

Sketches — Volume 02 eBook

Sketches — Volume 02

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SCENE IX.

“Shoot away, Bill! never mind the old woman—she can’t get over the wall to us.”

One day two urchins got
A pistol, powder, horn, and shot,
And proudly forth they went
On sport intent.
“Oh, Tom! if we should shoot a hare,”
Cried one,
The elder son,
“How father, sure, would stare!”
Look there! what’s that?”
“Why, as I live, a cat,”
Cried Bill, “‘tis mother Tibbs’ tabby;
Oh! what a lark
She loves it like a babby!
And ain’t a cat’s eye, Tom, as good a mark
As any bull’s eyes?”
And straight “Puss! puss!” he cries,
When, lo! as Puss approaches,
They hear a squall,
And see a head and fist above the wall.
’Tis tabby’s mistress
Who in great distress
Loads both the urchins with her loud reproaches,
“You little villains! will ye shoot my cat?
Here, Tink! Tink! Tink!
O! lor’ a’ mercy! I shall surely sink,
Tink! Tink!”
Tink hears her voice—and hearing that,
Trots nearer with a pit-a-pat!
“Now, Bill, present and fire,
There’s a bold ’un,
And send the tabby to the old ’un.”
Bang! went the pistol, and in the mire
Rolled Tink without a mew—
Flop! fell his mistress in a stew!
While Bill and Tom both fled,
Leaving the accomplish’d Tink quite finish’d,
For Bill had actually diminish’d
The feline favorite by a head!
Leaving his undone mistress to bewail,



In deepest woe,
And to her gossips to relate
Her tabby's fate.
This was her only consolation—for altho'
She could not tell the head—she could the tail!

SCENE X.

SEPTEMBER 1ST,—AN ONLY OPPORTUNITY.

"I begin to think I may as well go back."

My vig! vat a pelter this is—
Enough all my hardour to tame;
In veather like this there's no sport,
It's too much in earnest for game!

A ladle, I might as well be,
Chain'd fast to a hold parish pump,
For, by goles! it comes tumbling down,
Like vinking,—and all of a lump.

The birds to their nestes is gone,
I can't see no woodcock, nor snipe;
My dog he looks dogged and dull,
My leggins is flabby as tripe!

The moors is all slipp'ry slush,
I'm up to the neck in the mire;
I don't see no chance of a shot,
And I long-how I long for a fire!

For my clothes is all soak'd, and they stick
As close as a bailiff to me
Oh! I wish I was out o' this here,
And at home with my mother at tea!

This is the fust, as I've got
Permission from uncle to shoot;
He hadn't no peace till he give
This piece, and the powder to boot!

And vat's it all come to at last?—
There isn't no chance of a hit,
I feel the rain's all down my back,
In my mouth though I hav'n't a bit!



O! it's werry wezaatious indeed!
For I shan't have another day soon;
But I'm blow'd, if I don't have a pop—
My eye! I've shot Dash! vot a spoon!

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O! here's a partic'lar mess,
Vot vill mother say to me now?
For he vas her lap-dog and pet,
Oh! I've slaughtered her darling bow-wow!

SCENE XI.

"Mother says fishes comes from hard roes, so I chuck'd in the roe of a red-herring last week, but I doesn't catch any fish yet."

How beautiful is the simplicity of unsophisticated youth! Behold with what patience this innocent awaits a bite, trusting with perfect faith in the truth of his affectionate mother's ichthyological knowledge. Wishing to behold a live fish dangling at the end of his line, he has, with admirable foresight, drawn up the bucket, that in the ascent the finny prey may not kick it! It must be a hard roe indeed, that is not softened by his attentions; but, alas! he is doomed never to draw up a vulgar herring, or a well-bred fish!

Folks who are a little deeper read than the boy—(or the herring!)—may smile at his fruitless attempt, but how many are there that act through life upon the same principle, casting their lines and fishing for—compliments, who never obtain even a nibble—for why? their attempts at applause, like his red-herring, are smoked. He does not know that herrings are salt-water fish—and, in fact, that the well-water is not the roes—water!

