

# **Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 100, May 23, 1891 eBook**

## **Punch, or the London Charivari, Volume 100, May 23, 1891**

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# Page 1

## Title: **Punch, Or The London Charivari, Vol. 100, May 23, 1891**

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## **PUNCH,**

*Or the London charivari.*

*Vol. 100.*

*May 23, 1891.*

## **MR. PUNCH'S POCKET IBSEN.**

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

*No. IV.—The wild Duck.*

*Act I.*

*At WERLE's house. In front a richly-upholstered study. (R.) a green-baize door leading to WERLE's office. At back, open folding doors, revealing an elegant dining-room, in which a brilliant Norwegian dinner-party is going on. Hired Waiters in profusion. A glass is tapped with a knife. Shouts of "Bravo!" Old Mr. WERLE is heard making a long speech, proposing—according to the custom of Norwegian society on such occasions—the health of his Housekeeper, Mrs. SOeRBY. Presently several short-sighted, flabby, and thin-haired Chamberlains, enter from the dining-room, with HIALMAR EKDAL, who writhes shyly under their remarks.*



*A Chamberlain.* As we are the sole surviving specimens of Norwegian nobility, suppose we sustain our reputation as aristocratic sparklers by enlarging upon the enormous amount we have eaten, and chaffing *Hialmar Ekdal*, the friend of our host's son, for being a professional Photographer?

[Illustration: "Father, a word with you in private. I loathe you!"]

*The other Chamberlains.* Bravo! We will.

[*They do; delight of HIALMAR. Old WERLE comes in, leaning on his Housekeeper's arm, followed by his son, GREGERS WERLE.*

*Old Werle (dejectedly).* Thirteen at table! (*To Gregers, with a meaning glance at Hialmar.*) This is the result of inviting an old College friend who has turned Photographer! Wasting vintage wines on *him*, indeed!

[*He passes on gloomily.*

*Hialmar (to Gregers).* I am almost sorry I came. Your old min is *not* friendly. Yet he set me up as a Photographer fifteen years ago. *Now* he takes me down! But for him, I should never have married GINA, who, you may remember, was a servant in your family once.

*Gregers.* What? my old College friend married fifteen years ago—and to our GINA, of all people! If I had not been up at the works all these years, I suppose I should have heard something of such an event. But my father never mentioned it. Odd!



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*[He ponders; Old EKDAL comes out through the green-baize door, bowing, and begging pardon, carrying copying work. Old WERLE says “Ugh” and “Puh” involuntarily. HIALMAR shrinks back, and looks another way. A Chamberlain asks him pleasantly if he knows that old man.]*

*Hialmar.* I—oh no. Not in the least. No relation!

*Gregers (shocked).* What, HIALMAR, you, with your great soul, deny your own father!

*Hialmar (vehemently).* Of course—what else *can* a Photographer do with a disreputable old parent, who has been in a Penitentiary for making a fraudulent map? I shall leave this splendid banquet. The Chamberlains are not kind to me, and I feel the crushing hand of fate on my head! *[Goes out hastily, feeling it.]*

*Mrs. Soerby (archly).* Any Nobleman here say “Cold Punch”?

*[Every Nobleman says “Cold Punch,” and follows her out in search of it with enthusiasm. GREGERS approaches his father, who wishes he would go.]*

*Gregers.* Father, a word with you in private. I loathe you. I am nothing if not candid. Old EKDAL was your partner once, and it’s my firm belief you deserved a prison quite as much as he did. However, you surely need not have married our GINA to my old friend HIALMAR. You know very well she was no better than she should have been!

*Old Werle.* True—but then no more is Mrs. SOERBY. And *I* am going to marry *her*—if you have no objection, that is.

*Gregers.* None in the world! How can I object to a stepmother who is playing Blind Man’s Buff at the present moment with the Norwegian nobility? I am not so overstrained as all that. But really I can not allow my old friend HIALMAR, with his great, confiding, childlike mind, to remain in contented ignorance of GINA’s past. No, I see my mission in life at last! I shall take my hat, and inform him that his home is built upon a lie. He will be so much obliged to me! *[Takes his hat, and goes out.]*

*Old Werle.* Ha!—I am a wealthy merchant, of dubious morals, and I am about to marry my housekeeper, who is on intimate terms with the Norwegian aristocracy. I have a son who loathes me, and who is either an Ibsenian satire on the Master’s own ideals, or else an utterly impossible prig—I don’t know or care which. Altogether, I flatter myself my household affords an accurate and realistic picture of Scandinavian Society!

ACT II.



*HALMAR EKDAL's Photographic Studio. Cameras, neck-rests, and other instruments of torture lying about. GINA EKDAL and HEDWIG, her daughter, aged 14, and wearing spectacles, discovered sitting up for HALMAR.*

*Hedvig. Grandpapa is in his room with a bottle of brandy and a jug of hot water, doing some fresh copying work. Father is in society, dining out. He promised he would bring me home something nice!*



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*Hjalmar (coming in, in evening dress).* And he has not forgotten his promise, my child. Behold! (*he presents her with the menu card; HEDVIG gulps down her tears; HIALMAR notices her disappointment, with annoyance.*) And this all the gratitude I get! After dining out and coming home in a dress-coat and boots, which are disgracefully tight! Well, well, just to show you how hurt I am, I won't have any *beer* now! What a selfish brute I am! (*Relenting.*) You may bring me just a little drop. (*He bursts into tears.*) I will play you a plaintive Bohemian dance on my flute. (*He does.*) No beer at such a sacred moment as this! (*He drinks.*) Ha, this is real domestic bliss!

[*GREGERS WERLE comes in, in a countrified suit.*

*Gregers.* I have left my father's home—dinner-party and all—for ever. I am coming to lodge with you.

*Hjalmar (still melancholy).* Have some bread and butter. You won't? then I *will*. I want it, after your father's lavish hospitality. (*HEDVIG goes to fetch bread and butter.*) My daughter—a poor shortsighted little thing—but mine own.

*Gregers.* My father has had to take to strong glasses, too—he can hardly see after dinner. (*To Old EKDAL, who stumbles in very drunk.*) How can you, Lieutenant EKDAL, who were such a keen sportsman once, live in this poky little hole?

*Old Ekdal.* I am a sportsman still. The only difference is that once I shot bears in a forest, and now I pot tame rabbits in a garret. Quite as amusing—and safer.

[*He goes to sleep on a sofa.*

*Hjalmar (with pride).* It is quite true. You shall see.

[*He pushes back sliding doors, and reveals a garret full of rabbits and poultry—moonlight effect. HEDVIG returns with bread and butter.*

*Hedvig (to GREGERS).* If you stand just there, you get the best view of our Wild Duck. We are very proud of her, because she gives the play its title, you know, and has to be brought into the dialogue a good deal. Your father, peppered her out shooting, and we saved her life.

