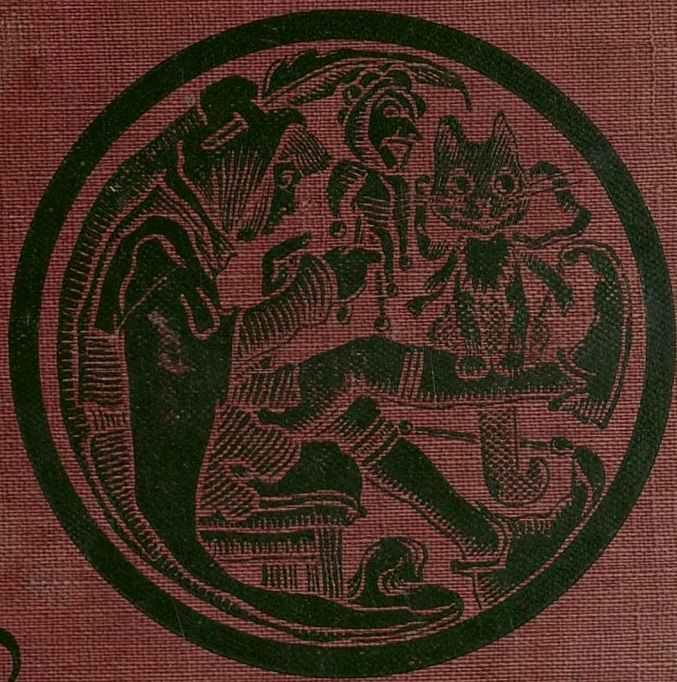


Absurd Ditties

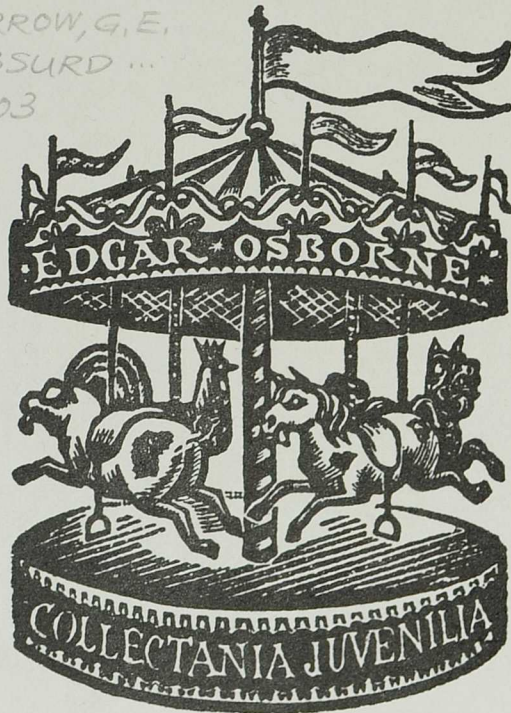
By G. E. FARRROW



Illustrations
By

JOHN HASSALL

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FARROW, G. E.
ABSURD ...
1903



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With much Edith's love

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ABSURD DITTIES  
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THESE
TO
MY FRIEND
T. FRANCIS VERE FOSTER.

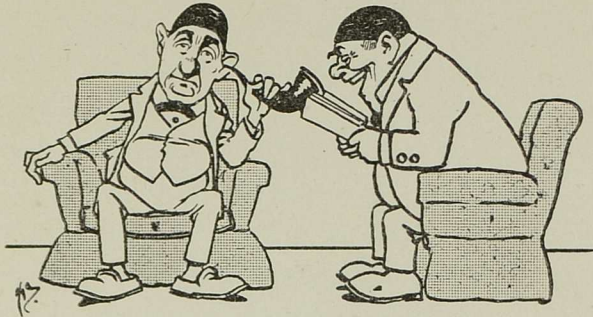
G. E. F.

ABSURD DITTIES

BY

G. E. FARROW

Author of "The Wallypug of Why" etc.



WITH PICTORIAL ABSURDITIES

BY

JOHN HASSALL



LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS, LTD.
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ABSURD DITTIES.

I.

THAT OF MR. JUSTICE DEAR.

“**T**IS really very, *very* queer!”

Ejaculated Justice Dear,

“That, day by day, I’m sitting here
Without a single ‘case.’

This is the twenty-second pair
Of white kid gloves, I do declare,
I’ve had this month. I can *not* wear
White kids at such a pace.”



His Lordship thought the matter o'er.
 "Crimes ne'er have been so few before;
 Not long ago, I heard a score
 Of charges every day;
 And now—dear me! how *can* it be?" —
 And, pondering thus, went home to tea.
 (He lives Bayswater way.)

A frugal mind has Justice Dear
 (Indeed, I've heard folks call him "near"),
 And, caring naught for jibe or jeer,
 He rides home on a bus.
 It singularly came to pass,
This day, he chanced to ride, alas!
 Beside two of the burglar class;
 And one addressed him thus:

"We knows yer, Mr. Justice Dear,
 You've often giv' us 'time'—d'ye hear?—
 And now your pitch we're going to queer,
 We criminals has *struck!*
 We're on the 'honest livin'' tack,
 An' not another crib we'll crack,
 So Justices will get the sack!
 How's *that*, my legal buck?"

This gave his Lordship quite a fright,
 He had not viewed it in that light.
 "Dear me!" he thought, "these men are right,
 I'd better smooth them down.
 "Let's not fall out, my friends," said he,
 "Continue with your burglarie;
 Your point of view I clearly see.
 Ahem! Here's half-a-crown."

* * *



The morning sun shone bright and clear
 On angry Mr. Justice Dear;
 His language was not good to hear;
 With rage he'd like to burst.

His watch and chain, and several rings,
His silver-plate, and other things,
Had disappeared on magic wings—
They'd burgled his house first!

II.

THAT OF THE LATE MR. BROWN.

LIFE has its little ups, and downs,
As has been very truly said,
And Mr. Brown,
Of Camden Town
(Alas! the gentleman is dead),
Found out how quickly Fortune's smile
May turn to Fortune's frown;
And how a sudden rise in life
May bring a person down.

He lived—as I remarked before—
Within a highly genteel square
At Camden Town,
Did Mr. Brown
(He had been born and brought up there);
But—waxing richer year by year—
Grew prosperous and fat,
And left the square at Camden Town
To take a West End flat.

It was a very stylish flat,
With such appointments on each floor
As Mr. Brown
At Camden Town
Had never, never seen before :
Electric lights; hydraulic lifts,
To take one up and down;
And telephones *to everywhere*.
(These quite bewildered Brown.)

The elevator pleased him most;
To ride in it was perfect bliss.
“I say!” cried Brown,
“At Camden Town
We’d nothing half as good as this.”
From early morn till dewy eve
He spent his time—did Brown—
In being elevated up,
And elevated down.

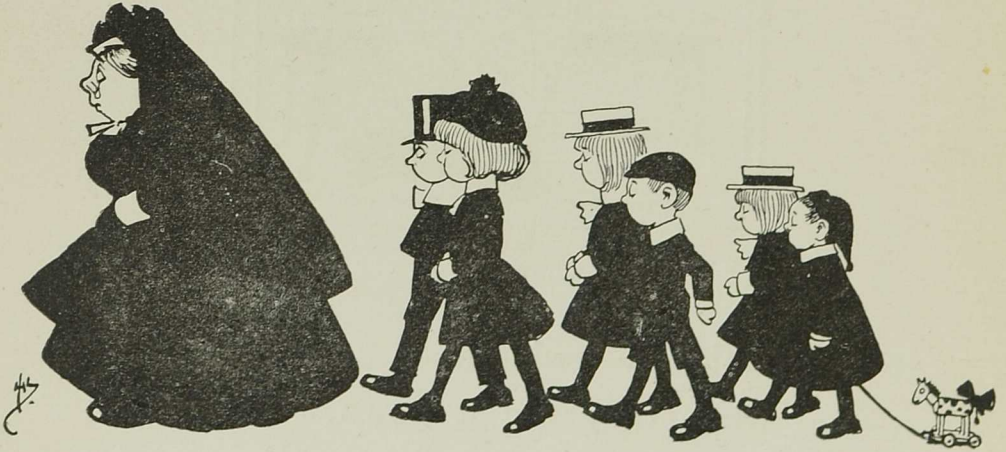
One night—I cannot tell you why—
When all the household soundly slept,
Poor Mr. Brown
(Late Camden Town)
Into the elevator stepped;



It stuck midway 'twixt floor and floor,
 And when they got it down,
 They found that it was all U.—P.
 With suffocated Brown.

Yes, life *is* full of ups and downs,
 As someone said in days of yore.
 They buried Brown
 At Camden Town
 (The place where he had lived before);

And now, alas! a-lack-a-day!
In black and solemn gowns,
Disconsolate walk Mrs. Brown
And all the little Browns.



III.

THAT OF OUR OLD FRIEND BISHOP P.

(With many thanks to Mr. W. S. Gilbert for his kind assurances that the inclusion of these verses causes him no offence.)

TWICE Mr. Gilbert sang to you
Of Bishop P., of Rum-ti-foo;
Now, by your leave, I'll do that too,
 Altho' I'm bound to fail
(So you will tell me to my face)
In catching e'en the slightest trace
Of true Gilbertian charm, or grace,
 To decorate my tale.

Still, I will tell, as best I can,
How Bishop Peter—worthy man—
 Is getting on by now.
Now where shall I begin? Let's see?
You know, I think, that Bishop P.
(Wishful to please his flock was he)
 Once took the bridegroom's vow.

You doubtless recollect, His Grace
Wed Piccadil'lee of that place,
And Peterkins were born apace,
 When she became his bride.
In fact I'm told that there were three,
When dusky Piccadillillee,
In odour of sanctittittee,
 Incontinently died.



Some years have passed since her demise
But Bishop Peter—bless his eyes—

That saintly prelate, kind, and wise,
Is excellently well.
And, not so very long ago,
He sought to wed—this gallant beau
(His faithful flock desired it so)—
Another Island belle.

There was one difficulty, this:
Our Peter wooed a dusky Miss
Who (tho' inclined to married bliss)
Declared him rather old;
Who giggled at his bald, bald head,
And even went so far, 'tis said,
As to decline His Grace to wed,
Did Lollipoppee bold.

But, one day, on that far-off reef,
A merchant vessel came to grief,
And all the cargo—to be brief—
Was washed upon the shore.
Most of the crew, I grieve to state,
Except the Bos'un and the Mate,
Were lost. Theirs was a woesome fate,
And one we all deplore.

Amongst the wreckage on the strand,
 A box of "Tatcho" came to land,
 Which, there half buried in the sand,
 The Bishop—singing hymns
 Amongst his flock down by the shore—
 Discovered, and they open tore
 The case. Behold! The contents bore
 The magic name of Sims.

"What! G. R. Sims?" quoth Bishop P.
 (Visions of "Billy's Rose" had he),
 "Good gracious now! It Sims to me
 I've heard that name before."
 (Oh, well bred flock! there was not one
 Who did not laugh at this poor pun;
 They revelled in their Bishop's fun.
 They even cried "Encore!")

Then spake the Mate (whose name was Ted):
 "Now this 'ere stuff, so I've 'eard said,
 Will make the 'air grow on yer 'ead
 As thick as any mat."
 "Indeed?" quoth worthy Bishop P.;
 "Then 'tis the very thing for me,

For I am bald, as you may see.”

His Grace removed his hat.

The Bo’sun quickly broke the neck
Of one large bottle from the wreck,
Proceeding then His Grace to deck

With towels (careful man,
This was to save his coat of black,
For “Tatcho” running down one’s back
Is clearly off its proper tack).

And then the fun began.



For Ted he rubbed the liquid through,
As hard as ever he could do.

And worthy Jack rubbed some in too
(The Bo'sun's name was Jack).

And day by day they did the same.

Now "Tatcho" ne'er belies its fame,
And soon a little hair there came
(His Lordship's hair is black).

Miss Lollipoppee views with glee

The change in worthy Bishop P.

Now quite agreed to wed is she

(The banns were called to-day).

No "just cause or impediment"

Can interfere with their content;

The natives' loyal sentiment

Is summed up in "Hooray!"

IV.

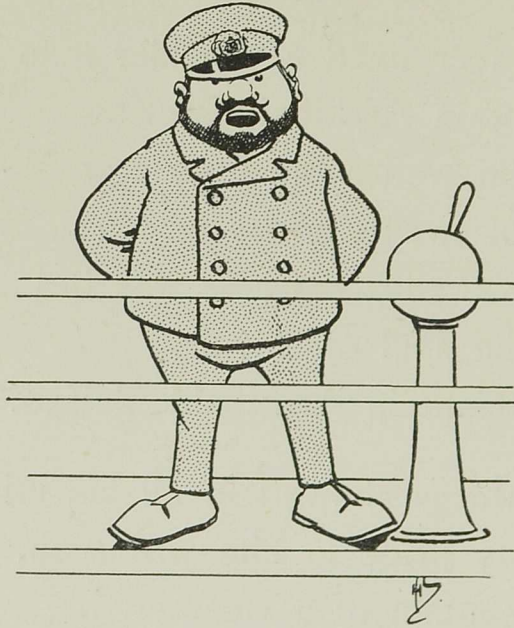
THAT OF CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD MCKAN.

THERE never lived a worthier man
Than Captain Archibald McKan.
I knew him well some time ago
(I speak of twenty years or so);
Sans peur et sans reproche was he;
He was the soul of chivalry,
Was Captain Archibald McKan.

True greatness showed in all his mien,
No haughty pride in him was seen,
Though, captain of a steamer, he,
From Greenwich unto far Chelsea,
That, spite of weather, wind, and tide,
From early Spring to Autumn plied,
Brave, modest Captain A. McKan.

However sternly might his roar
Reverberate from shore to shore
Of "Ease her! Back her! Hard astern!"

His duty done, with smile he'd turn
And be most affable and mild
To every woman, man, or child
Aboard, would Captain A. McKan.



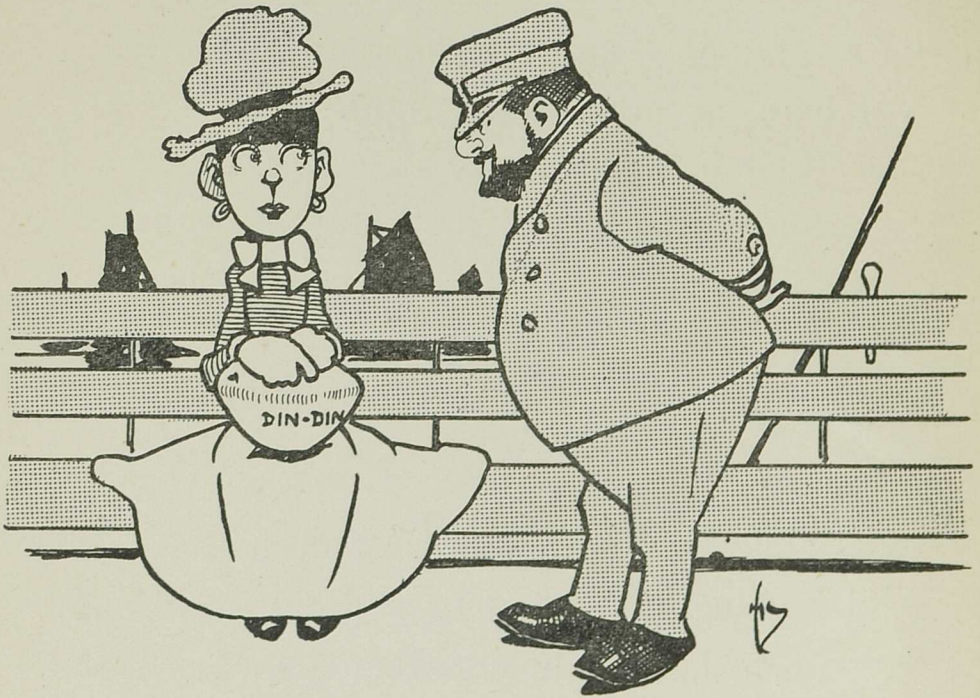
He reassured the anxious fears
Of nervous ladies—pretty dears!—
He in his pocket carried toys
And sweets for little girls and boys;
He talked in quite familiar way
With men who voyaged day by day,
Did Captain Archibald McKan.

In fact, as I've already said,
 No man alive—or even dead—
 Was freer from reproach than he;
 And yet of Fortune's irony
 (Though such a very decent sort)
 This worthy man was e'en the sport.
 Alas! was Captain A. McKan!

“*Cherchez la femme.*” The phrase is trite,
 Yet here, as usual, 'twas right.
 Our Captain noted every day
 A certain girl rode all the way
 From Greenwich Pier to Wapping Stair.
 “It *cannot* be to take the air,”
 Thought Captain Archibald McKan.

She calmly sat, with downcast eye;
 And looking both demure and shy;
 Yet, once, he caught a roving glance,
 Which made his pulses wildly dance;
 And,—though as modest as could be—
 “I do believe she's gone on me,”
 Considered Captain A. McKan.

“Why else should she persistently
Select *my* boat alone?” thought he;
“I *wonder* why she comes? I’ll ask,
Though ’tis a very ticklish task.”
So, walking forward with a smile,
Beside the lass he stood awhile,
Then coughed, did Captain A. McKan.



“You’re frequently aboard my boat,”
Began he; “she’s the best afloat;
But, pray, may I enquire, *do* you

So *very* much admire the view?"

"Er—moderately, sir," said she.

"Exactly so! It *must* be *me!*"

Decided Captain A. McKan.

"Come, tell me, Miss, now no one's by,"

He whispered; "Won't you tell me why

You come so oft? There's naught to dread.'

The lady looked surprised, and said:

"My husband works at Wapping Stair,

I daily take his dinner there."

Poor Captain Archibald McKan!

V.

THAT OF MATILDA.

YES, I love you, dear Matilda,
But you may not be my bride,
And the obstacles are many
Which have caused me to decide.
Firstly, what is *most* annoying,
And I'm not above confessing,
Is, that I think you indolent,
And over-fond of dressing.
I've known you spend an hour or two
In a-sitting on a chair,
And a-fussing and attending
To your toilet or your hair.

There's another little matter—
You may say a simple thing—

Yet, Matilda, I must own it,
I object to hear you sing.
For the sounds you make in singing
Are so *very* much like squalling,
That the only term appropriate
To them is caterwauling.
Indeed, I've never *heard* such horrid
Noises in my life,
And I'd *certainly* not tolerate
Such singing in a wife.

And, Matilda dear, your language!
It is really *very* bad;
The expressions which you use at times,
They make me feel quite sad.
It is very, very shocking,
But I do not mind declaring
That I've heard some sounds proceeding
From your lips so much like swearing,
That I've had to raise a finger,
And to close at least *one* ear,
For I couldn't feel quite certain
What bad words I mightn't hear.



But worse than this, Matilda:
I hear, with pious grief,
Many rumours that Matilda
Is no better than a thief.

And I'm shocked to find my darling
 So entirely lost to feeling,
 As to go and give her mind up
 Unto picking and a-stealing.
 Oh, Matilda! pray take warning,
 For a prison cell doth yearn
 For a person that appropriates
 And takes what isn't her'n.

And the culminating blow is this:

You stay out late at night.

Now, Matilda dear, you must confess

To do this is *not* right.

Where you go to, dear, or what you do,

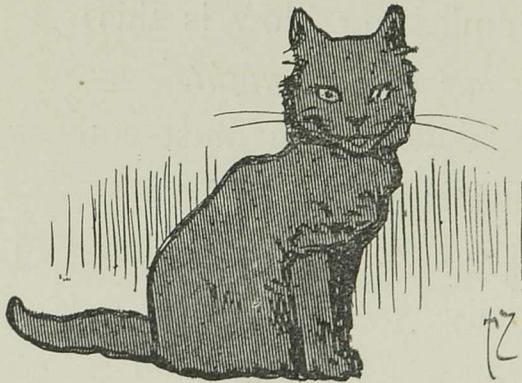
There really is *no* telling,

And with rage and indignation

My fond foolish heart is swelling.

* * *

Yet the faults which I've enumera-
Ted can't be wondered at,
When one realises clearly
That "Matilda"—is a *cat*.



