bookmaking we only say, “Give us Fitz.” He is to the manor born. He is neither romancer nor poet: “*poeta nascitur non ‘Fitz.’*” Occasionally FITZ is aggravatingly reticent. For instance, at page 16 we read, “*Two or three years ago*”—which? two or three?—“*a curious and amusing coincidence brought the author’s son, a barrister in good practice*”—Which son? His name? There were more sons than one: were they all barristers? And was this one the only one in good practice?—“*into connection with his father’s famous book. It occurred at a trial on the Circuit.*” Which Circuit? Which is “*the Circuit*”? The Baron, who is now the Last of the Barons but one, only asks because the phrase “on Circuit” would not have required his query; but “on the Circuit” is another pair of shoes. “*A trial.*” What trial? When? At p. 17, “*The Judge entered into the humour of the thing*”—what Judge? The Baron is of opinion that in the well-known advertisement about the Waverley Pen, quoted in a note at p. 25, the correct order should be, “*The Pickwick, the Owl, and the Waverley Pen*”—not *Pickwick* last. Did CHARLES DICKENS ever write to FORSTER that he was “*getting on like a house o’ fire*”? Surely this should be a “house a-fire,” or “a house on fire”; for a “house o’ fire” means a “house of fire,” which is not what the expression is intended to convey. At p. 51, in a note, FITZ says, ““*Phiz, Whizz, ’or something of that kind, was T. HOOD’s joke.*” Was it? If so, where does the joke come in?

[Illustration]

My friend, the late GEORGE ROSE, better known as “ARTHUR SKETCHLEY,” used to say that DICKENS took *Sam Weller* from (as I understood him) a character in one of O’KEEFE’s comedies. This statement was given on the authority of Mr. BAYLE BERNARD. But I am bound to say I can find nothing like *Sam* in O’KEEFE’s; but I have found DICKENS there bodily. It is in Sc. 1, Act I. of *Life’s Vagaries; or, The Neglected Son*. ““Oh!” exclaims FANNY, ‘if my papa was to see me—oh!’ (*Seeing DICKENS, runs; he stops her.*)” And, oddly enough, in this edition of 1798, frequently as the above-mentioned character appears, it is “on this occasion only” that the name is spelt with an “E.”

Mr. FITZGERALD, at p. 136 of this book, says, that an actor named SAM VALE, appearing as *Simon Splatterdash*, in a piece called *The Boarding-House*, was in the habit of “interlarding his conversation with metaphorical illustrations”—and then follow the examples. *The Boarding-House*, however, is not by O’KEEFE, but, as appears from a note in *Sketches by Boz*, was being performed when DICKENS’s short tale of *The Boarding-House*

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appeared. For my part, I long ago came to the conclusion that *Sam Weller* was absolutely an original creation, as far, that is, as anything outside the immaterial realms of fancy and fairyland can be an original creation. Our FITZ gives CALVERLEY's Examination Paper, and also an Oxford imitation of it, which, however, is not by any means up to the CALVERLEY-BLADES mark. There is also a preface to *Pickwick*, specially interesting, as not being found in later editions. Then our Fitz informs us how many dramatic versions of *Pickwick* there have been, some with and some without music, bringing the list down to the latest "Dramatic Cantata" (it oughtn't to have been so described, as there was dialogue in it), the music of which will always hold a first place among the compositions of the Musical Baron's friend claiming to be the gifted descendant of the Wise and Musical King SOLOMON.

Altogether a vote of thanks should be presented to Mr. PERCY FITZGERALD for his entertaining, instructive, and most readable book on the immortal *Pickwick*, says THE BARON DE BOOK-WORMS.

* * * * *

[Illustration: TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION.

Husband (off to Paris). "DON'T CRY, DARLING. IT'S TOO SAD TO LEAVE YOU, I KNOW! BUT YOU CAN TALK TO ME THERE JUST AS IF WE WERE TOGETHER—ONLY BE CAREFUL, AS IT'S EXPENSIVE!"

Wife. "IS IT, DARLING? HA-HA-HADN'T YOU BETTER LEAVE ME A FEW BLANK CHEQUES?"]