*Hjalmar.* Yes, GREGERS, our estate is not large—but still we preserve, you see. And my poor old father and I sometimes get a day's gunning in the garret. He shoots with a pistol, which my illiterate wife here *will* call a "pigstol." He once, when he got into trouble, pointed it at himself. But the descendant of two lieutenant-colonels who had never quailed before living rabbit yet, faltered then. He *didn't* shoot. Then I put it to my own head. But at the decisive moment, I won the victory over myself. I remained in



life. Now we only shoot rabbits and fowls with it. After all I am very happy and contented as I am. [*He eats some bread and butter.*

*Gregers.* But you ought *not* to be. You have a good deal of the Wild Duck about you. So have your wife and daughter. You are living in marsh vapours. To-morrow I will take you out for a walk and explain what I mean. It is my mission in life. Good night! [*He goes out.*



## Page 4

*Gina and Hedwig.* What was the gentleman talking about, Father?

*Hjalmar (eating bread and butter).* He has been dining, you know. No matter—what we have to do now, is to put my disreputable old whitehaired pariah of a parent to bed.

*[He and GINA lift old ECCLES—we mean old EKDAL—up by the legs and arms, and take him off to bed as the Curtain falls.*

\* \* \* \* \*

COCKNEY MOTTO FOR A FEEBLE CRICKETER.—“Take 'Art of GRACE!”

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: PROPOSED HERALDIC DEVICE FOR THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL. (See opposite page.)]

\* \* \* \* \*

KEY TO THE PROPOSED HERALDIC DEVICE.

*Arms.*—Quarterly: 1. A female figure habited in white robes reaching to the ankles, with Arms elevated, all quite proper, for *Grace*. 2. A wildman or ratepayer rampant, for *Thrift*. 3. A bend (or bar) sinister on a chart vert, for *Bloomsbury*. 4. Three demi-councillors, wings elevated, regardant an empty seat, for *Vacancy*.

*Crest.*—On a beadle’s hat erased, a new broom.

*Supporters.*—Dexter, a Paul Pry regardant, grasping an eyeglass sinister. Sinister, a Stiggins. Both gorged.

*Motto.*—“*Ubi nunc sumus?*”

\* \* \* \* \*

FAMILIARITY BREEDS RESPECT.

(A PAGE FROM THE DIARY OF A WOULD-BE BUT COULDN’T-BE DUELLIST.)

*Monday.*—Arrived on the ground ready to fight my opponent to the death. We had just measured the ground, when an agent of Police appeared upon the scene, and we had to decamp hurriedly. Duel postponed till to-morrow.

*Tuesday.*—New spot chosen. Pistols this time instead of rapiers. Just as we were about to fire, appearance of the agents of the law. Postponement again absolutely necessary.



*Wednesday.*—Once more ready to meet. Both of us rather amused at the precautions we have to take to prevent interruption. Opponent obligingly suggested a new and suitable spot for the settlement of our little differences. Found it to be a most excellent selection, but before we could fight, once more interrupted. Both of us greatly annoyed, and arranged to meet to-morrow.

*Thursday.*—Amused to find myself first in the field—my opponent five minutes late. Both of us had come before the seconds, and so spent the time in a pleasant little chat, and cigarettes. My opponent not half a bad fellow when you come to know him. Just as he was in the middle of a most amusing story, our seconds arrived—with the Police! Postponement once more imperative.

*Friday.*—Opponent turned up first, and, at my request, completed his yesterday's story—one of the best I have ever heard. Most amusing chap—should have liked to have heard another, when, finding ourselves uninterrupted, we thought we had better seize the opportunity to settle our affair of honour. Our customary luck! Seemingly had just time to kill one another, when enter the Police! Programme as before.

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*Saturday.*—Met again. Really quite pleased to have made the acquaintance of such a nice fellow as my opponent. Full of fun and anecdote. On comparing notes, we found that we had entirely forgotten what on earth we had quarrelled about. So shook hands and arranged that if we fired at anyone, our target should be the Police.

\* \* \* \* \*

### A PLEA FOR THE CART-HORSE PARADE SOCIETY.

All who love English horses, and back English Trade,  
Should welcome the annual "Cart-Horse Parade."  
No function of Fashion on Racecourse or Row  
Should "fetch" our equestrian enthusiast so.  
First-rate English horses in holiday guise!  
A sight that to please a true Britisher's eyes.  
And then the Society—surely *that* will be  
Supported by Britons. Ask good WALTER GILBEY  
(Cambridge House, Regent's Park). He will tell you no doubt  
What the C.-H.P.S. have, some time, been about.  
Fancy prizes to Carmen for care of their horses!  
That charms a horse-lover. To plump the resources  
Of such a Society—by their support  
In subscriptions—all friends of the horse and of sport  
Should surely be eager; so, horse-lovers willing,  
Despatch the gold pound plus the odd silver shilling!

\* \* \* \* \*

HISTORY AND ART.—Doubts have been thrown on the genuineness of the story about St. ELIZABETH of Hungary as illustrated by Mr. CALDERON's well-known and striking picture in this year's Academy. Mr. CALDERON affirms, according to the best of his high lights, that he has simply portrayed the naked truth. So far, in a certain sense, the Court is with him. Still, historians are neither unbiassed nor infallible, and painters are inclined to sacrifice much for effect. For our part, we should be inclined to refer the situation, which this picture illustrates, to some incident in the life of the celebrated Miss ELIZABETH MARTIN, generally known as "BETTY MARTIN." The legend may be found in some work by that voluminous writer *Finis*, or by the oft-quoted *Ibid*, under the quaint heading, *Historia Mei et Beati Martini*.

\* \* \* \* \*



## THE PICK OF THE PICTURES. (AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY.)

[Illustration: No. 164. Pilling Him. Affectionate wife insisting on the invalid taking a Bolus. Sidney Paget.]

[Illustration: No. 259. "A Select Committee." H. Stacy Marks, R.A.]

No. 278. "*The Fleecy Charge*." A title that suggests an attempt at extortion, but is here applied to *A picture in wool-work* by the veteran, T. SYDNEY COOPER, R.A. Of course whatever the artist may ask for it, it will always be "sheep at the price."

No. 388. "*Writing a Message to St. Helena*." Hope St. Helena received it. Probably forwarded by a winged messenger as suggested by the name of the artist, which is EYRE CROWE, A.



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No. 519. "Gorse." By DAVID MURRAY. Good? Why certainly, as a matter of gorse.

No. 697. Rather mixed subject, being "Eventide" by KNIGHT.

