

English Humorists of To-day

J. A. HAMMERTON



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1907

**WAPPING
HIGH STREET**



WILL OWEN

W. W. JACOBS

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Frontispiece]

ENGLISH HUMORISTS OF TO-DAY

By

J. A. HAMMERTON

Editor of "The Punch Library of Humour."

With Stories, Sketches, and Poems by

SIR W. S. GILBERT, ANTHONY HOPE, JEROME K.
JEROME, W. W. JACOBS, W. PETT RIDGE, BARRY PAIN,
SIR F. C. BURNAND, F. ANSTEY, OWEN SEAMAN,
WALTER EMANUEL, J. M. BARRIE, H. G. WELLS,
RICHARD WHITEING, ISRAEL ZANGWILL, G. K.
CHESTERTON, and INGLIS ALLEN

Caricature Portraits by "Spy," E. T. Reed, Max Beerbohm,
A. S. Boyd, Harry Furniss, W. Ralston, F. Anger, and others

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON MCMVII

ENGLISH HUMORISTS
OF TO-DAY

J. A. TANNER

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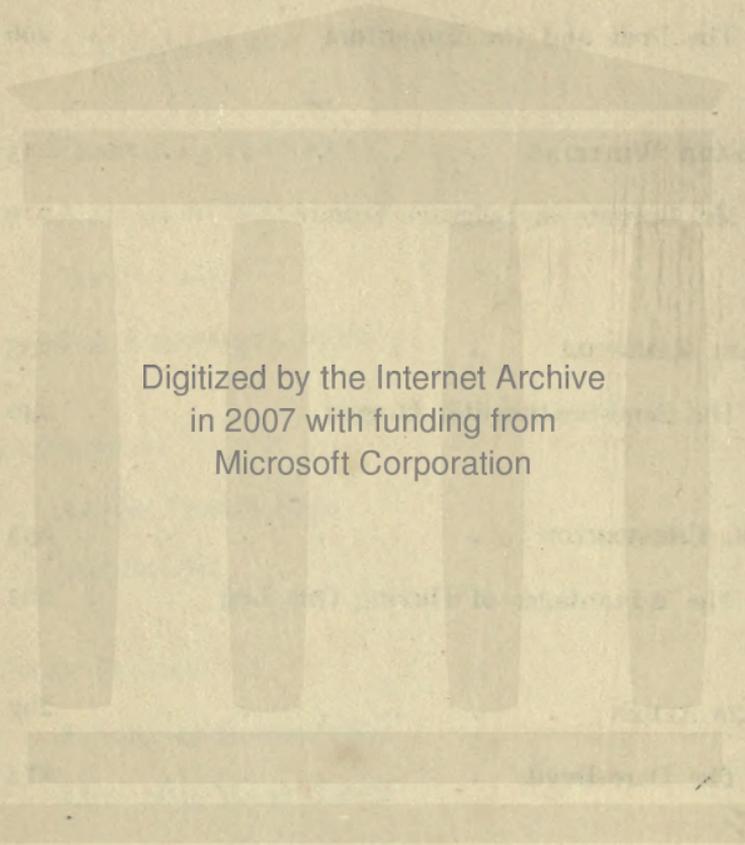
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ON HUMOUR AND HUMORISTS

SOME few years ago I assisted, as the French say, at a literary gathering to which several popular authors had been invited for the purpose of discussing "Humour in Literature." The result of the discussion, so far as I can now recall it, was entirely profitless, though I can testify that the exchange of ideas was in every way entertaining. The result was profitless for the simple reason that with the sad superfluous pertinacity of the young debater these notable men of letters endeavoured to arrive at some definition of humour. As I have never found any two persons to be completely in accord on this point, and indeed have seldom known any one person to give precisely the same definition twice, I do not purpose attempting any serious consideration of the subject here. There exists a weighty treatise on *A Theory of Wit and Humour*, and the intrepid definition hunter may be referred to that—with the suspicion that what sense of humour he possessed before will afterwards be modified. I shall not even observe the time-honoured custom of writers on this subject by quoting from Addison's essay on *True and False Humour*, or his *Six Papers on Wit*. Addison did not settle the matter, and assuredly

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it is not for me to attempt it. There is, however, a certain exegetical purpose behind this little work and that I hope incidentally to explain.

Whatever our individual notions of humour may be, there is no doubt that in every generation certain writers succeed in the most agreeable of all occupations—moving one's fellow-creatures to laughter. There are others, hardly less useful in the economy of nature, who achieve the same end by a humorless effort to be serious; but for the moment we have no concern with the unconscious humorist. The fact that certain writers have legitimately gained a reputation for amusing us and that we may turn to them with fair measure of confidence for a refreshing draught of laughter when we feel the need of it, is of more importance than any academic distinction between true and false humour.

But there is one aspect of humour which would be worthy of consideration if the occasion served, and that is the manner in which its characteristics change from generation to generation. There is, for instance, a wide difference between what passed for humour in the days of Elizabeth and in the days of George I, while the humour of both those periods is vastly different from that of to-day, which, in its turn, is losing all relationship to the humour of the early Victorian period. This is only saying that humour is a national characteristic which takes on the temper of the time, and it also explains why books over which one generation has laughed consumedly fail utterly to amuse another.

Further sources of profitable inquiry might be found in noting the different kinds of humour

popular in one generation, and the changing taste of the individual at different times of life. But none of these questions can be discussed within the space of this brief note, and I mention them merely that I may not be thought to take too perfunctory a view of my subject.

One feature of humorous literature in our own day does call for some notice here, and that will be found entirely in harmony with the spirit of our time. The tendency of our age is strongly in the direction of specializing. In the past the man of letters had, like Jacques, "as large a charter as the wind"; but to-day public taste would seem to demand that the humorist should be a humorist; that the historical novelist should write nothing but historical novels; in a word, that the author should continue to work that particular vein in which he first struck popular favour.

We can see, among our humorists especially, that this limited charter is somewhat irksome; and the majority of those represented in the present work have shown from time to time, by writing works of serious import, that they do not consider "motley's the only wear." But no matter how successful they have been in their serious studies of human life, they remain humorists to the end, and in fact it is only those who possess the humanizing quality of humour that are capable of the best in literature. There is a splendid ichor of humour flowing through the writings of the old Hebrew prophets. Conceive the works of Shakespeare as devoid of humour as, say, those of Mr. Hall Caine, and frigid oblivion had swallowed them long ago.

Humour is truly the preservative of all good literature ; it is essential to the greatest. It is humour that keeps Fielding and Smollet alive, and is it not so with Lamb and Carlyle, with Dickens and with Thackeray ?

If the little work to which this note is introductory were an attempt to illustrate humour *in* literature, its scheme had been entirely different. That were a much more ambitious undertaking, and the two first names to call for consideration would be those of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy, eminently humorists both. But its purpose is rather to illustrate the work of a group of writers, or, more correctly, several groups, with whom humour is not only incidental to their work, as in the cases of the great writers named, but who have from time to time made direct appeal for audience as writers of humorous literature, which implies something different from humour in literature.

And one of the reasons why I have sought thus to bring together in one volume these slight critical studies of our leading humorists, with illustrative selections from their works, is by way of reply to a distinguished American critic who some two or three years ago in a review of contemporary English literature bemoaned the utter lack of the humorist. I am persuaded that, despite the vogue of the melodramatic, which is the sworn enemy of humour—*Jane Eyre* will illustrate this—the humour of the present day is of a very high order, and its exponents are sufficiently numerous to warrant our having no uneasiness as to the immediate future of English fiction ; for there can be no healthier sign than

the quantity and improving quality of humorous writing.

There are sixteen writers and almost as many different styles of humour represented in the present collection. For the most cursory critic can scarcely fail to be struck by the distinct individuality of the humorists whose work I have sought to illustrate. Thus Sir William Gilbert stands quite alone as the author of the inimitable *Bab Ballads* and the creator of what has been described as "Topsy-Turvydom." Inimitable, but so persistently imitated! Most of his imitators remind one of the person, described by Mr. Jerome in his *Novel Notes*, who deemed himself an original writer by depicting a land where people walked on their hands and wore their hats on their feet. Sir William never for one instant had so crude a vision of Topsy-Turvydom, all his quaint notions and inverted pictures of life being arrived at by a process of logical deduction whereby things are reduced to absurdities. He is a humorist because he is a logician, just as people who are capable of logical thought cannot help seeing the humorous side of things.

Mr. Anthony Hope again stands equally alone in his particular field, as the humorist of society, expressing himself in the dialogue form, which, as practised by him, may be said to be his own invention. It is true that "F. Anstey" is likewise a master of comic dialogue, but he also is a humorist *sui generis*, and has no possible relationship to the author of *The Dolly Dialogues*. Mr. Anstey, with perfect art and working somewhat on the lines of M. Henri Lavedan, the delightful French writer,

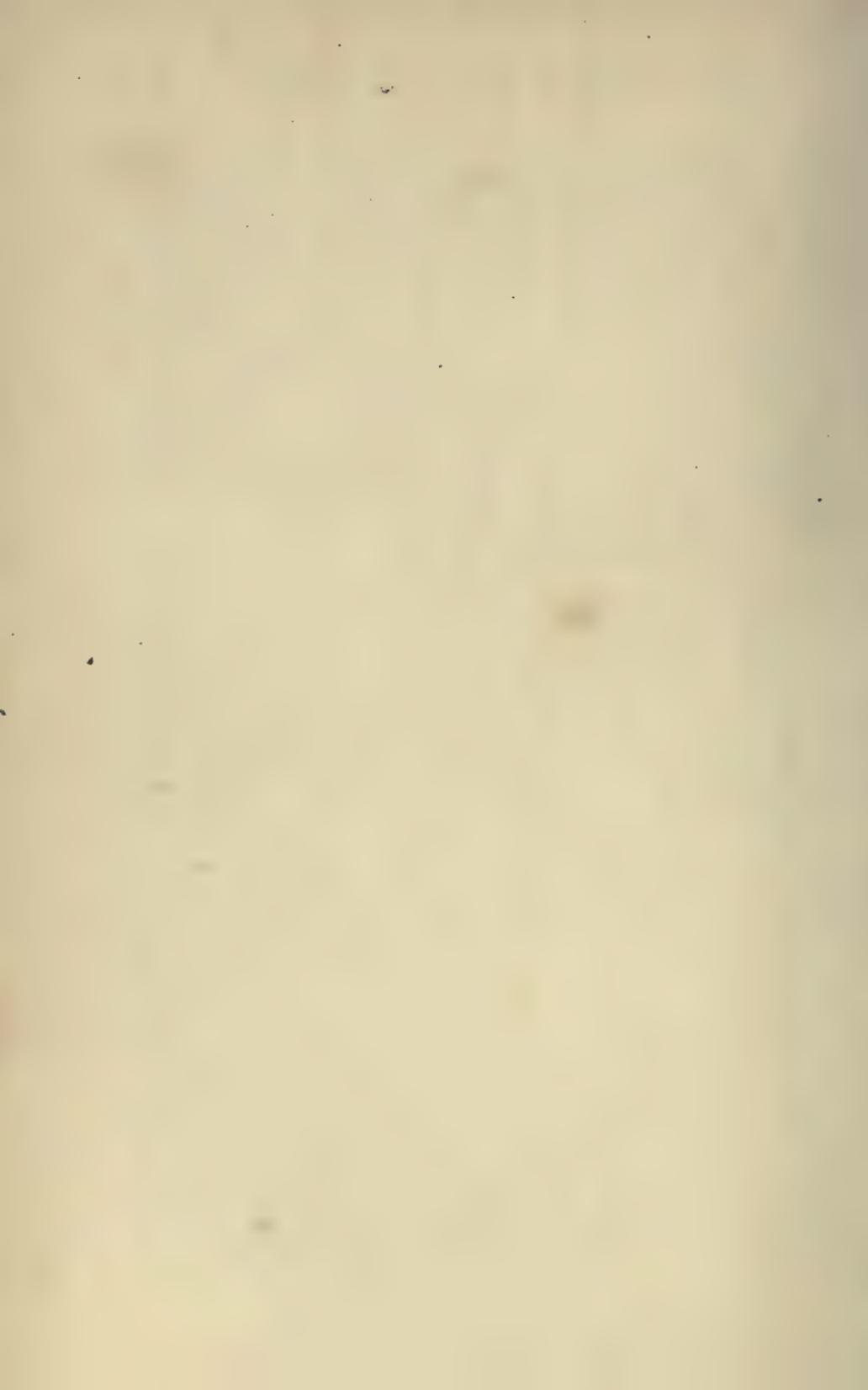
produces in his reader the illusion of overhearing an actual colloquy between a group of unconsciously funny fellow-creatures. Mr. Jerome K. Jerome, on the other hand, makes a direct appeal to us in his own person as an amused but sympathetic commentator on the passing show of life, while Mr. W. W. Jacobs may be described in a word as the most Dickensian of living humorists, and Mr. Pett Ridge has some qualities akin to both but still remaining distinctly individual in his point of view.

Mr. Barry Pain might, if he particularly cared, have done some very considerable work in humour, but he has preferred to follow the fancy of his mood, which is now for the attic wit of *The Nine Muses Minus One*, anon for the character comedy of *De Omnibus*, the broad farce of *The One Before*, or the spirited humour of such a short story as that which I have the pleasure of including in the present collection. Sir Francis Burnand, again, is at once typical of a period—I suppose one might describe it as the later Victorian—and still individual. He is almost the only living humorist who retains any affection for the pun, thus linking the present with the days of Hood and Hooke, although the quality of his humour lies more in his command of the short, crisp, comic sentence, than in the mere play of words.

It is unnecessary that I should here continue the review of the goodly company of humorists whom I have mustered for the reader's entertainment, since I deal with each in his place at some length; but I submit that what is true of those I have named is true also in a greater or less degree of Mr. Seaman, Mr. Barrie, Mr. Wells, Mr. Zangwill, Mr. Whiteing,

Mr. Chesterton, Mr. Emanuel, and Mr. Allen—they all possess qualities that give to their writings distinct individuality among the humorous literature of our time, and they are here to prove that in this strenuous age of ours the comic muse is by no means suffering neglect. Indeed, I might add that had it not been necessary to consider the limitations of a handy volume I should have experienced no difficulty in mustering at least as many more humorous authors of excellent qualities if not of equal note, for, in the American phrase of the moment, “there are others.”

It only remains for me to add a word of sincere thanks to the authors and publishers who have so kindly granted the use of their copyrights, all which are duly acknowledged, and to say that, although I wish to be held responsible for the selected pieces, in many cases I have consulted the author's own taste, and always, I believe, to the advantage of the collection.





SIR WILLIAM S. GILBERT

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I

SIR WILLIAM S. GILBERT

WHEN one considers the extraordinary interest which the British public has taken in the personality of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, it is surprising that Sir William Gilbert has somehow contrived to escape the embarrassing adulation of the populace, for in a far greater measure than Mr. Kipling's has his work found favour with his countrymen. Indeed, if one were asked to name the greatest humorist of our time, there would be small reason to hesitate in nominating the author of the *Bab Ballads*, and that long series of brilliant comic operas which brought fame and fortune to Sir William and to his musical collaborateur, the late Sir Arthur Sullivan. Mr. Kipling, of course, is not conspicuously a humorist—though one remembers his *Brugglesmith* with misgivings—but even so it is not easy to account for the disparity in the public interest taken in the two men: where Kipling has enthralled his thousands, Gilbert has entertained his tens of thousands.

It may be that the personality of a playwright does not come so close to his audience as that of an author; and, furthermore, while Sir William has

introduced this generation to the most delightful of intellectual playgrounds, he has remained himself—and I do not think he will resent the suggestion—an admirable type of the solid, unpretentious British Philistine. A Justice of the Peace, a country gentleman gravely concerned with the agricultural affairs of his hundred acres, does not strike one as the kind of person to devote himself to the writing of comic verse and fairy comedies. A dramatist who refuses to go to the theatre to witness the production of his own work after it has passed the rehearsal stage, seems to be an unromantic figure—and such is Sir William Gilbert. It is the distinguishing feature of his humour to turn things topsy-turvy—is not every situation of that kind now described as “Gilbertian”?—but although in his own person he has illustrated something of this topsy-turviness, William Schwenck Gilbert the man has never occupied so eminent a place in public interest as many of his lesser contemporaries. Perhaps this is as he would have it, for he is a sworn foe of interviewers, and on one memorable occasion, when approached by a lady journalist to grant her an interview, he replied that his charge for doing so would be £50.