But after all, is not such ignorance bliss?—for he enjoys the anticipated pleasure; and if anticipation be really greater than reality —what an interminable length will that pleasure be to him! Ever and anon he draws up his line, like a militia captain for a review;—puts fresh bait on the crooked pin, and lets it slowly down, and peeps in, wondering what the fish can be at!—and is quite as much in the dark as his float. But he may at last, perhaps, discover that he is not so deep as a well—and wisely resolve to let well—alone; two points which may probably be of infinite importance to him through life, and enable him to turn the laugh against those who now mock his ignorance and simplicity.

SCENE XII.

Ambition.

"He was ambitious, and I slew him."

What carried Captain Ross to the North Pole? "A ship to be sure!" exclaims some matter-of-fact gentleman. Reader! It was *ambition*!

What made barber Ross survey the poll, make wigs, and puff away even when powder was exploded? What caused him to seek the applause of the 'nobs' among the



cockneys, and struggle to obtain the paradoxical triplicate dictum that he was a werry first-rate cutter!' What made him a practical Tory? (for he boasts of turning out the best wigs in the country!)

What induces men to turn theatrical managers when a beggarly account of empty boxes nightly proves the Drama is at a discount—all benefits visionary, and the price of admission is regarded as a tax, and the performers as ex-actors?—when they get scarcely enough to pay for lights, and yet burn their fingers?—*Ambition*

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The candidate for the county cringes, and flatters the greasy unwashed ten-pounders, in order to get at the head of the poll—so likewise the bumpkin (in imitation of his superior) rubs his hand in the dirt to enable him to cling fast, and reach the top of the soap'd poll, whereon the tempting prize is displayed. And, what prompts them both to the contest?—*Ambition!*

What is the 'primum mobile,' of the adventurous Aeronaut, Mr. Green, one of the most rising men of the day, who aspires even unto the very clouds, and in his elevation looks upon all men of woman born as far beneath him?—*Ambition!*

What prompts the soldier who spends half-a-crown out of sixpence a-day to thrust his head into the cannon's mouth, to convince the world that he is desirous of obtaining a good report and that he is fearless of the charge?—*Ambition!*

What makes the beardless school-boy leap ditches and over posts at the risk of his neck, and boast that he'll do another's dags'—or the sporting man turn good horses into filthy dog's meat, in riding so many miles in so many minutes?—*Ambition!*

What magic influence operates upon the senses of the barrister (a scholar and a gentleman) to exert his winning eloquence and ingenuity in the cause of a client, who, in his conscience, he knows to be both morally and legally unworthy of the luminous defence put forth to prove the trembling culprit more sinned against than sinning?—*Ambition!*

What urges the vulgar costermonger to bestride his long-ear'd Arabian, and belabor his panting sides with merciless stick and iron-shod heels to impel him to the goal in the mimic race—or the sleek and polish'd courtier to lick the dust of his superiors' feet to obtain a paltry riband or a star?—*Ambition!*

SCENE XIII.

Better luck next time.

The lamentation of Joe Grishin.

"O! Molly! Molly! ven I popp'd my chops through the arey railings, and seed you smile, I thought you vos mine for ever! I wentur'd all for you —all—. It war'n't no great stake p'r'aps, but it was a tender vun! I offer'd you a heart verbally, and you said 'No!' I writ this ere wollentine, and you returns it vith a big 'No!'

"O! Molly your 'No's,' is more piercinger and crueller than your heyes. Me! to be used so:—Me! as refused the vidder at the Coal Shed! (to be sure she wore a vig and I didn't vant a bald rib!) Me!—but it's o' no use talking; von may as vell make love to a lamp-post, and expect to feed von's flame vith lights! But adoo to life; this 'ere rope, fix'd

round the 'best end o' the neck' will soon scrap me, and ven I'm as dead as mutton, p'r'aps you may be werry sorry.

"It'll be too late then, Molly, ven you've led me to the halter, to vish as you'd married me."

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After this bitter burst of wounded feeling, and, urged by the rejection of his addresses, the love-lorn Butcher mounted a joint-stool, and stepping on a fence, twisted the awful rope round the branch of a tree, and then, coiling it about his neck, determined that this day should be a killing day; vainly supposing, in the disordered state of his mind, that the flinty-hearted Molly would probably esteem her 'dear' (like venison) the better for being hung! Mystically muttering 'adoo!' three times, in the most pathetic tone, he swung off and in an instant came to his latter end—for the rope snapp'd in twain, and he found himself seated on the turf below, when he vainly imagined he was preparing himself for being placed below the turf!