No. 1161. "A Maiden Fair." By G.A. STOREY, A. Never heard of such a thing as "a Maiden Fair," except in Oriental countries. She seems to be having all the fun of the Fair to herself. This concludes a series of Storeys in four numbers, 356, 704, 1043 and 1161, making up his "Tale." "And now my STOREY's done," that is, for this Season.

### SCULPTURE.

No. 1962. "Triumph" of ADRIAN JONES. It is so. Quite a triumph. The SMITHS, BROWNS and ROBINSONS nowhere compared with A. JONES.

No. 2001. "H.M. Stanley—bust." Is he? Poor STANLEY! It is to be hoped that the EMIN-ent explorer will forgive the sculptor, who is C.B. BIRCH, A. Fancy the indomitable STANLEY never yet beaten, but BIRCH'd at last!

\* \* \* \* \*

### MR. PUNCH'S PRIZE NOVELS.

NO. XVIII.—MARIAN MUFFET: A ROMANCE OF BLACKMORE.

(BY R.D. EXMOOR, AUTHOR OF "BORN A SPOON;" "PADDOCK ROWEL;" "WIT AND WITTY;" "TIPS FOR MARRIERS;" "SCARE A FAWN;" "BRELLAS FOR RAIN," &C., &C., &C.)

["This," writes Mr. EXMOOR, "is another of my simple tales. Yet I send it forth into the world thinking that haply there may be some, and they not of the baser sort, who reading therein as the humour takes them, may draw from it nurture for their minds. For truly it is in the nature of fruit-trees, whereof, without undue vaunting, I may claim to know somewhat, that the birds of the air, the tits, the wrens, ay, even unto the saucy little sparrows, whose firm spirit in warfare hath ever been one of my chiefest marvels, should gather in the branches seeking for provender. So in books, and herein too I have some small knowledge, those that are of the ripest sort are ever the first to be devoured. And if the public be pleased, how shall he that made the book feel aught but gratitude. Therefore I let it go, not being blind in truth to the faults thereof, but with humble confidence too in much compensating merit."]

## CHAPTER I.

[Illustration]



Fate, that makes sport alike of peasants and of kings, turning the one to honour and a high seat, and making the other to lie low in the estimation of men, though haply (as 'tis said in our parish) he think no small beer of himself, hath seemingly ordained that I, THOMAS TIDDLER, should set down in order some doings wherein I had a share. And herein I make no show of learning, being but an undoctrined farmer and not skilled in the tricks of style, as the word is in these parts, but trusting simply to strength and honesty (whereof, God knows, there is but little beyond the limits of our farm), and to that breezy carriage of the pen which favoureth a plain man treading sturdily



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the winding paths and rough places of his native tongue. Notwithstanding I take no small encouragement from this, that whereas of those that have made to my knowledge the bravest boasting and the loudest puffing (though of this I am loth to speak, never having had a stomach for the work), the writings often perish neglectfully and nothing said, some, writing afar in quiet places removed from the busy rabblement of towns, not seldom steer their course to fame and riches, whereof, thanks be to Heaven, I never yet had covetousness, deeming theirs the happier lot to whom a dry crust with haply a slice of our good country cheese and a draught of the foaming cider bring contentment. Each to his own fashion, say I, and the fashion of the TIDDLERS hath always been in a manner plain and unvarnished, like to the large oak press wherein mother stores her Sunday gown and other woman's finery such as the mind of man, being at best but a coarse week-day creature, hath never fairly conceived. But lo! I am tarrying on my way, losing myself in a maze of cheap fancies, while the reader perchance yawns and stretches his limbs as though for bed. All I know is paper and ink are cheaper than when I began to write.

### CHAPTER II.

Now it fell on a Summer morning, I being then but newly come home from the Farmers' College, in the ancient town of Cambridge, that our whole household was gathered together in our parlour. Mother sat by the head of the great table, ladling out a savoury mess of porridge, not rashly, as the custom of some is, but carefully, like a prudent housewife, guarding her own. And by her side sat MOLLY and BETTY, her daughters, and next to them the maids, and they that pertained to the work of the house. First came old POLLY THISTLEDEW, gaunt of face, and parched of skin, the wrinkles running athwart her face, and over her hooked nose, like to the rivers drawn with much labour of meandering pen in the schoolboys' maps, though for such my marks were always low, I being better skilled in the giving of raps with the closed fist than in the making of maps with inky fingers—a bootless toil, as it always hath seemed to me. Next to her sat SALLY, the little milkmaid, casting coy glances at mother, who would have none of them, but with undue sternness, as I thought then, and still think, tossed them back to the shame-faced SALLY. Lower down sat JOHN TOOKER, “GIRT JAN DOUBLEFACE” he was ever called, not without a sly hint of increasing obesity, for JOHN, though a mighty man of thews and sinews, was no small trencherman, and, as the phrase is, did himself right royally whenever porridge was in question. All these sat, peaceably swallowing, while I, at the table's foot, faced mother, stirring my steaming bowl with my forefinger, forgetting the heat thereof, but not daring to wince, lest BETTY, whose tongue cut shrewdly when she had a mind, should make sport of me.

### CHAPTER III.



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Although I had, for the most part, so very stout an appetite that my bowl stood always first for the refilling, I had no desire for my food that day, but idly sat and stirred, and the burden of my thoughts wore deeply inward with the dwelling of my mind on this view and on that of it. But, on a sudden, what a turmoil, what a rising of maids, what a jumping on chairs, what a drawing up of gowns, and what a scurrying! For, out of a corner, comes the great brown rat, gliding sedately, and never so much as asking by your leave or with your leave. Then mother's old tom-cat, *Trouncer*, slowly rising, stretches his limbs, and bares his claws, making ready for what is to come, but not, methinks, with much alacrity for the conflict, for rats have teeth, as *Trouncer* knows—ay, and can use them to much purpose. Therefore *Trouncer*, making belief to be brave, as is the custom both of cats and of others that walk on two legs, and have thumbs to their fore-paws, gathers himself to the spring, but springs not. Then comes GIRT JAN's terrier, *Rouser*, at last—where hath the terrier been tarrying? Terriers should not tarry—and, with scant ceremony, leaps upon *Trouncer*. Cuff, cuff, go the claws. *Trouncer* swears roundly. Nay, *Trouncer*, 'tis a coward's part to fly beneath the chair. To him, good *Rouser*, to him, my man. But *Rouser* hath forgot the claw-bearer, though his bleeding nose for many a day shall remember. *Rouser* hath the rat in view. Round the parlour they go, helter-skelter, *Rouser* on the tracks of the life-desiring rat, while the maids upon the chairs show ankles, in proof of terror, until, lo! he hath him pinned fast, never more to stir, or clean his whiskers in rat-land.