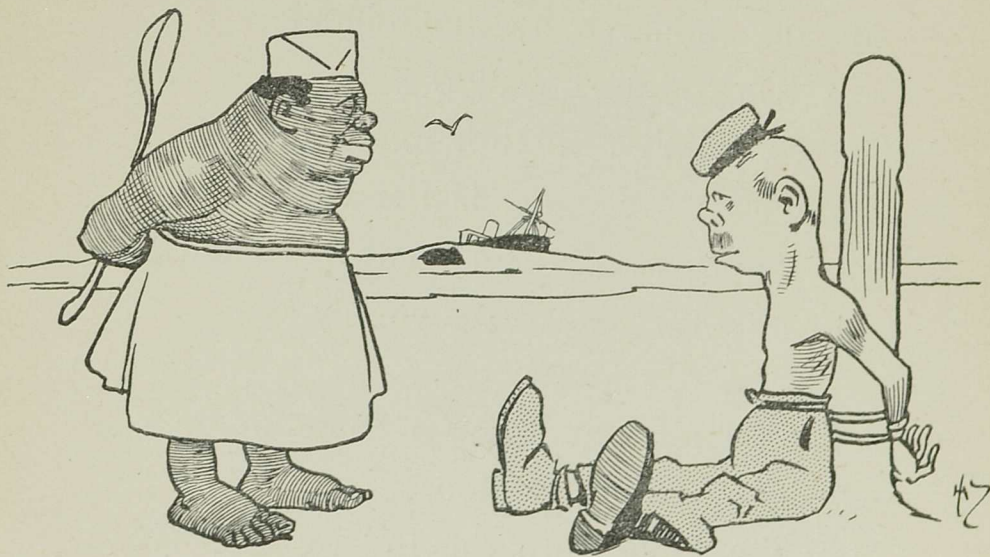
VI.

THAT OF "DOCTOR" PATRICK O'DOOLEY.

I_N the South Pacific Ocean
In an oiland called Koodoo,
An' the monarch ov thot oiland
Iz King Hulla-bulla-loo.
Oi wuz docthor to thot monarch
Wonct. Me name iz Pat O'Dooley.
Yis, you're roight. Oi come from Oirland,
From the County Ballyhooly.

An' Oi'll tell yez how Oi came to be
A docthor in Koodoo;
May the Divil burn the ind ov me,
If ivery word's not throe.
Oi wuz sailin' to Ameriky,
Aboard the "Hilly Haully,"
Which wuz drouned in the ocean,
For the toime ov year wuz squally.

An' Oi floated on a raft, sor,
 For some twinty days or more,
 Till Oi cum to Koodoo Island,
 Phwich Oi'd niver seen before.
 But the natives ov thot counthry,
 Sure, would take a lot ov batin',
 For a foine young strappin' feller
 They think moighty pleasint atin'.



An' they wint an' told the King, sor,
 Him called Hulla-bulla-loo.
 "Ye come from Oirland, sor?" sez he.
 "Bedad!" sez Oi, "thot's true."

Thin he whispered to the cook, sor;
An' the cook he giv me warnin':
"It's Oirish *stew* you'll be," sez he,
"To-morrow, come the marnin'."

But to-morrow, be the Powers, sor,
The King wuz moighty bad,
Wid most odjus pains insoide him,
An' they nearly drove him mad;
So he sint a little note, sor,
By the cook, apologoizin'
For not cooking me that day, sor,
Wid politeness most surprisin'!

An' Oi wrote him back a letther,
Jist expressin' my regret,
Thot Oi shouldn't hiv the honor,
Sor, ov bein' cooked an' et;
An' Oi indid up the letther
Wid a midical expresshin,
As would lead him to imagine
Oi belonged to the professhin.

Och! he sint for me *at wonct*, sor.
"If ye'll *only* save me loife,"

Sez he, "Oi'll give yez money,
 An' a most attractive woife,
 An' ye won't be in the *menu*
 Ov me little dinner party
 If ye'll only pull me round," sez he,
 "An' make me sthrong an' hearty."

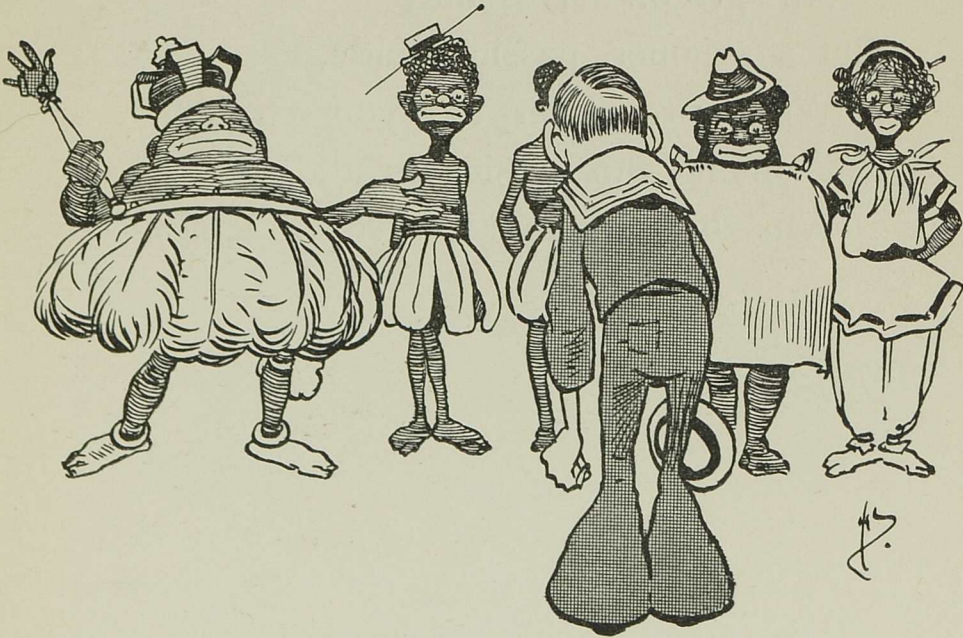
So Oi made a diagnosis
 Wid my penknife an' some sthring
 (Though Oi hadn't got a notion
 How they made the blessid thing;
 But Oi knew thot docthors did it
 Phwen they undertook a case, sor),
 An' Oi saw his pulse, an' filt his tongue,
 An' pulled a sarious face, sor.

Thin Oi troied a bit ov blarney.
 "Plaze, yer gracious Madjisty,
 It's yer brains iz much too big, sor,
 For yer cranium, ye see."
 But the King he looked suspicious,
 An' he giv a moighty frown, sor.
 "The pain's not there at all," sez he,
 "*The pain is further down, sor.*"

"Oi'm commin', sor, to thot," sez Oi.

"Lie quiet, sor, an' still,
While Oi go an' make yer Madjisty
Me cilebratid pill."

In the pocket ov me jacket
Oi had found an old ship's biscuit
("An' Oi think," sez Oi, "'twill do," sez Oi,
"At any rate Oi'll risk it").



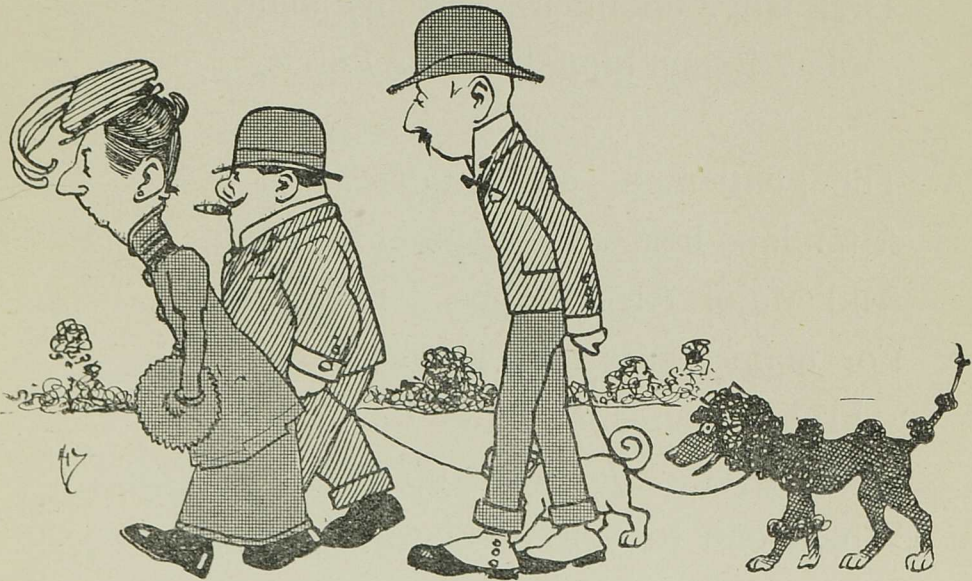
The biscuit it wuz soft an' black
By raisin ov the wet,
An' it made the foinist pill, sor,
Thot Oi've iver seen as yet;

It wuz flavoured rayther sthrongly
Wid salt wather an' tobaccy,
But, be jabers, sor, it did the thrick,
An' *cured* the blissid blackie!

The King wuz as deloighted,
An' as grateful as could be,
An' he got devorced from all his woives,
An' giv *the lot* to me;
But a steamer, passin' handy,
Wuz more plazin' to "yours trooly,"
An' among the passingers aboard
Wuz the "Docthor",—Pat O'Dooley.

VII.

THAT OF MY AUNT BETSY.



YOU may have met, when walking out
In Kensington, or thereabout,
A lady (angular and plain)
Escorted by an ancient swain,
Or, possibly, by two,

Each leading by a piece of string
A lazy, fat, and pampered thing
Supposed to be a dog. You may,
Perhaps, have noticed them, I say,
 And, if so, thought, "They do
Present unto the public gaze
 A singular appearance—very."
That lady, doubtless, was my aunt,
 Miss Betsy Jane Priscilla Perry.

The gentleman—or gentlemen—
Attending her were Captain Venne
And Major Alec Stubbs. These two
For many years had sought to woo
 My maiden aunt, Miss P.,
Who never *could* make up her mind
Which one to marry, so was kind
To one or other—each in turn—
Thus causing jealous pangs to burn.
 I incidentally
Should mention here the quadrupeds—
 Respectively called "Popsey Petsey,"—
A mongrel pug;—and "Baby Heart,"—
 A poodle—both belonged to Betsy.

You'd notice Captain Venne was tall,
And Major Stubbs compact and small;
These two on nought could e'er agree,
Except in this—they hated me,
Sole nephew to Aunt Bess.

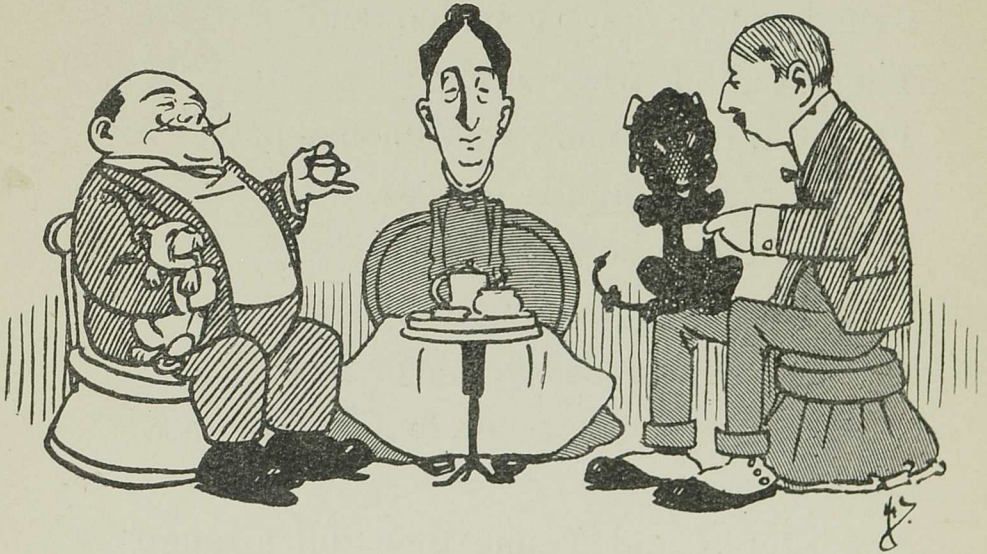
My aunt was very wealthy, and
I think you'll quickly understand
The situation, when I say
That Captain Venne was on half-pay,
And Major Stubbs on *less*.

To me it was so very plain
And evident, I thought it funny
My aunt should never, never see
They wanted, not her, but her money.

And Stubbs and Venne they did arrange
A plan, intended to estrange
My aunt and me. They told her lies;
And one day, to my great surprise,
A letter came for me.

Requesting me to "call at six,"
For aunt had "heard of all the tricks
I had been up to," and "was sad
At hearing an account so bad."

I went—in time for tea.
 My aunt was looking so severe
 I felt confused, a perfect noodle
 While Major Stubbs caressed the pug,
 And Captain Venne he nursed the poodle.



“Dear Major Stubbs,” my aunt began,
 “Has told me all—quite all he *can*—
 Of your sad goings on. Oh, fie!
 Where will you go to when you die,
 You naughty wicked boy?”
 And Captain Venne has told me too
 What *very* dreadful things you do.
 Of course I cannot but believe

My two dear friends. *They'd* not deceive,
 Nor characters destroy,
 Without a cause. Go, leave me now,
 You'll see my purpose shall not falter
 I'll send at once for Lawyer Slymm,
 My latest will to bring and alter."

I fear I lost my temper—quite;
I know I said what wasn't right;
 You see, I felt it hard to bear
 (And really, I contend, unfair),
 To be misjudged like this.
 I tried to argue, but 'twas vain,
 "My mind is fixed—my way is plain,"
 My aunt declared. "Then hear me now!"
 I hotly cried, "There's naught, I vow,
 To cause you to dismiss
 Your nephew thus, but, as you please.
 And if, perchance, you wish to do it,
 Your money leave to your two friends;
 They want it, and—they're welcome to it."

I hurried out. I slammed the door.
 I vowed I'd never call there more.

And neither did I, in my pride,
Till six weeks since, when poor aunt died,
And then, from Lawyer Slymm
I got a little note, which said:
“The will on Tuesday will be read.”
I went, and found that “Baby Heart”
From Captain Venne must ne'er depart—
She had been left to him;
While “Popsey Petsey” Major Stubbs
Received as his sole legacy
And that was all. The money—oh!
The money—that was left to *me*.

VIII.

THAT OF THE TUCK-SHOP WOMAN.

OF all the schools throughout the land
St. Vedast's is the oldest, and
 All men are proud
 (And justly proud)
Who claim St. Vedast's as their *Al-*
Ma mater. There I went a cal-
Low youth. Don't think I'm going to paint
The glories of this school—I ain't.

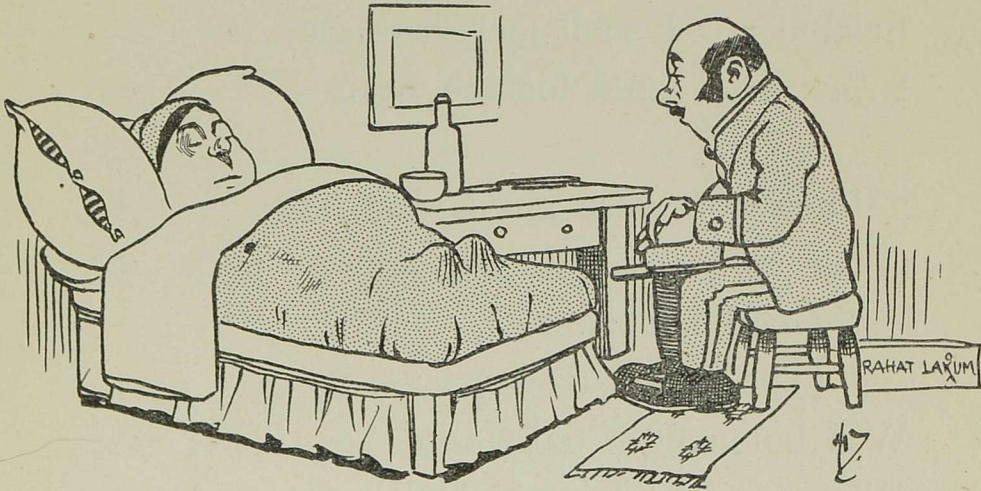
The Rev. Cecil Rowe, M.A.,
Was classics Master in my day,
 A learned man
 (A worthy man)
In fact you'd very rarely see
A much more clever man than he.
But if you think you'll hear a lot
About this person,—you will not.

The porter was a man named Clarke;
We boys considered it a lark
 To play him tricks
 (The usual tricks
Boys play at public schools like this),
And Clarke would sometimes take amiss
These tricks. But don't think I would go
And only sing of him. Oh, no!

This ditty, I would beg to state,
Professes likewise to relate
 The latter words
 (The solemn words)
Of her who kept the tuck-shop at
St. Vedast's. I'd inform you that
The porter was her only son
(The reason was—she had but one).

For many years the worthy soul
Had kept the shop—the well-loved goal
 Of little boys
 (And larger boys)
Who bought the tarts, and ginger pop
And other things sold at her shop—

But, feebler growing year by year,
She felt her end was drawing near.



She therefore bade her son attend,
That she might whisper, ere her end,
A startling tale
(A secret tale)

That on her happiness had preyed,
And heavy on her conscience weighed
For many a year. "Alas! my son,"
She sighed, "injustice has been done.

"Let not your bitter anger rise,
Nor gaze with sad reproachful eyes
On one who's been

(You *know* I've been)

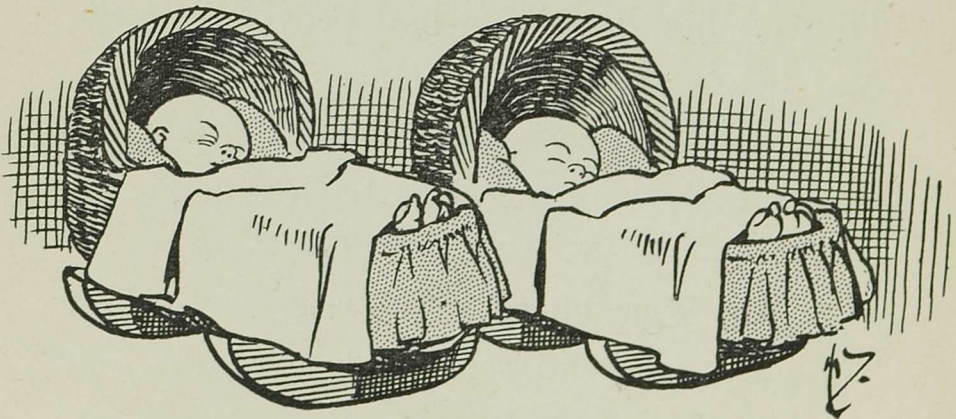
For many years your mother, dear;
 And though you think my story queer,
 Believe—or I shall feel distressed—
 I *thought* I acted for the best.

“When you were but a tiny boy
 (Your mother's and your father's joy),

Good Mr. Rowe

(The Revd. Rowe)

Was but a little baby too,
 Who very much resembled you,
 And, being poorly off in purse,
 I took this baby out to nurse.



“Alike in features and in size—
So like, indeed, the keenest eyes

Would find it hard

(Extremely hard)

To tell the t’other from the one——”

“Hold! though your tale is but begun,”

The porter cried, “a man may guess
The secret of your keen distress.

“You changed the babes at nurse, and I
(No wonder that you weep and sigh),

Tho’ callèd Clarke

(School Porter Clarke),

Am *really* Mr. Rowe. I see.

And he, of course, poor man, is *me*,

While all the fortune he has known

Through these long years should be my own.

“Oh falsely, falsely, have you done

To call me all this time your son;

I’ve always felt

(Distinctly felt)

That I was born to better things

Than portering, and such-like, brings,

I'll hurry now, and tell poor Rowe
What, doubtless, he will feel a blow."

"Stay! stay!" the woman cried, "'tis true,
My poor ill-treated boy, that you

Have every right

(Undoubted right)

To feel aggrieved. I *had* the chance
Your future welfare to advance
By changing babes. I knew I'd rue it,
My poor boy—but—*I didn't do it.*"

IX.

THAT OF S. P. IDERS WEBBE, SOLICITOR.

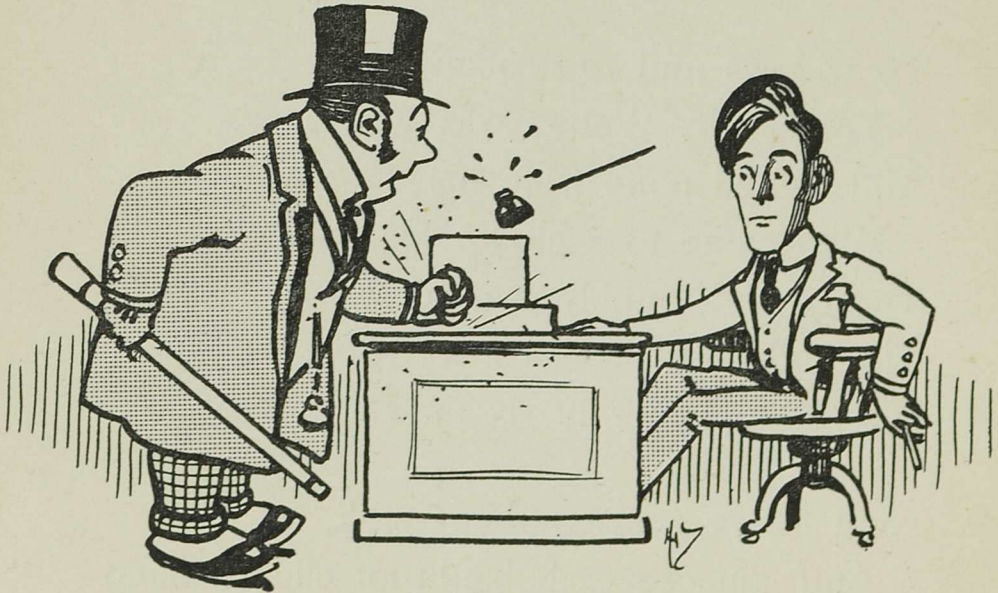
YOUNG Mr. S. P. Iders Webbe,
Solicitor, of Clifford's Inn,
Sat working in his chambers, which
Were far removed from traffic's din.
To those in legal trouble he
Lent ready ear of sympathy—
And six-and-eightpence was his fee.