"Nothin' but disappointments in this world;" exclaimed he, really feeling hurt by the unexpected fall, for he had grazed his calves in the meadow, and was wofully vexed at finding himself a lover 'turned off' and yet 'unhung.'

Cast down and melancholy, he retraced his steps, and seizing a cleaver (dreadful weapon!) vented his suicidal humour in chopping, with malignant fury, at his own block!

SCENE XIV.

Don't you be saucy, Boys

"What are you grinning at, boys?" angrily demanded an old gentleman seated beside a meandering stream, of two schoolboys, who were watching him from behind a high paling at his rear.—"Don't you know a little makes fools laugh."

"Yes, sir! that's quite true, for we were laughing at what you've caught!"

"Umph! I tell you what, my lads, if I knew your master, I'd pull you up, and have you well dressed."

"Tell that to the fishes," replied the elder, "when you do get a bite!"

"You saucy jackanapes! how dare you speak to me in this manner?"

"Pray, sir, are you lord of the manor? I'm sure you spoke to us first," said the younger.

"More than that," continued his companion. "We are above speaking to you, for you are beneath us!"

The old gentleman, rather nettled at the glibness of the lads, stuck a hook vengefully into an inoffensive worm, and threw his line.

The boys still retained their post, and after many whispered remarks and tittering, the younger thrust his handkerchief into his mouth to smother a burst of irrepressible laughter, while the other, assuming a modest and penitent air, said:

“I beg your pardon, sir.”

“What?” demanded the old gentleman sharply.

“Hope you are not offended, sir?”

“Get along with you,” replied the unfortunate angler, irritated at his want of success.

“I can tell you something, sir,” continued the lad;—“there’s no fish to be had where you are. I know the river well. Father’s very fond o’ fish; he always brings home plenty. If you like, sir, I can show you the place.”

Here his companion rolled upon the grass and kicked, perfectly convulsed with laughter, luckily hidden from the view of the now mollified old gentleman.

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"Indeed!" cried the angler: "is it far from this?"

"Not a quarter of a mile," replied the boy.

"That is nothing. I've walked eighteen this morning," said the old gentleman, packing up his apparatus. "I'll go with you directly, and thank you too, for I'm a perfect stranger in these parts."

When he had joined them, the laughing fits of the younger had subsided, although he chose to fall in the rear. "Now, to shew you how much more profitable it is to respect than to mock at your superiors in years, there's a (let me see)—there's a halfpenny for you to purchase cakes."

"Thank ye, sir," said he, and turning to his companion with a wink: "Here Bill, run to Cummins' and buy a ha'p'orth of eights—we'll make the most of it—and I'll come to you as soon as I've shown the gentleman the fish."

"Show me the place, and I'll find the fish," said the anticipating angler.

On they trudged.

"Must we go through the town?" asked his companion, as he marched with his long rod in one hand and his can in the other.

"Yes, sir, it ain't far;" and he walked on at a quicker pace, while all the crowd of rustics gazed at the extraordinary appearance of the armed Waltonian, for it happened to be market-day. After parading him in this fashion nearly through the town, he presently twitched him by his coat-sleeve.

"Look there, sir!" cried he, pointing to a well-stocked fishmonger's.

"Beautiful!—what a quantity!" exclaimed the venerable piscator.

"I thought you'd like it, sir—that's the place for fish, sir,—good morning."

"Eh! what—you young dog?"

"That's where father gets all his, I assure you, sir,—good morning," said the youth, and making a mock reverence, bounded off as fast as his legs could carry him.

SCENE XV.

"Vy, Sarah, you're drunk! I am quite ashamed o' you."

“Vell, vots the odds as long as you’re happy!”

Jack was an itinerant vender of greens, and his spouse was a peripatetic distributor of the finny tribe, (sprats, herrings or mackerel, according to the season,) and both picked up a tolerable livelihood by their respective callings.

Like the lettuces he sold, Jack had a good heart, and his attention was first attracted to the subsequent object of his election by the wit of a passing boy, who asked the damsel how she sold her carrots? Jack’s eyes were in an instant turned towards one whom he considered a competitor in the trade—when he beheld the physiognomy of his Sarah beaming with smiles beneath an abundant crop of sunny hair!

“You are a beauty and no mistake,” exclaimed the green grocer in admiration.