And then all come down, and JAN boasts loudly how he all but trod him flat, ay, and could have done so had rat not fled in terror of his boot; and *Trouncer* returns, smugly purring, and mother rates the blushing maids.

And I to the fields, having work to do, but liking not the doing.

## CHAPTER IV.

Now I with *Rouser* at my heels went manfully on my way. Gaily I went over the parched brown wastes where lately the flood had lain heavy upon the land, past the whispering copses of fir and beech and oak that top the upland, through the yellowing corn that stands waving golden promise in the valley, till I came to where the land bends suddenly with a sharp turn from the eastward whence a pearly brook, now swollen to a roaring torrent, babbles bravely over the stones. Sudden I stopped as though a palsy had gripped me, though of the TIDDLERS, as is well known, none hath ever suffered of a palsy, they being for the most part a lusty race, and apt for enduring moisture both within and without. Never till my dying day shall I forget the sight that met my eyes. For there seated upon a tuffet, her beautiful blue eyes fixed in horror and despair, her jug of curds and whey scarce tasted, was my MARIAN, while beside her, lolling at ease with the slothful stretch of his great limbs, and the flames as of Tophet in his fierce eyes sat SPIDER, the great black-haired giant SPIDER that would make a feast of her.

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I know not how I ran, nor what mighty strength was in my limbs, but in a moment I was with them, and his hairy throat was in my clutch. Quickly he turned upon me and fain had freed himself. Our breast-bones cracked in the conflict, his arms wound round and round me, and a hideous gleam of triumph was in his face. Thrice he had me off my feet, but at the fourth close I swayed him to the right, and then with one last heave I flung him on his back, and had the end of it, leaving him dead and flattened where he lay.

### CHAPTER V.

Then gently I bore my MARIAN home, and mother greeted her fondly, saying, "Miss MUFFET, I presume?" which pleased me, thinking it only right that mother should use ceremony with my love. But she, poor darling, lay quiet and pale, scarce knowing her own happiness or the issue of the fight. For 'tis the way of women ever to faint if the occasion serve and a man's arms be there to prop them. And often in the warm summer-time, when the little lads and lasses gather to the plucking of buttercups and daisies, likening them gleefully to the gold and silver of a rich man's coffers, my darling, now grown matronly, sitteth on the tuffet in their midst, and telleth the tale of giant SPIDER and his fate.—[THE END.]

\* \* \* \* \*

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

[Illustration]

One of our "Co."—and the Baron may observe that, when "Co." is written it is not an abbreviation of "Coves"—has been reading *Sir George* (BENTLEY), a Novel, which Mrs. HENNIKER has the courage to put forth in one volume. At the outset, the writing is a little slipshod. Mrs. HENNIKER has, moreover, a wild passion for the conjunction. When she can't summon another "which," she sticks in a "that." On one page appears the following startling announcement—"The March winds this year were unusually biting, and her nervous guardian would therefore [why therefore?] never allow her to walk out without a respirator, till they blew no longer from the East." We assume that, as soon as respirators blew from the West, this injunction would be withdrawn. But, as Mrs. HENNIKER, gets forward in her story, the style improves, "which's" disappear as they did in *Macbeth's* time, and the tale is told in simple strenuous language. *Uncle George* is a character finely conceived, and admirably drawn.

The Baron returns thanks to the publisher, W. HEINEMANN, for sending a volume of DE QUINCEY'S *Posthumorous Works*. A small dose of them, taken occasionally the last thing at night, may be confidently recommended to admirers of *The Opium Eater*, and



BOOKRAGS

will probably be found of considerable value to some who hitherto may have been the victims of *insomnia*. Highly recommended by the Faculty.

(Signed.) BARON DE BOOK-WORMS & Co.

\* \* \* \* \*

EVENINGS FROM HOME.



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At the Court Theatre, *Le Feu Toupinel*, adapted for the English stage as *The Late Lamented*, is decidedly funny, that is, if you can once get over the idea that all its humour depends upon the immoral vagaries of an elderly scoundrel, an habitual criminal, who has departed this life in the odour of respectability, without his immoralities ever having been discovered. Had he been found out during his lifetime, he would have been tried for bigamy, convicted, and punished accordingly. This piece has been adapted from the French for the English stage; but, query, is it adapted to an English audience? That's the point. The run must decide. If the best possible acting can carry it along, then that it has got; for, though Mrs. JOHN WOOD has frequently had better chances, yet she has never worked harder, and never has she more deserved the laughter she excites. The same may be said of Mr. STANDING and Miss FILLIPPI, and also of Mr. ARTHUR CECIL, whose make-up is perfect, especially the dressing and colouring of his hair, which is an artistic triumph. Mr. GILBERT FARQUHAR's *Mr. Fawcett*, the Solicitor, contributes much to the fun of the scenes in which he appears with Mrs. JOHN WOOD; and Mr. CAPE, as *Parker*, the Confidential Servant, is excellent. There's plenty of "go" in it, but will it "stay"?

Great attraction at the Lyceum! *The Corsican Brothers* and *Nance Oldfield*! ELLEN TERRY as *Nance* is delightful. Chorus, Gentlemen, if you please, "For—all our fancy, Dwells upon Nancy!" Our ELLEN is charming in this, so natural and so theatrical: herself as *Nance*, and then as *Mrs. Oldfield*, the actress, in the characters that *Nance* assumes. For 'tis ELLEN playing *Nancy*, and *Nancy* again playing Tragedy and Comedy. It is an old piece revived: there never was so old a piece, for there are only four characters in it, and they're all Old. There are two *Oldfields* and two *Oldworthys*. Mr. WENMAN as *Oldfield Senior*, or the Old Obadiah, is a trifle too blustering, but on the other hand, I am not prepared to say that a country attorney of that period wouldn't be uncouth and blustering. His son *Alexander*, the Young Obadiah, is prettily played by Mr. GORDON CRAIG, who is a trifle too windmilly with his hands and arms; but in the whole play nothing becomes him so well as the pathos of his broken-hearted exit. He was touching and going. Henceforth, this young actor may justly describe himself as of the "Touch-and-go" school, and be, like "the livin' skeleton" mentioned by *Sam Weller*, "proud o' the title." Miss KATE PHILLIPS as *Anne's* sister—though, as Mr. J.L. T-LE observed, as she is younger than *Anne*, she cannot well be her Anne-sister—is as bright and lively as need be, considering her menial position, which is rather odd in her sister's house. Visit Mistress NANCE TERRY; you'll find her very much "at home" in the part. After which *The Corsican Brothers* revived, *Ghost* and all.



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[Illustration: The Corsican Brothers and Nance Oldfield at the Lyceum.]