To widows and to orphans, too,
Young Mr. Webbe was very nice,
And turned none from his door away
Who came to seek for his advice :
To these, I humbly beg to state—
The sad and the disconsolate—
His fee was merely six-and-eight.

He'd heave a sympathetic sigh,
And squeeze each bankrupt client's hand

While listening to a tale of woe
Salt tears within his eyes would stand.
Naught, naught his sympathies could stem,
And he would only charge—ahem!—
A paltry six-and-eight to *them*.

This gentleman, as I observed,
Was calmly seated at his work,
When, from the waiting-room, a card
Was brought in by the junior clerk.
“Nathaniel Blobbs? Pray ask him to
Step in,” said Webbe. “How do you do?
A very pleasant day to you.”



“A pleasant day be hanged!” said Blobbs,
A wealthy man and very stout
(That he was boiling o’er with rage
There could not be the slightest doubt).
“I’m given, sir, to understand
You’re suitor for my daughter’s hand.
An explanation I demand!

“I *know* your lawyer’s tricks, my man;
In courting of my daughter Jane—
Who’s rather plain and not too young—
My money’s what *you* seek to gain.
Confound you, sir!” the man did roar.
“My daughter Jane is no match for
A beggarly solicitor!”

At words like these *most* gentlemen
Would really have been somewhat riled;
But do not think that Mr. Webbe
Was angry. No; he merely *smiled*.
But, oh! my friends, the legal smile
Is not to trust. ’Tis full of guile.
(*So* smiles the hungry crocodile.)

“I see,” Webbe most politely said,
“My worthy sir, *your* point of view.
You’re wealthy; I am poor. Of course,
What I proposed would never do.
If only, now, I’d property,
And *you* were—well, as poor as *me*——”
“Pooh! that,” cried Blobbs, “can *never* be.”

“Think not?” said Webbe. “Well, p’r’aps
you’re right.

And so—there’s nothing more to say.
You *must* be going? What! so soon?
I’m *sorry*, sir, you cannot stay!”
Blobbs went—and slammed the outer door.
Webbe calmly made the bill out for
The interview—a lengthy score.

He charged—at highest legal rate—
For every word he’d uttered; and
He even put down six-and-eight
“To asking for Miss Blobbs’s hand”;
Next, in the Court of Common Pleas
A “Breach of Promise” case, with ease,
He instituted—if you please.

He gained the day, because the maid
Was over age, the Judge averred,
And Blobbs was forced to "grin and pay,"
Although he vowed 'twas *most* absurd.
The "damages," of course, were slight;
But "legal costs" by no means light.
(Webbe shared in these as was his right.)

Outside the Court indignant Blobbs
Gave vent to some expressions which
Were libellous, and quickly Webbe
Was "down on him" for "using sich."
Once more the day was Webbe's, and he.
By posing as a damagee,
Obtained a thousand pounds, you see.

With this round sum he then contrived
To buy a vacant small estate
Adjoining Blobbs, who went and did
Something illegal with a gate.
Webbe "had him up" for *that*, of course;
Then something else (about a horse),
And later on a water-course.

He sued for this, he sued for that,
 Till action upon action lay,
 And in the Royal Courts of Law
 “Webbe *versus* Blobbs” came on each day.
 “Law costs” and big “retaining fees,”
 “Mulcted in fines”—such things as these
 Made Blobbs feel very ill at ease.

As Webbe grew rich, so he grew poor,
 Till finally he said: “Hang pride!
 I’ll let this fellow, if he must,
 Have Jane, my daughter, for his bride.”
 He went once more to Clifford’s Inn.
 Webbe welcomed him with genial grin:
 “My *very* dear sir, pray step in.”

“Look here!” cried Blobbs. “I’ll fight no more!
 You lawyer fellows, on my life,
Will have your way. I must give in.
 My daughter Jane *shall* be your wife!”
 “Dear me! this *is* unfortunate,”
 Said Webbe. “I much regret to state
 Your condescension comes too late.

“For, sir, I marry this day week

(Being a man of property)

The young and lovely daughter of

Sir Simon Upperten, M.P.”

Then, in a light and airy way:

“I think there’s nothing more to say.

Pray, mind the bottom step. *Good day!*”



X.

THAT OF MONSIEUR ALPHONSE VERT.

YOUR Mistair Rudyar' Kipling say
Ze cricquette man is "flannel fool."
Ah! oui! Très bon! I say so too,
Since Mastair Jack, *enfant* at school,
He show me how to play ze same.
I like it not—ze cricquette game.

My name is Monsieur Alphonse Vert
(You call him in ze English "Green");
I go to learn ze English tongue,
And lodge myself at Ealing Dean
In family of Mistair Brown,
Who has *affaire* each day "in town."

Miss Angelina Brown she is
Très charmante—what you call "so pretty";
I walk and talk wiz her sometimes
When Mr. Brown go to ze City;

I fall in love (pardon zese tears)
 All over head, all over ears.

I buy her books, and flowers (*bouquet*),
 And tickets for *la matinée*,
 And to ze cricquette match we go,
Hélas! upon one Saturday.
 To me she speak zere not at all.
 But watch ze men, and watch ze ball.

Ze cricquette men zey run, zey bat,
 Zey throw ze ball, zey catch, zey shout;
 And Angelina clap her hands.

Vot for, I know not, all about,
 And in myself I say "*Ah! oui!*"
 I *too* a cricquette man shall be."

To Angelina's brother Jack

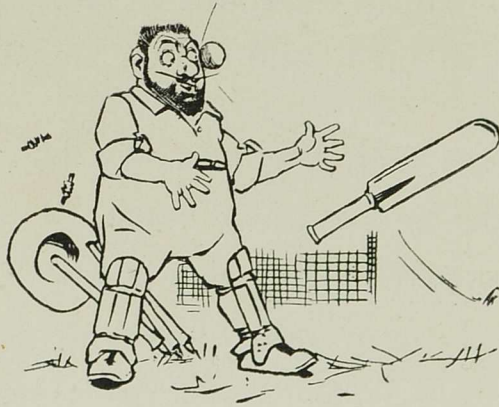
(His name is also Mastair Brown)

I say, "Come, teach me cricquette match,
 And I will give you half-a-crown."

Jack say, "My eye!" (in French *mes yeux*)*
 "Oh! what a treat!" (in French *c'est beau*).*

* Frenchmen could never make these two words rhyme
 —but Englishmen can. I've heard 'em. G. E. F.

After, to Ealing Common we
 Go out, with "wicquette" and with "ball,"
 And what Jack calls a "cricquette-bat."
 (Zese tings I do not know at all;
 But Angelina I would catch,
 So "*Allons! Vive la cricquette match!*")



I hold ze "bat," Jack hold ze "ball."
 "Now zen! Look out!" I hear him cry.
 I drop ze "bat," I look about;
 Ze ball—he hit me in ze eye."
 I cry, "*Parbleu!*" Ze stars I see.
 I think it is "all up" wiz me.

I try again. Ze "ball" is hard.
 I catch him two times—on ze nose.

I run, I fall, I hurt my arm,
I spoil my new white flannel clothes,
In every part I'm bruised and sore,
So cricquette match I play no more.



I change my clothes, I patch my eye,
I tie my nose up in a sling,
And to Miss Angelina Brown
Myself and all my woes I bring.
“Ah, see,” I cry, “how love can make
Alphonse a hero for thy sake.”

But Angelina laugh and laugh,
And say, “I know it isn't right

To laugh; but you must please forgive
Me. You look *such* a fright!"
And next day Jack say, "I say, Bones,
My sister's going to marry Jones."

XI.

THAT OF LORD WILLIAM OF PURLEIGH.

LORD WILLIAM OF PURLEIGH retired for the night
With a mind full of worry and trouble,
Which was caused by an income uncommonly slight,
And expenses uncommonly double.
Now the same sort of thing often happens, to me—
And perhaps to yourself—for most singularlee
One's accounts—if one keeps 'em—will never come
right,
If, of “moneys received,” one spends double.

His lordship had gone rather early to bed,
And for several hours had been sleeping,
When he suddenly woke—and the hair on his head
Slowly rose—he could hear someone creeping
About in his room, in the dead of the night,
With a lantern, which showed but a glimmer of light,
And his impulse, at first, was to cover his head
When he heard that there burglar a-creeping.

But presently thinking "Poor fellow, there's naught
In the house worth a burglar a-taking,
And, being a kind-hearted lord, p'r'aps I ought,
To explain the mistake he's a-making."
Lord William, then still in his woolly night-cap
(For appearances noblemen don't care a rap),
His second-best dressing-gown hastily sought,
And got up without any noise making.



"I'm exceedingly sorry," his lordship began,
"But your visit, I fear, will be fruitless.
I possess neither money, nor jewels, my man,
So your burglarizing here will be bootless.

The burglar was startled, but kept a cool head,
And bowed, as his lordship, continuing, said:

“Excuse me a moment. I’ll find if I can
My warm slippers, for I *too* am bootless.”

This pleasantry put them both quite at their ease;

They discoursed of De Wet, and of Tupper.

Then the household his lordship aroused, if you please,

And invited the burglar to supper.

The burglar told tales of his hardly-won wealth,

And each drank to the other one’s jolly good health.

There’s a charm about informal parties like these,

And it was a most excellent supper.

Then the lord told the burglar how poor he’d become,

And of all which occasioned his lordship distress;

And the burglar—who wasn’t hard-hearted like some—

His sympathy ventured thereat to express:

“I’ve some thoughts in my mind, if I might be so
bold

As to mention them, but—no—they mustn’t be told.

They are hopes which, perhaps, I might talk of to
some,

But which to a lord—no, I dare not express.”

“Pooh! Nonsense!” his lordship cried, “Out with it, man!

What is it, my friend, that you wish to suggest?

Rely upon me. I will do what I can.

Come! Let us see what’s to be done for the best.”

“I’ve a daughter,” the burglar remarked with a sigh.

“The apple is she, so to speak, of my eye,

And she wishes to marry a lord, if she can—

And of all that I know—why, your lordship’s the best.



“I am wealthy,” the burglar continued, “you see,

And her fortune will really be ample:

I have given her every advantage, and she

Is a person quite up to your sample.”

Lord William, at first, was inclined to look glum,
But, on thinking it over, remarked: "I will come
In the morning, to-morrow, the lady to see
If indeed she *is* up to the sample."

On the morrow he called, and the lady he saw,
And he found her both charming and witty;
So he married her, though for a father-in-law
He'd a burglar, which p'r'aps was a pity.
However, she made him an excellent wife,
And the burglar he settled a fortune for life
On the pair. What an excellent father-in-law!
On the whole, p'r'aps, it *wasn't* a pity.

XII.

THAT OF PASHA ABDULLA BEY.

ABDULLA BEY—a Pasha—had
A turn for joy and merriment:
You never caught *him* looking sad,
Nor glowering in discontent.

His normal attitude was one
Of calm, serene placidity;
His nature gay, and full of fun,
And free from all acidity.

A trifling instance I'll relate
Of Pasha Bey's urbanity,
The which will clearly indicate
His marvellous humanity.

He had a dozen wives or so
(In him no immorality;
For Eastern custom, as you know,
Permits, of wives, plurality).

Yes; quite a dozen wives—or more—
 Abdulla had, and for a while
 No sound was heard of strife or war
 Within Abdulla's domicile.

But, oh! how rare it is to find
 A dozen ladies who'll consent
 To think as with a single mind,
 And live together in content.

Abdulla's wives—altho', no doubt,
 If taken individually,
 Would never think of falling out,—
 Collectively, could *not* agree.

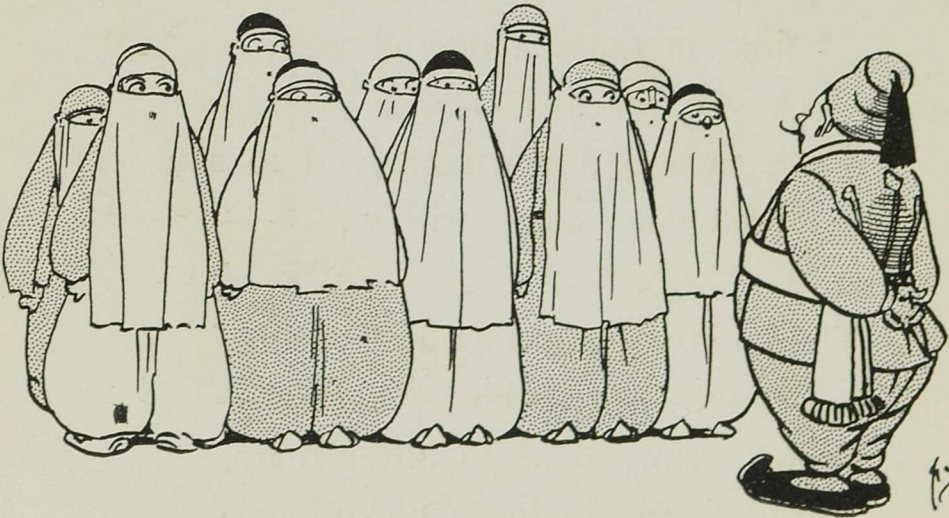
At first, in quite a playful way,
 They quarrelled—rather prettily;
 Then cutting things contrived to say
 About each other wittily;

Then petty jealousies and sneers
 Began,—just feeble flickerings—
 Which grew, alas! to bitter tears,
 And fierce domestic bickerings.

You never had a dozen wives—
Of course not—so you cannot know
The grave discomfort in their lives
These Pashas sometimes undergo.

Abdulla Bey, however, *he*
Was not the one to be dismayed,
And doubtless you'll astounded be
To hear what wisdom he displayed.

He did not—as some would have done—
Seek angry ladies to coerce;
He did not use to any one
Expressions impolite—or worse.



No, what he did was simply this:

He stood those ladies in a row,
And said, "My dears, don't take amiss
What I'm about to say, you know.

"I find you cannot, like the birds,
Within your little nest agree,
So I'll unfold, in briefest words,
A plan which has occurred to me.

"These quarrellings, these manners lax,
In comfort means a loss for us,
So I must tie you up in sacks
And throw you in the Bosphorus."



He tied them up; he threw them in;
Then Pasha Bey, I beg to state,
Did *not* seek sympathy to win
By posing as disconsolate.

He mourned a week; and then, they say
(A Pasha is, of course, a catch),
Our friend, the good Abdulla Bey,
Got married to another batch.

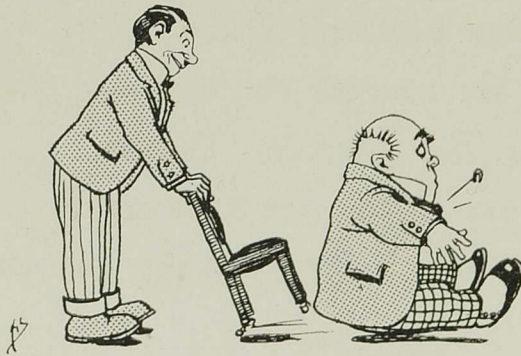
XIII.

THAT OF ALGERNON CROKER.

PERMIT me, and I will quite briefly relate
The sad story of Algernon Croker.
Take warning, good friends, and beware of the fate
Of this asinine practical joker,
Who early in life caused the keenest distress
To his uncle, Sir Barnaby Tatton,
By affixing a pin in the form of an S
To the chair which Sir Barnaby sat on.

His uncle had often been heard to declare
That to make him his heir he was willing;
But the point of *this* joke made Sir Barnaby swear
That he'd cut the boy off with a shilling.
Their anger his parents took means to express,
Tho' I may not, of course, be exact on
The particular spot—though you'll probably guess—
That young Croker was properly whacked on.

His pranks, when they presently sent him to school,
Resulted in endless disasters,
And final expulsion for playing the fool
(He made "apple-pie" beds for the masters).
Nor was he more fortunate later in life,
When courting a lady at Woking;
For he failed to secure this sweet girl for his wife
On account of his practical joking.



To her father—a person of eighteen-stone-two,
In a round-about coat and a topper—
He offered a seat; then the chair he withdrew,
And, of course, the old chap came a cropper.
Such conduct, the father exceedingly hurt,
And he wouldn't consent to the marriage;

So the daughter she married a person named Birt,
And she rides to this day in her carriage.

But these are mere trifles compared with the fate
Which o'ertook him, and which I'm recalling,
When he ventured to joke with an old Potentate,
With results which were simply appalling.
'Twas in some foreign country, far over the sea,
Where he held a small post ministerial
(An Ambassador, Consul, or *something* was he.
What exactly is quite immaterial).

He told the old Potentate, much to his joy,
That King Edward had sent him a present,
And handed a parcel up to the old boy,
With a smile which was childlike and pleasant.
The Potentate he, at the deuce of a pace,
At the string set to fumbling and maulin';
Then Croker laughed madly to see his blank face—
For the package had nothing at all in.

The Potentate smiled—'twas a sad, sickly smile;
And he laughed—but the laughter was hollow.
"Ha! a capital joke. It doth greatly beguile;
But," said he, "there is something to follow.

I, too, wish to play a small joke of my own,
At the which I'm remarkably clever."
Then,—a man standing by, at a nod from the throne,
Croker's head from his body did sever.



XIV.

THAT OF——?

P^HWAT'S thot yer afther sayin'—
Oi "don't look meself at all?"
Och, murder! sure ye've guessed it.
Whist! Oi'm *not* meself at all,
But another man entoirly,
An' Oi'd bether tell ye trooly
How ut iz Oi'm but *purtendin'*
That Oi'm Mr. Pat O'Dooley.

Tim Finnegan an' me, sor,
Waz a-fightin ov the blacks
In hathen foreign parts, sor,
An' yer pardon Oi would ax
If Oi mention thot the customs
In them parts iz free an' aisy,
An' the costooms—bein' mostly beads—
Iz airy-loike an' braizy.

But them blacks iz good at fightin'
 An' they captured me an' Tim;
 An' they marched us back in triumph
 To their village—me an' him;
 An' they didn't trate us badly,
 As Oi'm not above confessin',
 Tho' their manners—as Oi said before—
 An' customs, waz disthressin'.



So Oi set meself to teachin'
 The King's daughter to behave
 As a perfect lady should do;
 An' Oi taught the King to shave;
 An' Oi added to the lady's
 Scanty costoom by the prisent

Ov a waistcoat, which she thanked me for,
 A-smilin' moighty plisent.

Now she wazn't bad to look at,
 An' she fell in love with me,
 Which was awkward for all parties,
 As you prisently will see;
 For on wan noight, when the village
 Waz all quiet-loike an' slapin',
 The King's daughter to the hut, phwere
 Tim an' me lay, came a-crapin'.

An' she whispered in my ear, sor:
 "Get up quick, an' come this way,
 Oi'll assist ye in escapin',
 If ye'll do just phwat Oi say."
 An' she led me by the hand, sor;
 It waz dark, the rain was pourin'
 An' we safely passed the huts, sor,
 Phwere the sintrys waz a snorin'

Then we ran, an' ran, an' ran, sor,
 Through all the blessid noight,
 An' waz many miles away, sor,
 Before the day was loight.