* * * * *

TALKING BY TIME.

The growing pressure of the business having already obliged the Belgium Postal Authorities to cut down the time allowed for a telephonic communication between Paris and Brussels, from five minutes to three, it is to be presumed that the rush of public patronage that may be expected when the wire is opened between London and the French Capital, will soon necessitate the substitution, in place of the promised ten minutes, of an allowance to each speaker of a minute, or at most a minute and a half for his interview, which it may confidently be expected will not unfrequently take the following shape:—

Inexorable Official. Now, Sir; your turn next.

[*Shuts intending London Talker in, and switches him "on."*

London Talker. Dear me! How quick they are, one hardly knows what one is about. I wonder how loud, now, one ought to speak. Better shout. Anyhow, I'll try that first. (*At the top of his voice through the tube.*) Hullo! Hi! I say. Are you there?

Paris Listener (replying). Oh! don't bawl like that. Of course I'm here, I've been waiting quite half a minute; thought you were never going to begin. But I suppose it is JONES I am speaking to?

London Talker. Oh yes, I'm JONES. It's all right. But can't you recognise my voice?

Paris Listener. Not when you bawl fit to break the drum of one's ear. But come, now, get on quick with what you want to say.

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London Talker. All right—I'll get on. But now tell me, do I pitch my voice about right now? Can you catch distinctly all I say?

Paris Listener. Oh yes! Bother! But do get on. Timesgoifast.

London Talker. What? I didn't catch that last word. Time's what?

Paris Listener (very distinctly, with emphasis). I said—that—time—was—going fast. Can you hear that?

London Talker. Oh yes, I can hear that, and most distinctly. Really, it is a most wonderful invention.

Paris Listener. Oh, bother the invention! Do come to business! What did you want me for?

London Talker. Oh, of course. Well, it was just this. I thought—

Inexorable Official. Time's up, Sir. Trouble you to make room for this Lady.

[Switches him "off," and turns him out.

* * * * *

"THAT CON-FOUNDLAND DOG!"

Mr. JOHN BULL *loquitur*:—

"Love me, love my Dog!" Well, / don't want to flog
The fine but excitable fellow.
With a nip on his tail e'en a Bull wouldn't fail
To bounce round a bit, and to bellow.
I'd do my square best with the greatest good will,
If only he'd—just for a moment—stand still.

Stand still, with a nip like crocodile's grip
On one's caudal appendage? Ah, just so!
I know 'tis a task that seems *too* much to ask.
I'm reasonable,—or I trust so.
But there *is* the Lobster, it's holding on fast.
And—hang it! this state of affairs cannot last!

How came it about? That's a matter of doubt,
Which there isn't much use in discussing,
To part them's my aim; I would manage that same



Without either fighting or fussing.
Newfoundland or not, there's no dog finds it nice
To live very long with its tail in a vice!

I want to get near if I can, but, oh dear!
The Dog to my call won't attend. I
Conceive, if he would, it might be for his good,
I'd hit on some *modus vivendi*.
But if Dog *won't* stand still, and if Lobster *won't* loose,
My heartiest help cannot be of much use.

One ANDROCLES bold eased a lion of old
Of a thorn in his foot—a great worry!
But ANDROCLES, sure, would have failed of a cure
If poor Leo had kept on the scurry,
As you, my dear Dog, do at present. *Verb. sap.!*
Do just let me *get at* the Lobster, old chap!

While it's fast to your tail, and you wriggle and wail,
And romp all around, the best master,
And kindest of heart, Dog and Lobster can't part.
Don't think I deride your disaster!
The pinch of it might make an elephant prance;
No, all that I ask is—*just give me a chance!*



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[Illustration: "THAT CON-FOUNDLAND DOG!"

JOHN BULL. "IF I COULD ONLY GET HIM TO STAND STILL, I COULD SOON SETTLE THE LOBSTER!"]

* * * * *

A TEN MINUTES' IDYL.

Life is a farce, a dreary round,
A fraud—of that there's not a doubt,
Although I've only lately found
It out.