When some years ago the Irvingesque version of it was produced, the twin who lived in Corsica, Brother *Fabien*, used to behave in the wildest Corsican way. Who that saw it some years ago does not remember how he used to chuck his gun up in the air, when it caught on to a hook in the wall! with what gusto he used to light a tiny cigarette from an enormous flaming brand snatched from the burning wood fire on the hearth! and how badly the starving guest from Paris fared in the Corsican household where he hadn't a chance against the appetite of Master *Fabien*, who, after a hard day's sport, came in ready for anything, and ate everything! It was the only occasion when this fearless son of destiny ever "bolted." But, my! how the food used to disappear! what a short time the supper occupied, and how very much third best the poor stranger came off under the hospitable roof of the *Dei Franchis*. Even now the supper is a brief one, but justice is done to it, *and* to the weary traveller. Never was such an unhappy tourist! He comes to a house in the wilds of Corsica; he is choke-full of Parisian gossip, he has a lot to say of course, but he never gets a chance, as *Fabien* tells him family stories one after the other, as if he hadn't had such an opportunity or so good a listener for ever so long. Then, when on the entrance of his mother *Fabien* breaks off in the middle of one of his many anecdotes, which evidently can't be told before ladies, the Parisian gent, who now sees something like an opening for some light Boulevardian chit-chat, is presented with a flat candlestick and bowed off to bed, without being allowed a word to say for himself. All this is just the same as ever; there have been no alterations nor repairs; the piece is as curiously old-fashioned as are the exquisitely correct costumes; while the Masked Ball at the Opera and the Duel in the snow are as effective as ever, and the latter, if anything, more so. They make a first-rate fight of it, do Messrs. *Irving dei Franchi* and *M. Terriss de Chateau Renaud*, until the latter collapses, and "subsequent proceedings interested him no more." As long as the strong right arm of the Corsican Brother can draw a good and shining rapier, he will draw as good and brilliant a house as he did on the first night of this revival. Why ought this piece to go well in the first theatre in Ireland? Why? because it's a great play for Dublin'. *Exeunt omnes*.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE EPIDEMIC.—Up to now Members of Parliament have been generally considered as "influential personages." This year many M.P.'s will be remembered as "very influenzial personages."

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: THE MOST IRRESISTIBLE SIRENS ARE NOT THOSE WHO SING, BUT THOSE WHO LISTEN (OR PRETEND TO)!]



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*Daughter of the House.* “TELL ME, PROFESSOR BORAX, HOW DID YOU LIKE THE LADY MAMMA GAVE YOU TO TAKE IN TO DINNER?”

*The Professor (innocently).* “MY DEAR GIRL, SHE’S SIMPLY THE MOST CHARMING WOMAN I EVER MET! *I NEVER TALKED SO MUCH IN MY LIFE!*”]

\* \* \* \* \*

IN A MAZE.

“Mr. BALFOUR brought up a new sub-section, which he admitted was so obscure that he only ‘more or less’ understood it himself, and which, indeed, is of ‘*plusquam-Thucydidean*’ dimness and involution.... There is no excuse, we must say, for the muddle into which the Government has got over the Bill.... The House of Commons has adjourned for a short holiday, but the Irish Land Purchase Bill is not yet through Committee.... There still remained all the new clauses, for which no time had been found.”—*Times*.

*Little Bill loquitur:*—

Oh do, if you please, Mr. BALFOUR, Sir, if you *can*,—and who can if you can’t, Sir?—

Get me out of this Maze, where for days and days I have strayed till I’m all of a pant, Sir.

Twelve months ago we started, you know, and I’ve been on my feet ever since, Sir.

And oh, if you please, I feel weak at the knees, and the pains in my back make me wince, Sir.

Mister HOOD’s “Lost Child” wasn’t half as had, for he only strayed in the gutter,

While this dreadful Maze is enough to craze; and *my* feeling of lostness is utter.

Oh, my poor feet! This is worse than Crete, and old Hampton Court isn’t in it.

Oh stop, *do* stop! for I feel I shall drop if I don’t sit down half a minute.

I really thought you knew the way out—which I own *I*’m unable to guess, Sir—

And now ’twould appear you are far from clear, and are puzzled “more or less,” Sir.

The paths are really so twirly-whirly, the hedges so jimble-jumbled; It must be hundreds and hundreds of miles along which we have staggered and stumbled.



I thought you *were* a cool card. Mister BALFOUR, and did know your way about. Sir,

But what I should like to know at present is, when we are like to get out, Sir.

How LABBY will laugh at the Labyrinth-maker, who gets lost in his own Great Maze, Sir!

Don't say, Sir, pray, that you've lost *your way*,—you, whom people so cosset and praise Sir.

You won't be hurried, and you can't be flurried, and you're always as cool as a cucumber.

Can a little 'un like me, your own child, don't you see, such a smart pioneer as are *you* cumber?

You, the modern Theseus? Where's your Ariadne? Oh, I know you are cool, and clever.

Yet I feel a doubt. When *shall* we get out?—which I *can't* go on wandering for ever!



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*Mazemaster loquitur:—*

Poor little man! Yes, I *had* a plan, and a perfectly plain one, too, boy;  
But—I fear—for a moment—I’ve—lost the clue! Ah! I’m awfully sorry for  
you boy!

You have been on your feet for a precious long time, and all this  
roundaboutation,

Is “*plusquam*-Thucydidean,” perhaps, and at any rate mean aggravation.  
But you’ll please understand I’m a very “cool hand;” there’s abundance of  
“humour” about me,

And though for a jiffy I *seem* at a loss, don’t you come for to go for to  
doubt me.

’Tis most complicated, this Miz-Maze! I’ve stated the clue I’ve let slip  
for a moment,

And LABBY, no doubt, and his henchmen, will shout and indulge in invidious  
comment:

The *Times*, too, may gird, and declare ’tis absurd not to know *one’s own*  
*Labyrinth* better.

The *Times* is my friend, but a trifle too fond of the goad and the scourge  
and the fetter;

You really can’t rule the whole civilised world with the aid of the whip  
and the closure;

Though I *should* enjoy—but no matter, my boy, let us try to maintain our  
composure!

*When shall we get out?* That’s a matter of doubt, cross-hedges my pathway  
still chequer,

The clue I’ve let slip, but you just take my tip; we’ll get clear—if you  
keep up your pecker!

\* \* \* \* \*

CHANGE FOR THIRTY-FIVE SHILLINGS.

There is a singular directness of purpose in the following advertisement which appears  
in the *Daily News*:—

REPORTER (27), now on Weekly, WANTS CHANGE. 35s.

The advertiser not only wants change, but he mentions the exact sum. It seems odd.  
One often wants change for a sovereign, and even oftener wants the sovereign itself.  
But what precise coin a man hands you when he wants thirty-five shillings change is not  
quite clear.



\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: IN A MAZE.