Sir William, for all his attachment to country life, is a thorough son of London, having been born in Southampton Street, Strand, on November 18, 1836. His father, William Gilbert, who died in 1889, was a *littérateur* of considerable reputation, who had been a midshipman in his youth and then a surgeon, before he settled down to a literary career. He wrote some thirty works in all, novels and

biographies, his best remembered being a delightful sea story, *King George's Middy*.

William Schwenck Gilbert's early schooling was obtained at Boulogne and at Ealing. As a scholar he had already won some boyish distinction for his efforts in English, Greek, and Latin verse, before entering King's College, intending to complete his education at Oxford. At nineteen he suddenly came to a decision to enter the Army, commissions in the Royal Artillery having then been thrown open to competitive examination owing to the need of officers for the Crimean War. Thus he graduated at London University and gave up thoughts of Oxford, but after all he did not enter the Army, as the war was finished before he had qualified for examination. Some ten or twelve years later, however, he became a captain of the Royal Aberdeenshire Highlanders (Militia).

His first occupation after leaving college was that of an assistant clerk in the Education Department of the Privy Council Office, and this he resigned in 1862 after four years of "detestable thraldom." Meanwhile, he had begun reading for the Bar, and on becoming a barrister he joined the Northern Circuit; but as he was not harassed by clients he turned his thoughts to literature, and from 1861 became a regular contributor to *Fun*, then newly established by Henry J. Byron. In its pages his famous *Bab Ballads* originally appeared, those delightfully comic verses being very cleverly illustrated by the author; but this was some years later, when Tom Hood was editing that periodical. To the *Cornhill*, *Temple Bar*, and other magazines

the young barrister became a frequent contributor, writing occasionally in *Punch*, and supplying London correspondence to a Russian journal, as well as "doing the theatres" for an illustrated weekly which has long since disappeared.

Perhaps the most popular of his *Bab Ballads* was "The Yarn of the *Nancy Bell*," in which, with absurdly comic detail, an old salt is made to relate the appalling story of how a castaway crew had been reduced to one man (himself) by the drawing of lots to determine who should be sacrificed for the common pot. This very characteristic piece of Gilbertian humour was declined by the editor of *Punch* on the ground that it was "too cannibalistic for his readers' taste," but it duly appeared in *Fun*, thus exactly reversing the experience of Sir Francis Burnand with his *Mokeanna*.

But its author was soon to find that while literary journalism was more profitable to him than his work at the Bar, the theatre was much more lucrative than either, and a burlesque he had written very hurriedly being produced with success at the St. James's during the Christmas season of 1866, he was presently devoting all his energies to writing for the stage. Burlesques, "fairy comedies," dramas, from his pen followed each other in merry succession, and generally with success, for although we are apt to remember him chiefly from the beginning of his famous partnership with Sir Arthur Sullivan, he was a dramatist of high reputation, with such admirable plays as *The Princess*, *The Palace of Truth*, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, to his credit before, in 1875, *Thespis*, which ran for

eighty nights at the old Gaiety, and was followed soon by *Trial by Jury*, indicated the possibilities of the Gilbert-Sullivan collaboration. *The Sorcerer*, produced at the Opera Comique in November, 1877, was perhaps the real foundation of the long and unexampled series of triumphs scored by Sir William as a comic opera librettist.

It is difficult in a few words to offer any criticism of what has come to be known as Gilbertian humour. At first thought, it would seem to be peculiarly easy to reproduce, and yet the failures of numerous imitators have proved it to be quite inimitable. To turn things topsy-turvy is not necessarily to make them funny. Mere inversion is utterly foreign to Gilbertian humour, the essence of which is a certain quality of daringly imaginative logic. That is to say, when Sir William conceives a situation, as in *Utopia Limited*, or *Iolanthe*, where the normal conditions of life are to be upset, he carries it to a conclusion in a manner that is at once logical and comic, being indeed humorous because it is the reasonable outcome of a conception essentially comic. His extraordinary dexterity in quaint and original rhyme, and, in some degree also, his resources as a punster, are important elements in his success.

That he is a keen student of character, goes without saying; and that a certain cynicism, gay and never ill-tempered, is an especial feature of his humour, and gives edge to many of his passages, will be readily granted.

The *Bab Ballads*, it seems to me, were the direct outcome of the author's high spirits—in this regard they have more affinity with certain aspects of

American humour than with that which is characteristically English—and Sir William Gilbert in his comic librettos is still the high-spirited “ Bab ” with an added tincture of cynicism and a wider range of vision ; in a word, a gay and irresponsible, but usually a shrewd and truthful critic of the follies and foibles of his fellow-men.

The two specimens from *The Bab Ballads* which follow are reprinted by permission of the author and Messrs Macmillan & Co.

THE YARN OF THE *NANCY BELL*

BY W. S. GILBERT

'Twas on the shores that round our coast
From Deal to Ramsgate span,
That I found alone on a piece of stone
An elderly naval man.

His hair was weedy, his beard was long,
And weedy and long was he,
And I heard this wight on the shore recite,
In a singular minor key :

“ Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig.”

And he shook his fists and he tore his hair,
Till I really felt afraid,
For I couldn't help thinking the man had been
drinking,
And so I simply said :

“ Oh, elderly man, it's little I know
Of the duties of men of the sea,
And I'll eat my hand if I understand
However you can be

“ At once a cook, and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo’sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain’s gig.”

Then he gave a hitch to his trousers, which
Is a trick all seamen larn,
And having got rid of a thumping quid,
He spun this painful yarn :

“ ’Twas in the good ship *Nancy Bell*
That we sailed to the Indian Sea,
And there on a reef we come to grief,
Which has often occurred to me.

“ And pretty nigh all the crew was drowned
(There was seventy-seven o’ soul),
And only ten of the *Nancy’s* men
Said ‘ Here ! ’ to the muster-roll.

“ There was me and the cook and the captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And the bo’sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain’s gig.

“ For a month we’d neither wittles nor drink,
Till a-hungry we did feel,
So we drewed a lot, and, accordin’ shot
The captain for our meal.

“ The next lot fell to the *Nancy’s* mate,
And a delicate dish he made ;
Then our appetite with the midshipmite
We seven survivors stayed.

- “ And then we murdered the bo’sun tight,
And he much resembled pig ;
Then we wittled free, did the cook and me,
On the crew of the captain’s gig.
- “ Then only the cook and me was left,
And the delicate question, ‘ Which
Of us two goes to the kettle ? ’ arose,
And we argued it out as sich.
- “ For I loved that cook as a brother, I did,
And the cook he worshipped me ;
But we’d both be blowed if we’d either be stowed
In the other chap’s hold, you see.
- “ ‘ I’ll be eat if you dines off me,’ says TOM ;
‘ Yes, that,’ says I, ‘ you’ll be,—
‘ I’m boiled if I die, my friend,’ quoth I ;
And ‘ Exactly so,’ quoth he.
- “ Says he, ‘ Dear JAMES, to murder me
Were a foolish thing to do,
For don’t you see that you can’t cook *me*,
While I can—and will—cook *you* ! ’
- “ So he boils the water, and takes the salt
And the pepper in portions true
(Which he never forgot), and some chopped shalot,
And some sage and parsley too.
- “ ‘ Come here,’ says he, with a proper pride,
Which his smiling features tell,
‘ Twill soothing be if I let you see
How extremely nice you’ll smell.’

“ And he stirred it round and round and round,
 And he sniffed at the foaming froth ;
 When I ups with his heels, and smothers his squeals
 In the scum of the boiling broth.

“ And I eat that cook in a week or less,
 And—as I eating be
 The last of his chops, why, I almost drops,
 For a wessel in sight I see !

* * * * *

“ And I never larf, and I never smile,
 And I never lark nor play,
 But sit and croak, and a single joke
 I have—which is to say :

“ ‘ Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
 And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
 And a bo’sun tight, and a midshipmite,
 And the crew of the captain’s gig ! ’ ”

ETIQUETTE

BY W. S. GILBERT

THE *Ballyshannon* foundered off the coast of Cariboo,
And down in fathoms many went the captain and
the crew ;
Down went the owners—greedy men whom hope
of gain allured :
Oh, dry the starting tear, for they were heavily
insured.

Besides the captain and the mate, the owners and
the crew,
The passengers were also drowned excepting only
two :
Young PETER GRAY, who tasted teas for BAKER,
CROOP AND CO.,
And SOMERS, who from Eastern shores imported
indigo.

These passengers, by reason of their clinging to a
mast,
Upon a desert island were eventually cast.
They hunted for their meals, as ALEXANDER SELKIRK
used,
But they couldn't chat together—they had not been
introduced.

For PETER GRAY, and SOMERS too, though certainly
in trade,
Were properly particular about the friends they
made ;
And somehow thus they settled it without a word
of mouth—
That GRAY should take the northern half, while
SOMERS took the south.

On PETER'S portion oysters grew—a delicacy rare,
But oysters were a delicacy PETER couldn't bear.
On SOMERS' side was turtle, on the shingle lying
thick,
Which SOMERS couldn't eat, because it always made
him sick.

GRAY gnashed his teeth with envy as he saw a
mighty store
Of turtle unmolested on his fellow-creature's shore.
The oysters at his feet aside impatiently he shoved,
For turtle and his mother were the only things he
loved.

And SOMERS sighed in sorrow as he settled in the
south,
For the thought of PETER'S oysters brought the
water to his mouth.
He longed to lay him down upon the shelly bed,
and stuff :
He had often eaten oysters, but had never had
enough.

How they wished an introduction to each other they
had had
When on board the *Ballyshannon* ! And it drove
them nearly mad
To think how very friendly with each other they
might get,
If it wasn't for the arbitrary rule of etiquette !

One day, when out a-hunting for the *mus ridiculus*,
GRAY overheard his fellow-man soliloquizing thus :
“ I wonder how the playmates of my youth are
getting on,
M'CONNELL, S. B. WALTERS, PADDY BYLES, and
ROBINSON ? ”

These simple words made PETER as delighted as
could be,
Old chummies at the Charterhouse were ROBINSON
and he !
He walked straight up to SOMERS, then he turned
extremely red,
Hesitated, hummed and hawed a bit, then cleared
his throat, and said :

“ I beg your pardon—pray forgive me if I seem
too bold,
But you have breathed a name I knew familiarly
of old.
You spoke aloud of ROBINSON—I happened to be
by.
You know him ? ” “ Yes, extremely well.” “ Allow
me, so do I.”

It was enough : they felt they could more pleasantly
get on,
For (ah, the magic of the fact !) they each knew
ROBINSON !
And Mr. SOMERS' turtle was at PETER's service
quite,
And Mr. SOMERS punished PETER's oyster beds all
night.

They soon became like brothers from community of
wrongs :
They wrote each other little odes and sang each
other songs ;
They told each other anecdotes disparaging their
wives ;
On several occasions, too, they saved each other's
lives.

They felt quite melancholy when they parted for the
night,
And got up in the morning soon as ever it was light ;
Each other's pleasant company they reckoned so
upon,
And all because it happened that they both knew
ROBINSON !

They lived for many years on that inhospitable
shore,
And day by day they learned to love each other
more and more.
At last, to their astonishment, on getting up one
day,
They saw a frigate anchored in the offing of the bay.

To PETER an idea occurred. "Suppose we cross the
main ?

So good an opportunity may not be found again."

And SOMERS thought a minute, then ejaculated,

"Done !

I wonder how my business in the City's getting on ?"

"But stay," said Mr. PETER : "when in England,
as you know,

I earned a living tasting teas for BAKER, CROOP
AND CO.,

I may be superseded—my employers think me dead."

"Then come with me," said SOMERS, "and taste
indigo instead."

But all their plans were scattered in a moment when
they found

The vessel was a convict ship from Portland, outward
bound ;

When a boat came off to fetch them, though they
felt it very kind,

To go on board they firmly but respectfully declined.

As both the happy settlers roared with laughter at
the joke,

They recognized a gentlemanly fellow pulling
stroke :

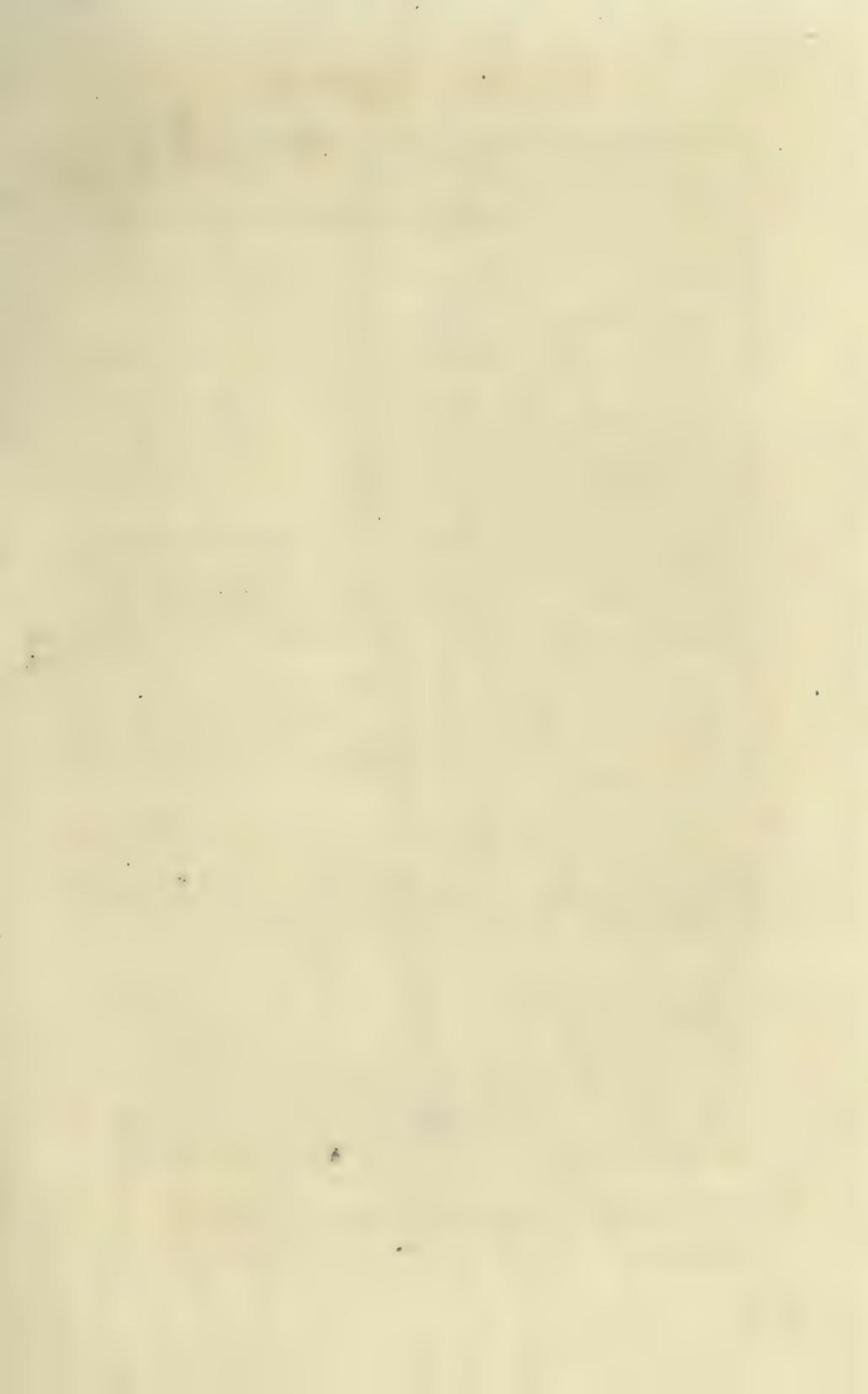
'Twas ROBINSON—a convict, in an unbecoming
frock !

Condemned to seven years for misappropriating
stock !!!

They laughed no more, for SOMERS thought he had
 been rather rash
In knowing one whose friend had misappropriated
 cash ;
And PETER thought a foolish tack he must have
 gone upon
In making the acquaintance of a friend of ROBINSON.

At first they didn't quarrel very openly, I've heard ;
They nodded when they met, and now and then
 exchanged a word :
The word grew rare, and rarer still the nodding of
 the head,
And when they meet each other now, they cut each
 other dead.

To allocate the island they agreed by word of mouth,
And PETER takes the north again, and SOMERS takes
 the south ;
And PETER has the oysters, which he hates, in
 layers thick,
And SOMERS has the turtle—turtle always makes
 him sick.