Bad boldly masquerades as good,
Fruit turns to ashes in the taking,
Unpleasant very is the rude
Awaking.

'Tis Spring, when something, so one learns,
Seems to affect the burnished dove,
And when a young man's fancy turns
To love.

With window open to the breeze,
The tramp of passers-by unheeding,
I sit reclining at mine ease,
A-reading.

I've read enough—and not amiss
I rather fancy now would be
A little rest—ah! what is this
I see?

A sight that's almost past belief,
And makes me think I must be raving,
For there a girl a handkerchief
Is waving!

Like to a light that in the black
And inky night shines o'er the main,
It disappears, and then comes back
Again.



I know the house quite well—I've heard
Her father's something in the City,
And she's a blue-eyed girl absurd-
-ly pretty.

By Jove! she does it with a whirr,
It's clear this inexpressive she
Is given to the *fortiter*
In re.

Of course it's forward—and indeed
It's worse—it's shockingly imprudent
Thus to encourage me, a need-
-y student.

Her form is shadowy—I must
Get out my glasses, so to bring
Her nearer. Yes—the range is just
The thing!

* * * * *

Life is a farce, without a doubt!
The cause of all this fuss and fluster
Is just a housemaid shaking out
Her duster!

* * * * *

IN THEIR EASTER EGGS.

Lord Salisbury.—Allegorical Cartoon representing BRITANNIA astonished at the success of her recent Foreign Policy.

Mr. Gladstone.—Pocket Edition of Cyclopaedia of Universal Information, copiously illustrated, for the use of veteran Statesmen.

The Emperor of Germany.—Prize Homily on the Art of Governing, with special reference to the science as applied to the subordination of “temper.”

Mr. Parnell.—Sculptured Group representing the Reptile of Egotism turning the tables on St. Patrick, and endeavouring to drive him out of Ireland.

The President of the United States.—An Italian Iron—over-heated.

Ex-King Milan of Servia.—A Monthly Cheque for amusement and travelling expenses, but not including a return ticket to Belgrade.

The Post-Master-General.—One hundred Receipts for getting into hot water.

Mr. Sheriff Augustus Harris.—Draft Proposal for buying up and working the British Government with duly audited Schedule, showing how the “takings” could be more than doubled by spirited management.

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Mr. Jackson of Clitheroe.—Prize Farce entitled, “Lynch Law and Conjugal Rights.”

* * * * *

MEN WHO HAVE TAKEN ME IN—
TO DINNER.

(*BY A DINNER-BELLE.*)

NO. III.—THE GREAT UNKNOWN.

[Illustration]

He was a dapper, dumpy thing,
With nought decisive on him graven
But smiles, like footlights flickering
O'er visage shaven.

And *it*, that kind of social myth
Where every guest (and each a rum one)
Is Somebody, because the kith
Or kin of Someone.

The Great Siberian Victim's Aunt,
The Godfather of Colonel CODY,
And some affinity I can't
Recall to DAUDET.

In fine, a Tussaud's once removed,
Not waxworks, but their far connections;
The names, the attitudes, approved,
But mere reflections.

Our hostess, wont to pedigree
Her portents, slurred his surname sweetly;
So up my smiler tripped—to me
Unknown completely.

Thus mystified, I needs must bruit
The weather—“It was rainy, rather.”
“Yes,” he rejoined, “It does not suit
My Poet-father:



“Strange how the damp affects great men;
My nephew, not the Wit, the Artist,
You know paints always smartest when
It rains the smartest.”

“In *water-colours*?” feebly next
I faltered, falling quite to pieces:
“No, no,” he murmured mildly vexed,
“*You* mean my nieces.

“Those delicate young paintresses
Of Idyls in Cobalt and Bistre,
Though for Impressionist success,
Give me my sister.

“My nephew, he’s inspired of course,
Divine, quite *autre chose*: *en bref* you—
Forgive an uncle’s pride—perforce
Adore my nephew.”

Reeling with Relatives, I quite
My compass lost: to shift our bearing,
“Who is the Lady on your right?”
Quoth I, despairing.