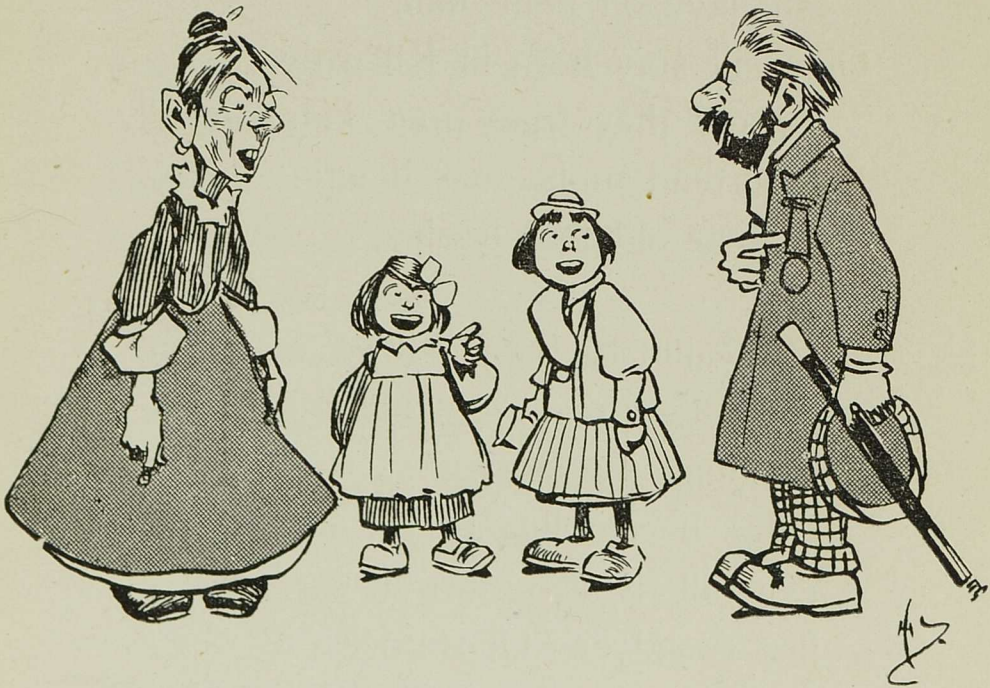
Then the lady saw my features,
An' she stopped an' started cryin',
For she found that *I waz Tim* instead
Ov me, which waz *most* tryin'.

In the hurry an' the scurry
Ov the darkness, don't yez see,
She had made a big mistake,
An' rescued him instead ov me—
An' to me it waz confusin'
An' most hard ov realizin';
For to find yerself *another* person,
Sor, iz most surprisin'.

An' pwhen the lady left me,
An' Oi'd got down to the shore
An' found a ship to take me home,
Oi puzzled more an' more,
For, ov course, the woife an' family
Ov Finnegan's was moine, sor,
Tho' Oi didn't know the wan ov 'em
By hook, nor crook, nor soign, sor.

But Oi came to the decision
They belonged to me no doubt,

So directly Oi had landed
 Oi began to look about.
 Tim Finnegan had told me
 That he lived up in Killarn'y,
 An' Oi found meself that far, somehow,
 By carryin' an' blarney.



An' Oi found me woife an' family—
 But, ach! upon my loife
 Oi waz greatly disappointed
 In my family an' woife,
 For my woife was *not* a beauty,
 An' her temper wazn't cheerin'

While the family—onkindly—
At their father took to jeerin’.

“Oi waz better off as Pat,” thought Oi,
“Than Oi’ll *iver* be as Tim.
Bedad! Oi’d better be *meself*
An’ lave off bein’ him.
Oi won’t stay here in Killarn’y,
Phwere they trate poor Tim so coolly,
But purtend to be meself agin
In dear old Ballyhooley.’

So Oi came to Ballyhooley,
An’ Oi’ve niver told before
To anyone the story
Oi’ve been tellin’ to ye, sor,
An’ it, all ov it, occurred, sor,
Just exactly as Oi state it,
Though, ov course, ye’ll understand, sor,
Oi don’t wish ye to repate it.

XV.

THAT OF THE RIVAL HAIRDRESSERS.

I_N the fashionable quarter
Of a fashionable town
Lived a fashionable barber,
And his name was Mister Brown.
Of hair, the most luxuriant,
This person had a crop,
And—a—so had his assistants,
And—the boy who swept the shop.

He had pleasant manners—very—
And his smile was very bland,
While his flow of conversation
Was exceptionally grand.
The difficulty was that he
Did *not* know when to stop;
Neither did his good assistants,
Nor—the boy who swept the shop.

He'd begin about the weather,
And remark the day was fine,
Or, perhaps, "it would be brighter
If the sun would only shine."
Or, he'd "noticed the barometer
Had fallen with a flop;
And—a—so had his assistants,
And—the boy who swept the shop."

Then the news from all the papers
(Most of which you'd heard before)
He would enter into fully,
And the latest cricket score;
Or, political opinions,
He'd be pleased with you to swop;
And—a—so would his assistants,
Or—the boy who swept the shop.

At the Stock Exchange quotations
Mister Brown was quite *au fait*,
And on betting, or "the fav'rit,"
He would talk in knowing way;
Then into matters personal
He'd occasionally drop,

And—a—so would his assistants,
Or—the boy who swept the shop.



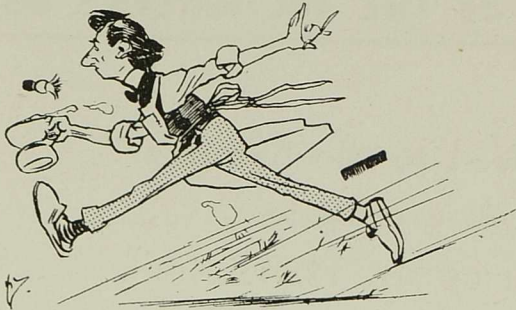
He'd recommend Macassar oil,
Or someone's brilliantine,
As "a remedy for baldness."
'Twas "the finest he had seen."
And he'd "noticed that your hair of late
Was thinning on the top."
And—a—"so had his assistants,
And—the boy who swept the shop."
Now one day, nearly opposite,
Another barber came,

And opened an establishment
With quite another name.
And Brown looked out and wondered
If this man had come to stop.
And—a—so did his assistants,
And—the boy who swept the shop.

But they didn't fear their neighbour,
For the man seemed very meek.
He'd no flow of conversation,
And looked half afraid to speak.
So Brown tittered at his rival
(Whose name happened to be Knopp);
And—a—so did his assistants,
And—the boy who swept the shop.

But somehow unaccountably
Brown's custom seemed to flow
In some mysterious sort of way
To Knopp's. It *was* a blow.
And Brown looked very serious
To see his profits drop.
And—a—so did his assistants
And—the boy who swept the shop.

And I wondered, and I wondered
Why this falling off should be,
And I thought one day I'd step across
To Mister Knopp's to see.



I found him *very* busy
With—in fact—no time to stop,
And—a—so were *his* assistants.
And—the boy who swept *his* shop.

Mister Knopp was very silent,
His assistants still as mice;
All the customers were smiling,
And one whispered, “Ain’t it nice?”
“Hey? You want to know the reason?
Why, *deaf and dumb is Knopp,*
And—a—so *are his assistants,*
And—the boy who sweeps the shop.”

XVI.

THAT OF THE AUCTIONEER'S DREAM.

I'LL proceed to the narration
Of a trifling episode
In the life of Mr. Platt,
An auctioneer,
Who was filled with jubilation
And remarked: "Well, I'll be blowed!"—
An expression rather im-
Polite, I fear.

But he dreamt he'd heard it stated
That, in future, auctioneers
Might include their near relations
In their sales;
And he felt so much elated
That he broke out into cheers,
As one's apt to do when other
Language fails.

And he thought: "Dear me, I'd better
 Seize this opportunity
 Of getting rid of ma-in-law,
 And Jane—
 ('Twas his wife)—I'll not regret her;
 And, indeed, it seems to me
 Such a chance may really not
 Occur again.

"And, indeed, while I'm about it,
 I'll dispense with all the lot—
 (O'er my family I've lately
 Lost command)—
 'Tis the best plan, never doubt it.
 I'll dispose of those I've got,
 And, perhaps, I'll get some others
 Second-hand."

So his ma-in-law he offered
 As the first lot in the sale,
 And he knocked *her* down for two-
 And-six, or less.
 Then Mrs. Platt he proffered—
 She was looking rather pale;

But she fetched a good round sum,
I must confess.

Sister Ann was slightly damaged,
But she went off pretty well
Considering her wooden leg,
And that;

But I can't think *how* he managed
His wife's grandmother to sell—
But he did it. It was very smart
Of Platt.



Several children, and the twins
(Lots from 9 to 22),

Fetch'd the auctioneer a tidy sum
Between 'em.

(One small boy had barked his shins,
And a twin had lost one shoe,
But they looked as well, Platt thought, as e'er
He'd seen 'em.)

Then some nephews, and some nieces,
Sundry uncles, and an aunt,
Went off at figures which were
Most surprising.

And some odds and ends of pieces
(I *would* tell you, but I can't
Their relationship) fetch'd prices
Past surmising.

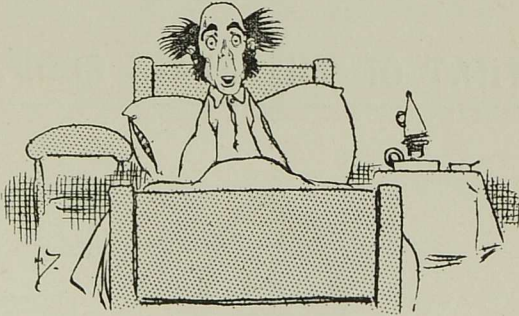
It is quite enough to mention
That before the day was out
All his relatives had gone
Without reserve.
This fell in with Platt's intention,
And he said: "Without a doubt,
I shall now as happy be
As I deserve."

But he *wasn't* very happy,
For he soon began to miss
Mrs. Platt, his wife, and all
The little "P's."
And the servants made him snappy;
Home was anything but bliss;
And Mr. Platt was very
Ill at ease.

So he calmly thought it over.
"On the whole, perhaps," said he,
"I had better buy my fam-
ily again,
For I find I'm not in clover,
Quite, without my Mrs. P.—
She was really not a bad sort,
Wasn't Jane."

But the persons who had bought 'em
Wouldn't part with 'em again,
Though Platt offered for their purchase
Untold gold.
For quite priceless now he thought 'em,
And, of course, could see quite plain

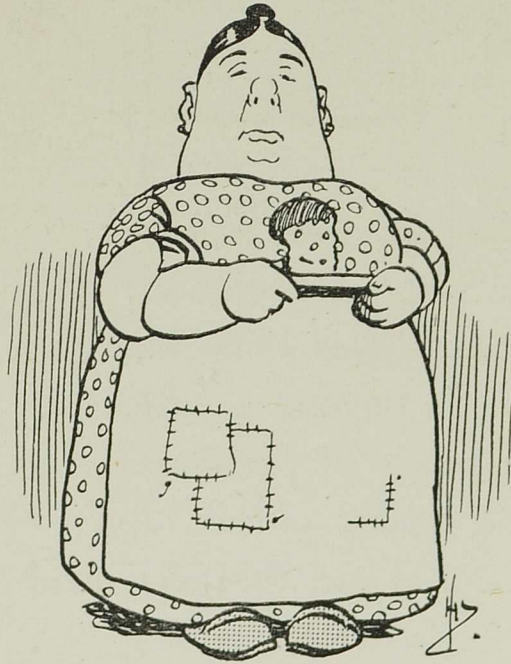
That in selling them he had himself
 Been sold.



And he thought, with agitation,
 Of them lost for ever now,
And he said, "This thing has gone
 Beyond a joke,"
While the beads of perspiration
 Gathered thickly on his brow;
And then Mr. Platt, the auctioneer—
 Awoke.

XVII.

THAT OF THE PLAIN COOK.



MISS MIRIAM BRIGGS was a plain, plain cook,
And her cooking was none too good
(Not at all like the recipes out of the book,
And, in fact, one might tell at the very first look
That things hadn't been made as they should).

Her master, a person named Lymmington-Blake,
 At her cooking did constantly grieve,
 And at last he declared that “a change he must make,”
 For he “wanted a cook who could boil or could bake,”
 And—this very plain cook—“she must leave.”

So she left, and her master, the very same day,
 For the Registry Office set out,
 For he naturally thought it the very best way
 Of procuring a cook with the smallest delay.
 (You, too, would have done so, no doubt.)

But, “A cook? Goodness gracious!” the lady declared
 (At the Registry Office, I mean),
 “I’ve no cook on my books, sir, save one, and she’s
 shared
 By two families; and, sir, I’ve nearly despaired,
 For so rare, sir, of late, cooks have been.”

Where next he enquired ’twas precisely the same:
 There wasn’t a cook to be had.
 Though quite high were the wages he’d willingly name,
 And he advertised,—uselessly,—none ever came,—
 Not a cook, good, indiff’rent, or bad.

What *was* to be done? Mr. Lymmington-Blake
Began to grow thinner and thinner.
(Now and then it is pleasant, but *quite* a mistake,
To dine every day on a chop or a steak,
And have nothing besides for your dinner.)

So he said: "If I can't get a cook, then a mate
I'll endeavour to find in a wife"
(His late wife deceased, I p'r'aps ought to relate,
Four or five years before), "for this terrible state
Of things worries me out of my life."

So he looked in the papers, and read with delight
Of a "Lady of good education,
A charming complexion, eyes blue (rather light),"
Who "would to a gentleman willingly write."
She "preferred one without a relation."

Now Lymmington-Blake was an orphan from birth,
And had neither a sister nor brother,
While of uncles and aunts he'd a similar dearth,
And he thought, "Here's a lady of singular worth;
I should think we should suit one another."

So he wrote to the lady, and she wrote to him,
And the lady requested a photo,

But he thought, "I'm not young, and the picture
might dim

Her affection; I'll plead, to the lady, a whim,
And refuse her my photo *in toto*."

"I'll be happy, however," he wrote, "to arrange
A meeting for Wednesday night.

Hampstead Heath, on the pathway, beside the old
Grange,

At a quarter to eight. If you won't think it strange,
Wear a rose—I shall know you at sight."

Came Wednesday night, Mr. Lymmington-Blake

To the *rendezvous* all in a flutter

Himself—in a new suit of clothes—did betake;

And over and over, to save a mistake,

The speech he had thought of did mutter.

He wore a red rose, for he thought it would show

He had taken the matter to heart.

A lady was there. Was it she? Yes, or no?

Blake didn't know whether to stay or to go.

He was nervous. But what made him start?

'Twas the figure—at first he could not see her face—
Which somehow familiar did look.

Then she turned—and he ran. Do you think it was
base?

I fancy that you'd have done so in his place.

It was Miriam Briggs, the plain cook.



XVIII.

THAT OF "8" AND "22."

'T WAS on the "Royal Sovereign,"
Which sails from Old Swan Pier,
That Henry Phipps met Emily Green,
And—*this* is somewhat queer—
Aboard the ship was Obadiah,
Likewise a lady called Maria

The surnames of these people I
Cannot just now recall,
But 'tis quite immaterial,
It matters not at all.
The point is *this*—Phipps met Miss Green;
The sequel quickly will be seen.

He noticed her the first time when
To luncheon they went down
(The luncheon on the "Sovereign"
Is only half a-crown),

Where Obadiah gravely at
The table, with Maria, sat.

And Obadiah coughed because
Phipps looked at Emily—she at him.
Maria likewise noticed it,
And thereupon grew stern and grim,
Though neither one of all the four
Had met the other one before.

Now Emily Green was pretty, but
Maria—she was the reverse;
While Obadiah's looks were tra-
Gic—something like Macbeth's, but worse.—
And these two somehow seemed to be
Quite down on Phipps, and Miss E. G.
For when *she* smiled, and kindly passed
The salt—which Phipps had asked her for—
Maria tossed her head and sniffed,
And Obadiah muttered “Pshaw!”
While later on Miss E. G. thinks
She heard Maria call her “minx.”

Twice on the upper deck when Phipps
Just ventured, in a casual way,

To pass appropriate remarks,
Or comment on the "perfect" day,
He caught Maria listening, and,
Close by, saw Obadiah stand.

At last, at Margate by the Sea,
The "Royal Sovereign" came to port.
Phipps hurried off and soon secured
A lodging very near The Fort
(He'd understood Miss Green to say
That she should lodge somewhere that way).

He really *was* annoyed to find
That Obadiah came there too,
While Miss Maria, opposite,
The parlour blinds was peering through.
Still he felt very happy, for
He saw Miss Green arrive next door.

That night he met her on the pier,
And Phipps, of course, he raised his hat.
Miss Emily Green blushed, smiled, and stopped—
It was not to be wondered at.
But Obadiah, passing by,
Transfixed them with his eagle eye.



And, later in the evening, when

The two were list'ning to the band,
Phipps—tho' perhaps he oughtn't to—

Was gently squeezing Emily's hand.
He dropped it suddenly, for there
Maria stood, with stony stare.

'Twas so on each succeeding day.

Whate'er they did, where'er they went,
There Obadiah followed them;

Maria, too. No *accident*

Could possibly account for this
Sad interference with their bliss.

At last Phipps, goaded to despair,
Cried: "Pray, sir—*what*, sir, do you wish?"
But Obadiah turned away,
Merely ejaculating "Pish!"
Then Phipps addressed Maria too,
And all he got from *her* was "Pooh!"

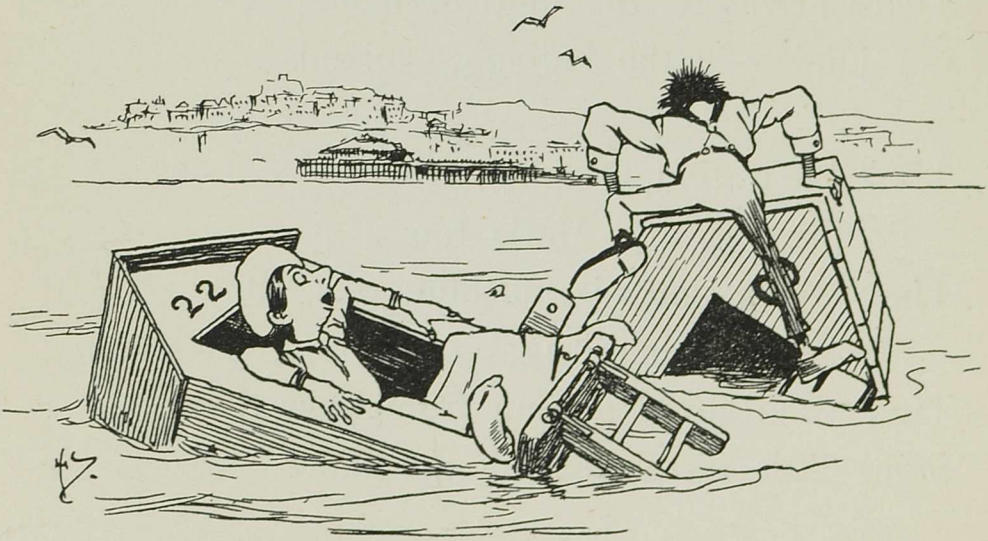
So Mr. Phipps and Emily Green
Determined *something must be done*.
And all one day they talked it o'er,
From early morn till setting sun.
Then, privately, the morrow fixed
For joining in the bathing,—mixed.

They knew that Obadiah would
Be present, and Maria too.
They were; and his machine was "8,"
Maria's Number "22."
They each stood glaring from their door,
Some little distance from the shore.

* * *

The tide came in, the bathers all—
 Including Phipps and Emily Green—
 Each sought his own—his very own—
 Particular *bathing-machine*;
 But Nos. "22" and "8"
 Were left, unheeded, to their fate.

When, one by one, the horses drew
 The other machines to the shore,
Phipps bribed the men to leave those two
Exactly where they were before.
 (In "8," you know, was Obadiah,
 And "22" contained Maria.)



The tide rose higher, carrying
The two machines quite out to sea.
The love affairs of Emily Green
And Phipps proceeded happily.

* * *

I'm not quite certain of the fate
Of either "22" or "8."

XIX.

THAT OF THE HOOLIGAN AND THE PHILANTHROPIST.

BILL BASHER was a Hooligan,
The terror of the town,
A reputation he possessed
For knocking people down;
On unprotected persons
Of a sudden he would spring,
And hit them with his buckle-belt,
Which hurt like anything.

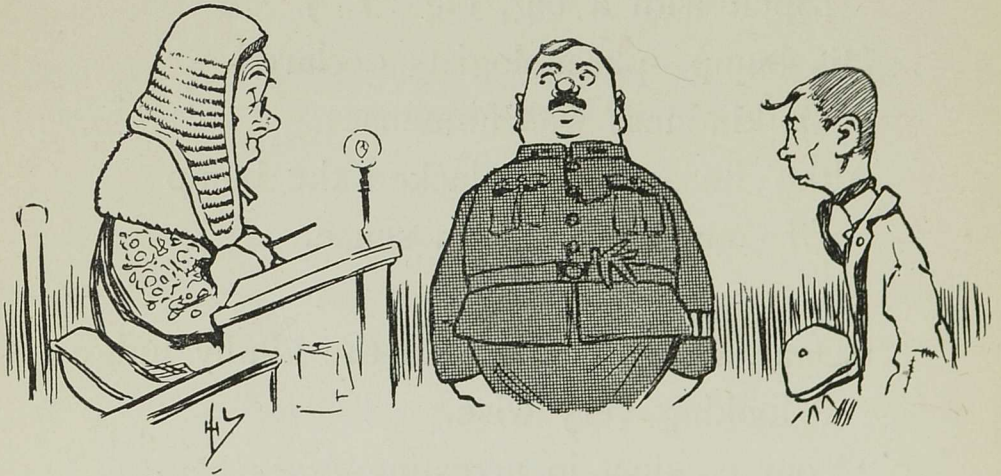
One day ten stalwart constables
Bill Basher took in charge.
“We cannot such a man,” said they,
“Permit to roam at large;
He causes all the populace
To go about in fear;
We’d better take him to the Court
Of Mr. Justice Dear.”