"ANTHONY HOPE"

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II

ANTHONY HOPE

IT is a more difficult thing to be a humorist of the West than of the East End, for there is far more of the salt of humour east of Aldgate than west of St. Mary's-le-Strand. Given an eye for character and a sense of the comic, he is a duffer indeed who cannot make an entertaining sketch of low-class cockney life. But rarer are the gifts that enable one to present the humorous side of Society with entire success ; such a one derives so little from actual life, and must be, on that account, the more reliant on his own wit and imagination. To succeed tolerably well in this direction would be no mean distinction ; to succeed brilliantly is fame indeed. Now Mr. Anthony Hope is *par excellence* the humorist of modern Society (the capital S is imperative), and for that reason, rather than for his work in historical romance, he stands in the front rank of contemporary authors.

Mr. Hope is, indeed, in the front rank, but without a fellow ; for he is alone in his particular qualities as a writer of fiction, and, deriving from no one who has gone before, he shares his literary gifts with none of his contemporaries. His function has been to interpret modern Society to itself ; not by hold-

ing the mirror up to nature, but by showing Society a magic glass wherein it may see itself as it fain would be. An agreeable, no less than a difficult, undertaking, but successful beyond dispute. "It is not very easy," says our humorist of Willie Prime (in *Comedies of Courtship*), "to assert social position when one has nothing on and only one's head out of water, but Willie did it." We are not told how the feat was achieved, but enough that Willie and all young gentlemen of the West would like to do it: Mr. Hope's ingenuity is always equal to making us accept the will for the deed.

Oddly enough, the future wit of the West was born at Hackney. His father, the late Rev. E. C. Hawkins, became headmaster of St. John's Foundation School, Leatherhead, in the year that Anthony was born, 1863, and continued to occupy that post till 1883, when he moved to London as vicar of St. Bride's, Fleet Street. The youthful Anthony Hope Hawkins—to give him for once his full name, which he still wears in private life—began his education under the eye of his father at St. John's, and when thirteen years old won a scholarship at Marlborough, where his father had also been a scholar. Thence he passed to Oxford with an Exhibition, and in 1881 secured a Balliol scholarship. His college career was in every sense a brilliant one: first class in Moderations and in History; and in 1886 he was elected president of the Union. In 1885 he took his M.A. degree, but continued at Oxford for two terms as a coach, during these two years being entered at the Middle Temple, and was called to the Bar in 1887.

Unlike so many barristers who have made their mark in literature, he was for a number of years a diligent and a promising lawyer. But legal affairs did not demand all his energies ; he had his chambers like any other barrister, and when clients were not pressing he wrote things more interesting than statements of cases. He had been practising on the London and Midland Circuit for three years, when, in 1890, his first novel, *A Man of Mark*, appeared. For a time he endeavoured to serve the two masters of Law and Literature, and what more natural than that the altar he had reared should be consecrated to the dual service ? When Literature's smiles became more plentiful than the other's, the workshop—if I may change a perilous metaphor—was devoted entirely to her uses. Thus it came about that when Mr. Hope still lived at St. Bride's, no longer a hopeful barrister but a successful novelist, he plied his pen in his chambers. Therefore, let not the literary pilgrim of the future stand wrapt before St. Bride's Vicarage fondly thinking that he there beholds the house in which Mr. Hope's romances have been written.

His literary success was swift and dazzling—or it might have been the latter, had not Anthony Hope been too sane a man and with too pronounced a sense of humour to take himself over seriously—for in 1894, when he had just bade good-bye to the " thirties," he produced *The Prisoner of Zenda*, and found himself famous. This book created a new fashion in fiction, or at least revived an old one : the historical-romantic, which it combined with a vivacity and lightness of touch that had in earlier

romanticists been sadly lacking. We have had scores of books by other writers as clearly inspired by this clever story as though they had avowed it on their title-pages. But none have shown either Mr. Hope's ingenuity in construction or in the more subtle invention of "atmosphere." Yet our author has not written a really great book in this particular class; and his most characteristic work is illustrated by *The Dolly Dialogues*, which first appeared also in 1894.

Here again the author may be credited with having set a literary fashion, for the popularity of the dialogue with us may be said to date from the appearance of the immortal "Dolly." A good many years before Mr. Hope created his captivating heroine M. Henri Lavedan had been producing work very similar in kind. In the famous French author's *La Haute* (which to-day he might have called "High Life," since the phrase has become acclimatized in France), published some eighteen years ago, we have the same quick play of wit achieved in very similar dialogue, though Lavedan is less capable of being translated into English than Hope into French. Yet I do not suggest that the author of *The Dolly Dialogues* was directly influenced by the author of *La Haute*, as Mr. Anthony Hope is in none of his writings so obviously true to his own particular *métier* as in those of his books where he is depicting modern Society or "high life," either by means of the short, crisp dialogue or the long sustained story. He is emphatically our master of dialogue.

To a later generation Mr. Hope in his lighter

writings may prove a more graphic chronicler of the manners of our time than some of our novelists who take themselves far more seriously and try with heavier hands to mirror the upper-class life of our day. And if the impression which those who come after may gather from his portraits of his fellow-mortals be too favourable, we must remember that the chief characteristic of our Society is a pathetic effort after cleverness. If Society is not so clever, not so witty, in reality as Mr. Anthony Hope contrives to make it appear in fiction, that is simply because art is often more successful than nature !

As to the man, I may recall a personal impression set down after visiting him in his bachelor days at his old chambers in the Savoy Mansions. "As he sits in his desk chair," I then wrote, "and puffs his cigarette, or rises and crosses the room to lean for a few minutes against the mantelpiece, Mr. Hope presents a perfect picture of the keen, alert, resourceful lawyer. This, rather than the man of letters. The clean-shaven face, the lines of the mouth firm, incisive ; eyes that are wide-awake, and a voice admirably adapted to forensic oratory, with just a reminiscence of ' the Oxford manner ' in speech—these are all suggestive of the barrister. The thinning hair is not peculiarly legal, but the carefully ordered work-desk, with its neat row of novels bearing the name of Anthony Hope, is in consonance with the character that one naturally attributes to the man before me : the love of orderliness, finish, a nice attention to detail are all there, and surely these are more characteristic of the legal fraternity

than of literary men ; indeed, there is little in this delightfully furnished room to remind one of the author. There are no random piles of books, no accumulations of manuscript. The only books are those contained in that row already mentioned, and when a gentleman calls and is told by Mr. Hope that he has nothing for him to-day, he describes him as ' my clerk.' Why, the commonest book-hack would have romanced about him as ' my private secretary ' ! If he endows many of his ' society ' characters with a needful degree of affectation, and unveils to us a world in which few try to be themselves, he himself is singularly free from this social weakness."

The " Dolly Dialogue " chosen for the present collection is reprinted by permission of the author and Messrs. Methuen & Co.

A LIBERAL EDUCATION

BY ANTHONY HOPE

"THERE'S ingratitude for you!" Miss Dolly Foster exclaimed suddenly.

"Where?" I asked, rousing myself from meditation.

She pointed at a young man who had just passed where we sat. He was dressed very smartly, and was walking with a lady attired in the height of fashion.

"I *made* that man," said Dolly, "and now he cuts me dead before the whole of the Row! It's atrocious! Why, but for me, do you suppose he'd be at this moment engaged to three thousand a year and—and the plainest girl in London?"

"Not that," I pleaded; "think of——"

"Well, very plain, anyhow. I was quite ready to bow to him. I almost did."

"In fact you did!"

"I didn't. I declare I didn't."

"Oh, well, you didn't then. It only looked like it."

"I met him," said Miss Dolly, "three years ago. At that time he was—oh, quite unpresentable. He was everything he shouldn't be. He was a teetotaler, you know, and he didn't smoke, and he

was always going to concerts. Oh, and he wore his hair long, and his trousers short, and his hat on the back of his head. And his umbrella——”

“Where did he wear that?”

“He *carried* that, Mr. Carter. Don’t be silly! Carried it unrolled, you know, and generally a paper parcel in the other hand; and he had spectacles too.”

“He has certainly changed outwardly at least.”

“Yes, I know; well, I did that. I took him in hand, and I just taught him, and now——!”

“Yes, I know that. But how did you teach him? Give him Saturday evening lectures, or what?”

“Oh, every-evening lectures, and most-morning walks. And I taught him to dance, and I broke his wretched fiddle with my own hands!”

“What very arbitrary distinctions you draw.”

“I don’t know what you mean. I do like a man to be smart, anyhow. Don’t you, Mr. Carter? You’re not so smart as you might be. Now, shall I take you in hand?” And she smiled upon me.

“Let’s hear your method. What did you do to him?”

“To Phil Meadows? Oh, nothing. I just slipped in a remark here and there, whenever he talked nonsense. I used to speak just at the right time, you know.”

“But how had your words such influence, Miss Foster?”

“Oh, well, you know, Mr. Carter, I made it a *condition* that he should do just what I wanted in little things like that. Did he think I was going

to walk about with a man carrying a brown-paper parcel—as if he had been to the shop for a pound of tea ? ”

“ Still, I don’t see why he should alter all his——”

“ Oh, you are stupid ! Of course, he liked me, you know.”

“ Oh, did he ? I see.”

“ You seem to think that very funny.”

“ Not that he did—but that, apparently, he doesn’t.”

“ Well, you got out of that rather neatly—for you. No, he doesn’t now. You see, he misunderstood my motive. He thought—well, I do believe he thought I cared for him, you know. Of course I didn’t.”

“ Not a bit ? ”

“ Just as a friend—and a pupil, you know. And when he’d had his hair cut and bought a frock-coat (fancy ! he’d never had one !), he looked quite nice. He has nice eyes. Did you notice them ? ”

“ Lord, no ! ”

“ Well, you’re so unobservant.”

“ Oh, not always. I’ve observed that your——”

“ Please don’t ! It’s no use, is it ? ”

I looked very unhappy. There is an understanding that I am very unhappy since Miss Foster’s engagement to the Earl of Mickleham was announced.

“ What was I saying before—before you—you know—oh, about Phil Meadows, of course. I did like him very much, you know, or I shouldn’t have taken all that trouble. Why, his own mother thanked me ! ”

"I have no more to say," said I.

"But she wrote me a horrid letter afterwards."

"You're so very elliptical."

"So very what, Mr. Carter?"

"You leave so much out, I mean. After what?"

"Why, after I sent him away. Didn't I tell you? Oh, we had the most awful scene. He *raved*, Mr. Carter. He called me the most horrid names, and——"

"Tore his hair?"

"It wasn't long enough to get hold of," she tittered. "But don't laugh. It was really dreadful. And so unjust! And then, next day, when I thought it was comfortably over, you know, he came back, and—and apologized, and called himself the most awful names, and—well, that was really worse."

"What did the fellow complain of?" I asked in wondering tones.

"Oh, he said I'd destroyed his faith in women, you know, and that I'd led him on, and that I was—well, he was very rude indeed. And he went on writing me letters like that for a whole year! It made me quite uncomfortable."

"But he didn't go back to short trousers and a fiddle, did he?" I asked anxiously.

"Oh, no. But he forgot all he owed me, and he told me that his heart was dead, and that he should never love any one again."

"But he's going to marry that girl."

"Oh, he doesn't care about her," said Miss Dolly reassuringly. "It's the money, you know. He hadn't a farthing of his own. Now he'll be set up for life."

"And it's all due to you!" said I admiringly.

"Well, it is really."

"I don't call her such a bad-looking girl though."

(I hadn't seen her face.)

"Mr. Carter! She's *hideous*!"

I dropped that subject.

"And now," said Miss Dolly again, "he cuts me dead!"

"It is the height of ingratitude. Why, to love you was a liberal education!"

"Yes, wasn't it? How nicely you put that. 'A liberal education!' I shall tell Archie" (Archie is Lord Mickleham).

"What, about Phil Meadows?"

"Goodness me, no, Mr. Carter. Just what you said, you know."

"But why not tell Mickleham about Phil Meadows?" I urged. "It's all to your credit, you know."

"Yes, I know, but men are so foolish. You see, Archie thinks——"

"Of course he does."

"You might let me finish."

"Archie thinks you were never in love before."

"Yes, he does. Well, of course, I wasn't in love with Phil——"

"Not a little bit?"

"Oh, well——"

"Nor with any one else?"

Miss Dolly prodded the path with her parasol.

"Nor with any one else?" I asked again.

Miss Dolly looked for an instant in my direction.

"Nor with any one else?" said I.

Miss Dolly looked straight in front of her.

"Nor with——" I began.

"Hullo, old chappie, where did you spring from?"

"Why, Archie!" cried Miss Dolly.

"Oh, how are you Mickleham, old man? Take this seat; I'm just off—just off. Yes, I was, upon my honour—got to meet a man at the club. Good-bye, Miss Foster. Jove! I'm late!"

And as I went I heard Miss Dolly say, "I thought you were *never* coming, Archie dear!" Well, she didn't think he was coming just then. No more did I.



JEROME K. JEROME

From the original drawing by THOMAS DOWNEY

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III

JEROME K. JEROME

“THE time is happily past,” wrote Dr. Robertson Nicoll on the appearance of *Paul Kever*, “when it was necessary to speak up for Mr. Jerome. It was the foolish custom of foolish, clever men, who could never do anything but sneer, to make Mr. Jerome the object of cheap and cruel witticisms. They had their chance in the fact that he began as a humorist pure and simple, and the English people are always inclined to belittle the humorist.”

Is this quite true? I mean the reference to the English people belittling the humorist, not to the fact that it is unnecessary to “speak up” for Mr. Jerome, wherein I heartily agree with Dr. Nicoll.

My own impression is that there is no kind of writer whom the public takes more readily to its bosom than the humorist, and if there are comparatively few who enjoy its favour, the reason is that real humorists are none too plentiful.

We are happy, however, in the possession of a small but gifted band of humorous writers among the favourites of the day, and of these none is more generously gifted than Mr. Jerome Klapka Jerome,

who used to be called "the High Priest of the New Humour."

It is now about eighteen years since he came into fame with *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*, and I am persuaded that there have been few books written in our day so helpful, so human, as this. One recalls the mingled sneers and praise with which it was received by the critics, who have a curious habit of being, like the Irish members, "agin the government," the latter in their case representing public approval. The public "found" Mr. Jerome before the literary critics did.

Personally, I retain the most agreeable memories of *Idle Thoughts*, and although the author's literary style in that book is by no means impeccable, he revealed himself as a genuine humorist, his outlook on life being sunny and optimistic; not the optimism of the eye shut to grim things, but the priceless quality that springs from chastening experience of the world and deep sympathy with one's fellow-creatures. It was urged by the critical, that if there had been no Mark Twain there had been no Jerome K. Jerome. But those who said so little understood the man. He owes no debt to any of his contemporaries. He has succeeded through being himself, and by expressing in his own way a genial philosophy of life derived from experiences that have been the common lot of the vast majority of his fellow-countrymen.

It is true that the element of exaggeration is in some degree an essential of Mr. Jerome's comic writing, but while this is almost the only quality of American humour, it is not peculiar to the latter,

but arises from that natural flow of buoyant spirits, which we associate with all humour. In Mr. Jerome's case exaggeration is most apparent in *Three Men in a Boat*, which is eminently a narrative of high spirits, and contains far less of tender humanity and laughing philosophy than any of his other humorous books.

Like that hilarious funny man "Max Adeler," Mr. Jerome has achieved his reputation in jocular literature almost in spite of himself. He has always believed that his true bent is towards serious writing, and a good many years ago, in that admirable little tale *John Ingerfield*, we had the first show of this side of him.

Nothing is more natural than that the man who can compel us to laugh away the cares of the world should be able to show us how serious and earnest is the battle to which Destiny summons each one of us. And those who discovered in that masterly study of life which Mr. Jerome published in the autumn of 1902 in the conventional form of a novel, entitled *Paul Kever*, a breaking away from his earlier manner—a sort of good-bye to his old humorous self—were perhaps not aware that this novel had begun to take shape in his mind thirteen years before it appeared, and indeed had been, in great part, written for many years.

Mr. Jerome has been quite as successful a dramatist and novelist as he has been a humorist; but while we shall all welcome another *Paul Kever*, we as sincerely hope that he may continue from time to time his contributions to light literature.

Personally, he is one of the kindest men who

have achieved success in modern letters, and few have had so varied a career. Born on May 2nd, 1859, at Walsall, where his father was a clergyman, he was clerk, schoolmaster, provincial actor, journalist, in turn before he found his public with *Idle Thoughts*. In 1892 he started *The Idler*, editing it in conjunction with Mr. Robert Barr for five years, and in 1893 he founded *To-day*, which he conducted for four years, before deciding to devote himself to the freer and more congenial life of the writer of books and plays, who can pass his days wherever he listeth.