“Flummery!” replied the damsel—the deep blush of modesty mantling her cheeks. Jack rested his basket on a post beside her stall, and drank deep draughts of love, while Sarah’s delicate fingers were skilfully employed in undressing a pound of wriggling eels for a customer.

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“Them’s rig’lar voppers!” remarked Jack.

“Three to a pound,” answered Sarah, and so they slipped naturally into discourse upon trade, its prospects and profits, and gradually a hint of partnership was thrown out.

Sarah laughed at his insinuating address, and displayed a set of teeth that rivalled crimped skate in their whiteness—a month afterwards they became man and wife. For some years they toiled on together—he, like a caterpillar, getting a living out of cabbages, and she, like an undertaker, out of departed soles! Latterly, however, Jack discovered that his spouse was rather addicted to ‘summut short,’ in fact, that she drank like a fish, although the beverage she affected was a leetle stronger than water. Their profit (unlike Mahomet) permitted them the same baneful indulgence—and kept them both in spirits!

Their trade, however, fell off for they were often unable to carry their baskets.

The last time we beheld them, Sarah was sitting in the cooling current of a gutter, with her heels upon the curb (alas! how much did she need a curb!) while Jack, having disposed of his basket, had obtained a post in a public situation, was holding forth on the impropriety of her conduct.

“How can you let yourself down so?” said he,—“You’re drunk—drunk, Sarah, drunk!”

“On’y a little elevated, Jack.”

“Elevated!—floor’d you mean.”

“Vell; vot’s the odds as long as you’re happy?”

Jack finding all remonstrance was vain, brought himself up, and reeling forward, went as straight home—as he could, leaving his spouse (like many a deserted wife) soaking her clay, because he refused to support her!

SCENE XVI.

“Lawk a’-mercy! I’m going wrong! and got to walk all that way back again.”

A pedestrian may get robbed of his money on the highway, but a cross-road frequently robs him of time and patience; for when haply he considers himself at his journey’s end, an impertinent finger-post, offering him the tardy and unpleasant information that he has wandered from his track, makes him turn about and wheel about, like Jim Crow, in anything but a pleasant humor.

It were well if every wayfarer were like the sailor, who when offered a quid from the 'bacoo box of a smoker, said, 'I never chews the short-cut!' and in the same spirit, we strongly advise him, before he takes the short-cut to think of the returns!

Should the weather prove rainy, the hungry traveller may certainly get a wet on the road, although he starves before he reaches the wished-for inn.

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As there is likewise no more chance of meeting a good tempered guide on a cross-road, than of finding eggs and bacon, in an edible state, at least on a common—and as he can no more pull in the summer-rains than he can the reins of a runaway stallion; the result is, the inexperienced youth ludicrously represents so many pounds of ‘dripping,’ and although he may be thirsty, he will have no cause to complain that he is—dry! The best mode for an honest man to go round the country, is to take a straight-forward course, especially when the surcharged clouds do rule the horizon with sloping lines of rain! Besides, it is by no means a pleasant thing for a man with a scanty wardrobe, to find his clothes running away at a most unpleasant rate, while he can scarcely drag one clay-encumbered leg after the other.

It is a difficult trial, too, of a man’s philosophy, after trudging over a long field, to be encountered by the mockery of a ‘ha! ha!’—fence! He utters a few bitter expletives, perhaps, but nought avails his railing against such a fence as that!

The shower which makes all nature smile, only causes him to laugh—on the wrong side of his mouth, for he regards it as a temperance man does a regular soaker!

Reader! never attempt a bye-way on a wet day, with a stick and bundle at your back—(if you have a waterproof trunk, you may indeed weather it)—but go a-head on the turnpike road—the way of all mails—leaving long and short commons to the goose and donkey—and the probability is, that you may not only I make a sign before you die, but get a feed—and a shelter.

SCENE XVII.

“I’m dem’d if I can ever hit ‘em.”

It is a most extraordinary thing, ‘pon my veracity: I go out as regularly as the year, and yet I never bring down an individual bird.

I have one of the best Mantons going with such a bore! and then I use the best shot—but not being the best shot in the world myself—I suppose is the identical reason why I never hit any thing. I think it must arise from a natural defect in my sight; for when I suppose a covey as near—as my miser of an uncle—they are probably as distant—as my ninety-ninth cousin!

Such a rum go!—the other day I had a troop of fellows at my heels, laughing like mad; and what do you think?—when I doffed my shooting jacket, I found some wag had stuck the top of a printed placard on my back, with the horrid words, “A young Gentleman missing!”