To Mr. Justice Dear they went—
 A tender Judge was he:
 He was a great Philanthropist
 (Spelt with a big, big “P”).
 His bump—phrenologists declared—
 Of kindness was immense;
 Altho’ he somewhat lacked the bump
 Of common, common sense.

“Dear, dear!” exclaimed the kindly Judge
 A-looking very wise,
 “Your conduct in arresting *him*
 Quite fills me with surprise.
 Poor fellow! Don’t you see the lit-
 Tle things which he has done
 Were doubtless but dictated
 By a sense of harmless fun?

“We really *mustn’t* be too hard
 Upon a man for *that*,
 And *I* will not do more than just
 Inflict a fine. That’s flat!
 See how he stands within the dock,
 As mild as any lamb.

No! Sixpence fine. You are discharged.
Good morning, William."



Now strange to say, within a week,
 Bill Basher had begun
 To knock about a lot of other
 People "just in fun."
 He hit a young policeman
 With a hammer on the head,
 Until the poor young fellow
 Was approximately dead.

"Good gracious!" murmured Justice Dear,
 " *This really is too bad,*

To hit policemen on the head
Is not polite, my lad,
I must remand you for a week
To think what can be done,
And, in the meantime, please remain
In cell one twenty one."

Then, Justice Dear, he pondered thus:
"Bill Basher ought to wed
Some good and noble woman;
Then he'd very soon be led
To see the error of his ways,
And give those errors o'er."
This scheme he thought upon again,
And liked it more and more.

A daughter had good Justice Dear,
Whose name was Angeline
(The lady's name is not pronounced
To rhyme with "line," but "leen"),
Not beautiful, but dutiful
As ever she could be;
Whatever her papa desired
She *did* obediently.

With her he talked the matter o'er,
And told her that he thought,
In the interests of humanity,
To marry Bill she ought.
And, though she loved a barrister
Named Smith, her grief she hid
And, with a stifled sigh, prepared
To do as she was bid.



They got a special licence, and
Together quickly went
To visit Basher in his cell
And show their kind intent.

* * *

His answer it was to the point,
Though couched in language queer,
These were the very words he used:
“*Wot?* Marry *'er?* No fear!”

Good Justice Dear was greatly shocked;
Indeed, it *was* a blow
To find that *such* ingratitude
The Hooligan should show.
So he gave to Smith, the barrister,
His daughter for a wife,
While on Bill he passed this sentence—
“Penal servitude for life.”

XX.

THAT OF THE SOCIALIST AND THE EARL.

IT was, I think, near Marble Arch,
Or *somewhere* in the Park,
A Socialist
Once shook his fist
And made this sage remark:



“It is a shime that working men,
The likes of you and me—
 Poor, underfed,
 Without a bed—
In such a state should be.

“When bloated aristocracy
Grows daily wuss an’ wuss.
 Why don’t the rich
 Behave as sich
An’ give a bit to us?

“They’ve carriages and flunkeys,
Estates, an’ lots of land.
 Why this should be,
 My friends,” said he,
“I fail to understand.

“Why should *they* ’ave the bloomin’ lot,
When, as I’ve said before,
 It’s understood
 This man’s as good
As *that* one is—or MORE?

“So what I sez, my friends, sez I,
Is: Down with all the lot,
Unless they share—
It’s only fair—
With us what they have got!”

* * *

An Earl, who stood amongst the crowd,
Was *very* much impressed.
“Dear me,” he said,
And smote his head,
“I really *am* distressed.

“To think that all these many years
I’ve lived so much at ease,
With leisure, rank,
Cash at the bank,
And luxuries like these,

“While, as this honest person says,
Our class is all to blame
That these have naught:
We really ought
To bow our heads in shame.

“My wealth unto this man I’ll give,
My title I will drop,
And then I’ll go
And live at Bow
And keep a chandler’s shop.”

* * *

The Socialist he took the wealth
The Earl put in his hands,
And bought erewhile
A house in style
And most extensive lands.

Was knighted (for some charity
Judiciously bestowed);
Within a year
Was made a Peer;
To fame was on the road.

But do not think that Fortune’s smiles
From friends drew him apart,
Or hint that rude
Ingratitude
Could dwell within his heart.

You fear, perhaps, that he forgot
The worthy Earl. Ah, no!
Household supplies
He *often* buys
From *his* shop down at Bow.



XXI.

THAT OF THE RETIRED PORK-BUTCHER
AND THE SPOOK.

I MAY as well
Proceed to tell
About a Mister Higgs,
Who grew quite rich
In trade—the which
Was selling pork and pigs.

From trade retired,
He much desired
To rank with gentlefolk,
So bought a place
He called “The Chase,”
And furnished it—old oak.

Ancestors got
(Twelve pounds the lot,

In Tottenham Court Road);
A pedigree—
For nine pounds three,—
The Heralds' Court bestowed.

Within the hall,
And on the wall,
Hung armour bright and strong.
"To Ethelbred"—
The label read—
"De Higgs, this did belong."

'Twas *quite* complete,
This country seat,
Yet neighbours stayed away.
Nobody called,—
Higgs was blackballed,—
Which caused him great dismay.

"Why *can* it be?"
One night said he
When thinking of it o'er.
There came a knock
('Twas twelve o'clock)
Upon his chamber door.



Higgs cried, "Come in!"
A vapour thin
The keyhole wandered through.
Higgs rubbed his eyes
In mild surprise:
A ghost appeared in view.

"I beg," said he,
"You'll pardon me,
In calling rather late.
A family ghost,
I seek a post,
With wage commensurate.

“I’ll serve you well;
My ‘fiendish yell’
Is certain sure to please.
‘Sepulchral tones,’
And ‘rattling bones,’
I’m *very* good at these.

“Five bob I charge
To roam at large,
With ‘clanking chains’ *ad lib.*;
I do such things
As ‘gibberings’
At one-and-three per gib.

“Or, by the week,
I merely seek
Two pounds—which is not dear;
Because I need,
Of course, *no* feed,
No washing, and *no* beer.”

Higgs thought it o’er
A bit, before
He hired the family ghost,

But, finally,
He did agree
To give to him the post.

It got about—
You know, no doubt,
How quickly such news flies—
Throughout the place,
From “Higgses Chase”
Proceeded ghostly cries.

The rumour spread,
Folks shook their head,
But dropped in one by one.
A bishop came
(Forget his name),
And then the thing was done.

For afterwards
All left their cards,
“Because,” said they, “you see,
One who can boast
A family ghost
Respectable *must* be.”

* * *



When it was due,
The “ghostes’s” screw
Higgs raised—as was but right—
They often play,
In friendly way,
A game of cards at night.

XXII.

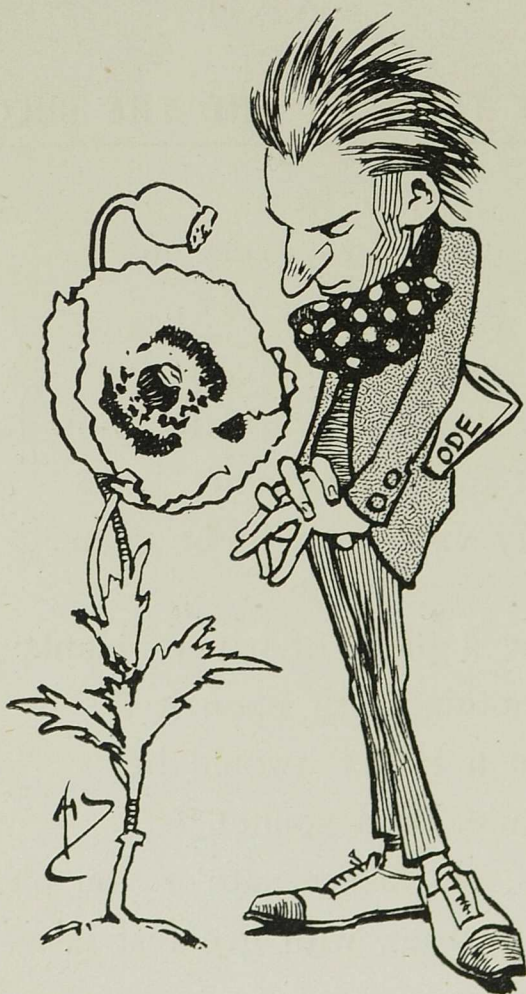
THAT OF THE POET AND THE BUCCANEERS.

IT does not fall to every man
To be a minor poet,
But Inksby-Slingem he was one,
And wished the world to know it.
In almost every magazine
His dainty verses might be seen.

He'd take a piece of paper—blank,
With nothing writ upon it—
And soon a triolet 'twould be
A ballade, or a sonnet.
Pantoums,—in fact, whate'er you please,
This poet wrote, with greatest ease.

By dozens he'd turn poems out,
To Editors he'd bring 'em,
Till, quite a household word became
The name of Inksby-Slingem.

A mild exterior had he,
With dove-like personality.



His hair was dark and lank and long,
His necktie large and floppy
(*Vide* his portrait in the sketch
“A-smelling of a Poppy”),

And unto this young man befell
The strange adventure I'll now tell.

He took a summer holiday
Aboard the good ship "Goschen,"
Which foundered, causing all but he
To perish, in the ocean,
And many days within a boat
Did Inksby-Slingem sadly float—

Yes, many days, until with joy
He saw a ship appearing ;
A skull and crossbones flag it bore,
And towards him it was steering.
"This rakish-looking craft," thought he,
"I fear a pirate ship must be."

It was. Manned by a buccaneer.
And, from the very first, he
Could see the crew were wicked men,
All scowling and bloodthirsty ;
Indeed, he trembled for his neck
When hoisted to their upper deck.

Indelicate the way, at least,
That he was treated—very.
They turned his pockets inside-out;
They stole his Waterbury;
His scarf-pin, and his golden rings,
His coat and—er—his *other things*.

Then, they ransacked his carpet-bag,
To add to his distresses,
And tumbled all his papers out,
His poems, and MSS.'s.
He threw himself upon his knees,
And cried: "I pray you, spare me these!"

"These? What are these?" the Pirate cried.
"I've not the slightest notion."
He read a verse or two—and then
Seemed filled with strange emotion.
He read some more; he heaved a sigh;
A briny tear fell from his eye.

"Dear, dear!" he sniffed, "how touching is
This poem 'To a Brother!'"

It makes me think of childhood's days,
 My old home, and my mother."
 He read another poem through,
 And passed it to his wondering crew.



They read it, and all—all but two—
 Their eyes were soon a-piping;
 It was a most affecting sight
 To see those pirates wiping
 Their eyes and noses in their griefs
 On many-coloured handkerchiefs,

* * *

To make a lengthy story short,
 The gentle poet's verses
 Quite won those men from wicked ways,
 From piratings, and curses;

And all of them, so I've heard tell,
Became quite, *quite* respectable.

All—all but two, and one of *them*
Than e'er before much worse is
For *he* is now a publisher,
And "pirates" Slingem's verses;
The other drives a "pirate" 'bus,
Continuing—alas!—to "cuss."

XXIII.

THAT OF THE UNDERGROUND "SULPHUR CURE."

SULPHURIC smoke doth nearly choke
That person—more's the pity—
Who does the round, by Underground,
On pleasure, or on business bound,
From West End to the City.

At Gower Street I chanced to meet,
One day, a strange old party,
Who tore his hair in wild despair,
Until I thought—"I would not swear,
That you're not mad, my hearty."

"Yes, mad, *quite* mad. Dear me! How sad!"
I cried; for, to the porter,
He did complain—"Look here! Again
No smoke from any single train
That's passed within the quarter.



“ *This air’s too pure!* I cannot cure
 My patients, if you don’t, sir,
 Sulphuric gas allow to pass,
 Until it thickly coats the glass.
 Put up with *this* I won’t, sir!”

I noticed then some gentlemen
 And ladies join the chatter—
 And dear, dear, dear, they *did* look queer!
 Thought I—“They’re very ill, I fear;
 I wonder what’s the matter.”

Surmise was vain. In came my train.

I got in. "First"—a "Smoking."

That motley crew—*they got in too.*

I wondered what on earth to do,

For each began a-choking.



"Pray, won't you smoke?" the old man spoke.

Thought I—"He's growing madder."

"I wish you would. 'Twould do them good.

My card I'd hand you if I could,

But have none. My name's Chadder.

"My patients these. *Now*, if you please!"

He cried, in tones commanding,

And gave three raps, "I think, perhaps,

We'd best begin. Undo your wraps!"

This passed my understanding.

"Put out your tongues! Inflate your lungs!"

His patients all got ready;

Their wraps thrown off, they each did doff

Their respirator—spite their cough—

And took breaths long and steady.

"Inhale! Inhale! And do not fail

The air you take to swallow!"

They gasped, and wheezed, and coughed,
and sneezed.

Their "doctor," he looked mighty pleased.

Expecting me to follow.

"Pray, tell me why, good sir!" gasped I,

"Before I lose my senses,

Why ever you such strange things do?

To know this, I confess my cu-

Riosity immense is."

In accents mild he spoke, and smiled.

"Delighted! I assure you.

We take the air—nay! do not stare;
Should aught your normal health impair,
This 'sulphur cure' will cure you.

"I undertake, quite well to make
Patients,—*whate'er* they're ailing.
Each day we meet, proceed *en suite*
From Edgware Road to Gower Street,
And back again—*inhaling*.

"That sulphur's good, 'tis understood,
But, I would briefly mention,
The simple way—as one may say,—
In which *we* take it, day by day,
Is *quite my own invention*.

"Profits? Ah, yes, I must confess
I make a tidy bit, sir?
Tho' Mr. Perkes', and Mr. Yerkes
'S system—if it only works—
Will put a stop to it, sir."

A stifled sigh, a tear-dimmed eye
Betrayed his agitation.

“Down here there’ll be no smoke,” said he,
“When run by electricity.
Excuse me! Here’s our station!”

He fussed about, and got them out,
(Those invalids I mean, sir,)
Then raised his hat; I bowed at that,
And then, remaining where I sat,
Went on to Turnham Green, sir.

XXIV.

THAT OF THE FAIRY GRANDMOTHER AND THE
COMPANY PROMOTER.

A COMPANY Promoter was Septimus Sharpe,
And the subject is he of this ditty;
He'd his name—nothing more—
Painted on the glass door
Of an office high up on the toppermost floor
Of a house in Throgmorton Street, City.

The Companies which he had promoted, so far,
Had not—so to speak,—been successes.
As a matter of fact,
He had often to act
In a manner requiring considerable tact
To—financially—keep out of messes.

One day there appeared—Sharpe could never tell how,—
In a costume unusually airy,
A young lady. “Dear me!
How surprising!” said he.

“Now, who upon earth can this young person be?
Is it possible? Why! *it's a Fairy!*”

“You are right, Septimus,” said the Fairy—“quite right,
For, in fact, I'm your Fairy Grandmother!”

Sharpe had to confess,

“I already possess

Two grandmothers. But,” said he, “nevertheless,
In *your* case, I will welcome another.



“Especially if, Fairy Grandmother dear,
Your intentions are—pardon me,—golden.
I’ll be pleased, if my till—
Or my coffers—you’ll fill,
As,—like a good fairy,—I’ve no doubt you will;
Then to you I’ll be greatly beholden.”

The Fairy she smiled, as, quite sweetly, she said:
“You’re mistaken, my dear young relation.
There’s no fairy displays
In these up-to-date days,
Her powers in *such* crude and old-fashioned ways—
No! I bring you AN IMAGINATION.

“But exercise It, and you quickly will find
From your pathway all troubles are banished!”
She waved a small wand,
With a look sad yet fond,
Then, into the far and the distant “beyond”
Sharpe’s good Grandmother suddenly vanished.

The spell she had cast very quickly began
In his brain to engender a vision.
He *imagined* a MINE

Filled with gold, pure and fine,
 And a lovely PROSPECTUS began to design
 Every item worked out with precision.

He *imagined* BIG DIVIDENDS; profits galore;
 And some DUKES he *imagined* DIRECTORS.
 And "the PUBLIC should share,"
 He went on to declare,
 "In such wealth as should cause the whole nation to
 stare."

There were THOUSANDS—*in Shares*—for Projectors.

Then he went on *imagining* mine after mine,
 With Prospectuses most high-faluting.
 And the *Public* they *fought*
 For the Shares he had brought
 To the Market (they "safer than houses" were thought);
 And each day some new Company was mooting.

* * *

That he grew passing rich is a matter of course.
 All his wealth to his wife he made over.

* * *



(EXTRA SPECIAL.)

There has been a great smash;
Company's gone with a crash.
Gone also, I hear, has the shareholders' cash.
But, SEPTIMUS SHARPE—*he's* in clover.

XXV.

THAT OF THE GEISHA AND THE JAPANESE
WARRIOR.



AN almond-eyed maiden was pretty Jes-So,
Her effort in life was to please;
A Geisha was she, and she handed the tea
In a costume bewitching as ever could be,
And a style which was best Japanese;
And she often served bowls of exceptional size
To a Japanese warrior called Li-Kwize.

And daily Li-Kwize and the pretty Jes-So,
In their artless and Japanese way,
'Neath the Gom-bobble trees rubbed their hands o'er
their knees,
Saying flattering things, such as over the seas,
It's the proper and right thing to say:
Little wonder, in sooth, that Li-Kwize fell in love,
While the Japanese turtle-birds twittered above.

But 'tis said that the course of true love ne'er ran smooth,
And a rival appeared on the scene,
He'd a glass in his eye, and his collar was high,
His gloves were immaculate, so was his tie,
And his legs were excessively lean;
A descendant was he of a long line of "Dooks,"
And his name was Lord Algernon Perkyns de Snooks.

In Japan,—on a tour,—he'd arrived with his ma,
On the tea gardens stumbled by chance,
And directly he saw all the girls he said "Haw!
I—aw—wish, don't you know, that I'd come here befaw"—
And he gave them a languishing glance;
To his feeble moustache he gave several twirls,
Declaring that Geishas were "Doooid fine girls!"

And he called for a dish of best Japanese tea,
And he ogled the pretty Jes-So,
While the warlike Li-Kwize stared in angry surprise
At the flirtation going on under his eyes,
And he wished that Lord Algy would go;
But, oh! dear me, no, he continued to stop
All the long afternoon in the pretty tea-shop.

On the morrow he came there again, and again
He appeared on the following day,
And it made Jes-So sad to hear language so bad
As Li-Kwize employed, as he "went on" like mad
In a grotesque, and Japanese way;
For he raved and he stormed as they do in Japan.
(You have seen how, no doubt, on a Japanese
fan.)

He thrust, and he slashed at the air with his sword,
And he shouted aloud at each blow;
There is, really, no doubt he was greatly put out,
But he *didn't* do what you are thinking about:
He didn't slay Lord Algy—no:
For Li-Kwize he was subtle, as subtle could be,
He'd a far better plan up his sleeve, don't you see.

He went to the house where Lord Algy's mamma,
A stern, and a haughty old dame,
Was staying, and, tho' it was all in dumb show,
He managed—somehow,—that the lady should know
Exactly her son's little game,
The equivalent Japanese noise for a kiss
He expressed,—its significance no one could miss.

In pantomime glibly he told the whole tale,
While the lady grew pale, and irate:
“Ha! *what's* that you say? Takes tea there each day?
Geisha? Tea-shop indeed! Come, show me the way!
We must stop *this* before it's too late.”
And she pounced on her son, with a terrible frown,
At the pretty tea-shop at the end of the town.



Not a word did she say, but she took by the ear
Lord Algernon Perkyms de S.;

She turned him about, and she marched him straight
out—

An undignified exit, altho', without doubt,
An effectual way to suppress
A thing which no mother *could* view with delight,
And, for one, *I* contend the old lady was right.

* * *

The pretty Jes-So, and the warlike Li-Kwize
“Made it up,” I am happy to say,
And the almond-eyed miss, with a Japanese kiss,
Filled the warrior's heart with a Japanese bliss,
In quite the conventional way;
While the turtle-birds sang in the Gom-bobble trees
All their prettiest songs in their best Japanese.

XXVI.

THAT OF THE INDISCREET HEN AND THE
RESOURCEFUL ROOSTER.

(An Allegory.)