The passages selected from *Three Men on the Bummel* to illustrate Mr. Jerome's humour are included here by permission of the author and Mr. J. W. Arrowsmith.

ON LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BY JEROME K. JEROME

I

HE handed me a small book bound in red cloth. It was a guide to English conversation for the use of German travellers. It commenced "On a Steamboat," and terminated "At the Doctor's"; its longest chapter being devoted to conversation in a railway carriage, among, apparently, a compartment load of quarrelsome and ill-mannered lunatics: "Can you not get further away from me, sir?"—"It is impossible, madam; my neighbour, here, is very stout."—"Shall we not endeavour to arrange our legs?"—"Please have the goodness to keep your elbows down."—"Pray do not inconvenience yourself, madam, if my shoulder is of any accommodation to you," whether intended to be said sarcastically or not, there was nothing to indicate.—"I really must request you to move a little, madam, I can hardly breathe," the author's idea being, presumably, that by this time the whole party was mixed up together on the floor. The chapter concluded with the phrase, "Here we are at our destination, God be thanked! (*Gott sei dank!*)," a pious exclamation, which under the circumstances must have taken the form of a chorus.

At the end of the book was an appendix, giving

the German traveller hints concerning the preservation of his health and comfort during his sojourn in English towns, chief among such hints being advice to him to always travel with a supply of disinfectant powder, to always lock his bedroom door at night, and to always carefully count his small change.

"It is not a brilliant publication," I remarked, handing the book back to George; "it is not a book that personally I would recommend to any German about to visit England; I think it would get him disliked. But I have read books published in London for the use of English travellers abroad every whit as foolish. Some educated idiot, misunderstanding seven languages, would appear to go about writing these books for the misinformation and false guidance of modern Europe."

"You cannot deny," said George, "that these books are in large request. They are bought by the thousand, I know. In every town in Europe there must be people going about talking this sort of thing."

"Maybe," I replied; "but fortunately nobody understands them. I have noticed, myself, men standing on railway platforms and at street corners reading aloud from such books. Nobody knows what language they are speaking; nobody has the slightest knowledge of what they are saying. This is, perhaps, as well; were they understood they would probably be assaulted."

George said: "May be you are right; my idea is to see what would happen if they were understood. My proposal is to get to London early on Wednesday morning and spend an hour or two going about and

shopping with the aid of this book. There are one or two little things I want—a hat and a pair of bedroom slippers, among other articles. Our boat does not leave Tilbury till twelve, and that gives us time. I want to try this sort of talk where I can properly judge of its effect. I want to see how the foreigner feels when he is talked to in this way.”

It struck me as a sporting idea. In my enthusiasm I offered to accompany him, and wait outside the shop. I said I thought that Harris would like to be in it, too—or rather outside.

George said that was not quite his scheme. His proposal was that Harris and I should accompany him into the shop. With Harris, who looks formidable, to support him, and myself at the door to call the police if necessary, he said he was willing to adventure the thing.

We walked round to Harris', and put the proposal before him. He examined the book, especially the chapters dealing with the purchase of shoes and hats. He said :

“ If George talks to any bootmaker or any hatter the things that are put down here, it is not support he will want ; it is carrying to the hospital that he will need.”

That made George angry.

“ You talk,” said George, “ as though I were a foolhardy boy without any sense. I shall select from the more polite and less irritating speeches ; the grosser insults I shall avoid.”

This being clearly understood, Harris gave in his adhesion ; and our start was fixed for early Wednesday morning.

II

We arrived at Waterloo a little after nine, and at once proceeded to put George's experiment into operation. Opening the book at the chapter entitled "At the Cab Rank," we walked up to a hansom, raised our hats, and wished the driver "Good-morning."

This man was not to be outdone in politeness by any foreigner, real or imitation. Calling to a friend named "Charles" to "hold the steed," he sprang from his box, and returned to us a bow that would have done credit to Mr. Turveydrop himself. Speaking apparently in the name of the nation, he welcomed us to England, adding a regret that Her Majesty was not at the moment in London.

We could not reply to him in kind. Nothing of this sort had been anticipated by the book. We called him "coachman," at which he again bowed to the pavement, and asked him if he would have the goodness to drive us to the Westminster Bridge road.

He laid his hand upon his heart, and said the pleasure would be his.

Taking the third sentence in the chapter, George asked him what his fare would be.

The question, as introducing a sordid element into the conversation, seemed to hurt his feelings. He said he never took money from distinguished strangers; he suggested a souvenir—a diamond scarf-pin, a gold snuff-box, some little trifle of that sort by which he could remember us.

As a small crowd had collected, and as the joke

was drifting rather too far in the cabman's direction, we climbed in without further parley, and were driven away amid cheers. We stopped the cab at a boot shop a little past Astley's Theatre that looked the sort of place we wanted. It was one of those overfed shops that the moment their shutters are taken down in the morning disgorge their goods all round them. Boxes of boots stood piled on the pavement or in the gutter opposite. Boots hung in festoons about its doors and windows. Its sun-blind was as some grimy vine, bearing bunches of black and brown boots. Inside, the shop was a bower of boots. The man, when we entered, was busy with a chisel and hammer opening a new crate full of boots.

George raised his hat, and said "Good-morning."

The man did not even turn round. He struck me from the first as a disagreeable man. He grunted something which might have been "Good-morning," or might not, and went on with his work.

George said: "I have been recommended to your shop by my friend Mr. X."

In response, the man should have said: "Mr. X. is a most worthy gentleman; it will give me the greatest pleasure to serve any friend of his."

What he did say was: "Don't know him; never heard of him."

This was disconcerting. The book gave three or four methods of buying boots; George had carefully selected the one centred round "Mr. X." as being of all the most courtly. You talked a good deal with the shopkeeper about this "Mr. X.," and then, when by this means friendship and understanding had been

established, you slid naturally and gracefully into the immediate object of your coming, namely, your desire for boots, "cheap and good." This gross, material man cared, apparently, nothing for the niceties of retail dealing. It was necessary with such an one to come to business with brutal directness. George abandoned "Mr. X.," and turning back to a previous page, took a sentence at random. It was not a happy selection; it was a speech that would have been superfluous made to any bootmaker. Under the present circumstances, threatened and stifled as we were on every side by boots, it possessed the dignity of positive imbecility. It ran: "One has told me that you have here boots for sale."

For the first time the man put down his hammer and chisel and looked at us. He spoke slowly, in a thick and husky voice. He said:

"What d'ye think I keep boots for—to smell 'em?"

He was one of those men that begin quietly and grow more angry as they proceed, their wrongs apparently working within them like yeast.

"What d'ye think I am," he continued, "a boot collector? What d'ye think I'm running this shop for—my health? D'ye think I love the boots, and can't bear to part with a pair? D'ye think I hang 'em about here to look at 'em? Ain't there enough of 'em? Where d'ye think you are—in an international exhibition of boots? What d'ye think these boots are—a historical collection? Did you ever hear of a man keeping a boot shop and not selling boots? D'ye think I decorate the shop

with 'em to make it look pretty? What d'ye take me for—a prize idiot?"

I have always maintained that these conversation books are never of any real use. What we wanted was some English equivalent for the well-known German idiom: "Behalten Sie Ihr Haar auf."

Nothing of the sort was to be found in the book from beginning to end. However, I will do George the credit to admit he chose the very best sentence that was to be found therein and applied it. He said:

"I will come again, when, perhaps, you will have some more boots to show me. Till then, adieu!"

With that we returned to our cab and drove away, leaving the man standing in the centre of his boot-decked doorway, addressing remarks to us. What he said I did not hear, but the passers-by appeared to find it interesting."

III

At Barr (in Alsace) just before supper a tourist entered. He looked English, but spoke a language the like of which I have never heard before. Yet it was an elegant and fine-sounding language. The landlord stared at him blankly; the landlady shook her head. He sighed, and tried another, which somehow recalled to me forgotten memories, though, all the time, I could not fix it. But again nobody understood him.

"This is damnable," he said aloud to himself.

“ Ah, you are English ! ” exclaimed the landlord, brightening up.

“ And monsieur looks tired,” added the bright little landlady. “ Monsieur will have supper.”

They both spoke English excellently, nearly as well as they spoke French and German ; and they bustled about and made him comfortable. At supper he sat next to me, and I talked to him.

“ Tell me,” I said—I was curious on the subject—“ what language was it you spoke when you first came in ? ”

“ German,” he explained.

“ Oh,” I replied, “ I beg your pardon.”

“ You did not understand it ? ” he continued.

“ It must have been my fault,” I answered ; “ my knowledge is extremely limited. One picks up a little here and there as one goes about, but of course that is a different thing.”

“ But *they* did not understand it,” he replied, “ the landlord and his wife ; and it is their own language.”

“ I do not think so,” I said. “ The children hereabout speak German, it is true, and our landlord and landlady know German to a certain point. But throughout Alsace and Lorraine the old people still talk French.”

“ And I spoke to them in French also,” he added, “ and they understood that no better.”

“ It is certainly very curious,” I agreed.

“ It is more than curious,” he replied ; “ in my case it is incomprehensible. I possess a diploma for modern languages. I won my scholarship purely on the strength of my French and German. The correctness of my construction, the purity of my

pronunciation, was considered at my college to be quite remarkable. Yet, when I come abroad hardly anybody understands a word I say. Can you explain it?"

"I think I can," I replied. "Your pronunciation is too faultless. You remember what the Scotsman said when for the first time in his life he tasted real whisky: 'It may be *puir*, but I canna drink it'; so it is with your German. It strikes one less as a language than as an exhibition. If I might offer advice, I should say: Mispronounce as much as possible, and throw in as many mistakes as you can think of.

"It is the same everywhere. Each country keeps a special pronunciation exclusively for the use of foreigners—a pronunciation they never dream of using themselves, that they cannot understand when it is used. I once heard an English lady explaining to a Frenchman how to pronounce the word *have*.

"You will pronounce it," said the lady reproachfully, "as if it were spelt *h-a-v*. It isn't. There is an 'e' at the end."

"But I thought," said the pupil, that you did not sound the 'e' at the end of *h-a-v-e*."

"No more you do," explained his teacher. "It is what we call a mute 'e'; but it exercises a modifying influence on the preceding vowel."

Before that, he used to say "have" quite intelligently. Afterwards, when he came to the word he would stop dead, collect his thoughts, and give expression to a sound that only the context could explain.

Putting aside the sufferings of the early martyrs, few men, I suppose, have gone through more than I myself went through in trying to attain the correct pronunciation of the German word for church—"Kirche." Long before I had done with it I had determined never to go to church in Germany, rather than be bothered with it.

"No, no," my teacher would explain—he was a painstaking gentleman; "you say it as if it were spelt K-i-r-c-k-e. There is no k. It is——" And he would illustrate to me again for the twentieth time that morning, how it should be pronounced; the sad thing being that I could never for the life of me detect any difference between the way he said it and the way I said it. So he would try a new method.

"You say it from your throat," he would explain. He was quite right; I did. "I want you to say it from down here," and with a fat forefinger he would indicate the region from which I was to start. After painful efforts, resulting in sounds suggestive of anything rather than a place of worship, I would excuse myself,

"I really fear it is impossible," I would say. "You see, for years I have always talked with my mouth, as it were; I never knew a man could talk with his stomach. I doubt if it is not too late now for me to learn."

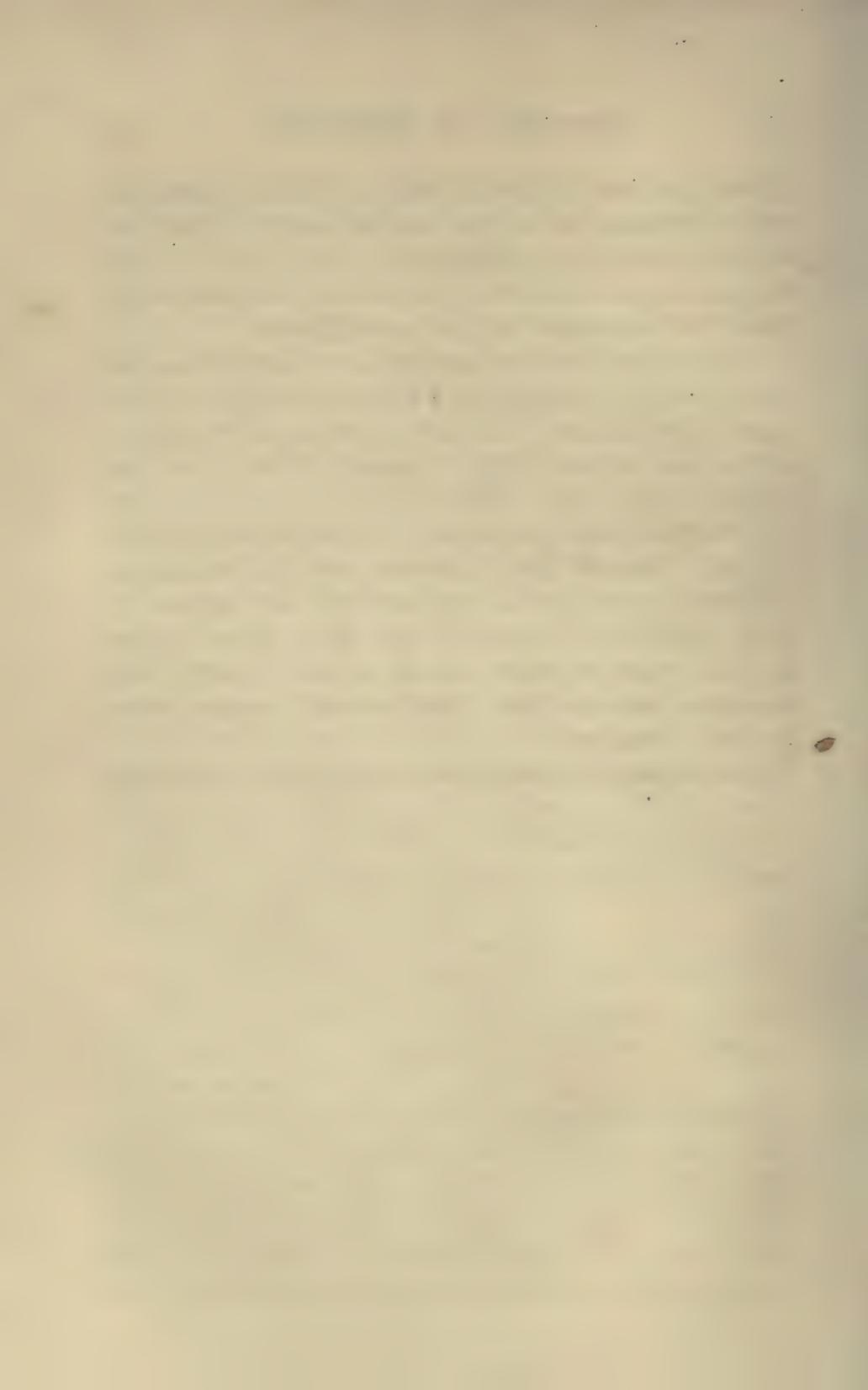
By spending hours in dark corners, and practising in silent streets, to the terror of chance passers-by, I came at last to pronounce this word correctly. My teacher was delighted with me, and until I came to Germany I was pleased with myself. In Germany I found that nobody understood what I meant by it.

I never got near a church with it. I had to drop the correct pronunciation, and painstakingly go back to my first wrong pronunciation. Then they would brighten up, and tell me it was round the corner, or down the next street, as the case might be.

I also think pronunciation of a foreign tongue could be better taught than by demanding from the pupil those internal acrobatic feats that are generally impossible and always useless. This is the sort of instruction one receives :

“ Press your tonsils against the underside of your larynx. Then with the convex part of the septum curved upwards so as almost—but not quite—to touch the uvula, try with the tip of your tongue to reach your thyroid. Take a deep breath, and compress your glottis. Now, without opening your lips, say ‘ Garoo.’ ”

And when you have done it they are not satisfied.



IV

W. W. JACOBS

“**V**ERY fine old Port,” was Mr. Pett Ridge’s punning title for a charming article on Mr. W. W. Jacobs’ novel *At Sunwich Port*. For once in a way facts justified the play of words, as there is about the humour of Mr. Jacobs something of the delicious flavour which the connoisseur of wines may discover in rare old port ; though it is difficult for one who has no knowledge of the grape to point the comparison.

Mr. Pett Ridge, himself in my estimation a genuine humorist, considers that there are but four “really humorous writers in England,” and Mr. William Wymark Jacobs is one of these, the others being Mr. Anstey, Mr. Jerome, and Mr. Barry Pain. This is an arbitrary list, as I am bold to suggest the present work will demonstrate ; but there can be no question as to Mr. Jacobs’ claim to a place among any first four of our humorous writers.