It was only last week, a whole flight of sparrows rose at my very feet—I fired—bang!—no go!—but I heard a squall; and elevating my glass, lo! I beheld a cottage within a few



yards of my muzzle—the vulgar peasant took the trouble to leap his fence, and inform me I had broken his windows—of course I was compelled to pay him for his panes.

To be sure he did rather indicate a disposition to take away my gun—which I certainly should never have relinquished without a struggle—and so I forked out the dibs, in order to keep the piece! I'm quite positive, however, that the vagabond over-charged me, and I kicked, as was quite natural, you know, under such circumstances!

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I really have an imperfect notion of disposing of my shooting-tackle—but I'm such an unfortunate devil, that I really believe when I post 'em up for sale—my gun will not go off!—dem me!

SCENE XVIII.

"Have you read the leader in this paper, Mr. Brisket?"

"No! I never touch a newspaper; they are all so werry wenal, and Ovoid of sentiment!"

Bob.

O! here's a harticle agin the fools,
Vich our poor British Nation so misrules:
And don't they show 'em up with all their tricks—
By gosh! I think they'd better cut their sticks;
They never can survive such cuts as these is!

Brisket.

It's werry well; but me it never pleases;
I never reads the news, and sees no merit
In anythink as breathes a party sperrit.

Bob.

Ain't you a hinglishman? and yet not feel
A hint'rest, Brisket, in the common-weal?

Brisket.

The common-weal be—anything for me,—
There ain't no sentiment as I can see
In all the stuff these sons of—Britain prate—
They talk too much and do too little for the state.

Bob.

O! Brisket, I'm afeard as you're a 'Rad?'

Brisket.

No, honour bright! for sin' I was a lad
I've stuck thro' thick and thin to Peel, or
Vellinton—for Tories is genteeler;
But I'm no politician. No! I read
These 'Tales of Love' vich tells of hearts as bleed,
And moonlight meetins in the field and grove,
And cross-grain'd pa's and wictims of true love;
Wirgins in white a-leaping out o' winders—



Vot some old codger cotches, and so hinders—
From j'ining her true-love to tie the knot,
Who broken-hearted dies upon the spot!

Bob.

That's werry fine!—but give me politics—
There's summat stirring even in the tricks
Of them vot's in to keep the t'others out,—
How I Should like to hear the fellers spout!
For some on 'em have sich a lot o' cheek,
If they war'n't stopp'd they'd go it for a week.

Brisket.

But they're so vulgar, Bob, and call sich names
As quite the tag-rag of St. Giles' shames
The press too is so wenal, that they think
All party horrors for the sake o' chink.

Bob.

But ain't there no false lovers in them tales,
Vot hover wirgin hinnocence perwails?

Brisket.

Vy, yes, but in the end the right one's married,
And after much to do the point is carried
So give me love sincere and tender,
And all the rest's not worth a bender.

SCENE XIX.

AN EPISTLE

FROM

Samuel softly, ESQ. To his friend, Richard Gubbins, ESQ. Of Tooley street.

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O! *Dick!*

Such a misfortin' has you never heard on as come upon your friend. I'll jist give you a breef houtline of the circumstantials as near as my flurry vill let me. T'other mornin' I vips up my gun for to go a-shootin', and packin' up my hammunion, and some sanwidges, I bids adoo to this wile smoky town, with the intention of gettin' a little hair. Vell! on I goes a-visshin' and thinkin' on nothin', and happy as the bumblebees as vos a-numming around me. Vell! a'ter an hour or more's valking, not an house nor a brick vos visible.

Natur', in all her werdur', vos smilin' like a fat babby in its maternal harms! But, as somebody has it—

"Man never ain't, but al'ays to be bless'd,"

and I'm bless'd if that ain't true too, as you shall see presently. Vell! I pops at von bird and then at another; but vether the poor creturs vos unaccustom'd to guns, and so vos frighten'd, I don't know, but somehow I couldn't hit 'em no-how.

Vell! and so I vos jist a-chargin' agin ven a great he-fellow, in a ruff coat and partic'lar large viskers, accostes me (ciwilly I must say, but rayther familler)—

"Birds shy?" says he.

"Werry;—ain't hit nothin'," says I.

"I'll tell you vot it is, young gentleman," says he, "it's the unevenness o' the ground!"