“That Beauty, like the portraits I’ve
For sale beheld of Miss BELLE BILTON.”—
“She? She’s the representative,
The last, of MILTON!”

This was too much: what *could* I try
To burst from such a tangled tether?
The shops for neutral ground, thought I,
Eclipse the weather.

The shops! The very thing. I dared
The shops. “How wonderful was WHITELEY!”
Dazed at the Wizard’s name he stared,
And shuddered slightly.

A silence froze his ready twang:
No more he smiled—from that fell minute,
HENRY THE FIRST—to speak in slang—
Was scarcely in it.

That smilelessness! What meant the curse?
Who could the skein unravel? I did.



This was the Diner “Univers-
-ally provided.”

Renowned, if nameless—hired to be
Salvation of a banquet’s ruin,
“Monsieur Le Quatorzieme” took me,
And may take you in.

* * * * *

THE MERRY GREEN WOOD.

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AN "EPPING FOREST" CHORUS.

"For ever and again the Corporation of London send down their *proteges*, the young City sportsmen who may, or may not, know how to load a gun, but who are very keen on 'Sport.' Then the herds are driven by beaters towards the gallant huntsmen, the forest re-echoes with the report of guns, and next day you can trace the whereabouts of the wounded bucks and deer by tracks of blood among the bushes, and by impressions on the grass where the maimed creature has fallen in its flight for life."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

Chorus of Huntsmen.

Oh, we like,—we love the Merry Green Wood,
As should Huntsmen bold of the proper sort!
And we would hit the stag *if we possibly could*,—
As is meet with such palpable sons of Sport.
Away to the forest we cheerily run,
And wait for the beaters' welcome cry;
And though we are new to the use of a gun,
What matters? At anything we'll let fly!
So Sing hey, sing ho, for the startled deer;
We warrant we'll hit him, if *he* comes near
And we'll send him lame and limping away,
With a shot he'll remember for many a day!
For marry come up! But it would be absurd
To expect a bold Sportsman to bag the whole herd!
So he blazes away; and he hits one or two;
And they hobble away in some thicket to lie,
And, after a day or two's suffering, die;
We don't see precisely what more we could do,
Than shout that "we love the Merry Green Wood!"
And would settle the stag,—*if we possibly could!*

* * * * *

The following advertisement appears in the *Standard*:—

A Lady wishes to have twice from the country a SUPPLY of LIVE SPARROWS, for a favourite cat.—Address, &c.

There is an uncomfortably blood-thirsty look about this "Lady's" desire to supply her favourite cat with some downright real Sport. For it is to be presumed that she intends her well-cared for pet literally to do the unhappy sparrows to death in the most approved fashion. How will she manage it? Clip their wings, and set them on the drawing-room



floor; or tie strings to their legs, and let the favourite cat “go for them?” Cats must be fed. But it is not necessary to provide them with a “Supply of Live Sparrows” twice, or even once. We submit the subject to the notice of the S.P.C.A.

* * * * *

ONE POUND NOTES.—Probable rate that a fashionable *prima donna* will charge for a song in the near future.

* * * * *

[Illustration: APRIL FOOLS.]

* * * * *

OUR OPENING (SUN) DAY!