It is not the least of the debts which the reading public owes to Mr. Jerome, that he should have been the first to recognize the rare gifts of Mr. Jacobs and to encourage him to exercise these for our delectation. That was in the days of Mr. Jerome’s

brilliant editorship of *To-day*, in the pages of which the celebrated author of *Many Cargoes* made his first bow to the general public. Previous to that he had written anonymously for a journal published in the interests of Post Office officials and for other magazines, but he is always glad to confess Mr. Jerome as his literary sponsor, and the connexion thus formed soon ripened into a deep and lasting friendship.

The father of our humorist was manager of a wharf at Wapping, and here we touch at once the circumstance which has conditioned his work and secured to him, in conjunction with his great natural gift, a unique place among the writers of our time. He saw much of the quaint life of the Thames during his most impressionable days, and with true instinct he turned to the congenial task of depicting the life he knew best when in due time the literary impulse moved him to production.

As a youth, Mr. Jacobs entered the Savings Bank department of the G.P.O., and it was while still employed there that he began to try his hand as a teller of tales. Indeed he continued in the Civil Service for several years after his stories had brought him wide popularity, and only retired from it some eight years ago with sixteen years of service to his credit.

His first three books, *Many Cargoes*, *The Skipper's Wooing*, and *Sea Urchins*, had all been published while he made use of literature as "a very good walking-stick," and before he determined to disprove Charles Lamb's maxim by showing that he could make it also a most excellent "crutch."

Few living authors have enjoyed richer rewards than have fallen to the lot of Mr. Jacobs since he devoted himself entirely to writing, and none have more deserved good fortune, as the humorist is, of all who use the pen, ever the most welcome.

Mr. J. M. Barrie in one of his earlier sketches described the amusing results of his own youthful appearance at an age when he was no longer a junior : " I have observed old gentlemen frown at my precocity," he wrote, " when I said a good thing or helped myself to a second glass of wine." Mr. Herbert Vivian is another who has experienced the humours of remaining boyish in appearance long after boyhood, and once when present at a meeting where he was a candidate for Parliament, a kind old lady presented him with an apple. But Mr. Jacobs is quite the youngest-looking man of his age that I know, and to assert that the youthful face seen in any of his photographs has been looking out on this interesting old world for four and forty years is to make a statement which few will readily credit. But in giving this ungracious fact, one may say with good reason that Mr. Jacobs is in spirit no older than he looks ; he has, not only in appearance, but in fact, that supreme grace of genius—a boyish delight in the life he has chosen to depict by his pen.

Touching the quality of Mr. Jacobs' humour, it has always seemed to me that he has the dual gift of reproducing the humorous side of life and of creating from his own inner consciousness comic situations that are almost too funny to be true.

He is at once a reproducer and an inventor, and it often happens that writers who are eminently

entertaining excel in only one of these capacities. Yet, on his imaginative side, he is in nowise a romancer, as he sees things near at hand and for their own sakes.

This I have already attempted to illustrate elsewhere by contrasting him with a writer who, while possessing a most refined sense of humour, had above all the temperament of the romancer. Robert Louis Stevenson could not have looked at the commonest coaster without his mind striving to sublimate the thing and weave around it the fairy meshes of romance. He would have endowed it with some strange mission; sent it sailing afar on a mysterious quest. But Mr. Jacobs is content to take the boat and its crew for the everyday things they are, and when he does fit them with a mission, as in the delightful story of *The Skipper's Wooing*, it is one born of whimsicality and carried through in the spirit of a good joke.

Although the element of the practical joke occupies an important place among what may be termed, without offence, Mr. Jacobs' "comic effects," it has to be remembered that practical jokes, blunders, misunderstandings, are of all things in real life those most productive of amusement, and Mr. Jacobs is, except in his most exalted drolleries of comic invention, closely true to life.

His characters are always actual, racy, living types, and much of his fun is produced by a deft choice of adjectives and a command of dialect that render his stories of the real stuff of literature. Mr. Chesterton once heard a coster exclaim, on

having his nose injured : “ My fatal beauty spoiled at last ! ” and thought the phrase worthy of Mr. Jacobs. Mr. Jacobs is indeed a writer who will rank with the greatest of our time, and is like to be to a future generation a humorist as human and as perennially welcome as Dickens still remains to the majority of his countrymen.

I have chosen one of his earliest comic tales, from the collection published as *Many Cargoes* in 1896, and it is here reprinted by permission of the author and Messrs. Methuen & Co.

A CHANGE OF TREATMENT

BY W. W. JACOBS

“ YES, I’ve sailed under some ‘cute skippers in my time,” said the night-watchman ; “ them that go down in big ships see the wonders o’ the deep, you know,” he added with a sudden chuckle ; “ but the one I’m going to tell you about ought never to have been trusted out without ‘is ma. A good many o’ my skippers had fads, but this one was the worst I ever sailed under

“ It’s some few years ago now ; i’d shipped on his barque, the *John Elliott*, as slow-going an old tub as ever I was aboard of, when I wasn’t in quite a fit an’ proper state to know what I was doing, an’ I hadn’t been in her two days afore I found out his ‘obby, through overhearing a few remarks made by the second mate, who came up from dinner in a hurry to make ‘em. ‘ I don’t mind saws an’ knives hung round the cabin,’ he ses to the fust mate, ‘ but when a chap has a ‘uman ‘and alongside ‘is plate, studying it while folks is at their food, it’s more than a Christian man can stand.’

“ ‘ That’s nothing,’ ses the fust mate, who had sailed with the barque afore. ‘ He’s half crazy on doctoring. We nearly had a mutiny aboard once owing to his wanting to hold a *post-mortem*

on a man what fell from the mast-head. Wanted to see what the poor feller died of.'

" 'I call it unwholesome,' ses the second mate very savage. 'He offered me a pill at breakfast the size of a small marble; quite put me off my feed, it did.'

" 'Of course, the skipper's fad soon got known for'ard. But I didn't think much about it, till one day I seed old Dan'l Dennis sitting on a locker reading. Every now and then he'd shut the book, an' look up, closing 'is eyes, an' moving his lips like a hen drinking, an' then look down at the book again.

" 'Why, Dan,' I ses, 'what's up? you ain't larning lessons at your time o' life?'

" 'Yes, I am,' ses Dan very soft. 'You might hear me say it, it's this one about heart disease.'

" He hands over the book, which was stuck full o' all kinds o' diseases, and winks at me 'ard.

" 'Picked it up on a bookstall,' he ses; then he shut 'is eyes an' said his piece wonderful. It made me quite queer to listen to 'im. 'That's how I feel,' ses he, when he'd finished. 'Just strength enough to get to bed. Lend a hand, Bill, an' go an' fetch the doctor.'

" Then I see his little game, but I wasn't going to run any risks, so I just mentioned, permiscous like, to the cook as old Dan seemed rather queer, an' went back an' tried to borrow the book, being always fond of reading. Old Dan pretended he was too ill to hear what I was saying, an' afore I could take it away from him, the skipper comes hurrying down with a bag in his 'and.

“ ‘ What’s the matter, my man ? ’ ses he, ‘ what’s the matter ? ’

“ ‘ I’m all right, sir,’ ses old Dan, ‘ ‘cept that I’ve been swoonding away a little.’

“ ‘ Tell me exactly how you feel,’ ses the skipper, feeling his pulse.

“ Then old Dan said his piece over to him, an’ the skipper shook his head an’ looked very solemn.

“ ‘ How long have you been like this ? ’ he ses.

“ ‘ Four or five years, sir,’ ses Dan. ‘ It ain’t nothing serious, sir, is it ? ’

“ ‘ You lie quite still,’ ses the skipper, putting a little trumpet thing to his chest an’ then listening. ‘ Um ! there’s serious mischief here I’m afraid, the prognotice is very bad.’

“ ‘ Prog what, sir ? ’ ses Dan, staring.

“ ‘ Prognotice,’ ses the skipper, at least I think that’s the word he said. ‘ You keep perfectly still, an’ I’ll go an’ mix you up a draught, and tell the cook to get some strong beef-tea on.’

“ Well, the skipper ’ad no sooner gone, than Cornish Harry, a great big lumbering chap o’ six feet two, goes up to old Dan, an’ he ses, ‘ Gimme that book.’

“ ‘ Go away,’ says Dan, ‘ don’t come worrying ’ere ; you ’eard the skipper say how bad my prognotice was.’

“ ‘ You lend me the book,’ ses Harry, ketching hold of him, ‘ or else I’ll bang you first, and split to the skipper arterwards. I believe I’m a bit consumptive. Anyway, I’m going to see.’

“ He dragged the book away from the old man, and began to study. There was so many complaints

in it he was almost tempted to have something else instead of consumption, but he decided on that at last, an' he got a cough what worried the fo'c'sle all night long, an' the next day, when the skipper came down to see Dan, he could 'ardly 'ear hissself speak.

“ ‘ That’s a nasty cough you’ve got, my man,’ ses he, looking at Harry.

“ ‘ Oh, it’s nothing, sir,’ ses Harry, careless like. ‘ I’ve ’ad it for months now off and on. I think it’s perspiring so of a night does it.’

“ ‘ What?’ ses the skipper. ‘ Do you perspire of a night?’

“ ‘ Dreadful,’ ses Harry. ‘ You could wring the clo’es out. I s’pose it’s healthy for me, ain’t it, sir?’

“ ‘ Undo your shirt,’ ses the skipper, going over to him, an’ sticking the trumpet agin him. ‘ Now take a deep breath. Don’t cough.’

“ ‘ I can’t help it, sir,’ ses Harry, ‘ it will come. Seems to tear me to pieces.’

“ ‘ You get to bed at once,’ says the skipper, taking away the trumpet, an’ shaking his ’ed. ‘ It’s a fortunate thing for you, my lad, you’re in skilled hands. With care, I believe I can pull you round. How does that medicine suit you, Dan?’

“ ‘ Beautiful, sir,’ says Dan. ‘ It’s wonderful soothing, I slep’ like a new-born babe arter it.’

“ ‘ I’ll send you some more,’ ses the skipper. ‘ You’re not to get up mind, either of you.’

“ ‘ All right, sir,’ ses the two in very faint voices, an’ the skipper went away arter telling us to be careful not to make a noise.

“ We all thought it a fine joke at first, but the airs them two chaps give themselves was something sickening. Being in bed all day, they was naturally wakeful of a night, and they used to call across the fo’c’sle inquiring arter each other’s healths, an’ waking us other chaps up. An’ they’d swop beef-tea an’ jellies with each other, an’ Dan ’ud try an’ coax a little port wine out o’ Harry, which he ’ad to make blood with, but Harry ’ud say he hadn’t made enough that day, an’ he’d drink to the better health of old Dan’s prognostice, an’ smack his lips until it drove us a’most crazy to ’ear him.

“ Arter these chaps had been ill two days, the other fellers began to put their heads together, being maddened by the smell o’ beef-tea an’ the like, an’ said they was going to be ill too, and both the invalids got into a fearful state of excitement.

“ ‘ You’ll only spoil it for all of us,’ ses Harry, ‘ and you don’t know what to have without the book.’

“ ‘ It’s all very well doing your work as well as our own,’ ses one of the men. ‘ It’s our turn now. It’s time you two got well.’

“ ‘ *Well?* ’ ses Harry, ‘ *well?* Why you silly iggernerant chaps, we shan’t never get well, people with our complaints never do. You ought to know that.’

“ ‘ Well, I shall split,’ ses one of them.

“ ‘ You do!’ ses Harry, ‘ you do, an’ I’ll put a ’ed on you that all the port wine and jellies in the world wouldn’t cure. ’Sides, don’t you think the skipper knows what’s the matter with us?’

“ ’Afore the other chap could reply, the skipper hissself comes down, accompanied by the fust mate,

with a look on his face which made Harry give the deepest and hollowest cough he'd ever done.

“ ‘ What they reely want,’ ses the skipper, turning to the mate, ‘ is keerful nussing.’

“ ‘ I wish you'd let *me* nuss 'em,’ ses the fust mate, ‘ only ten minutes—I'd put 'em both on their legs, an' running for their lives into the bargain, in ten minutes.’

“ ‘ Hold your tongue, sir,’ ses the skipper ; ‘ what you say is unfeeling, besides being an insult to me. Do you think I studied medicine all these years without knowing when a man's ill ? ’

“ The fust mate growled something and went on deck, and the skipper started examining of 'em again. He said they was wonderfully patient lying in bed so long, an' he had 'em wrapped up in bedclo'es and carried on deck, so as the pure air could have a go at 'em. *We* had to do the carryin', an' there they sat, breathing the pure air, and looking at the fust mate out of the corners of their eyes. If they wanted anything from below one of us had to go an' fetch it, an' by the time they was taken down to bed again, we all resolved to be took ill too.

“ Only two of 'em did it though, for Harry, who was a powerful, ugly-tempered chap, swore he'd do all sorts o' dreadful things to us if we didn't keep well and hearty, an' all 'cept these two did. One of 'em, Mike Rafferty, laid up with a swelling on his ribs, which I knew myself he 'ad 'ad for fifteen years, and the other chap had paralysis. I never saw a man so reely happy as the skipper was. He was up an' down with his medicines and his instruments all day long, and used to make notes of the cases

in a big pocket-book, and read 'em to the second mate at meal-times.

"The fo'c'sle had been turned into hospital about a week, an' I was on deck doing some odd job or the other, when the cook comes up to me pulling a face as long as a fiddle.

"'Nother invalid,' ses he; 'fust mate's gone stark, staring mad!'

"'Mad?' ses I.

"'Yes,' ses he. 'He's got a big basin in the galley, an' he's laughing like a hyener an' mixing bilge-water an' ink, an' paraffin an' butter an' soap an' all sorts o' things up together. The smell's enough to kill a man; I've had to come away.'

"Curious-like, I jest walked up to the galley an' puts my 'ed in, an' there was the mate as the cook said, smiling all over his face, and ladling some thick sticky stuff into a stone bottle.

"'How's the pore sufferers, sir?' ses he, stepping out of the galley jest as the skipper was going by.

"'They're very bad; but I hope for the best,' ses the skipper, looking at him hard. 'I'm glad to see you've turned a bit more feeling.'

"'Yes, sir,' ses the mate. 'I didn't think so at fust, but I can see now them chaps is all very ill. You'll s'cuse me saying it, but I don't quite approve of your treatment.'

"I thought the skipper would ha' bust.

"'My treatment?' ses he. 'My treatment? What do you know about it?'

"'You're treating 'em wrong, sir,' ses the mate. 'I have here' (patting the jar) 'a remedy which 'ud cure them all if you'd only let me try it.'

“ ‘ Pooh ! ’ ses the skipper. ‘ One medicine cure all diseases ! The old story. What is it ? Where’d you get it from ? ’ ses he.

“ ‘ I brought the ingredients aboard with me,’ ses the mate. ‘ It’s a wonderful medicine discovered by my grandmother, an’ if I might only try it I’d thoroughly cure them pore chaps.’

“ ‘ Rubbish ! ’ ses the skipper.

“ ‘ Very well, sir,’ ses the mate, shrugging his shoulders. ‘ O’ course, if you won’t let me you won’t. Still I tell you, if you’d let me try I’d cure ’em all in two days. That’s a fair challenge.’

“ Well, they talked, and talked, and talked, until at last the skipper give way and went down below with the mate, and told the chaps they was to take the new medicine for two days, jest to prove the mate was wrong.

“ ‘ Let pore old Dan try it first, sir,’ ses Harry, starting up, an’ sniffing as the mate took the cork out ; ‘ he’s been awful bad since you’ve been away.’

“ ‘ Harry’s worse than I am, sir,’ ses Dan ; ‘ it’s only his kind heart that makes him say that.’

“ ‘ It don’t matter which is fust,’ ses the mate, filling a tablespoon with it, ‘ there’s plenty for all. Now, Harry.’

“ ‘ Take it,’ ses the skipper.

“ Harry took it, an’ the fuss he made you’d ha’ thought he was swallowing a football. It stuck all round his mouth, and he carried on so dredful that the other invalids was half sick afore it came to them.

“ By the time the other three ’ad ’ad theirs it was

as good as a pantermine, an' the mate corked the bottle up, and went an' sat down on a locker while they tried to rinse their mouths out with the luxuries which had been given 'em.

" 'How do you feel?' ses the skipper.

" 'I'm dying,' ses Dan.