MASTER LAND BILL. "OH, MR. BALFOUR, I'M SO TIRED!"

MR. B. "CHEER UP, LITTLE MAN! NEXT TURN TO THE RIGHT,—AND I HOPE WE SHALL BE OUT OF IT!!"]

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: *Dealer's Man (confidentially)*. "NICE 'OSS, SIR. JUST SUIT YOU, SIR. NICE PERMISCUOUS 'OSS, SIR!—YOU CAN SIT ON HIM A'MOST ANYWHERE!"]

\* \* \* \* \*

LEAVES FROM A CANDIDATE'S DIARY.

*Billsbury, May 5.*—Received the following letter from TOLLAND yesterday:—

*45, Main Street, Billsbury, May 3.*

DEAR MR. PATTLE,



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A committee Meeting of our Council has been summoned for the day after to-morrow (May 5) at eight o'clock P.M., at the Beaconsfield Club, to consider some important questions affecting your Candidature and the plan of campaign to be adopted in prosecuting it. I trust that you may be able to make it convenient to attend, and shall be glad to receive a wire from you to this effect. I may mention to you that I have lately heard, in confidence, that Sir THOMAS CHUBSON's health is causing considerable anxiety to the Radical leaders here. He has attended very few divisions lately, and has offended many of the advanced section by his conduct over the Strike Subvention Bill, which was backed by the Labour Members. Sir THOMAS, however, abstained from the division on the Second Reading. It is just possible that, under the circumstances, he may decide to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds very shortly, and we must be prepared for every emergency.

Yours faithfully, JAMES TOLLAND.

It was a confounded nuisance. I had arranged to take the BELLAMYS to the Scandinavian Exhibition this afternoon, and to dine and go to the theatre with the JACKSONS. Had to put off everything. MARY BELLAMY will be dreadfully annoyed. Wrote specially to her to apologise and explain. They're sure to get that beast POMFRET to take them instead. He's always hanging round. Last week he wrote a lot of verse in MARY's Confession Album, in this style (I copied some of it out, in order to show it to VULLIAMY, who hates him):—

Though, when he's asked his favourite name, a man is apt to stare, he  
*Must* answer, if he knows what's what, "My favourite name is MARY."

And this:—

The vice I detest and abhor above all  
Is not dancing four *times* with *you* at a ball.

And this, in answer to the question, "What or who would you rather be, if you were not yourself?"—

I'd rather be the rosebud that nestles in your hair,  
Or the aunt whose hand you took in yours and pressed upon the stair.

They all admired this slip-slop immensely, and MARY asked me, when I called the other day, if I didn't think it wonderfully clever. I know, when I wrote my answers in her album, it took me days of thought to get them done in prose, and even then they turned out the most ordinary, commonplace things. However I thought they pleased MARY, and now POMFRET steps in with his confounded rhymes. Mrs. BELLAMY's father once published a volume of verse, and is still talked of in the household as "your grandfather the poet." She told me that she thought "a faculty for versification was the mark of a



truly refined and delicate mind.” Bah! POMFRET’s one of the most selfish and calculating ruffians outside a convict prison, and always haggles over his luncheon bills at the Club, till the head-waiter and all the rest nearly go off their heads.



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However, I had to come to Billsbury, nilly-willy. Met the Committee after dinner. They were anxious that I should do some canvassing soon, and wanted me, when next I spoke, to explain myself more fully (1) on the Temperance Question and the question of Compensation to Publicans; (2) on the Women's Suffrage Question; (3) on the Labour Question; (4) on Foreign Policy; and (5) with reference to the Billsbury Main Drainage Scheme. I said I would, but I should probably require more than one speech to do it in. Afterwards a very solemn member of the Committee, whose name I forget, got up and made a long speech, in which he observed that my habit of appearing in dress clothes at the meetings had annoyed a good many of my supporters, and that he ventured to suggest to me, for my own good, that I should wear ordinary dress. It seems a good many of the lower lot thought it looked uppish. I'm glad enough not to have to do it any more. There were other points, but I'm too tired to remember them. By the way, I have subscribed to about a dozen more Clubs and Institutions, and have promised to get Mother to open a bazaar here at the end of the month. Back to London to-morrow. What a life!

\* \* \* \* \*

THE LATEST "LABOR PROGRAM."

(BY A NEW-UNIONIST.)

I am all for myself, and 'tis perfectly true  
That the "labor" I love is regardless of "u."  
But, *per contra*, informing my "program" you see  
Though I wink (with two l's), I eliminate "me."

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: POLITICAL BOATING-PARTY DURING THE RECESS.

(By Our Own Instantaneous Photographer.)]

\* \* \* \* \*

IN A LOCK.—A WHITSUNTIDE WARBLE.

"Lock! Lock!"—Shock! Rock! That's a pretty frock bulging over the  
gunwale!  
She looks like to choke with that horrible smoke, which is fuming out  
of the Steam-Launch funnel.  
Pleasant old cry! All in, and dry, though we're awfully crowded this  
first Spring holiday,  
Better this than St. Stephen's dead-lock! Our serious Senators out  
for a jolly day



Might do worse. Who carries the purse? That ten-foot rod with the  
toll-net ending it  
Means a hint. They must make "a mint"; and, by Jove, there are many  
worse ways of spending it,—  
Money, I mean. Now were G-SCH-N seen collecting cash for his dry  
Exchequer  
With pole and net, it were nicer, you bet, than keeping up his  
financial pecker  
With Spirit Duties! Those two blonde beauties in Cambridge blue are  
exceeding bonny;  
B-LF-R now at that same boat's bow would be quite in his element—eh,  
my sonny?  
And OLD MORALITY cooling his legs in the stern-sheets yonder would  
find the steering  
Easier far than amidst the jar of St.



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Stephen's, hot with T-M H-LY  
jeering.  
S-L-SB-RY, too, with a well-trained crew, would put his back—that  
broad back of his!—in it.  
Don't be in a hurry, my nautical friend! we shall all get out in  
another minute.  
Just like life! Such fidgety strife to be first to the front when the  
lock-gates sever.  
What does it matter, friends, after all? The slow, the skilful, the  
dull, the clever,  
The snake-swift "swell" and the splashing 'ARRY, the puffing launch,  
and the trim outrigger,  
The calm canoest who hugs the timbers, the fussy punter who toils  
like a nigger,  
All will anon be well out in the cutting, the old gates shutting  
slowly behind them,  
And where are those who so shoved to the front? At the tail of the  
race you may presently find them.  
The G.O.M. (with his collars for sails), that jaunty skiff might be  
handling. Bless us!  
Can he take holiday, he whom toil seems to encoil like a shirt of  
Nessus?  
Well, Union\_ist\_ or Separat\_ist\_, or chap with a twist like  
C-NN-NGH-M GR-H-M,  
Or howling PAT, or Aristo\_crat\_ with manners like BRUMMEL and voice  
like BRAHAM,  
Peppery G-SCH-N, or pompous H-RC-RT, or genial SM-TH, the new-made  
Warden,  
All, all, to-day, when the world is gay, the stream like silver, the  
banks a garden,  
*Much* worse might do than tog up in blue and join a crew on the  
rolling river,  
"Beyond the tide," dropping all their "side," party or personal,  
leaving "liver,"  
And Influenza, and other "Obstructions," all party-jobbers, all  
jibbers and jolters,  
In sunny weather to crowd together in Moulsey Lock, or it might be  
BOULTER's!