Emancipated Blue-Ribboned British Workman loquitur:—



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Yesh, HARRY LAWSHUN mosh entirely righ'!
WILFRIDSH mush blesh his nameshake! Had a frigh'
Only lash Shundaysh. Fanshied I saw snakesh.
Frigh'ful to watch 'em wrigglung, when one wakesh
Over the quilterpane—I mean counterquilt.
Lignorsh are lovely, when you're that waysh built;
But snakesh ish pizen! So ish liquorsh, too—
Leastwaysh, so WILFRIDSH LAWSHON and hish crew
Alwaysh declarsh! No matter! Nash'ral Museum,
Mush better than the Jim-Jamsh! Eugh! I shee 'em!
All eyesh and limbsh, all twists, and twirls, and twiddles;
Tails like long corkscrewsh, gogglesh in their middles;
Big headsh, and bony bodysh—frigh'fully frisky!
Fancy sush things living in Irish Whishky,
Like animalcu—what's it? in—*hic*—water!
No matter! I've sworn offsh! POLLY, my daughter,
Made me Good Templarsh! No more horrorsh now!
To Heaven's broad blue vault I lift my brow,
A shober Br—Bri'sh Workman! So old DUMPER,
The lecturer, putsh it. He'sh a rare tub-thumper!
Itsh Easter Shunday, and I am not tigh'!
Bri'sh Workman—Nash'ral Museum! Thatsh or'righ'.
Feelsh bit unsteady! That dashed ginger-beer
Gassysh—go i' my head an' makesh me queer!
One nipsh!—no, no! won't do! Wherream I? Lor!
Strai' on, the plishman says, through tha' there door.
Doorsh blessedh wide, and these 'ere big shop-cases
With bitsh o' stone and beedlesh!—Yah! Thosh faces!
Thosh eyesh, thosh limbsh, thosh bodysh, big and bony!
Thosh wrigglewigglements! I'll bet a pony
Thish ish no Nash'ral Museum—Nash—*hic*—ral Hishtory!
Look at 'em! *Look* at 'em!! Oh, hersh a mystery!
POLLYSH,—where are yer? Where'sh that blessedh bottle?
I'vesh got a peck o' March dust down my throttle.
Give ush that gin—ger beersh, o' course, I mean.
Look, POLLY!—shee that creature long and lean,
Crawling towardsh us! Jim-Jamsh are not in it
With thish 'ere Bri's'h Museum! Wai' a minute!
Where am I? Whersh tha' girl? Can't read this lingo!
“Mega—” It moves! *Got 'em again, by Jingo!!!*

* * * * *

[Illustration: AN EASTER OBJECT LESSON.

(At the Natural History Museum.)

Visitor. "HULLO! I SAY, I'VE GOT 'EM AGIN! GI' ME THE BLUE RIBBON!"]

* * * * *

LEAVES FROM A CANDIDATE'S DIARY.

March 10.—It has come at last, and I'm free to confess I don't care for it half as much as I thought I should. I got the letter five days ago. Here it is:—

45, Main Street, Billsbury, March 4, 18—.

Sir,—I have been in communication with headquarters, and I am informed that you are looking out for a Constituency at the next General Election. We have been for some time past endeavouring to find a Candidate for this Borough, and should be glad to hear if we may submit your name to the consideration of our local Council. The political history of Billsbury must be known to you. Up to the date of the last election we have always been represented by a Conservative. In fact, Billsbury was always looked upon as an impregnable fortress of sound Constitutional opinion.

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Our late Member, however, was unable to devote to the Constituency the time and attention it required. Moreover, I may mention in strict confidence, that his conduct over the Billsbury Main Drainage Scheme alienated a considerable number of his supporters, and the consequence was that at the last election Sir THOMAS CHUBSON, the Liberal Candidate and present Member for Billsbury, was elected by a majority of 279. Since then, however, the Party has rallied, the divisions in our ranks have been healed, the registrations have been very much in our favour, and there is no reason to doubt that, as soon as Billsbury has the chance, she will return to her ancient allegiance. I shall be in London the day after to-morrow (Thursday, March 6), and shall do myself the honour of calling upon you. Kindly let me know where and when I can see you. I shall be glad to afford you any further information.

Yours faithfully, JAMES TOLLAND,

To RICHARD B. PATTLE, Esq., President Billsbury Conservative Association. Dr. Johnson Buildings, Temple, E.C.