" 'So'm I,' ses Harry; 'I b'leeve the mate's pisoned us.'

" The skipper looks over at the mate very stern an' shakes his 'ed slowly.

" 'It's all right,' ses the mate. 'It's always like that the first dozen or so doses.'

" 'Dozen or so doses!' ses old Dan, in a far-away voice.

" 'It has to be taken every twenty minutes,' ses the mate, pulling out his pipe and lighting it; an' the four men groaned all together.

" 'I can't allow it,' ses the skipper, 'I can't allow it. Men's lives mustn't be sacrificed for an experiment.'

" ' 'Tain't a experiment,' ses the mate very indignant, 'it's an old family medicine.'

" 'Well, they shan't have any more,' ses the skipper firmly.

" 'Look here,' ses the mate. 'If I kill any one o' these men I'll give you twenty pound. Honour bright, I will.'

" 'Make it twenty-five,' ses the skipper, considering.

" 'Very good,' ses the mate. 'Twenty-five; I can't say no fairer than that, can I? It's about time for another dose now.'

" He gave 'em another tablespoonful all round

as the skipper left, an' the chaps what wasn't invalids nearly bust with joy. He wouldn't let 'em have anything to take the taste out, 'cos he said it didn't give the medicine a chance, an' he told us other chaps to remove the temptation, an' you bet we did.

“After the fifth dose, the invalids began to get desperate, an' when they heard they'd got to be woke up every twenty minutes through the night to take the stuff, they sort o' give up. Old Dan said he felt a gentle glow stealing over him and strengthening him, and Harry said that it felt like a healing balm to his lungs. All of 'em agreed it was a wonderful sort o' medicine, an' arter the sixth dose the man with paralysis dashed up on deck, and ran up the rigging like a cat. He sat there for hours spitting, an' swore he'd brain anybody who interrupted him, an' arter a little while Mike Rafferty went up and j'ined him, an' if the fust mate's ears didn't burn by reason of the things them two pore sufferers said about 'im, they ought to.

“They was all doing full work next day, an' though, o' course, the skipper saw how he'd been done, he didn't allude to it. Not in words, that is ; but when a man tries to make four chaps do the work of eight, an' hits 'em when they don't, it's a easy job to see where the shoe pinches.”



W. PETT RIDGE

From an unpublished pencil sketch by A. S. Boyd

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V

W. PETT RIDGE

THE old saying about two of a trade not agreeing finds a remarkable exception in the case of a certain group of our humorous authors, for Mr. Jerome, Mr. Jacobs, and Mr. Pett Ridge are all fast friends, and Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Pett Ridge have even appeared together in public, the one as chairman and the other as lecturer. It was on one of these occasions that the latter told his audience how his indulgent friend Mr. Jacobs had listened most carefully to his lecture some time before so far as the first half, but had slept profoundly during the second part of it. So, with the permission of the audience, Mr. Jacobs purposed taking his sleep while the lecturer was delivering the first portion of his address that evening.

Mr. William Pett Ridge is one of those writers to whom the public can never be sufficiently grateful : with a knowledge of London which is more profound, as it is assuredly more sympathetic, than that of so gloomy a realist as Mr. Arthur Morrison, or the late George Gissing, and possessing powers of realistic description as great as either of those writers, he has chosen to look on the bright side, and to illustrate

for us the humours of lowly life, knowing, as he does, that it is not poverty or vice or crime that is the leading characteristic of the poor Cockney, but humour. There is, indeed, far more that is humorous in the life of the poor than in the artificial existence of the rich ; it is not in Kensington that we have to look for high spirits and healthy fun, but " east of Aldgate " or in those places where the festive 'Arry and 'Arriet resort. "'Igh 'ats,' said the ticket collector thoughtfully, ' 'igh 'ats don't always mean 'appiness.'" This, from one of his own sketches, may be taken as the keynote of much that Mr. Pett Ridge has written.

Although he is, for so human and unaffected a man, almost as reticent as most of the ladies who figure in the confessional of *Who's Who*, and gives us no inkling of his age, I believe that Mr. Pett Ridge was born at Chartham, near Canterbury, about the year 1860, and lived a country life till 1880, having been educated at Marden, Kent, and the Birkbeck Institution. He was employed for some years in the clerical department of one of the great London railways, and at thirty years of age began to write. In this respect alone his career is remarkable in these days when so many authors have achieved a reputation before turning thirty. Mr. Sidney Low, while editing the *St. James's Gazette*, was the first editor to introduce the work of Mr. Pett Ridge to the public, and the first sketch which he published in 1890, as well as some short stories that followed it, was written over a pen name. But the new contributor was soon in such frequent evidence in the pages of the *St. James's* that he was all

but a regular member of the staff, and if my memory serves me, both of his first books, *Eighteen of Them*, published in 1894, and *Telling Stories*, issued the following year, consisted chiefly of reprints from that journal, and the latter came from its publishing office. But before then he had compiled from the columns of the *Daily News* the well-known volume of Mr. Andrew Lang's *Lost Leaders*, a fact which is worthy of mention, as it is so seldom that one who begins with such a piece of book-making ever himself achieves distinction as a literary creator. His first novel, *A Clever Wife*, also appeared in 1895, as well as a collection of dialogues under a pen-name.

Perhaps one might name *The Second Opportunity of Mr. Staplehurst*, published in 1896, as Mr. Pett Ridge's first book of real importance, and two years later he had shown himself in *Mord Em'ly* nearly as dexterous with the long story as he is with the short sketch. It is obvious, however, that his own sympathies are rather with the latter, and although he has in such novels as *A Son of the State* and *Erb* added further works of high merit to his list of books he has of late been expending much of his energy in the production of those admirable sketches of Cockney life on which it is fair to suppose much of his popularity rests. Among his more recent books, *Up Side Streets* and *Next Door Neighbours* are collections of these random pieces gathered from many magazines, and all are imbued with the qualities which, more than fifteen years ago, first attracted attention to the work of this delightful writer. There is in them the fruits of close and loving observation of the types of character to which

his sympathy draws him, humorous invention, and the ready recognition of humour, together with an artistic command of dialect unequalled by any other author who, since the days of Dickens, has set himself to portray the lights and shadows of Cockney town.

In a lecture on "Dialect and Dialogue," which Mr. Pett Ridge delivered to the Society of Women Journalists, he had some good advice to offer on this question of studying people and describing them. "In order to write about these people," he said, "one must study the people, and women authors will not take the trouble. The lives of the poor are, in the lump, brighter and more amusing than those of the well-to-do middle classes. Their amusements are enjoyed to the full. To understand them and to reproduce their language one must loaf about in their company; this is the only way. Many misconceptions will thus be corrected. Some novelists constantly introduce superfluous 'h's' into the language of the working-people. As a matter of fact, the Cockney rarely interpolates an 'h,' except when he is addressing a superior. His taste is all for economy. Only in some parts of South London the women have a strange, peculiar whine. Thus, in a chemist's shop, I heard one drawling out in lugubrious tones, 'I don't think it matters what you give me so long as it's medicine.'"

Needless to add, Mr. Pett Ridge is here preaching what he has practised. His stories, sketches, novels, have all been "taken from life," and thus ring true when tested; their humour is natural, ebullient, seldom or never forced; the sentiment is

always genuinely human, never by any chance approaching mawkishness ; the language is truthful, racy, yet humorously suggested rather than phonetically reproduced ; and through all shines the love of his fellow-kind—and especially the little ones with their games of make-believe—which is the one unmistakable trait of the true humorist.

The example of Mr. Pett Ridge's humour which has been chosen for the present collection does not show him among his familiar Cockney types, but is eminently typical of his work. It is taken by his permission from *Up Side Streets*, published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton.

THE HAPPY PRISONER

BY W. PETT RIDGE

“ JEST for the sake of argiment,” begged the seaman earnestly, “ put up your fists.”

“ You get on your way quiet,” said the constable. “ You’ve made quite ’nough disturbance and upset in our village already ; so get on.”

“ For the sake of a bit of fun, then. *Come along.* I’ve had a set-to with a lot of men in me time, but I’ve never,” said the red-faced seaman wistfully, “ I’ve never had a fight with a bloomin’ copper.”

The two men, who had been engaged in combat by the sailor, came back from the pump at the side of the *Dewdrop*, where they had washed their faces, slightly sobered and certainly the better-looking for this operation.

“ You say you want to get to Milford,” remarked the constable, pointing sagely with his walking-stick. “ Well, *that’s* your way.”

“ For the sake of old times,” urged the seaman. “ I’ve been on the tank, I admit, but I know what I’m talkin’ about. Come on ! P’raps me and you went to school together.”

“ P’raps ! ” said the constable, looking round at his audience confidently. “ P’raps not.”

“ There y’are,” cried the seaman. “ There’s a

doubt about it, isn't there? Ver' well; let's have a fight and settle the question." The constable shook his head negatively. "Bah! you ain't 'alf a man. I once come across a policeman out at Timaru in New Zealand, and mind you, he was not only a policeman but he were a gentleman into the bargain."

"Look here!" said the constable, hurt, "I've had 'bout enough of your lip. You tramp off as soon as ever you like."

"What?" shouted the other. "A tramp? You call me, Jim Woolland, A.B., a tramp! I'll jolly soon learn you to call things by their right name. Take that."

The constable took that, and, stumbling, went down on the triangular piece of grass in front of the inn. The publican and his customers, startled by this rude treatment of an official whom they revered, whose lightest joke was ever a sign for exhausting laughter, whose word on parliamentary affairs was accepted as final, rushed forward and held Jim Woolland.

"We've got him, Mr. Best," said the publican exultantly, panting as though the chase had lasted hours. He can't get away from us."

"Out with that dogcart of yourn," said the constable judiciously as he dusted his uniform. "Somehow these jobs always seem t' 'appen when I've got a hot supper waiting."

"Dogcart's on 'ire for the week, Mr. Best."

"That's no use, then. Last train gone?"

"A hower ago," said one of the lookers-on.

"Then," said P.C. Best sagely, "we can't catch

that. I shall have to lock him up at my place till morning." He turned to the seaman. "Are you coming quiet?"

"I'll come quiet," said James Woolland.

They went off together amid a suggestion of applause from the *Dewdrop* customers intended to express admiration of their constable's diplomacy. Once out of the vague light furnished by the *Dewdrop's* oil lamps, the roadway was dark, and James Woolland was glad of the constable's assistance.

"It's my one fault," he said tearfully. "I'm like the parrot, I'm too talkative. I talk and talk and talk till I don't know whether I'm on me 'ead or me 'eels."

"You ain't the only one," remarked Mr. Best. "But the law's one of them things—mind a puddle just here—that you've got to respect, mind you: once you give that up, and where are you? S'posin' now, just to 'lusterate what I mean, s'posin' I was you and you was me. S'posin' it was me that had had just one drop too much of old ale."

"You'd be a lucky dog! Lemme hold your arm for a change!"

"But," said the constable, complying, "I always say that what is to be will be. We ain't fur off my little shanty now."

The house was one of a precise row of six small cottages which looked as though they had been designed by some intelligent child; Mr. Best's cottage had the word "POLICE" on the front door, but the porch had clematis hanging from it and the blue flowers veiled the announcement. Still held by the seaman, he found his latch-

key and opened the door. The linoleum-covered staircase was immediately before them, and from the landing a female voice called :

“ That you, Ebenezer ? ”

“ What there is left of me,” answered Mr. Best.

“ Your supper’s in the oven. I put it there so’s to keep it hot.”

“ Right you are, old gel.” He spoke to his prisoner. “ This way, please.”

“ Have you got a lock-up ? ” asked the wife’s voice. “ Tell him to keep hisself quiet down in the washus and not wake my new baby. If he makes the leastest noise, I’ll have him turned out.”

“ Ma’am,” said James Woolland, taking off his round cap, “ I’ll be quieter’n a mouse.”

“ You’d better,” said a voice. “ And ’Nezer ! My Aunt Mary’s sent word to say she can’t come to-morrow.”

“ Goo’ job, too.”

“ Oh, don’t be unkind.”

“ What I mean to say is there’ll be plenty without her.”

“ That’s true. Busy enough I shall be too preparin’.”

“ Now I shall have to lock you in,” said Mr. Best to his man, “ but there’s plenty of water at the sink there, and you can make yourself pretty comfortable on them two mats.”

“ Compared with my cabin that I shared aboard the *Mimosa* this is a regular Hotel Métropole. Wish my old ’ead didn’t ache so.”

“ Ah,” said Mr. Best, “ that’s the lemonade. Good-night.”

“ So long, old man,” replied the prisoner. “ See you in the morning, I hope.”

The key turned outside, and then it occurred to James Woolland, A.B., that he was exceedingly hungry. An insinuating smell of a hot pie came to him, sharpening the edge of his appetite, but he was not unused to trials of this kind, and half undressing he prepared for sleep. As he did this, the door was unlocked and opened slightly. A thick old overcoat flew clumsily into the room. A plate with a large chunk of pie that had potatoes, onions, meat and nearly everything the heart could desire was placed on the brick flooring. The door closed quietly and the lock shot to again. James Woolland enjoyed his supper, and slept the heavy sleep of one who has served himself luxuriously.

The next morning he heard a sharp knock at the door, and muttering the word generally used by sailors under these circumstances, rolled out prepared to hurry on deck. Realizing with an effort his surroundings, he went to the door and answered. The voice of Mrs. Best said that she was sorry to trouble him, but Best had been called out on an urgent matter, and James Woolland must be prepared to give the washhouse up to her in two seconds or less. He could take the hand bowl and the yellow soap and have a sluice down on the lawn at the back ; but he was not for goodness gracious' sake to get in her way, for she had enough to do for twelve pairs of hands, let alone one. This the prisoner did, and when he reappeared, much refreshed, Mrs. Best had completed the first duties of the day, and had brought down the new baby,

setting him on the high chair near the burning wood fire. On James Woolland coming into the kitchen the new baby became excited, and with a sudden movement broke the wooden guard which kept him safe.

"Oh!" cried the perturbed little woman, "don't good-morning me. This is the beginning of my worries for the day!" She held up the broken guard and seemed inclined to cry. "Course it must happen to-day above all days! Just when I want everything to be jest so. My party's going to be a failure."

"'Scuse me," said the prisoner, "but if it wasn't taking too much of a liberty might I look after the kid for a bit, whilst I cut a fresh bit of wood?"

"You *can't* nurse a baby," said Mrs. Best, doubtfully.

"If I hadn't been a able seaman," declared the prisoner, "I sh'd 'ave been a nurse gel. Perhaps I might make the tea first."

"If you could manage that," said the little woman more graciously, "it'd leave me free to run up and dress the other two, and to go over the front room once more with a duster." The baby held out its fat arms to the seaman, and James Woolland responded with an "Ay, ay, cap'n." The little woman went on, "You know what relatives are to talk. Let them see the least speck of dust, and they go 'ome and declare they could write their names in it. Baby, be good boy with this gemman." She looked back into the kitchen again. "By-the-by, my 'usband told me to tell you not to go running away till he comes back."

"I give you my word," said the able seaman.

The high chair was mended, the baby was chuckling in the possession of a fleet of paper boats, and breakfast was ready when she returned. Mrs. Best complained because the prisoner had used a teaspoonful and a half of tea instead of one teaspoonful only, and although she found excuses for this gross irregularity in the fact that James was but a man and a sailor at that, she harped upon the subject until a single knock came to the front door, whereupon she broke off.

"Aunt Ju, as sure as fate! Jest like her to come early."

"Shall I be in the way, ma'am?"

"Yes," said little Mrs. Best, candidly, "you will. I was in 'opes that you'd have been off and away before any of them arrived. What ever shall I do?"

"Let her knock again," suggested the prisoner, whistling a new and agreeable face on the baby's wooden doll.

"And it's always a grievance with Aunt Ju that I went and married a policeman. What she'll say when she finds you——" The baby crowed with delight at the strikingly improved appearance of its doll.

"Say," suggested James, "say I'm an old friend of your 'usband's waiting till he comes back."

Thus the sailor was introduced to Aunt Ju, who found herself in sympathy with him by reason of the fact that she had once, in her early youth, nearly fallen into a pond.

When the elder babies came down dressed, James,

to solve a difficulty, offered to take them to the National Schools half a mile off, and Mrs. Best had no alternative but to avail herself of his services. He did not return by the straight road, but lighted his pipe and strolled round by the common ; it was a warm morning and only a couple of yellow gipsy vans and a dog were in sight. Anxious to talk to some one, he went in the direction of the collie, who at once commenced to bark defiantly. A game of running after pieces of dry wood thrown by James, mollified the dog, and they became so friendly that James was permitted to see that in the dry ditch where it stood on guard was a sack bursting with contents, on the top a silver claret jug shouldered out by other crowded articles within.