\* \* \* \* \*

[Illustration: ELEMENTARY INSTRUCTION IN COOKERY.]



*Young Lady.* “AND NOW, JANE, WHAT’S THE NEXT THING TO DO, AFTER PUTTING THE MEAT AND POTATOES IN THE STEWPAN?”

*Village Girl.* “PLEASE, MISS, WASH THE BABY!”]

\* \* \* \* \*

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

*The Kennel, Barks, Friday, May 15.*—This entry in Diary is dated from my ancestral home, pleasantly situated in the County I have the honour to represent. Haven’t been to Westminster this week. Hear, through usual channels of information, that House adjourns to-day for Whitsun Recess. When I say House, I mean fragment that remains; a few doors and chimneys, with here and there a ruined wing. Fact is, majority absent with influenza. Some seventy or eighty of us have formed House of our own; meet regularly at usual hour; get through business in a way that would astonish the residuum left at Westminster; and jog off comfortably for dinner. All Parties and all sections of Party represented. SPEAKER and



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Chairman of Committees still stick to Westminster. But we have GORST, one of the Deputy-Speakers, who presides with dignity and despatch. JACKSON looks after arrangement of business. AKERS-DOUGLAS whips up the Conservatives, assisted by SYDNEY HERBERT and ARTHUR HILL. THOMAS ESMONDE brings up to the scratch TANNER, SWIFT MACNEILL, and PIERCE MAHONY. On Treasury Bench MICHAEL BEACH sits in place of OLD MORALITY, being supported by GEORGIE HAMILTON, STUART WORTLEY, and JAMES FERGUSON, whilst KNUTSFORD and DERBY look down from Peers' Gallery. On Front Opposition Bench Mr. G., just arrived; finds JOHN MORLEY, OSBORNE AP MORGAN, KAY-SHUTTLEWORTH, and MUNDELLA. WOLMER not yet arrived, but daily expected. Meanwhile JOHN LUBBOCK, MUNTZ, T.W. RUSSELL, and the Wiwacious WIGGIN here, ready to obey the Whip, when issued.

CHARLES FORSTER, looks after petitions for us; FRANK LOCKWOOD draws us out (or in, as the case may be); ALGERNON BORTHWICK throws an air of fashionable society around us; the Reverberating COLOMB lifts his tall head in our midst; ISAAC HOLDEN never tires of telling the fascinating story of how he discovered the lucifer-match; HENNIKER HEATON passes the time writing letters to RAIKES, and complains that the Postmaster-General has his communications ostentatiously fumigated before opening them; SEYMOUR KEAY says he must get back to Westminster (nobody says him nay), or Land Bill would be getting passed through Committee; and here is the Grand Young GARDNER *and* his wife—Lady WINIFRED, of course, looking down on us from Ladies' Gallery.

Have on the whole a very good time. Looked after by RUSTEM ROOSE, whose cure is as alluring as it is infallible. "Eat, drink and sleep," he says. "Lie on your back and sedulously do nothing." So whilst they storm and fret at Westminster, here, in hollow Lotos Land we live and lie reclining. Pleasant to hear RUSTEM ROOSE's voice as he goes his morning rounds, stethoscope in hand. "A long breath, dear friend: say '74; Pommery, certainly if you like; a pint at luncheon and a roast chicken. Turn over, dear friend; another long breath; say '80; de Lanson, of course, if you prefer it; a pint at dinner with a fried sole and a porterhouse steak; or, if you are tired of champagne, take a pint of claret with a glass or two of port. A long breath, dear friend; say '50; three glasses if '50 port won't do you any harm."

Worst of it is we're all getting better, and shall be back to the grind at Westminster after Whitsuntide. *Business done.*—All taking long breaths.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE DIS-ORDER OF THE DAY.—In the House of Commons on the Motion of the First Lord of the Treasury, it was resolved that Influenza, M.P., be expelled. Mr. CAMPBELL-



BANNERMAN, Leader of the Opposition, *pro tem.*, moved to amend the Resolution by adding “at once.” This was agreed to *nem. con.* The Serjeant-at-Arms was thereupon ordered to remove Influenza. He declined on the ground that if he did he might catch it. After some conversation the debate was adjourned. Influenza left sitting on Members generally.—*Extract from the Fifteenth of May’s Parliamentary Report.*



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\* \* \* \* \*

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS!

(BY A PERPLEXED READER OF THE PENNY PAPERS.)

[Illustration]

When you're lying awake, with a horrid headache (to adopt a suggestion  
of GILBERT's),  
When too freely you've dined, or too heavily wined, or munched too many  
walnuts or filberts;  
When your brain is a maze, and creation a haze, then each queer social  
craze—there are many!—  
Gets your wits in a spool, and there isn't a fool for your thoughts  
would advance you a penny.

You can't sleep a wink, so the question of Drink, though you timidly  
shrink from it, harries you.  
Your wit's in a whirl, as you think, if some girl with a *penchant* for  
you, ups and marries you.  
And ties you for life to the thing called a Wife,—that figment, that  
fraud, that illusion,  
Where, *what* will you be? And you can't find a key to the epoch's  
chaotic confusion.  
It seems Local Option is sure of adoption, and what a tyrannic majority  
May "opt" for one day, you're unable to say, and in vain you appeal to  
Authority.  
The Law of the Land is a labyrinth grand, which you can't understand,  
nor can anyone,  
And *that* is a thought, with delirium fraught, an appalling, if 'tis  
not a penny one.