I DOTE upon the softer sex.
The theme I write upon doth vex,
For female inconsistency
A sorry subject is for me
 To tackle;
Yet of a wayward female hen
I write this time, with halting pen.
Compound of pride, and vanity,
All feathers she appear'd to be,
 And cackle.

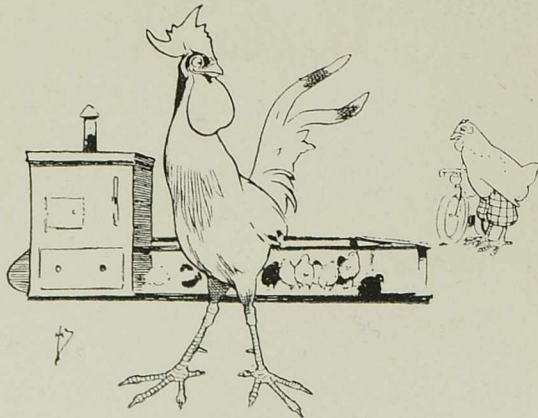
A flighty hen was she, no doubt—
A foolish fowl, a gad-about.
“Lay eggs!” quoth she. “Why should I?—why?
And set! I won’t, upon that I
 ’M decided.”

Then,—on the *Times* instalment plan,—
 A bicycle she bought, and 'gan
 Domestic duties to neglect;
 Her skirts were—what could one expect?—
 Divided.



This conduct greatly scandalised
 The farmyard; all looked on surprised,
 All but the rooster staid and grim;
He did not fret. 'Twas not for him
 To rate her;
 He let her go her wilful way,
 And purchased for himself one day
 A strange contraption—glass and tin—
 An article that's called an in-
 Cubator.

The nearest grocer's then he sought,
 Some ten-a-shilling eggs he bought;
 The incubator set to work
 (There was no fear that *it* would shirk
 Its duty),
 Then sat and waited patiently.
 Not many days to wait, had he:
 Within a week, to make him glad,
 A family of chicks he had—
 A beauty.



Surprised, his wife returned; but "No;
 In future you your way may go,
 And I'll go mine, misguided hen!"
 Said he. She fell to pleading then,
 But vainly.

“I’m better off without,” he said,
“A wife with such an empty head.”

* * *

He flourishes. His wife, grown stout,
Neglected, squa-a-ks and stalks about—
Ungainly.

MORAL.

It’s a wise chicken in these days that knows
its own mother.

XXVII.

THAT OF A DUEL IN FRANCE.

O_H, *Fa-la-la!* likewise *Hélas!*

A shocking thing has come to pass,
For Monsieur Henri Delapaire
Has fallen out,—a sad affair,—

With Monsieur Jacques Mallette.

“*La femme?*” Of course! They *both* declare
They love *la belle* Nannette.

Ma foi! They'll surely come to blows,
For one has tweaked the other's nose,
Who quickly snaps, with fierce grimace,
His fingers in the other's face.

A duel *must* result.

A Frenchman's honour 'twould disgrace
To bear with such insult.

“Pistols for two!”—in French,—they cry.
Nannette to come between doth fly:

“*Messieurs! Messieurs!* pray, *pray* be calm!
You fill your Nannette with alarm.”

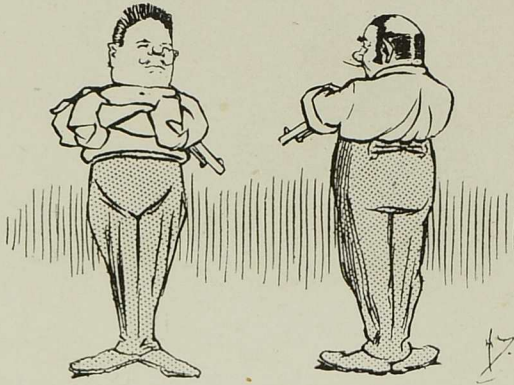
“*Parole d’honneur!* No.
Revenge!” they cry. The big gendarme,
Nannette to call, doth go.

Quickly a crowd has gathered round,
Pistols are brought, and seconds found;
A grassy space beneath the trees,
Where gentlemen may fight at ease;
Then, each takes off his coat—
Glaring meanwhile as though he’d seize
The other by the throat.

The seconds shrug, gesticulate,
And pace the ground with step sedate;
Then anxious consultation hold
O’er pistols, for the rivals bold
Who now stand white and stern;
Their arms across their chests they fold,
And sideways each doth turn.

The seconds place them *vis-à-vis*,
And give them word to fire at “three”;
Brave Monsieur Mallette shuts his eyes,

And points his pistol to the skies;
 Brave Monsieur Delapaire
 His hand to steady vainly tries,
 It trembles in the air.



A deadly silence: “*Un—deux—trois!*”
 Two shots are ringing through the *Bois*.
 Two shots,—and then two awful calms;
 As, senseless, in their seconds’ arms
 The duellists both lay.
 (Their faces pale the crowd alarms,
 And fills them with dismay.)

“Killed?” Goodness gracious—oh, dear *no!*
 This couldn’t be,—in France,—you know,
 For pistols *there* they never load.

But *caps* were they which did explode:
They've only swooned with fright.
 See! one some signs of life has showed;
 The crowd claps with delight.



They both revive. They both embrace.
 Twice kiss each other on the face.

* * *

“Stay! Hold!” you cry. “You said, I thought,
La belle Nannette the gendarme sought?”

She did,—*la belle Nannette*,—
 She sought, and found him—charming quite.
She stays there with him yet.

She “never cared for Delapaire,”
 She says with most *dégagé* air;

And "as for Monsieur Mallette,—well,
He *may* discover—who can tell?—

Someone to marry yet."

Meanwhile *le gendarme pour la belle*,
The fickle, fair Nannette.

XXVIII.

THAT OF THE ASTUTE NOVELIST.

QUITE an ordinary person
Wrote an ordinary book;
'Twas the first he'd ever written,
So a lot of pains he took.
From a two-a-penny paper
He some little *factlets* * culled,
With some "stories of celebrities"
By which the Public's gulled.

Then of course he had a hero,
And likewise a heroine,
And a villain, and a villainess,
Whose nefarious design
Was most properly defeated
In the chapter last but one,—
Which described the happy ending—
There you were! The thing was done.

* A *factlet* is nearly a fact.

But, somehow, it didn't answer.

“Nothing strange,” you'll say, “in that”;
 And, indeed, perhaps there wasn't
Very much to wonder at,
 For the book was really never
 Calculated fame to win,
 And the author's coat grew shabby
 And his body very thin.



And he pondered, and he pondered
 O'er his misery and ills,
 Till, one day, he met a party
 Who was posting up some bills.
 “What's the matter?” asked this person,
 “You are looking mighty glum.
 Books not selling? Advertise 'em.
That's the dodge to make things hum.”

“Look at ‘Whatsit’s Soap,’ and so on!
Look at ‘Thingumbobby’s Pills!’
It’s the advertising does it,
And the owner’s pocket fills.
Puff ’em up; the Public likes it;
And—(this from behind his hand)—
It doesn’t matter if it’s
Not *quite* true, *you* understand.”

So the author wrote another
Book, and brought in Tsars, and Kings,
And Popes, and noble ladies—
Queens, and Duchesses, and things
And “the problem” of the moment;
And some politics, and cram,
With tit-bits of foreign language
Mixed with literary jam.

And in type he had it stated
That “the world was all agog”
For this “epoch-making” novel,
And—their memory to jog—
The public had it daily
In all kinds of sorts of ways

Thrust upon them, till it set
Their curiosity ablaze.

And from Brixton unto Ponder's End
'Twas daily talked about
This wonderful new novel
Long, long, long before 'twas out;
I forget how many hundred
Thousand copies have been sold;
But it's brought the lucky author
Notoriety, and gold.



This judicious advertising
Has indeed brought him success;

He's the "lion" of the moment

In Society (big S).

It is even said that Royalty——

But there! I mustn't say,

For *he'll tell you all about it*

In another book some day.

XXIX.

THAT OF THE ABSENT-MINDED LADY.

THE lady hailed a passing 'bus,
And sat down with a jerk;
Upon her heated face she wore
A most complacent smirk;
Three parcels held she in her lap,
Safe-guarded from the least mishap.

The 'bus it rattled, bumped, and shook—
She didn't seem to mind—
And every now and then she *smiled*,
As something crossed her mind:
She evidently longed to tell
The joke, that we might smile as well.

"These men!" she said, at last to one
Who sat beside her. "It's absurd.
To hear them rave. They seem to think
That nobody—upon my word—

But men can do things in what they
Are pleased to call the proper way.



“My husband now, he’s like the rest,
And said, when I came out
To do some shopping, I’d forget
Something, he had no doubt,
Or else buy more than I desired,
Or something which was not required.

“Now, *three* things I set out to buy
 At Mr. Whiteley’s store ;
 Three parcels here, I’m taking home,
Three parcels, and no more.
 My husband he must own ere long
 Himself entirely in the wrong.”

She smiled,—a most triumphant smile.
 “Exactly like the men!”
 She said, and I—she looked at me—
 Felt much embarrassed then.
 Her scorn for men was undisguised ;
 The other ladies sympathised.

But, presently, I noticed that
 Upon the lady’s face
 No smile was seen—a puzzled frown
 Had come there in its place ;
 She squirmed, and fidgeted about,
 And turned her pockets inside out.

She counted over—several times—
 Her parcels—“One—two—three ;”
 Clutched at her purse, her parasol ;
 Then muttered, “H’m ! Dear me !

There's nothing that I haven't got.
What *can* I have forgotten? What?"

She tapped her foot impatiently;
Stared out into the street;
She got up several times and searched
Quite vaguely o'er the seat;
Then gave a sigh and settled down,
Still wearing that bewildered frown.

Then, evidently lost in thought,
She sat as in a dream,
Till—o'er her face a pallor spread,—
She sprang up, with a scream:
"Oh, stop! Pray stop, conductor! Stop!
I've left the baby in the shop!"



XXX.

THAT OF THE GERMAN BAKER AND THE COOK.

DESE vimens! Ach! dese vimens!
To me id is quide sad
Dat dey can be so bootiful,
Und yet can be so bad.
Dey vonce a fool haf made me
As never vas before;
Bud now I *know* dose vimens,
Und dey don't do dat no more.

Look! I am here a baker,
Und bread und biscuits bake,
Der dough-nuts, und der cooken,
Und all such tings I make;
Von voman to my shop come,
So bootiful und big,
Her eyes vas plue und shining,
Her hair joost like a vig.

She buy of me some dough-nuts,
 She come again next day,
 Und in my dough-nuts buying
 She stole mine heart away;
 For, ach! she vas so lofely
 As never yet I found—
 I tink dot even *both* my arms
 Her vaist could not go round.

Von day to me she say: "I vish
 I could dose dough-nuts make;
 My family is goned away;
 Come now, und ve shall make
 Some dough-nuts in my kitchen,
 If you vill show me how."
 I go. Because I tink, perhaps,
 I get her for mine vrow.

Der kitchen id vas big und clean,
 Der supper vas set out.
 Mit places at der table
 For two, mit pie, und stout.
 I show her how dough-nuts to make,
 Und den ve sit to sup;

Ven comes a vistle at der gate;
Der voman she jumps up.

“Quick! quick!” she say, “here somevon
comes,
Und you must herein hide.”



She pushes me der pantry in,
Mit nothing else beside.
I peep der keyhole through und see
A big policeman stand;
Der voman seems him pleased to see,
Und shakes him by der hand.

Den dey two at der supper sit
(Dot supper made for me),

Und I am in der pantry shut,
 As mad as mad can be;
 I sit der flour barrel upon,
 Der barrel it go through,
 Und in der flour I tumble. Ach!
 It make me schneize "Tish-oo!"

Der policeman say "Hark! vat is dat?"
 Und open burst der door;
 Dey see me den,—all vite mit flour
 Und tumbled on der floor.



Der voman scream "A burglar man!"
 Und tremble, und look pale;
 Der policeman den he take me up,
 And march me off to gaol.

Der magistrate some money for
A fine shall make me pay;
Der policeman und der voman
Dey get married yesterday:
So never now I trust no more
All vimens vat I see;
Dey make again some other man
A fool, but *never* me.

XXXI.

THAT OF THE CONVERTED CANNIBALS.

U_{PON} an island, all alone,
They lived, in the Pacific;
Somewhere within the Torrid Zone,
Where heat is quite terrific.
'Twould shock you were I to declare
The many things they did not wear,
Altho' no doubt
One's best without
Such things in heat terrific.

Though cannibals by birth were they,
Yet, since they'd first existed,
Their simple menu day by day
Of such-like things consisted:
Omelets of turtle's eggs, and yams,
And stews from freshly-gathered clams,
Such things as these
Were,—if you please,—
Of what their fare consisted.

But after dinner they'd converse,
 Nor did their topic vary;
 Wild tales of gore they would rehearse,
 And talk of *missionary*.
 They'd gaze upon each other's joints,
 And indicate the tender points.

Said one: "For us
 'Tis dangerous
 To *think* of *missionary*."



Well, on a day, upon the shore,
 As flotsam, or as jetsum,
 Some wooden cases,—ten, or more,—
 Were cast up. "Let us get some,
 And see, my friend, what they contain;
 The chance may not occur again,"
 Said good Who-zoo.

Said Tum-tum, "Do ;
We'll both wade out and get some."

The cases held,—what do you think?—

"PRIME MISSIONARY—TINNED."

Nay! gentle reader, do not shrink

The man who made it sinned:

He thus had labelled bloater-paste

To captivate the native taste.

He hoped, of course,

This fraud to force

On them. In this he sinned.

Our simple friends knew naught of sin,

They thought that this confection

Was missionary in a tin

According to direction.

For very joy they shed salt tears.

"'Tis what we've waited for, for years,"

Said they. "Hooray!

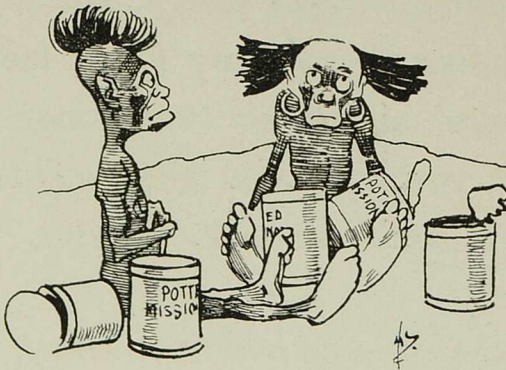
We'll feast to-day

According to direction."

"'Tis very tough," said one, for he

The tin and all had eaten.

“Too salt,” the other said, “for me;
The flavour might be beaten.”
It was enough. Soon each one swore
He’d missionary eat no more:
Their tastes were cured,
They felt assured
This flavour might be beaten.



And, should a missionary call
To-day, he’d find them gentle,
With no perverted tastes at all,
And manners ornamental;
He’d be received, I’m bound to say,
In courteous and proper way;
Nor need he fear
To taste their cheer
However ornamental.

XXXII.

THAT OF A FRUITLESS ENDEAVOUR.

COME let us quit the gruesome tales
Of cannibals, and Kings, and things;
On such-like themes my fancy fails,
My muse a simpler story sings:
I'd have you, one and all, consider
To-day a bachelor and "widder."

The bachelor,—named Robinson,
(A clerk, or something, in the City,
Just what, we will not dwell upon),
A pleasant man, and somewhat witty,
But thin,—I've seldom known a thinner,—
Dwelt in the suburbs, out at Pinner.

The widow lived at Pinner too,
Her name Ann Partington, *née* Gair,
And rich,—if what was said is true,—
Her age was forty; she was fair

And fat—indeed, as for that matter,
I've seldom known a person fatter.

Now Robinson considered: "Why
Should I, an eligible man,
In lonely 'diggings' live and die,
When I might marry widow Ann?
I'll call, and tentatively mention
My matrimonial intention."



The widow seemed at first inclined
To close the matter out of hand.
She said: "Yes, thank you, I don't mind,"
(No shyness *there*, you understand),
But later on said: "No, for us
To marry would be ludicrous.

We'd be the laughing-stock, I fear,
Of neighbours round about,
For you are awfully thin, poor dear,
And I am awfully stout;
I must withhold consideration
Till there's some drastic alteration."

So Robinson determined that
He'd put on flesh somehow;
He'd try all means of getting fat,
And made this solemn vow:
"The widow, —well, he'd do without her
Till he had grown a trifle stouter."

"Laugh and grow fat," somebody said;
So, daily, Robinson
The comic papers duly read,
And gloated thereupon:
He spent no end of pocket money
In things which he considered funny.

And eat!—I tell you he *did* eat!—
While (this was scarcely wise)
He seldom moved from off his seat,
And took *no* exercise.

'Twas not surprising, then—now, was it?—
He gained in “adipose deposit.”



He did; and when he turned the scale
At twenty stone or more,
He for the widow's house set sail,
And waddled to the door.
She met him—thin as any rat,
For SHE'D been taking Anti-Fat!

XX XIII.

THAT OF THE UNFORTUNATE LOVER.

I OFTEN heave a sigh to think
Of poor young A. McDougal,
And his disastrous bold attempt
To learn to play the bugle
(Which, judging from the sad result,
Must be, I fancy, difficult).

It happened thus: McDougal took
His charming young *fiancée* *
One evening to a "Monday Pop."
(Her Christian name was Nancy.)
And there they heard—he and this maid,—
A solo on the bugle played.

Fair Nancy was enraptured, and
Said: "Dearest A. McDougal,
I'd love you more than ever if
You'd learn to play the bugle."

* Cockney pronunciation please.

McDougal, as a lover should,
 Remarked, he'd learn it—"if he could."

That very night, as they walked home,
 McDougal was deluded
 A bugle into purchasing
 (With leather case included),
 At more than twice its proper price,
 Because it looked "so very nice."

He little thought, poor wretched man,
 As he this bargain fixed on,
 How it would wreck his future life.

He took it home to Brixton,
 And, from that hour, with much concern,
 To play upon it tried to learn.

His efforts—so I understand—
 At first were not successful.
 His landladies objected—which,
 Of course, was most distressful;
 Then neighbours much annoyed him, for
They sued him in a court of law.

Said he: "'Tis strange, where'er I go
 Opprobrium and hooting

My efforts greet. I'd better try
The common, out at Tooting,"
Where,—on his bugle-tootling bent,—
He most appropriately went.

Each evening after business hours
He'd practice—'twas his fancy—
Till *he* thought he played well enough
To serenade Miss Nancy,
Though (this must be well understood)
His playing really was *not* good.

He had no ear for music, and
Made discords which were racking;
While as for time, his sense of *that*
Was quite, entirely, lacking.
Still, excellent was his intent
As unto Nancy's house he went.

"That tune," he thought, "which we first heard,
'Twould doubtless, much engage her,
If I performed the self-same piece"
('Twas something in D major),
Which, knowing nought of C's and D's,
He played in quite a bunch of keys.

* * *

She closed the window with a bang.
A wild note from the bugle rang—



A wildly, weirdly, wailing note
To set one's blood a-freezing;
A compound 'twixt nocturnal cats,
And wheels which want a-greasing—

For A. McDougal—ah! how sad—
Her heartlessness had driven mad.

And Tooting Common, now, at night
None cross but the undaunted,
For people, living thereabout,
Declare the place is haunted
By one who serenades the moon
With jangled bugle, out of tune.

XXXIV.

THAT OF THE FEMALE GORILLY.

O^{CH}! Oi can't remember roightly
Phwat exactly waz the name
Of the gintleman phwat did it,
But Oi read it all the same—
How he lived insoide a cage, sor
('Twas a moighty strong consarn),
In the middle of the forest,
Monkey language for to larn.

If he larned to spake it roightly
Oi can't say, sor, yis or no;
But he left the cage behoind him,
That for sartin sure Oi know;
For Oi saw it there mesilf, sor—
If ye loike Oi'll tell yez how.
'Tis a moighty cur'ous story
That Oi'm tellin' of yez now.

'Tis some many years ago, sor,
Oi forget phwy Oi waz sint
With the great explorin' party,
But they axed me,—an' Oi wint.
An' the forests that we passed through,
An' the rivers that we crossed,
Phwat with one thing an' another
Ivery man but me waz lost.

But Oi still kept on explorin',
Walkin' by mesilf for moiles,
An' a-swimmin' over rivers,
Filled with hungry crocodoiles,
Till wan day a big gorilly
Oi saw standin' in the road,
And, phwen Oi saw the cratur,
“Och, bedad!” Oi cried, “Oi'm blow'd.”

For Oi took him for a Christian.
Dressed in plant'in leaves and things,
With a bonnet on his head, sor,
An' around his neck some rings
Ov berries from the trees, sor,
An', sez Oi, “It seems to me,

By the manner of his dressin',
It's most loikely *he's* a *she*."