I dashed off at once to the Central Association. They urged me to accept, and told me that even if I failed, which they said was extremely unlikely, my fight would give me "an irresistible claim on the Party." Afterwards saw VULLIAMY, the Member for one of the Pinkshire Divisions. He said "Take it? Of course you must. Ridiculous to hesitate. A youngster like you, who only left College four years ago, ought to be proud of the chance. If you're beaten you'll have a claim on the Party, and mind you don't let 'em forget it. Curse them, they never think of a man's valuable services if he doesn't keep on reminding them himself;" and then he drivelled on for a quarter of an hour about all he'd done for the Party, and how "the shabby beggars" had refused his nephew the Morterton Recordship. It seems the other side manage their business much better. Next I called on Uncle HENRY in the City. He said he'd stick to his promise of paying half my expenses, but wouldn't help me to nurse the place. However, I daresay that won't cost much. Eventually wrote to Old TOLLAND, and asked him to call at my Chambers on Thursday at 3 o'clock. Then went home and told my mother. She said, "My darling boy, I knew you would be distinguished. I knew it all along. If your dear father had only lived, he would have been a proud man to-day. Now, mind you have that horrid grating removed from the Ladies' Gallery." And with that she kissed me and rang for cook to tell her the news. I sloped.

On Thursday Old TOLLAND called. It seems he's an Alderman, and I only addressed him as plain Esquire. He wanted to know, What were my views on the Labour Question? Was I an Eight Hours' man? How about Vaccination and Woman's Suffrage? and all kinds of other rubbish. I had to beat about a good deal, and answer generally, but at last I consented to address the Council, and to-morrow was fixed as the day. If accepted, I shall have to come before a Mass Meeting, and go through it all again. It all seems rather roundabout, but I suppose it's the usual way.

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(*To be continued.*)

* * * * *

THE RIGHTS OF COUNSEL.

(*BY A CLIENT.*)

Oh, what are the “rights” of the Q.C.?
The point of the question but few see.
Those rights are to do
What suits *him*, if not *you*!
Faith! that’s the whole business *in nuce*!

* * * * *

JOKIN’S LATEST.—“The Surplus will be anything but a *dry* subject this year, as it is owing to a steady or (probably) unsteady consumption of Drink!”

* * * * *

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

House of Commons, Monday, March 23.—Easter Holidays begin to-morrow; to-night last rally round RAIKES; Postmaster harried from both sides of House; the Contumacious COBB begins it; comments on Coroner’s conduct beginning to pall on accustomed appetite; references to delicate investigation in judicial circles falling flat; so turns upon POSTMASTER-GENERAL. Wants to know about the Boy Messengers? Pack in full cry; RAIKES pelted with newspapers, assailed with over-weighted letters; late at night CAMERON comes up quite fresh, desiring to “call attention to the position taken up by the POSTMASTER-GENERAL with regard to the Electric Call and Boy Messenger System,” just as if he had at the moment made the discovery.

[Illustration: “Wonderful!”]

In course of lecture CAMERON produces sort of pocket-pistol; explains it’s the thing you work the electric call with. You press a button here, and up comes a tumbler of milk and soda; another button, and you have a sausage and a hot potato; a third, and your boots are suddenly pulled off by an unseen agency; a fourth, and you find yourself seated in a hansom cab, with eighteenpence pressed into your hand to pay your fare withal; a fifth, and you’re awakened at four o’clock in the morning with an apology. Something, you learn, went wrong with the machine, and it was the gentleman on the next floor who ought to have been called at this hour.

GANE, Q.C., with hands folded on knees, sat entranced, listening to this interesting narrative, and watching the illustrations rapidly produced by CAMERON, as he touched the various buttons.

“Wonderful!” cried GANE, Q.C. “Never knew anything like it since I read *Arabian Nights*.”

“What’s RAIKES’ loss is our GANE,” says WILFRID LAWSON.

Must think this over during the Recess.

For awhile RAIKES had peace; quite forgotten whilst House, falling into GANE’s attitude, listened to CAMERON’s fairy tale.

[Illustration: The Pillary Post.]