Now Law, the Old Antic, seems utterly frantic, absurdly romantic and  
maundering;  
And Cool Common Sense has gone dotty and dense, in dim deserts of  
Sentiment wandering.  
Now Reason and Right, hydrocephalous quite, are both Della-Cruscan and  
drivelling,  
Life (barring the fun) like "The Mulberry One," seems a mixture of  
diddling and snivelling.  
There's LAWSON who jaws on the Abstinence Cause on, and would lay his  
claws on the Nation,  
And put sudden stopper on all that's improper (as *he* thinks) without



compensation;  
And then there's Sir EDWARD, who, when he goes bedward, must have *his*  
reflections nightmarish!  
It seems, from such rigs, that our biggest Big Wigs are scarcest to  
govern a parish.  
MCDUGALL again, is agog to restrain all that gives *his* soul pain—it's  
a squeamish one!—  
He thinks he's a stayer as Jabberwock-slayer, mere Angry Boy he, *not* a  
Beamish One!  
These Oracles windy do raise such a shindy, and kick such a doose of a  
dust up,  
One would think without *them* we were wrong stern and stem, and the whole  
of creation would bust up.  
But verily why men should *new* worship Hymen,—who, just as unshackled as  
Cupid,—  
(See decision *Re JACKSON*), take burdens their backs on, I can\_not\_  
conceive. It seems stupid  
Beyond all expression to have a "possession"



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whose “ownness” there’s  
 desperate doubt of,  
 And which (if she’s *nous*) you can’t keep *in* your house, nor yet (if  
 she’s “savvy”) keep *out* of!  
 What *is* “Hymen’s halter”? I fidget and falter! The Beaks seem to palter  
 and fumble.  
 In such a strange fashion, I fly in a passion, and vow that the world is a  
 jumble.  
 Law seems a wigged noodle, as tame as a poodle, the whole darned caboodle  
 (as ‘ARRY sees)  
 Is ructions and “rot,” and our “rulers” a lot of confounded old foodles  
 and Pharisees!  
 Yes, that’s what *I* think about Marriage and Drink—if you may call it  
 thought, which with frenzy is fraught, and gives me a “head” like bad  
 whiskey; whose dread is on me day and night, makes me wake in a fright,  
 from visions most solemn of column on column of such “printed matter”  
 and paragraph chatter, as makes me feel flatter than cold eggless batter  
 upon a lead platter—as mad as a hatter, and who will relieve me? Can anyone?  
 I tell you it’s dreadful to face a whole bedful of spectres and spooks (born  
 of papers and books) with, most horrible looks, limbs contorted in crooks,  
 and bat-wings with big hooks, which haunt all the nooks of tester and  
 curtain, and which, I am certain, will drive me insane if *some* one can’t  
 explain where the mischief we are, ’midst the jumble and jar of factions  
 and fads, of crotchets and cads, of Tolstois and Jeunes, and Ibsens (whose  
 lunes are more lunatic still). Oh, I’d learn with a will from any or aught,  
 who could bring me, fresh caught, with lucidity fraught (what so long I have  
 sought) a Clear Comforting Thought—though a Penny One!

\* \* \* \* \*

*IN RE THE INFLUENZA.*

*(AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON THE APPEARANCE OF THE EPIDEMIC IN  
 THE LAW COURTS.)*

[Illustration: Catching.]

Owing to recent sentimental legislation, many members of the learned profession, to which I have the honour to belong, have found their practice becoming (to quote the poet) “small by degrees and beautifully less.” Times were when I could scarcely pass a week in term time without appearing in Court holding a consent brief, or armed with authority to move (unopposed) for the appointment of a receiver. But that was long ago



—a deep contrast with to-day—when my admirable and excellent Clerk PORTINGTON, finds an hour a day ample, almost too ample, time for posting up to date my Fee Book. However, occasionally a gleam of the old sunshine illumines, so to speak, the chambers I occupy, and such a gleam was my retention for the Defence in the cause of *Quicksilver v. Nore*. It was a Patent Case, and one of the deepest possible interest. It is my good fortune to know the Defendant, personally, and it was through his kind offices that

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the instructions to appear for him were left at my chambers. My friend and client (who is unjustly said to be eccentric in his habits) has recently patented and produced a most important invention, which greatly facilitates the retention of dinner-napkins, after those useful, nay, necessary articles have been used for the purpose for which they are manufactured. Like all really valuable inventions, the patent is simplicity itself, the napkin-ring consisting of the section of the thicker end of an elephant's tusk cut to an appropriate size and hollowed out. It is necessary to fold the dinner-napkin in such a fashion that, when inserted through the ring, its shape is retained by the adherent properties inseparable from the ivory. The patent can also be produced in other materials, such as gold, silver and jewels for the wealthy, and in bone, tin and even glass for purchasers of smaller means. I must say that when the ring was shown to me I was greatly struck with the cleverness and simplicity of the idea, and could not understand how Mr. QUICKSILVER could have allowed himself to be so badly advised as to bring an action for infringement, merely on the strength of *his* patent being also a dinner-napkin-holder with the ring element so far introduced that it consisted of a circle closed and opened by a hinge. However, it was no part of my duty to advise the other side, so I set to work to get up my case (as I invariably do) *con amore*. I hunted up all the causes in the Digest, that seemed to be on all-fours with the matter in dispute, and spent days in the Public Library of the Patent Office searching for patents having to do with table-napkins. As the specifications were not consecutively published, I had to wade through a large number of these interesting documents that treated of other subjects. For instance, the first specification I would take out of the box in which it was kept, would perhaps have to do with house-raising without disturbance to the foundations, the second would prove to be an article half umbrella, half revolver, while in the third I would perhaps find an extremely quaint notion for a portable pocket corkscrew. I myself picked up many ideas for future use, and hope some day, if I do nothing else, at least to perfect a clever little contrivance of my own for arousing the inmates of a house invaded by burglars by casement concussions. I propose calling this valuable little instrument (which is founded to some extent on the simple construction by which the figures in a child's box of wooden soldiers are enabled to advance and retire in a scissors-like fashion), when produced, the Policeman's Upper Floor Window Tapper.



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The day for the hearing at length arrived, and, armed with a mass of carefully selected information, I was in my seat ready to defend the originality of the Nore Napkin Ring, so to speak, to the death. In my notes before me I had the skeleton of a really fine oration, which I felt (if I mastered my normal nervousness) would bristle with epigram, and thrill with heartfelt, brain-inspired eloquence. So deeply interested was I in the matter, that I scarcely listened to my friend's opening, and only became aware of what was happening in Court by the rising of the Judge. Suddenly his Lordship bowed, and disappeared. I looked at the clock—it was only noon—and, consequently, an hour and thirty minutes in advance of the time usually selected for the mid-day adjournment. And then, to my dismay, I found that his Lordship was suffering from the influenza! Well, there was nothing to do but to collect my papers, and, assisted by PORTINGTON, return to my chambers. The next day my head ached violently, and I could not move. Then I have a recollection of dictating to my wife long telegrams to PORTINGTON, which I subsequently discovered were neither despatched nor delivered.

\* \* \* \* \*

When I awoke, I found that the matter of *Quicksilver v. Nore* had been arranged and settled—out of Court!

*Pump-handle Court.* (Signed) A. BRIEFLESS, JUNIOR.

\* \* \* \* \*

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