She waz that, an' by the same, sor,
When Oi bowed and raised me hat,
She jist flung her arms around me,
And then down beside me sat.
Oi could see she'd fell in love, sor,
An' Oi came all over hot,
For a big female gorilly
'S worse than any Hottentot.



An' Oi rasoned with her thus, sor:
"Oi *can't* marry yez, becaze
Oi've wan woife in Ballyhooly,
An' another wan that waz

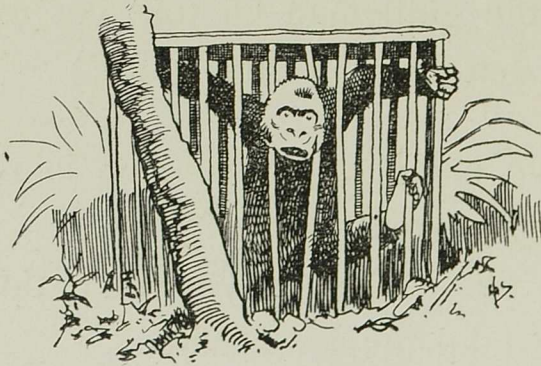
Me woife up in Killarney;
 If Oi marry *yez*, ye see,
 They'll call it bigamy, perhaps,
 Or trigonometry."

But she didn't understand, sor,
 An' she stayed with me all day,
 An' she growled an' showed her teeth, sor,
 When Oi tried to get away;
 Then she led me to her home, sor—
 It waz made insoide the cage,
 (That the gintleman Oi told *yez* ov
 Had left there, Oi'll engage.)

"An' ye mane to shut me up in that,
 Ye ugly great gorilly?"
 Thinks Oi. "Bedad! ye won't, thin.
 D'ye take me for a silly?"
 So when she opens wide the door,
 Oi steps asoide politely;
She walks insoide, *Oi* shuts the door,
 An' fastens it up toightly.

An' a moighty lucky thing it waz
 Oi fastened her up so, sor;

What would have happened otherwise
Oi really do not know, sor.
But Oi left her far behind me,
Still a-yellin' in her rage,
An' if the gintleman goes back,
He'll find her—in *the cage*.



THAT OF THE ARTIST AND THE MOTOR-CAR.

(Tragedy.)

THERE lived an artist,
Not unknown to fame—
Wild horses wouldn't
Drag from me his name.
Besides, it doesn't matter,—not a bit,—
It is sufficient, painting was his lit-
Tle game.

He copied Turner-
Esque effects with ease,
And painted cattle,—
Miniatures,—or seas;
Yet found some difficulty, I've heard said,
In making both ends meat, (or even bread,
And cheese).

He sat one day with-
 In his stu-di-o,
 Grieving that times were
 Bad, and prices low,
 When, suddenly, this thought occurred to him,
 (Of course, 'twas but a fancy, or a whim,
 You know):

“How strange 'twould be if
 What I painted here
 Upon the canvas
 Really should appear!
 I wish it would, and then remain for good.
 Upon my word, ha-ha! I say! That would
 Be queer!”

No sooner had the
 Thought occurred to him
 Than round and round the
 Studio seemed to swim.
 A fairy voice declared: “*On your behalf
 The wish is granted!*” then “*Ha! ha!*”
 ('Twas laugh-
 Ter grim.)

“ Absurd,” the artist
 Cried. “ Of course, there are
 No fairies now ; we’re
 Too advanced by far
 To think it ; still, with just a line or so
 Upon the canvas here, I’ll draw a mo-
 Tor-car.”



He drew, and scarce had
 Finished it before
 His servant knocked. (Up-
 On her face she wore
 A puzzled look.) “ Sir, here’s your coat and hat,
 And, if you please, *your motor-car is at
 The door!* ”

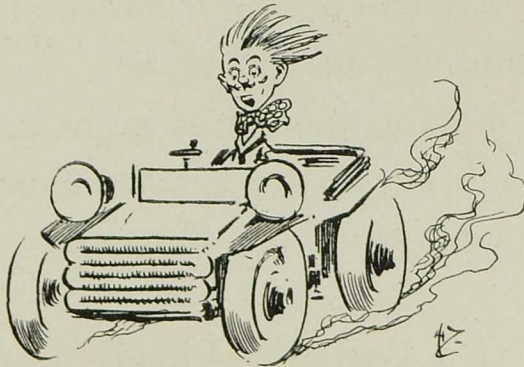
The artist hardly
 Could believe his eyes,
For what he saw quite
 Filled him with surprise:
There stood the *very* motor-car he'd meant,
In make, and pattern, most convenient,
 And size.

“Well! as it's here, I'll
 Use the thing,” he cried.
(Indeed, what was there
 To be done beside?)
So, watched by quite a crowd about the door,
He turned the crank, and off he started for
 A ride.

On went the motor-
 Car, on—“pop-pop-pop!—
On through the streets, and
 On past house and shop,
Through country lanes, and over hill and dell,
Delightfully,—until he thought it well
 To stop.

But stop he couldn't,
Try whate'er he would—
He hadn't drawn quite
Everything he should;
Some little crank, or something, he'd not done,
Because the mechanism he'd not un-
Derstood.

Result? Poor fellow!
To this day, he flies
Along the roads, with
Starting eyes, and cries
For help—which nobody can give him, for
He's doomed to ride until the thing busts, or—
He dies.



XXXVI.

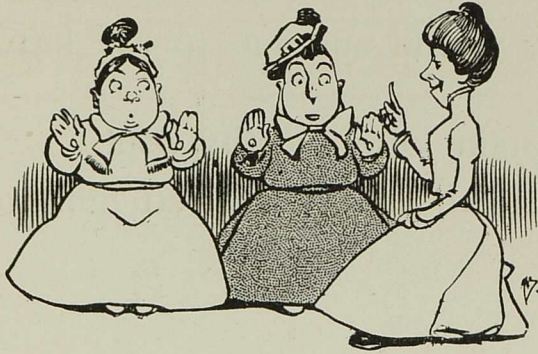
THAT OF THE INCONSIDERATE NABOB AND THE
LADY WHO DESIRED TO BE A BEGUM.

BEGUMS! Exactly what they are
I really ought to know—but don't;
In my Encyclopædia
I'll look them up. Stay! No, I won't.
Instead, let us converse together
About Miss Mary Merryweather.

A guileless child of nature, she
Who lived out Upper Norwood way,
A Begum she desired to be,
And dreamt about this night and day,
But,—though she made a solemn vow to
Be a Begum,—knew not how to.

“What *is* a Begum?” friends would ask,
And Mary M—— would shake her head.

“Though doubtless it will be a task
I’ll find out for myself,” she said.
They raised their hands in consternation
At this announced determination.



Later Miss Merryweather said:
“To be a Begum one must go
To India. I’d better wed
A captain on a P. and O.
I’ll therefore marry Captain Jolly.”
(A kind old man who called her “Polly.”)

“Though what on earth a girl could see,”
He said, while on their honeymoon,
“Attractive in a man like me——”
Then Mrs. Jolly very soon
(Though doubtless with some trepidation)
Explained to him the situation.

Good Captain Jolly sighed, and said :

“ A Begum you can never be,
My dearest Poll, till I am dead ;
Perhaps I'd better die,” said he.
“ If you don't mind, I think you'd better,”
Said she ; “ 'twill suit me to the letter.”

So Captain Jolly, worthy soul,
Deceased, as she desired him to.

* * *

In India—the lady's goal ;
A wealthy Nabob came in view,
Whom Widow Jolly captivated.
And,—later,—married, as is stated.

“ A Begum now at last am I,”
She said, when she had married him,
“ A Begum !” said the Nabob. “ Why ?”
His wife explained. “ A harmless whim,”
Said he ; “ but I regret to state, Ma'am,
You're *not* what you anticipate, Ma'am.

“ A Begum is a *Rajah's* wife,
And *not* a Nabob's, don't you see ;

And so throughout *my* natural life
A Begum you can never be.”
She wept—and hinted Captain Jolly
Had died to please his little Polly.



“Perhaps you——” “No, I won’t,” he cried;
“I draw the line,” said he, “at that.
Although poor Jolly may have died
To please you—I refuse. That’s flat!”

* * *

And so, alas! for her endeavour,
She never *was* a Begum,—never!

XXXVII.

THAT OF DR. FARLEY, M.D., SPECIALIST IN LITTLE TOES.



EVER heard of Dr. Farley,
Doctor Farley, sir, M.D.,
Living in the street of Harley,
Street of Harley, Number Three?

Years ago the simple fact is,
Simple fact is, don't you know,
He had but a tiny practice,
Tiny practice, down at Bow.

Consultations for a shilling,
For a shilling, sir, with pills;
For this sum he e'en was willing,
Willing, sir, to cure all ills.

Pains in "tum-tums" he would cure a,
Cure a man of, in a night,
With Ip. Cac. and Aqua pura
(Aqua pura his delight).

He was, too, a skilful surgeon,
Skilful surgeon, yet his fee—
Seldom was it known to verge on,
Even verge on, two and three.

Work at this rate wasn't paying,
Wasn't paying—what surprise?
So he sold his practice, saying,
Saying, "I must specialize."

“That’s the way to pick up money,
 Pick up money, so I’m told.”
 So he did it. Now—it’s funny,
 Funny, but—he rolls in gold.

His success himself surprises,
 Much surprises, for he knows
 That he only specialises,
 Specialises, little toes.



When swells in their little tootsies,
 Little tootsies, suffer pain,
 Unto him they bring their footsies,
 Footsies, to put right again ;

For they say, sir, “None but he, sir,
 He, sir, understands the toe.”

Earls and Dukes wait every day, sir,
Every day, sir, in a row.

This the history of Farley,
Doctor Farley, sir, M.D.,
Others—in the street of Harley—
Others like him there may be.

There's a moral to this story,
To this story, if you're wise:
If you'd win both wealth and glory,
Wealth and glory—SPECIALIZE.

XXXVIII.

THAT OF JEREMIAH SCOLES, MISER.

I SING of joys, and junketings,
Of holly, and of such-like things;
I sing of merry mistletoe,
And,—pardon me,—I sing also
Of Jeremiah Scoles.

I sing of Mister Scoles because
So singular a man he was,
And had so very strange a way
Of celebrating Christmas Day—
Unlike all other souls.

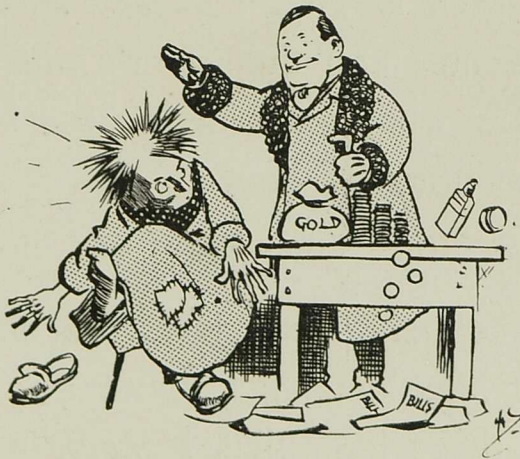
Myself, I am a cheerful man,
Enjoying life as best I can.
At Christmas-time I love to see
The flow of mirth and jollity
About the festive board;
I love to dance, I *try* to sing;
On enemies, like anything,

At Christmas-time I heap hot coals,
But not so Jeremiah Scoles—

He loves a miser's hoard.

I chanced one year, on Christmas Day,
To call upon him, just to say
That we'd be very pleased to see
Him, if he'd care to come to tea.

I found him quite alone.
He sat before a fireless grate;
The room looked bare and desolate,
And he, unkempt, in dressing-gown,
Received me with an angry frown,
And spoke in surly tone.



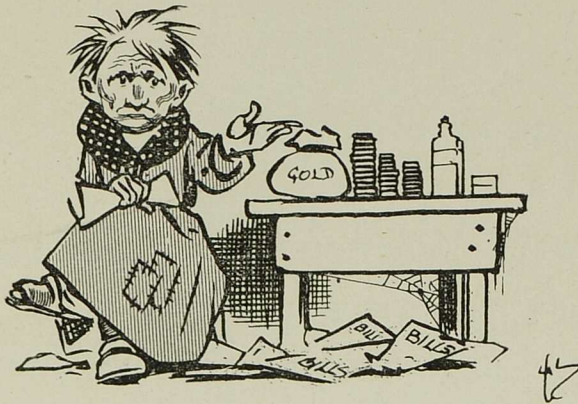
“Ha! what d’ye *want?*” said he to me
And eyed me most suspiciously.

I laughed and gave a hearty smack
 Upon the grumpy fellow's back,
 And cried: "Come home with me.
 We'll treat you well. There's lots of fun—"
 But ere I scarcely had begun
 He cut me short. "Pooh! folly! stuff!
 See *here*; I've fun—quite fun enough!"
 He laughed, but mirthlessly.

Before him on the table lay
 Gold, silver, coppers, in array;
 Some empty bottles; stacks of bills;
 Some boxes for containing pills—
 And that was all. Said he:
 "This gold is what I *haven't* spent
 In presents; and the silver's meant
 To show what *could* be wasted in—
 Pah!—Christmas boxes. 'Tis a sin
 I don't encourage—no, not me?"

"The coppers—little boys, no doubt,
 Would like 'em—*they may go without*;
 While these long bills I *should* have had
 From tradesmen, had I been so mad
 As to have bought the things

They represent for Christmas cheer;
 These bottles and pill-boxes here
 Show what I will *not* have to take,
 Because I'll have *no* stomach-ache
 That over-eating brings.



“And thus I spend my Christmas Day,
 Thinking what silly fools are they
 Who spend so much in solid cash
 On so much sentimental trash.

And now, good-day to you!”
 He showed me out, he banged the door,
 And I was—where I was before.

* * *

I really think, upon my word,
 His line of reasoning's most absurd.

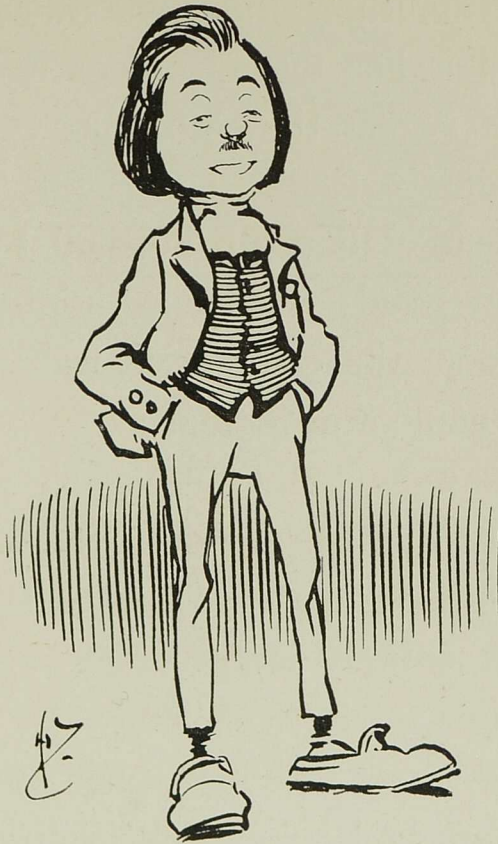
No doubt you think so, too?

XXXIX.

THAT OF THE HIGH-SOULED YOUTH.

A YEAR or so ago, you know,
I had a friend, at Pimlico,
For want of better name called Joe
 (This name is not his right 'un).
He was a sweet, poetic youth,
Romantic, gallant, and in sooth
Might well be called, in very truth
 An "Admirable Crichton."

And oh! it grieved him sore to see
The lack,—these times,—of chivalry.
He'd now and then confide to me
 His views upon the matter.
"Good, never *now* is done by stealth!"
He'd say, "Men ruin mind, and health
In sordid scramble after wealth;
 And talk,—is idle chatter."



“That simple virtue, Modesty,
Alas! it now appears to be
A valueless commodity,
 Though *once* men prized it highly.”
He went on thus,—like anything,
Until I heard, one day last Spring,
That he intended marrying
 The daughter of old Riley.

I knew the Riley girls, and thought
 "Now this has turned out as it ought.
 Joe is a reg'lar right good sort
 To marry 'Cinderella.'"

The younger one, (thus called by me)
 A sweet good girl as e'er might be
 Was poor; the elder—rich was *she*—
 Her name was Arabella.

An Aunt had left her lots of gold,
 While 'Cinderella'—so I'm told,—
 She left entirely in the cold
 Without a single shilling.

The elder one,—though plain to see,—
 Of suitors had some two, or three;
 Poor Cinderella, nobody
 To marry *her* seemed willing.

Until the noble high-souled Joe—
 That Errant-knight of Pimlico—
 Came forth, the world at large to show
 That *he* at least knew better.
 In spirit I before him bowed,
 "To know a man like *that* I'm proud



“ARABELLA.”

And happy!" I remarked aloud,
And sent to him this letter.

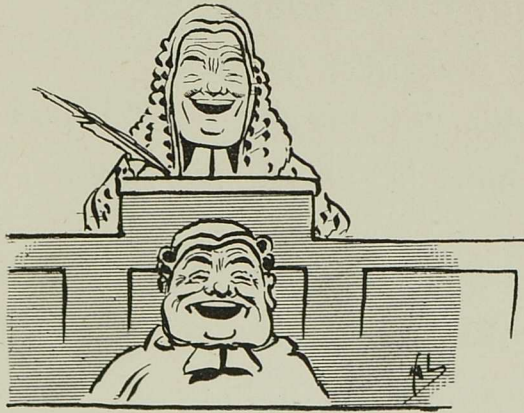
*"Dear Joe;—Wealth as you say's a trap
Gold is but dross,—not worth a rap—
How very like you—dear old chap!—
To marry 'Cinderella.'"*

* * *

He wrote:—"I must expostulate,
I'm not a FOOL at any rate!
OF COURSE I've chosen as a mate
The RICH one, Arabella!"

XL.

THAT OF MR. JUSTICE DEAR'S LITTLE JOKE AND THE
UNFORTUNATE MAN WHO COULD NOT SEE IT.



AGAIN of Mr. Justice Dear
My harmless numbers flowing,
Shall tell a story somewhat queer
About His Worship, showing,
How sensitive the legal wit.
It *is*. There is no doubt of it.

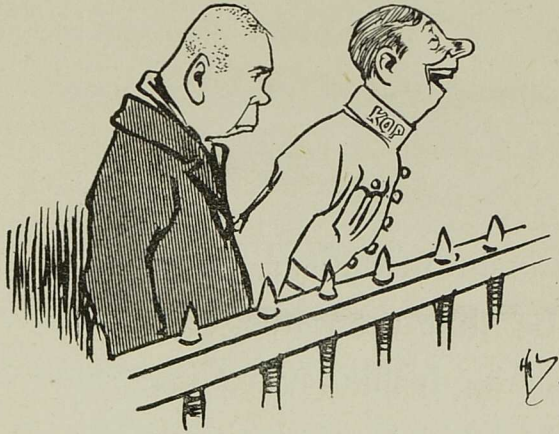
Before good Justice Dear one day
A man—for some small matter,
Was hailed, and, in his own sly way
(The former, not the latter)
Made,—and I thought the Court would choke,—
An unpremeditated joke.

The prosecuting Counsel roared,
The Jury giggled madly,
Only the Prisoner looked bored,
He took it rather sadly.
“Why don’t you laugh?” the Usher said,
The Prisoner, he shook his head.

“I cannot see,” said he, “that’s flat—
A fact that’s most annoying,—
What everyone is laughing at,
And seemingly enjoying.”
This strange remark, it reached his ear
And irritated Justice Dear.

“When I am pleased to make a joke
That’s *not* the way to treat it.”
Thus, warningly, his Worship spoke,
“Now listen! I’ll repeat it.”

He did. He said it o'er and o'er,
At least a dozen times or more.



“Excuse me, sir,” the Prisoner said,
“At *what* may you be driving?”
Good Justice Dear turned very red,
“This joke of my contriving,
If you don’t see it, Sir, you ought;
If not—well—’tis contempt of Court.”

The Counsel then explained it, but
Quite failed the point to show him;
The Usher muttered “Tut—tut—tut!”
The Jury whispered “Blow him!”
Then several people wrote it down.
The Prisoner still wore a frown.

“Am I supposed to laugh at *that*?

Why? I can't see the reason.”

It was too much. His Lordship sat

Aghast. “’Tis almost treason!

That unpremeditated joke before

Has *never* failed to raise a roar.

“Defective in morality,

Must be that man misguided,

Who fails its brilliancy to see.”