"D've think so?" says I.

"Sure on it," says he; "I'm a hold sojer! Know this 'ere place, and have picked up many a good dinner in it. Look at them fe'l'fares yonder," says he, "on'y let me have a slap at 'em for you, and see if I don't finish some on 'em in the twinkling of a pig's visper."

In course I felt obleeged by sich a hoffer, and hands him the gun. Vell! I vos a-follerin' him quite pleased, ven he visks round, and puttin' the muzzle o' the hinstrument fist agin my vescoat, says he, "Now you've lent us your gun, you may as vell lend us your votch. I can't shoot any think for you till I sees vot's o'clock!"

Here vas a go!—but I see vot vas a clock in a hinstant—and no mistake. So I cotch'd hold on the two butiful chased seals and tugs it out.

"That's the time o' day!" says he, a-cockin' his hugly heye at the dial; "and now," says he, "as you seems frightened at the gun, I shall jist put it out o' harm's way."



And with that he chucks it splash, into a duck-pond, and hoff marches my hold sojer in a jiffy! I vos putrified! and fell to a-blubberin' like a hinfant.

O! Dick, vot's to be done?

You know I ham, at any rate,

Yours truly,

S. *Softly*.

SCENE XX.

The Courtship of Mr. Wiggins.

Among the very few fashionable foibles to which Mr. Wiggins was addicted, was the smoking of cigars. Attracted by the appearance of a small box marked 'Marylands—one penny each,' very much resembling lettuce-leaves with the yellow jaundice, he walked into the chandler's shop where they were displayed.

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"Let us look at them cigars," said he, and then, for the first time, glancing at the smart, good-looking mistress of the emporium, he added, "if you please, ma'am—"

"Certain'y, sir."

A pretty little fist that, howsomever! thought Wiggins, as she placed the box before him.

"Vill you have a light?"

"Thank'ye, ma'am," said he, ramming the cigar into his mouth, as if he really intended to bolt it.

She twisted a slip of waste, and lighting it, presented it to her admiring customer, for it was evident, from the rapt manner in which he scanned her, that he was deeply smitten by her personal appearance.

She colored, coughed delicately, as the smoke tickled the tonsils of her throat, and looked full at the youth. Such a look! as Wiggins asserted. "I'm afeared as the smoke is disagreeable," said he.

"Oh! dear no, not at all, I assure you; I likes it of all things. I can't abide a pipe no-how, but I've quite a prevalence (predilection?) for siggers." So Wiggins puffed and chatted away; and at last, delighted with the sprightly conversation of the lady, seated himself on the small-beer barrel, and so far forgot his economy in the fascination of his entertainer, that he purchased a second. At this favourable juncture, Mrs. Warner, (for she was a widow acknowledging five-and-twenty) ordered the grinning shop-boy, who was chopping the 'lump,' to take home them 'ere dips to a customer who lived at some distance. Wiggins, not aware of the 'ruse,' felt pleased with the absence of one who was certainly 'de trop' in the engrossing 'tete-a-tete.' We will pass over this preliminary conversation; for a whole week the same scene was renewed, and at last Mrs. Warner and Mr. Wiggins used to shake hands at parting.

"Do you hever go out?" said Wiggins.

"Sildom-werry sildom," replied the widow.

"Vos you never at the Vite Cundic, or the hEagle, or any of them places on a Sunday?"

"How can I go," replied the widow, sighing, "vithout a purtector?"

Hereupon the enamoured Wiggins said, "How happy he should be," *etc.*, and the widow said, "She was sure for her part," *etc.* and so the affair was settled. On the following Sunday the gallant Mr. Wiggins figged out, in his best, escorted the delighted and delightful Mrs. Warner to that place of fashionable resort, the White Conduit, and did the thing so handsomely, that the lady was quite charmed. Seated in one of the snug

arbors of that suburban establishment, she poured out the hot tea, and the swain the most burning vows of attachment. "Mr. Viggins, do you take sugar?" demanded the fair widow. "Yes, my haingel," answered he, emphatically. "I loves all wot's sweet," and then he gave her such a tender squeeze! "Done—do—you naughty man!" cried she, tapping him on the knuckles with the plated sugar-tongs, and then cast down her eyes with such a roguish modesty, that he

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repeated the operation for the sake of that ravishing expression. Pointing his knife at a pat of butter, he poetically exclaimed, "My heart is jist like that—and you have made a himpression on it as time will never put out!" "I did'nt think as you were quite so soft neither," said the widow. "I ham," replied the suitor—"and there," continued he, cutting a hot roll, and introducing the pat, "I melts as easily afore the glance of your beautiful heyes!" Resolved to carry on the campaign with spirit, he called for two glasses of brandy and water, stiff, and three cigars! And now, becoming sentimental and communicative, he declared, with his hand upon his heart, that "hif there vos a single thing in life as would make him completely happy, it vos a vife!"