When James Woolland returned to his temporary gaol, the visitors had increased in number, for relatives had arrived close on the flat heels of Aunt Ju, who, taking the sailor now under her own protection, introduced him to the others as her friend. There was amongst them a rosy-cheeked young woman called Cousin Em, who, having recently been jilted by an injudicious railway porter, was the object of much commiseration from the rest, and bitter words were said concerning the ways of men and their instability—arguments to which James found himself bound to reply. Thus a highly interesting debate was started, that at first appeared one-sided, until Cousin Em, drying her tears, traitorously threw over her supporters and ranged herself on the side of man, declaring that, speaking generally, one sex had as many faults as the other, and that for her part she was not going to upset herself just because of a

miserable South-Western porter. Finding themselves constituting the party in opposition, James and Cousin Em took the new baby and went out to the lawn at the back, where Cousin Em kissed the baby and the baby kissed Cousin Em. When, at the hour of one, P.C. Best returned dusty and wearied in time for dinner, James Woolland, I am sorry to say, was snatching a kiss from Cousin Em, who perhaps thought he was the baby. It is good to be able to record that P.C. Best sent Cousin Em at once to rejoin the ladies and upbraided James in good set terms. "Nice example for my youngest, ain't it!" said Mr. Best severely. He warned his prisoner to remain where he was; more urgent business engaged his attention just now, and James would have to wait ere his case could be considered. It appeared, however, that the lady guests insisted on James' presence at the dinner table, and on Mr. Best saying that Woolland preferred to remain in the garden, Cousin Em offered to go and make him come in. Which she did.

"Well," said Aunt Ju, addressing Mr. Best when they had reached the roley-poley pudding course, "we don't get much conversation out of *you*. Why don't you laugh and joke like your seafarin' friend here?"

"Ah," said P.C. Best gloomily, "he wouldn't be setting the table in a roar if he had my worries. I've got to be off again directly."

"How we shall miss you," remarked Aunt Ju.

"Look here," said Mr. Best, goaded by this satirical remark. "S'posin' you was a constable. S'posin'

up at the vicarage during the night there'd bin a robbery."

"Robbery?" echoed the others.

"And s'posin'," still addressing Aunt Ju, "you'd been 'unting all over the place since seven o'clock, and at last your sergeant ups and says he wonders every 'ouse in the place isn't cleared out with a mug like Best to look after 'em."

"Did he dare to say that?" asked little Mrs. Best furiously.

"Any objections to me having a stroll round with you, old man, after dinner?" asked the prisoner.

"Mr. Woolland," protested Aunt Ju, "you're not going to leave us ladies!"

"He's tired of our company," declared Cousin Em coquettishly.

"Back in a hower or so," said James.

To the regret of the women-folk it had long been dark when the two returned, and this because James had insisted that Best should remain with him in the hedge which bordered one side of the dry ditch until some one came for the hidden sack of valuables and for the sentinel dog. When some one did arrive it proved to be three, and James had to rope up one of them with seaman-like accuracy, whilst P.C. Best held the other two, and James, his work done, gave him help in the work of handcuffing. The sergeant and other constables being found, the sergeant took the three off in his trap, but first made handsome apology to Best for any casual remark that he might have let fall, and promised to speak of him favourably to the Chief Constable. Because of this, P.C. Best returned home with

James in a glow of exultation and drank three glasses of his wife's home-made wine straight off. James was urged to emulate the example of his host, but declined, and Cousin Em approved his decision.

"The lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine," quoted Cousin Em.

It was at this moment, Mrs. Best afterwards declared, that her party really began. A concertina was found upstairs in a bonnet-box under the bed, and, although it suffered from asthma and one or two keys showed disinclination for work, James Woolland (so Aunt Ju said) made it literally speak. He played "Alice, where art thou?" and a lady relative who had once had a canary called Alice, wept silently; he played "The Maid of the Mill," and two sisters sang, one taking seconds; he played "Come lasses and lads," and Aunt Ju awakened a sleeping aunt of her own age and the two danced; he played "Rule, Britannia," and the entire strength of the company joined in making the police cottage rock, arousing the new baby, who was brought downstairs in a cloud of screams but resumed good temper on seeing James. When Aunt Ju, in a moment of brilliant inspiration, begged for a hornpipe, the new baby seconded the resolution by clapping its chubby hands. Wherefore P.C. Best, taking another glass of home-made wine, whistled as well as he could, and the ladies hummed the air, and James Woolland, A.B., after walking twice around the space in rather a proud way, suddenly broke into this most wonderful dance. "Tiddle-um-tum-tum, Tiddle-iddle-iddle-um" sang the ladies, as James, with arms folded, did an amaz-

ing progress down the room on tiptoes, hauled in right and left, did everything, in short, that no one else could have done, finishing with a high kick that only just missed the ceiling. Then male folk arrived to take their female relatives home.

"Which is your way, Mr. Woolland?" asked Cousin Em as he buttoned her gloves.

"I ought to be getting on to Milford," he said, glancing at P.C. Best.

"Nonsense," said the host with enthusiasm. "Stay the night and go on in the morning."

"Why," said Cousin Em, "me and my brother are driving within four miles of the place."

"You're welcome to stop," said P.C. Best. "There's the sofa in the best room."

"You didn't finish telling me about your experience on the ocean wave," urged Cousin Em. "I shall think you're cross about something if you don't let us give you a lift."

So James Woolland said good-bye to little Mrs. Best and kissed the baby; P.C. Best, flushed with home-made wine, made a gay offer to fight him in order to see whether he was to stay or not, whereupon Cousin Em took James' arm and ran off with him to the dogcart; the other women, fearing Best might be in earnest, surrounded him, begging him not to be silly and to think of his official position and his children and the neighbours on either side. The visitors drove away, Cousin Em and James Woolland seated at the back of the dogcart with a rug over their laps and James waving a good-bye with his cap.

"Well, old gel," remarked Mr. Best as he helped

to wash up, "this has been a great day for both of us."

"I'm so glad the party went off well," she said.

"It's all thanks to that sailor chap."

"By-the-by," said P.C. Best thoughtfully, "wasn't I going to lock him up for something or other?"

"Don't believe you 'alf know what you're up to," said his little wife sternly. "Get on with wiping them plates, do, and don't talk foolish!"



BARRY PAIN

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VI

BARRY PAIN

IN the days when Mr. Jerome, Mr. Zangwill, and Mr. Barry Pain were the sport of the shallow-pated cynics of the cheap press, who jeered at them as "the new humorists," one of the group has told us that the three met together in solemn conclave and swore never to make another joke. Thus determined, Mr. Zangwill began his first serious novel, Mr. Jerome started a weekly paper, and Mr. Barry Pain took to writing for *Punch*! Here was a little jest after the heart of the cheap journalist. *Punch* is well served, but it has often seemed to me a pity that more of Mr. Pain's brilliant work has not found its way into the pages of that journal, which, unlike almost every other periodical of our time, does not die in the week of its birth, but enjoys a length of life that is not accorded to the great mass of contemporary books.

It is now sixteen years since there appeared a little book in a series, called "The Whitefriars Library of Wit and Humour," carrying this preface: "My thanks are due to the editor of *The Granta* for permission to reprint *In a Canadian Canoe*, *The Nine Muses minus One*, and *The*

Celestial Grocery. They have been carefully revised, and considerable additions have been made. The rest of the volume has not appeared before, so far as I know. Although this book appears in a 'Library of Wit and Humour,' I have not tried to make it *all* witty and humorous; I wanted there to be some background. I am not sure that I have not made it all background." The success of the work thus wittily and modestly introduced was immediate and unmistakable, although the abundance of classical allusions and the intellectual nimbleness of its stories and sketches might have been thought to tell against its ready acceptance at the hands of the general reading public, which is most easily moved to applause by broadly humorous effects.

The author of *In a Canadian Canoe* had been writing more or less since boyhood, and seems to have been a prodigious scribbler in school magazines before going to Cambridge, where he wrote in two short-lived college journals, and became one of the best-known contributors to *The Granta*, that most successful of university periodicals. It was through the latter connexion that he first came to London; the late James Payn having seen something of his in its pages, asked him to write for the *Cornhill*, in which his first story written for the general public appeared. This was entitled *The Hundred Gates*, and it immediately furthered the literary fortunes of the young author in an unexpected way. Mr. Burnand read it, and is understood to have found it so funny that he fancied he must have written it himself. Mr. Pain, as a result, had an invitation

to contribute to *Punch*, and one of the first pieces of his which appeared in the pages of that journal was a delightfully amusing parody of Tennyson's *Throstle*, one of the poorest lyrics ever written by that great poet, but for which Mr. Archibald Grove had recently paid a huge sum as an attraction for the first number of that ill-fated monthly, the *New Review*.

This was in December, 1899, and just about the time when Mr. Pain resigned his engagement as classical tutor to an army "crammer" at Guildford and came to London to work regularly for *Punch*, the *Speaker*, and other journals. Of his decision to take this step he tells a curious story. Doubtful as to whether he should abandon his occupation as a tutor and thrust forward into the struggle of literary London, he opened his Virgil with the quaint old thought that his finger might rest upon some passage that might convey a portent. He looked at random and found that his finger pointed to the words, "*Forsan meliora sequentur*" ("Mayhap better things will follow"). He came, and the better things have surely followed.

The appearance of *In a Canadian Canoe* was the real beginning of his popularity as a humorous writer, and soon after his reputation had been established one encountered evidences of his pen in all sorts of periodicals and newspapers. Indeed, we may reasonably complain that so brilliant a writer should have been content to allow the great mass of his work to sink into the limbo of "back numbers," and that he should have made so many and not always satisfactory experiments in contrary

directions, as exemplified by such books as *Graeme and Cyril*, *The Kindness of the Celestial*, *The Octave of Claudius*, and *The Romantic History of Robin Hood*. He is excelled by no contemporary in his gift of humour or the suppleness of his literary style, and yet we have to be content with much of his finest and most individual work in the shape of fugitive newspaper sketches or little shilling booklets. Perhaps his humorous sense is so strongly developed that it does not allow of his taking himself so seriously as he ought to do from the bookwriting point of view. Yet when he cares to turn his attention to giving permanent form to his miscellaneous work, he has rich store to draw upon. There are, for instance, those racy sketches, charged with the real stuff of Cockney humour, which under the heading of "De Omnibus" were so long a favourite feature of *To-day*; his "Tompkins" ballads, formerly the delight of *Daily Chronicle* readers; and numerous other series of sketches and stories which he has written in *Black and White*, the *Windsor*, and other magazines, although many of these have been so closely wedded to some theme of passing interest, some oddity of the moment, that, despite the perfection of their form and their richly humorous flavour, they may have passed out of date.

Mr. Pain's humour is at once intellectual and emotional, though, as a rule, it tends in the former direction and is most characteristic when it smacks of the gay scholar; but none of his contemporaries have excelled him in reproducing, either in prose or verse, Cockney character and speech, or inter-

preting the mind of that best of rascals, "the natural boy." He has shown, too, though in lesser degree, a very refined feeling for the deeper things of life, and there is sound philosophy in much that he has written, despite his tendency when in a serious vein to surprise us suddenly with a touch of the absurd. In pure satire he has done nothing better, perhaps, than *Another Englishwoman's Love Letters*, which will afford entertainment when the preposterous original which he caricatured has been buried in oblivion.

The short story, "A Modern Sibyl," chosen from his book *Deals* (published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton), is an excellent example of his masterly treatment of a genuinely comic situation which is never allowed to become mere farce.

A MODERN SIBYL

BY BARRY PAIN

MESSRS. GRANWICK AND SHINE called it No. 42, Doddington Street, W. But their business—they were in the furnishing trade, and had not been doing well at it of late years—only occupied the ground floor and a part of the basement. The upper storey was let as bachelor chambers, and had a separate entrance, and on the fanlight the house was described as Doddington Mansions. The remainder of the basement was the abode of the porter and house-keeper to the chambers. It was an old-fashioned house, occupying a good deal of ground space, with wide passages and staircase. There were nine sets of chambers altogether, and the names of the residents were painted upon a board in the hall. The last name on the board was S. Bywater Soames, Esq.

Mr. Soames was a man of thirty. His father had been a successful dentist, and his parents had intended that Samuel (that was his first name) should follow the same profession; they had educated him with a view to that end. They died when he had just completed that education, and six months later Soames sold his father's practice, and intimated to his near relations that he had

given up the idea of being a dentist himself. The only reason he could give was that he felt he had not the energy for it ; he would have four hundred a year, and could live on that. They spoke of the possibility of marriage, and remonstrated with eloquence but without much hope ; they had always said among themselves that Samuel was most extraordinary, and there was no knowing what he would do. He said that he should not marry, and that if he ever wanted more money he hoped that he would be able to make it without having to work for it. Soames was a fair-haired, clean-shaven little man, of almost boyish appearance ; he always looked tired.

At the age of thirty—a critical age with many men—Soames woke up. He never gambled at all seriously ; he had no vicious tastes, and believed he had no extravagant tastes ; but for the last few years he had been spending a good deal more than his annual four hundred. He was not in debt, but he had begun to nibble at his capital. He paid a hundred a year for his chambers and went abroad for three months of the year ; he entertained his friends, not ostentatiously, but well ; his tailor was expensive ; the booksellers sent him particulars of anything good on the Stuart period, and he could rarely resist the purchase ; there was the Opera, of course, for Soames was rather by way of being a musician ; and there were hansoms, for Soames never walked if he could avoid it. He still looked tired, but he was awake now. He noted with surprise how many things there were on which one's money slipped away ; but he did realize it, and

he realized, moreover, that it is with capital as it is with cake—you cannot both eat it and have it. What was to be done ?

Money can be made in two ways—by doing and by knowing—as Soames was well aware. The man who does, makes little and makes it slowly ; the man who knows, makes much and makes it quickly. There are, of course, cases where the man both does and knows, but in those cases the knowledge is the essential factor. Knowledge without labour presented strong attractions to Soames. But not all knowledge has a commercial value ; Soames was learned in the Stuart period, and knew something of heraldry and more of Wagner, but such things do not replace the thousands lapsed from one's treasury chest.

There was also a possibility of economy. The chambers at Doddington Mansions might be given up, and Soames might live on two hundred a year until his finances were on a proper footing again. There were certainly bachelors in London who got along on two hundred a year, and among the very poor there might even be some who got along on less. But Soames thought of this with horror ; he had got used to his comfortable way of life and he did not want to change it. It made him so depressed that, in order to recover his self-respect, he took a hansom to Hesketh's to order some more clothes.

He happened to arrive at the moment when Hesketh's manager was turning a client out of the shop—customers are " clients " at Hesketh's. The customer was a tall, portly man, with a ragged,

black moustache, and a very shining hat tilted back on his head; he was very angry and the manager was perfectly calm.

"We decline to make for you, and we don't want to have you about the place. That's all I've got to say."

The customer blustered and swore badly. He was excited, his face was flushed, his eyes seemed to be starting out of his head. The manager took no notice of him, but escorted Soames into the shop.

"Very sorry, sir," he said, "that you should have arrived just when that little scene was going on. Unfortunately, there was no avoiding it. Brought it on himself."

"What was the row, Bland?" asked Soames. "Is that the way you treat us when we're broke?"

"No, sir, no, Mr. Soames, I hope you don't think that. That man's worth half a million, and as far as his money's concerned he's all right. But he doesn't understand the ways of a place like this. He comes here half drunk and uses the most offensive language; he loses his temper without any reason, for it's not our fault he's grown so stout. He's Mr. Walter Chive, and one never heard of him till last year."

"Do anything?" asked Soames lazily.

"Oh, yes; he's one of the Anglo-Foreign Hotels Syndicate. Minting money, they tell me. Quick elevators, ice-water, servants not too formal, and everything to suit the foreigners visiting England. He's a man who might have introduced a lot of valuable business, and I put up with him for a bit.

The other day he was carrying on when Lord Carris came in. His Lordship said to me privately, 'I wonder you let that filthy bounder into the shop at all, Bland.' Oh, I was quite ashamed! What could I say? However, we've seen the last of him now. He came in to-day in his usual state, and began, 'Where's that — fool, Bland?' Oh, I very soon showed him where I was. If we do lose the custom of his friends, it won't ruin us."

And then Soames refused a whisky-and-soda, lit a cigarette, and permitted patterns to be shown him. The incident mildly amused him. It seemed to him a queer thing that a man who was clever enough and knew enough to make money could not pick up a way of behaviour which would spare him the contempt of strangers that he met and the humiliation of being turned out of his tailor's.