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"It's only postponed, TOBY," he said, wearily, CAMERON (having accidentally touched the wrong button) being promptly carried off to bed in the middle of a sentence; "they'll be at me again to-morrow, and will begin once more, like giants refreshed, when they come back from the holidays. It's an old story; the House of Commons must always have its whipping-boy. Don't know whether you've sat long enough for Barks to remember AYRTON? A dead set was made against him, and he was not only driven out of office, but forth from public life. It's generally the HOME SECRETARY who is fastened on. There was WALPOLE, chronically reduced to tears. BRUCE was chivied by the cabmen, and had his hat blocked by the publicans. The blameless HARCOURT didn't go scot free whilst he was at the Home Office. MATTHEWS has had a long run, with the hounds after him. Now they've turned aside from him, and are yelping after me. It's very well for MATTHEWS, but a little worrying for me. Of course I don't claim to be perfect. As HARCOURT once admitted of himself, I'm almost human, I try to do my duty, and protect the interests of Department committed to my charge. They come in touch with all classes, and naturally there is friction. Just now the howling is persistent, and, I fancy, organised. Perhaps it'll fall away by-and-by. In the meanwhile, it's rather wearing, so pitilessly monotonous. As you said the other day, a new constitutional maxim has been established. Once OLD MORALITY used to write in his copybook, 'The QUEEN can Do no Wrong.' Now he may add this other, 'The POSTMASTER-GENERAL Does Nothing Right.'" *Business done.*—Miscellaneous.

Tuesday Afternoon.—Winding up business before holiday; rather a scramble at the end. OLD MORALITY, as usual, piled up heap of work to be got through. "Quite easy, you know," he said. "Tithes Bill, Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Savings Bank Bill, take them in your stride. What does the poet say? Line upon Line; Little by Little; Here to-day and gone To-morrow. Those are the sound economical principles that should guide a man through life."

At one time seemed that whilst we were certainly here to-day, we wouldn't be gone till to-morrow. Tithe Bill in last stage took a lot of fighting over. House wouldn't have Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill or the Savings Bank Bill at any price.

"Then I'll move the adjournment," paid OLD MORALITY, in despair.

[Illustration: "Stole Away!"]

"Not till you've heard my speech," said Dr. CLARK; pulled out manuscript from breast coat-pocket, began descanting on the under-pay of Civil Servants in Scotland, whilst TYSSSEN AMHERST folded his tent like the Arab, and as silently stole away. Example followed generally by Members in all parts of the House. CLARK thoroughly enjoying himself, composedly went on to end of speech, and then adjournment. SPEAKER "kept in" till Thursday to take part in ceremony of Royal Commission. Rest off, and won't be back till Monday, 6th of April.

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Business done.—Wound up for Easter Holidays.

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CRITICISING THE CALENDAR.

SIR,—The suggestion of your Correspondent “EASTER EGG,” who wishes Easter to be a fixed festival, always coming on April 20, is excellent. At present, Easter-tide, like the other tide, depends on the moon. What a humiliating confession! Why should we any longer consent to be the slaves of the (so-called) Science of Astronomy?

Yours, REFORMING SPIRIT.

SIR,—What’s all this fuss about Easter being too early this year? It isn’t half early enough. It ought to have come last Christmas, and Whitsuntide the same, and then we should have polished off three public holiday seasons—public nuisances, *I* call them,—at once.

Yours, gloomily, TRUE PHILANTHROPIST.

SIR,—I have just been horrified to hear that one of my boys now at home from school remains with us for a three weeks’ vacation! The early date of Easter is the paltry excuse offered by his Headmaster for this infliction. Anybody can see through such a flimsy pretext. His brother is to have *his* holiday four weeks later. The result is that the boys will see nothing of each other during their holidays, while their parents will see a great deal too much. How can brotherly affection—I say nothing of fatherly affection,—that priceless blessing, which I flatter myself I always conspicuously display—be expected to continue under these depressing conditions?

Yours, exasperatedly, FOND PARENT.

SIR,—As peeples are riting lettres to you about the Easter holy-days, I should like you to put in what old BOREHAM—he’s our Principul—has been doing. We all think it a thundring shame. He kept us grinding away right through Good Friday, Easter Monday, and means us to go on several weeks afterwards! The result was we had about half a Hot Cross-Bun each! Old BOREHAM akshally fixed Easter Monday for going over all the Latin irreglur verbs. Pleease would you say something in your valyble collums about old BOREHAM, and oblige

Yours, obedjiently, SMITH (*Tertius*), *Rodchester*.

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