SCENE XXI.

The Courtship of Mr. Wiggins.

Mr. Wiggins was so intoxicated with love, brandy-and-water and cigars, that he scarcely knew how he reached home. He only remembered that he was very dizzy, and that his charming widow—his guide and friend—had remonstrated with him upon the elevation of his style, and the irregularity of his progression.

With his head in his hand, and a strong "dish of tea" without milk, before him, he was composing himself for business the following morning, when an unexpected visitor was announced.

"Please, sir, there's Mrs. Warner's 's boy as wants to speak vith you," said his landlady.

"Show him up," languidly replied our lover, throwing his aching head from his right to his left hand.

"Vell, Jim, vot's the matter!" demanded he—"How's your missus?"

"She ain't no missus o' mine no longer," replied Jim.

"How?"

"I tell you vot it is, sir, she promised to give me a shillin'-aweek an' my feed; an' she ain't done vun thing nor t' other; for I'm bless'd if I ain't starved, and ain't seen the color of her money sin' I bin there. Father's goin' to summon her."

"It's some mistake, sure?"



"It's no mistake tho'," persisted Jim, "an' I can tell you she ain't got a farden to bless herself vith!—an' she's over head-and-ears in debt too, I can tell you; an' she pays nobody—puttin' 'em all off, vith promises to pay wen she's married."

"My heye!" exclaimed the excited Wiggins, thrown all a-back by this very agreeable intention upon his funds.

"More nor that, sir," continued the revengeful Jim, "I know she thinks as she's hooked a preshus flat, an' means to marry you outright jist for vot she can get. An' von't she scatter the dibs?—that's all; she's the extravagantest 'ooman as hever I came anigh to."

"But, (dear me!) she has a good stock—?"

"Dummies, sir, all dummies."

"Dummies?"

"Yes, sir; the sugars on the shelves is all dummies—wooden 'uns, done up in paper! The herrin' tub is on'y got a few at top—the rest's all shavins an' waste.—There's plenty o' salt to be sure—but the werry soap-box is all made up."



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"And so's my mind!" emphatically exclaimed the deluded Wiggins, slapping the breakfast-table with his clenched fist.

"Jim—Jim—you're a honest lad, and there's half-a-crown for you—"

"Thank'ye for me, sir," said the errand-boy, grinning with delight—"and—and you'll cut the missus, Sir!"

"For ever!—"

"Hooray! I said as how I'd have my rewenge!" cried the lad, and pulling the front of his straight hair, as an apology for a bow, he retreated from the room.

"What an escape!" soliloquized Wiggins— "Should n't I ha' bin properly hampered? that's all. No more insinuating widows for me!—"

And so ended the Courtship of Mr. Wiggins.

SCENE XXII.

The Itinerant Musician.

A wandering son of Apollo, with a shocking bad hat, encircled by a melancholy piece of rusty crape, and arrayed in garments that had once shone with renovated splendour in that mart of second-hand habiliments 'ycleped Monmouth-street, was affrighting the echoes of a fashionable street by blowing upon an old clarionet, and doing the 'Follow, hark!' of Weber the most palpable injustice.

The red hand of the greasy cook tapped at the kitchen-window below, and she scolded inaudibly—but he still continued to amuse—himself, as regardless of the cook's scolding as of the area-railing against which he leaned, tuning his discordant lay.

His strain indeed appeared endless, and he still persevered in torturing the ambient air with, apparently, as little prospect of blowing himself out as an asthmatic man would possibly have of extinguishing a smoky link with a wheeze—or a hungry cadger without a penny!

The master of the mansion was suffering under a touch of the gout, accompanied by a gnawing tooth-ache!—The horrid noise without made his trembling nerves jangle like the loose strings of an untuned guitar.

A furious tug at the bell brought down the silken rope and brought up an orbicular footman.