His Lordship then decided

To send the man,—despite his tears,—

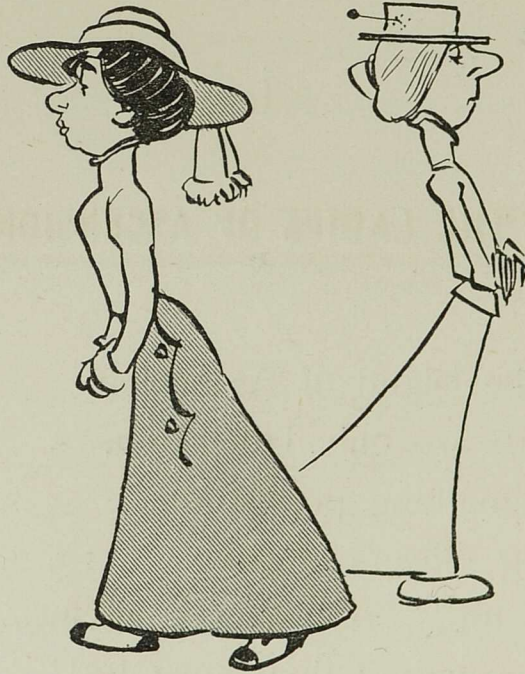
To servitude, for twenty years.

XLI.

THAT OF THE LADIES OF ASCENSION ISLAND.

ON the Island of Ascension
There are only ladies ten,
The remaining population
Being officers or men.
“Dear me!” I hear you saying,
“How united they must be!”
But in this you’d be mistaken,
As you’ll very quickly see.

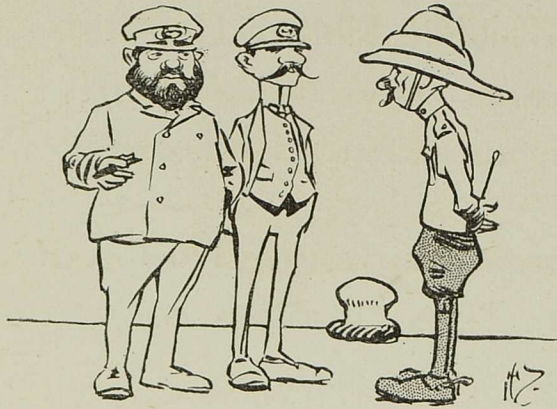
For each lady on the Island
Thinks *she* ought to take the lead
In social matters, and on this
They’re not at all agreed.
And Mrs. Smith’s told Mrs. Brown
She thinks her most absurd,
While others cut each other dead
And don’t exchange a word.



This state of thing's been going on
They tell me year by year,
And the husbands have grown tired of it
As we should do I fear;
For connubial felicity
Is doomed, if all our lives
Are spent in listening to the faults
Of other people's wives.

Quite recently a steamer called
For cinnamon and spice,

And her Captain and the officers
 Were asked for their advice.
 They gave it promptly. It was this—
 “’Twere better you agreed,
 In social matters, just to let
 The *eldest* lady lead.”



They tried it. But—good gracious!
 They are worse off than before,
 For every lady in the place
 Is firm upon that score.
 Impossible it is that age
 Shall be the final test,
 For every one insists that she
 Is younger than the rest!

XLII.

THAT OF THE ARTICULATING SKELETON.

THERE was a worthy Doctor once
Who unlike Mother Hubbard
Had *many* bones (a skeleton)
Shut up within a cupboard.

One night the worthy Doctor dreamt,
(He'd been up rather late)
His articulated skeleton
Did thus articulate:—



* * *

“Come! Doctor, come! confess that you’re a fraud
A very specious humbug and a sham.
Though meek as any lamb.
Don’t glare at me! I’ll tell it not abroad
But merely in *your* ears alone applaud
The wily artifice of pill and dram.

“*You* know as well as I do, you don’t mean,
One half the things you tell ‘our patient.’ No!
Why, I can clearly show,
That Mrs. Gobbles’ ailments are but spleen,
(’Tis quite the simplest cause that e’er was seen)
And yet what crack-jaw names you now bestow.

“Because, forsooth, the longer you can prey
Upon her pocket, *that* doth please you best,
So, Doctor, you protest
‘The case is serious,’ from day to day,
‘And it must run its course,’ you gravely say
With wisest head-shake and a look distressed.

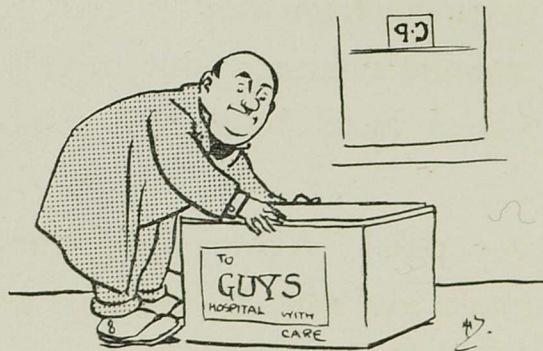
“And then those pills! Absurd you know to try
To gammon *me* with bolluses of bread;
While Aqua P. I’ve said,

Often, is good (if nothing else be nigh)
 To drink when thirsty and our throats are dry,
 But *not* for medicine—though coloured red.

“So, Doctor, when we’re by ourselves alone,
 Don’t try to put on ‘side’ with me, good lack,
 For I can surely track
 Full many a ‘fatal case’ you’d fain disown.
 And *I* can tell aright why you should groan
*When harmless ducks in passing cry ‘Quack!
 Quack!’*”

* * *

The Doctor woke. “Dear me!” said he,
 “This skeleton’s too wise
 For me.” He therefore packed it up,
 And sent it off to Guy’s.



XLIII.

THAT OF YE LOVE-PHILTRE: AN OLD-ENGLISH LEGEND.

SIR PETER DE WYNKIN

He loved a fair mayde,
And he wooed ye fair mayde
For hys bride.

But ye ladye cried "no,"
With a toss of her head,
And Sir Wynkin
Disconsolate sighed.

"Now out! and alas!
And alack-a-day me!"
He sang him
In sorrowful tones,
"She loveth me not
Yet, beshrew me!" said he,
"There's a wizard I wot of
Called—Jones."

Caldweller Ap Jones,
Was a wizard of note,
And he dwelt in a cave
Hard at hand.
Love-philtres and potions
He sold for a groat,
To ye rich and ye poor
Of ye land.

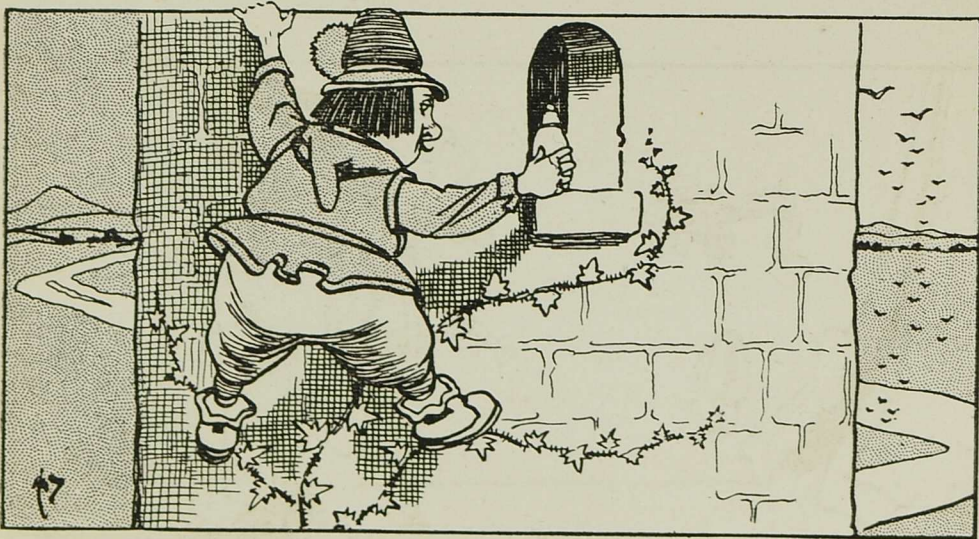
Sir Wynkin, he sought
This same wizard straightway,
And he told him hys
Dolorous plight.
The wizard cried, "Ha!
If you'll do as I say,
Thys small matter
Can soon be set right."

"Thys potion—a love-philtre
Made extra strong—
To ye ladye, by you,
Must be given."
"Oddzooks!" quoth Sir Wynkin.
"Ye ladye ere long

Shall receive it,
 Or e'er I be shriven."

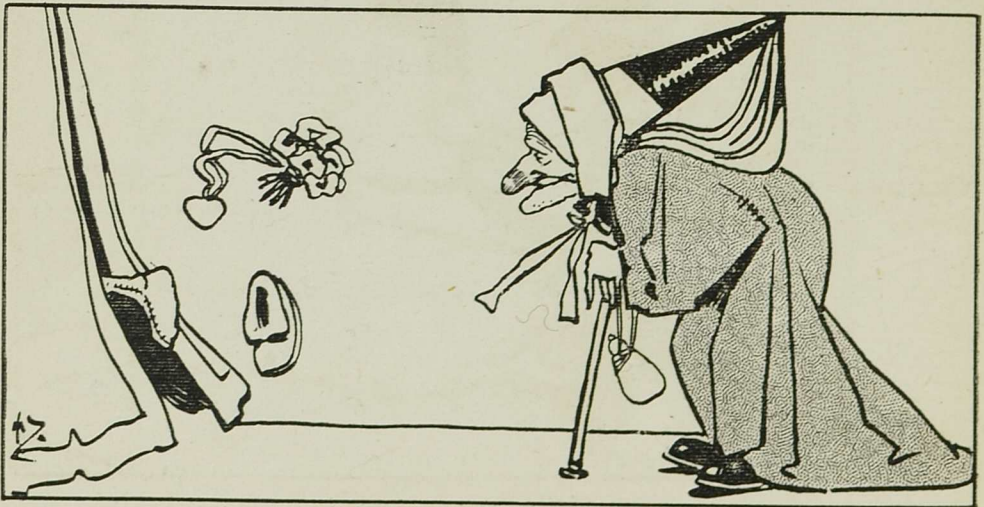
Ye bower was high
 Where ye fair ladye slept,
 But Sir Wynkin climbed up
 From ye basement.
 By means of ye ivy
 He painfully crept,
 And ye potion placed
 Outside the casement.

"She'll find it," quoth he,
 "Ere the morrow is past.



Curiosity'll prompt her
To drink it.
Ye magic will act,
And she'll love me at last.
Ah me! 'Tis sweet joy
E'en to think it."

But alack! and alas!
Ye endyng was sad,
Ye love-philtre caused
Quite a commotion.
For—a toothless old grand-dame
Ye fair ladye had,
And *she* found, and *she* drank
Ye love potion!!



Fell madly in love

With Sir Wynkin 'tis said,
And declared that ye Knight
Had betrayed her.

So, distraught, from ye country

Sir Wynkin he fled,
And he died at ye wars—
A Crusader.

XLIV.

THAT OF THE BARGAIN SALE.

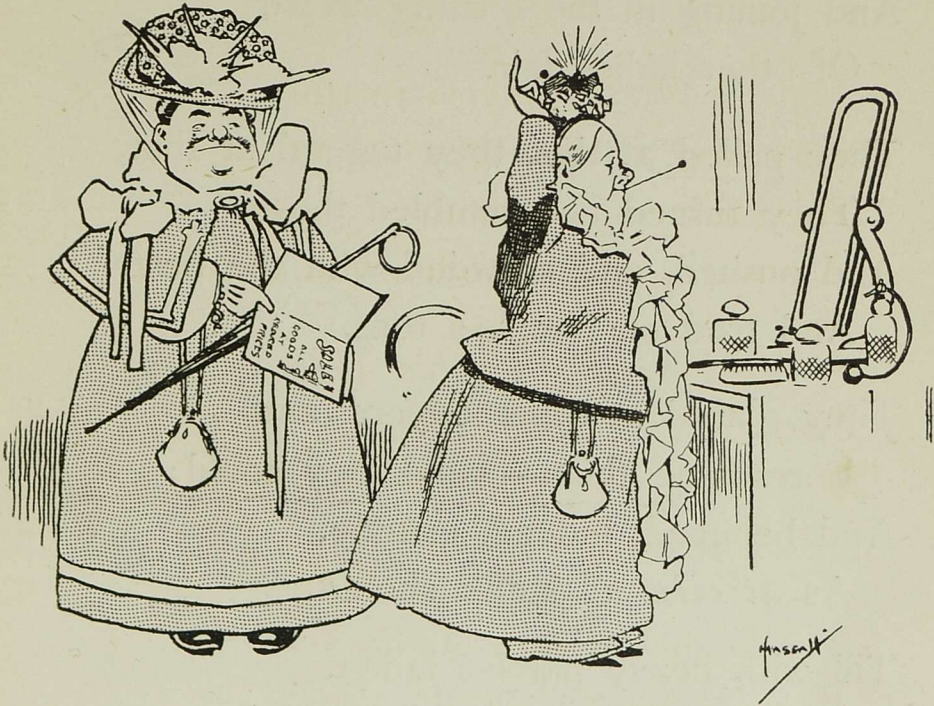
I SING of Mrs. Tomkins-Smythe,
And Mrs. Gibson-Brown;
Two ladies resident within
A square, near Camden Town,

Good neighbours they had been, and friends,
For twenty years, or more;
The Tomkins-Smythes they lived at "6,"
The Gibson-Browns at "4."

'Twas in that season of the year
When drapers' bargain sales
Do fascinate the female mind,
And vex the married males.

An illustrated catalogue
Arrived at "Number 4,"
Which Mrs. Gibson-Brown took in
To show her friend next door.

“My dear!” she cried in eager tones,
 “*Such* bargains! Gracious me!
 Here’s *this* reduced from two-and-six
 To one eleven-three!



“And *those* which you remember, dear,
 We thought so very nice,
 They’re selling off at really an
 Alarming sacrifice!”

“Those *remnants*—” Mrs. Tomkins-Smythe
 Remained to hear no more;

She jabbed her bonnet on with pins,
And hurried to the door.

A tram, a 'bus, the tupp'ny tube,
And they were quickly there;
And joining in the buzzing crowd
Of other ladies fair.

They pulled at this, they tugged at that,
They turned and tumbled those;
And pushed, and crowded with the best,
And trod on people's toes.

They glared at other buyers, and
Forestalled them—when they could;
And behaved, indeed, exactly,
As *at sales* all ladies should.

Till with heavy parcels laden,
Breathless, but with keen delight,
They beheld the remnant counter
("Second turning to the right.")

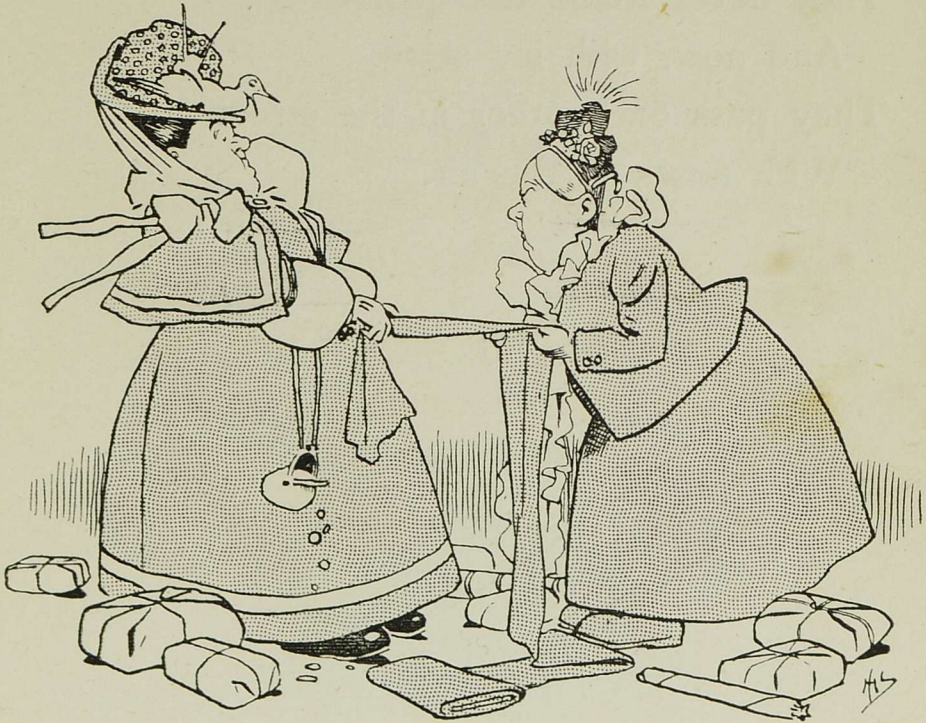
And (alas! how small a matter
May entirely change life's view)
Both in the self-same instant
Saw a remnant—Navy blue.

They each reached out to take it.

“’Tis mine!” they both did cry.

“I saw it first, my dearest love.”

“No, darling, it was I.”



“*My* remnant, and I’ll buy it!”

“Indeed? I think you *won’t!*”

“Pooh! madame, I will have it!”

“I’ll see, ma’am, that you don’t!”

And thus, and thus—oh, woesome sight—
They quarrelled, nor would stop
Until the shopwalker he came
And turned them from the shop.

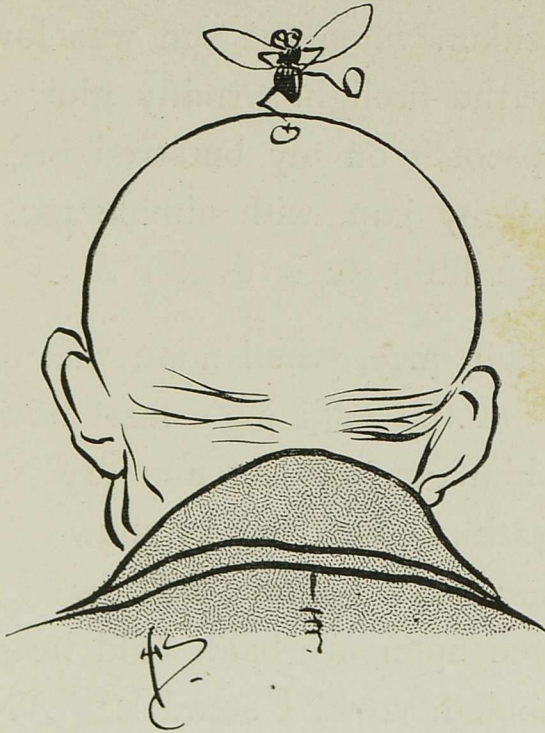
* * *

They never made the quarrel up,
And now, with icy stare,
They pass each other in the street
With noses in the air.

XLV.

THAT OF A DECEASED FLY.

(A Ballade.)



A LITTLE busy buzzy fly
Before my window oft would go,
I daily saw him sailing by
And thought that I would like to know

More of that little fly, and oh!

I raised my hat, and bowed, and said,
 "How do!" The fly replied, "So, so!"
 (Alas! that little fly is dead.)

We grew quite friendly, he and I,

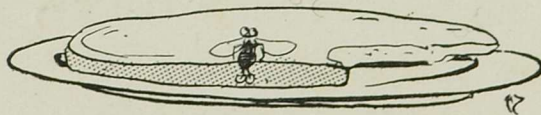
He'd come when called—I called him Joe.—
 He was a most amusing fly.

At evening, when the sun was low,
 Or, by the firelight's ruddy glow
 He'd hopscotch on my buttered bread
 Or o'er my jam, with nimble toe.
 (Alas! that little fly is dead.)

I saved him once, when none was by;

From out the milk jug's fatal flow
 I fished him out, and let him dry.

His gratitude he tried to show
 In many ways I know, I know;
But—when upon my bald, bald head
 He gamboled, could I stand it? *No!*
Alas! that little fly is dead!



ENVOY.

Prince. Pity, not your blame, bestow.

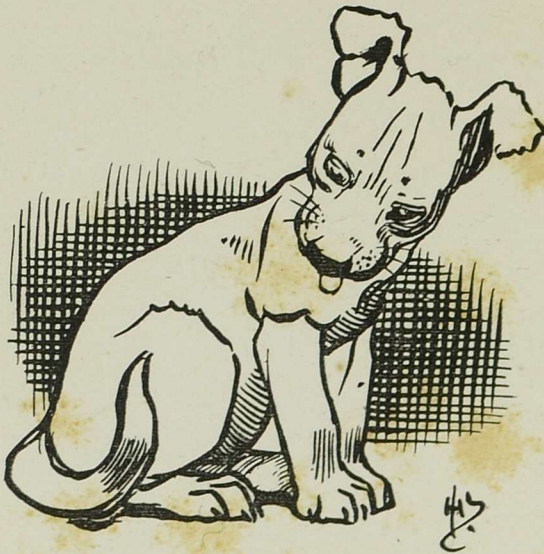
Remember all the tears I've shed.

What *could* I do? *It tickled so.*

Alas! That little fly is dead.

EPILOGUE.

THERE,—having sung in dulcet tones
Of Brown, and Robinson, and Jones,
Of poets, cannibals, and kings,
Of burglars, dukes, and such like things—
May kindly Fate our fortunes mend.
We wish you joy. This is



THE END