“William”

“Yes, sir.”

“D—— that, *etc.*! and send him to, *etc.*!”

“Yes, sir.”

And away glided the liveried rotundity.—

Appearing at the street-door, the musician took his instrument from his lips, and, approaching the steps, touched his sorry beaver with the side of his left hand.

“There’s three-pence for you,” said the menial, “and master wishes you’d move on.”

“Threepence, indeed!” mumbled the man. “I never moves on under sixpence: d’ye think I doesn’t know the walley o’ peace and quietness?”

“Fellow!” cried the irate footman, with a pompous air—“Master desires as you’ll go on.”

“Werry well”—replied the other, touching his hat, while the domestic waddled back, and closed the door, pluming himself upon having settled the musician; but he had no sooner vanished, than the strain was taken up again more uproariously than ever.

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Out he rushed again in a twinkling—

“Fellow! I say—man! vot do you mean?”

“Vy, now didn’t you tell me to go on?”

“I mean’t go off.”

“Then vy don’t you speak plain hinglish,” said the clarionist; “but, I say, lug out t’other browns, or I shall say vot the flute said ven his master said as how he’d play a tune on him.”

“Vot vos that?”

“Vy, he’d be blow’d if he would!”

“You’re a owdacious fellow.”

“Tip!” was the laconic answer, accompanied by an expressive twiddling of the fingers.

“Vell, there then,” answered the footman, reluctantly giving him the price of his silence.

“Thank’ye,” said the musician, “and in time to come, old fellow, never do nothin’ by halves—’cept it’s a calve’s head!”

SCENE XXIII.

Oh! lor, here’s a norrid thing.’

The Confessions of a Sportsman.

“Vell, for three year, as sure as the Septembers comes, I takes the field, but somehow or another I never takes nothin’ else! My gun’s a good ’un and no mistake!—Percussions and the best Dartford, and all that too. My haim ain’t amiss neither; so there’s a fault somewhere, that’s certain. The first time as I hentered on the invigorating and manly sport, I valks my werry legs off, and sees nothin’ but crows and that ’ere sort o’ small game.

“I vos so aggrawated, that at last I lets fly at ’em in werry spite, jist as they vos a sendin’ of their bills into an orse for a dinner.

“Bang! goes the piece;—caw! caw! goes the birds; and I dessay I did for some on ’em, but I don’t know, for somehow I vos in sich a preshus hurry to bag my game, that I



jumps clean over vun bank, and by goles! plump into a ditch on t'other side, up to my werry neck!

“The mud stuck to me like vax; and findin’ it all over vith me, and no chance o’ breaking a cover o’ this sort, I dawdled about ’till dusk, and vos werry glad to crawl home and jump into bed. I vos so ‘put out’ that I stayed at home the rest o’ that season.

“The second year come, and my hardor vos agin inflamed. ‘Cotch me a-shootin’ at crows,’ says I.—Vell, away I goes a-vhistling to myself, ven presently I see a solentary bird on the wing; ‘a pariwidge, by jingo!’ says I—I cocks—presents, and hits it! Hooray! down it tumbles, and afore I could load and prime agin, a whole lot o’ ’em comes out from among the trees. ‘Here’s luck’ says I; and jist shouldered my piece, ven I gets sich a vop behind as sent me at full length.

“‘Vot’s that for?’ says I.

“‘Vot are you a shootin’ at my pigeons for?’ says a great hulking, farmering-looking fellow.

“A hexplanation follered; and in course I paid the damage, vich stood me a matter of a suv’rin, for he said he’d take his davy as how it vos a valuable tumbler!—I never sees a ‘go’ o’ rum and vater but vot I thinks on it. This vos a sickener.

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“The third year I vos hout agin as fresh as a daisy, ven I made a haim at a sparrer, or a lark, or summit o’ that kind—hit it, in course, and vos on the p’int o’ going for’ard, ven lo! on turning my wision atop o’ the bank afore me, I seed a norrid thing!—a serpent, or a rattle-snake, or somethink a-curling itself up and a hissing like fun!

“I trembled like a haspen-leaf, and-didn’t I bolt as fast as my werry legs would carry me, that’s all?

“Since that time I may say, with the chap in the stage-play, that my parent has kept myself, his only son, at home, for I see no sport in sich rigs, and perfer a little peace at home to the best gun in the field!”—