A few days later Soames came across this same Mr. Walter Chive again. Soames was coming slowly down the stairs at Doddington Mansions, drawing on his gloves as he went. Chive was in the hall at the bottom of the stairs, in earnest conversation with two other men.

"Well," he was saying, "you've seen it yourselves, and you like the position. G. and S. have only two years to run, and we know for a fact that they will be glad to clear out any time. Shearing's going the deuce of a pace and will have to part with something soon."

"Vell, vell," said a middle-aged man whose appearance as well as his accent bore evidence to his nationality, "dat may be ver' true. But vy do nod Aston and Blaug know somedings? And

vot about dese?" he tapped with his stick on the board on which were the names of the residents.

"Yearly agreements, all of them. Aston and Blake are old-fashioned people. They did this property for his father before him, and they think things are going on the same way for ever. Besides, he won't tell 'em before he must."

"I must think over it," said the third man, who was a handsome old gentleman of a rather military appearance.

And then Soames passed through them and got into the cab which was waiting for him. He told the man to drive to his club. He was now in possession of some information that interested him. It seemed that the Anglo-Foreign Syndicate had cast their speculative eye on No. 42, Doddington Street. If they purchased it from Lord Shearing, they would probably pull it down, and put up a nice little hotel, five storeys higher, on the site. They expected that they would have no trouble in getting Granwick and Shine to part with their lease, and the occupants of the residential chambers had only yearly agreements. He thought things over, and realized that there was the knowledge which might be profitable. He called up through the trap and altered the direction of his cab. A few minutes later he was sitting in Mr. Blake's room at Messrs. Aston and Blake's offices, and Mr. Blake, a gentleman of venerable and kindly appearance, was asking what he could do for him.

"Well," said Soames, "I want those chambers of mine redecorated, if you don't mind."

“By all means,” said Mr. Blake. “Redecorate them.”

Soames explained that he had wanted rosewood panelling in the three rooms, with a deep frieze above. And he wanted painted ceilings—he knew an artist who was just the man for it. “I thought the landlord paid for these things,” he added plaintively. He looked the image of an ignorant boy who has had his enthusiasm damped.

Mr. Blake was much amused. He became patronizing and informative. He used the phrase, “When you have lived a little longer,” with great effect.

“Well,” said Soames, “there’s no help for it; as you won’t do it, I must. Only, how am I to know that you won’t turn me out as soon as I have spent my money on the place? It would be quite fair, wouldn’t it?”

“It would be quite legal,” said Mr. Blake. “But it is not the sort of thing we should dream of doing.”

“But suppose Lord Shearing died or wanted to sell the place, and it passed out of your hands. I’ve only got that thing I signed, and that only lasts a year. Couldn’t you fix it in some way so that I couldn’t be turned out? You see, this will cost me a lot of money; you said so yourself.”

“His Lordship is not at all likely to sell. Yes, I know there are some ill-natured stories about, but we attach no importance to them. However, you are a good tenant, if I may say so, Mr. Soames, and we’ll make an exception for you. You shall have a lease. Do you know what a lease is?”

And Mr. S. Bywater Soames was so forgetful of

the sacred character of truth that he said he was afraid he was not very clear upon it. A week later he had a seven years' lease of his chambers.

That was precisely what he had gone to Mr. Blake to get. If he had asked for it straight out, he might have aroused suspicions. Also, it was no part of his game to pose as the hard-headed business man. His youthful appearance had been in his favour, and he had played up to it. He was regarded by Messrs. Aston and Blake as a luxurious young ass, and this estimate of his character might very possibly come in useful.

He went back to his chambers and thought it over. If Lord Shearing and the Anglo-Foreign Hotels Syndicate never came to terms, he would be in the same position as before, with the exception of the money that he laid out on the redecoration of the chambers. A sum had been named, and its expenditure had been made a condition of the lease. But Soames had the right to sub-let to an approved tenant. He could go elsewhere and economize, or he might be more successful in his next attempt to make use of knowledge commercially.

If, on the other hand, the property were sold—then, he thought to himself with some pleasure, the fun would begin.

* * * * *

A month later Messrs. Granwick and Shine, crushed by the competition of Tottenham Court Road, went suddenly and savagely bankrupt. They owed a year's rent at the time. Lord Shearing wrote a letter to Messrs. Aston and Blake on the subject which made that venerable firm feel extremely sick.

Mr. Blake said sadly that his Lordship's father would never have written such a letter.

A few days afterwards Lord Shearing's brown filly, Fiametta, annoyed by three false starts, stopped and kicked when she should have been otherwise engaged. Lord Shearing watched the performance through his field-glasses. His smile was a trifle metallic and artificial; but, considering the amount that the mare was losing for him, it did him some credit that he was able to smile at all. When, a few days later, Messrs. Aston and Blake wrote to him that the Anglo-Foreign Hotels Syndicate had offered to give a fair price for No. 42, Doddington Street, his laconic Lordship wired back the simple word "Sell."

To Messrs. Aston and Blake, Mr. Walter Chive representing the Syndicate on this occasion, came as somewhat of a shock. He swore heavily and he smoked in the office; he spoke with marked disrespect of Lord Shearing; and he was always suspecting Messrs. Aston and Blake of sharp practice that had never entered their innocent and venerable heads.

"Now," said Mr. Chive, after a little preliminary conversation, "all this talk won't buy the baby a new frock, will it? Let's get to business. Give me your lowest price, and I'll say if we will buy. And for goodness' sake don't try anything on with me; I don't like it."

"We received this letter from his Lordship this morning," said Mr. Blake. "You will see that he states in it the amount which he is prepared to accept,"

Mr. Chive read through the letter and put it down. Then he got up, turned his back to Mr. Blake, walked to the window and looked out. The price asked was less than the Syndicate had been prepared to give. After a minute's reflection Mr. Chive turned round again.

"Well," he said, "this plunger of yours has got his mouth open quite wide enough. However, we'll buy his shanty at that price if we can have immediate possession."

"There is a lease, and there are certain yearly agreements. But I do not anticipate any difficulty. These people are all old tenants of ours, and I think we can deal with them on a footing that would not be possible for a stranger. Besides, they are gentlemen who would not care to reside at the Mansions while your builders and housebreakers were at work. The noise and dust would be unpleasant to them; in fact, I feel pretty sure that they will be glad to have the chance to leave at once. I will guarantee that you shall have possession in nine months."

"You might as well talk about nine blooming years," said Mr. Chive. "Look here, I'll put my cards on the table and let you see how we're placed. There's a bit of rivalry going on. Some people have picked our brains and are going to put up an hotel or two on our lines. They've got a site in this neighbourhood, and they'll begin to clear it next week. Our hotel has got to be ready before theirs is. See?"

"Of course, it is possible that we might be able to get the tenants out before the nine months. I

only say that we will not guarantee to give you possession before then. But we will do our best—you may depend on that.”

“ I don’t depend on that or anything else. Let’s see the lease. And what sort of a chap has got it? The yearlies can be managed, anyhow.”

After a good deal of talk it was arranged that the Syndicate should make the best terms they could with Soames and the other tenants, and that a sum of £500 should be deducted from the purchase price.

When all was signed and settled Mr. Blake permitted himself to ask, “ And if Mr. Soames refuses to go? ”

“ He won’t. I shall put it to him in a gentlemanly way.”

“ But if he won’t be persuaded? ”

“ A little ready money has a great effect on these young asses about town. You’ve told us the kind of fellow he is.”

“ And if even that doesn’t work? ”

“ I shall cut off the water, the electric light, and the staircase.”

“ I’m afraid you did not read that lease very carefully.”

“ Can’t I do that? Oh, well, I’ll find something else. Soames be hanged! He’s not going to block us.”

* * * * *

The two men whom Soames had seen in conversation with Chive in the hall at Doddington Mansions were Mr. Eugene Mandelbaum and Mr. Farshaw. Mr. Farshaw was more attractive in manner and

appearance than the other two men. He had a truthful blue eye and bore himself erect; there was something simple and soldierly about the old gentleman. He had probably made more money out of burst straights than any other poker player in the kingdom.

He had no difficulty at all in persuading the tenants at Doddington Mansions to hasten their departure. He was extremely sorry, but the place had to come down. There would be workmen all over it, and dust and noise everywhere. The porter and housekeeper would be turned out of the basement at once, and there would be nobody to attend to the chambers. His Syndicate regretted—really regretted—all the inconvenience and discomfort they were causing. Was there anything that they could do? That was all he wanted to know.

With every appearance of generosity, and very little actual expenditure, he got them all to go. But he did not get Mr. S. Bywater Soames to go.

Mr. Farshaw called upon Mr. Soames one morning by appointment. He was afraid Mr. Soames was not very glad to see him.

“On the contrary,” said Soames, who looked very tired, “I’m charmed. I had been expecting to hear from the Syndicate.”

“What I wanted to see you particularly about was the panelling in these rooms. We understand from Mr. Blake that you put this in quite recently at your own expense.”

“That is so.”

“The other directors and myself wish to say that if you care to remove this panelling, they are not

disposed to press their rights in the matter. In fact, we shall be having some experienced workmen of our own in the place in a fortnight, and if you like they shall take it down and pack it for you free of charge. We can do that for you, and of course, as we are making the chambers absolutely uninhabitable, we will cancel the lease and decline to take any rent that may be still due. Is there anything else we can do? People who keep hotels cannot afford to make enemies, and I am afraid that at the best we have given you a good deal of inconvenience."

"Not at all," said Soames politely. "And I shan't have to trouble your men about that panelling, because I am not leaving."

"Mr. Soames," said Farshaw, "I can see that you are angry with us, and I confess that it doesn't surprise me. This is hard lines for you. But do you think you are well advised in making bad worse? Let us suppose that you stay. It may give us a little trouble, but it will make no difference in the end. The hotel will be built, and your chambers will remain, just in the middle of the kitchens and the servants' quarters. You will have to use the servants' stairs and entrance. Will that be pleasant for you or for friends who come to see you? I say nothing of what you will have to go through in consequence of the building operations."

"It won't be pleasant, but I am going to stay. I shouldn't have thought that the first floor front was the best place for the kitchens and servants' bedrooms, but——"

“One moment, Mr. Soames. Now, suppose that you have the good sense to make up your mind to go. I will sit down now if you like and give you a note to the manager of one of our hotels in Jermyn Street. You can stay there for a week or a fortnight while you are looking for other chambers. You will get special attention and comfort there, and there will be no bill—you will be the guest of the Syndicate. We will do your removal free of charge, and hand you our cheque for twenty-five pounds to cover any incidental expenses. In your case we would sooner err on the generous side than on the other. Now, I’ll write that cheque and the note to our man in Jermyn Street, and I’m sure——”

“No, thanks,” said Soames. “I don’t feel that I know your Syndicate well enough to be its guest. Besides, I don’t want to leave.”

“Well,” said Farshaw, “I’ll let you think it over. In less than a week our men will be at work. If you change your mind then, let me know, and I will do the best I can for you. But, of course, I can’t promise that I shall be able to get the other directors to offer you the same terms then that they do now.”

“Quite so,” said Soames. “Good-morning.”

The next three months were occupied with a series of minor hostilities. The Syndicate pulled down as much of No. 42, Doddington Street, as they could, carefully watched on behalf of Soames by a builder and a solicitor, and that builder and solicitor worried the Syndicate a good deal. They got letters of solemn warning from that solicitor

about once a week. Soames thought that rather more dust and rubbish fell on him as he went up and down the stairs than was absolutely necessary, and he did not like the Syndicate's builder's foreman's smile; so he ordered in a case of the most atrocious whisky that could be bought for money. Next morning bricks appeared to be falling against Soames' door, and an iron girder was being beaten with a hammer continuously until the dinner-hour. Then Soames came out into the passage, found a couple of the men, and suggested that they might like a drink. He handed out four bottles of the destructive whisky to them, and Nature did the rest. Five men were too hopelessly drunk to work that afternoon, and the foreman did not smile any more. The builder required measurements which could only be got by entering Soames' chambers; Soames refused to allow the man to come in. The Syndicate's builder's foreman then punched Soames' servant's head, and was given the usual option; Soames distributed the rest of his paralysis brand of whisky and got a new servant; the Syndicate's architect went mad; and things came to a deadlock.

It was Mr. Eugene Mandelbaum who was next deputed by the Syndicate to interview Soames. He looked like a cross between a philosopher and a pig, and appearances did not belie him.

"I am a man of few vortz," he said to Soames.

"I beg your pardon?" said Soames.

"I mean, I am a man that has not moch to zay. And vot I zay is, how moch for you to go?"

"Three thousand pounds," said Soames.

"My frient, I am not kom here to shoke."

“That’s all right. I’m not joking. My offer’s good for twenty-four hours.”

Mr. Farshaw was of the opinion that the three thousand should be paid. “He’s on top and he knows it. While we thought he didn’t know it, it was all very well to try to shunt him on the cheap. But it’s no good to go on fighting when you’re beaten. He’s done us, and it can’t be helped.”

But Mr. Farshaw’s opinion did not prevail. It was decided to offer half the amount ; the offer was refused by return of post.

Soames had made up his mind quickly, but not easily. He was playing a big game, and it was quite possible that they might turn obstinate, in which case he would lose everything. Fifteen hundred pounds was a large sum to risk. But the offer was a sign in itself that the Syndicate was weakening, and he guessed that the weakening would be a gradual process. Also the workmen, whose intoxication he had so obligingly financed, were not ungrateful ; they had talked to Soames and had told him what they knew. Soames was aware that the new hotel could not be erected without a certain iron girder which would have to pass through the middle of his chambers. Besides, the lust of battle had entered into him. He felt now that he would sooner lose all than give in.

A month passed, during which the Syndicate’s builder did next to nothing, and the Syndicate’s rival’s builder did quite a good deal. It was during this month that the hair of Mr. Eugene Mandelbaum began definitely to go grey. Soames came out of his chambers and wandered about the site of the

proposed Doddington Hotel; he examined the excavations and asked the foreman why he did not get on. And all this time Farshaw was urging the other directors to give Soames his price; three thousand was, after all, a very small sum in comparison to what they were in danger of losing.

Mr. Eugene Mandelbaum observed, "I should like to haf that yonk man as a pardner," and reluctantly assented to Farshaw's proposal.

Mr. Walter Chive said, "Then I suppose it's no good my sticking out. The only thing that I stipulate for is that I hand him the cheque myself; and then at least I shall have a chance to tell him what I think of him. And I will, too."

"I should nod blay about with dat Zoames, if I vos you," said Mandelbaum. "It vill be no goot. He is a deffil."

"And he'll find he ain't the only devil about, too. I'll give him a dressing down that will take some of the edge off his enjoyment. You leave him to me. My belief is that if I had gone at the first we should never have been put in this infernal hole."

So Mr. Walter Chive went, with the Syndicate's cheque for three thousand in his pocket. He had seen a good many men, and they had most of them "taken another" with him, and he was not quite at his best that morning.

"No thanks, I won't sit down," he said in answer to Soames' invitation. "I'll say what I've got to say standing, Mr. Bugwater Soames, or whatever your name may be. If there were law and justice in this country you would be on the treadmill.

You're asking three thousand ; if it were a railway company, with Parliamentary powers to buy, I doubt if you would get three hundred. You're a swindler, a dirty swindler. You may find yourself in the dock on a charge of conspiracy yet. It's blackmail, that's what it is. However, the worse the vermin, the more one is willing to pay to be quit of them. Here's your three thousand. Sit down and write the receipt, and be out of these premises before this time to-morrow."

Soames had been lying lazily back in his chair with his eyes closed. He now opened them.

"My price *was* three thousand ; it is now six thousand, and in twenty-four hours it will be twelve thousand. If a cheque is sent, I shall leave on the day it is cleared, and not before ; and the cheque must be sent by post or by some decent messenger." He paused and rang the bell. "Now get out. I can't have drunken swine like you about the place."

The bell was answered by Soames' new servant. Soames had seen the necessity of getting some one who would not be likely to have his head punched. The new man was a quiet, steady-looking fellow, but he was powerful and clever with his hands.

At first Mr. Chive was unable to speak. He gesticulated with a clenched fist. Then he burst into a flood of stuttering blasphemy and obscenity. He seemed smitten with a desire to say all the bad words he knew in the shortest possible time. Saliva trickled from one corner of his mouth down his chin.

Soames jerked his thumb in the direction of Mr.

Chive and turned to the servant. "You can clear that away, James," he said.

James approached. Mr. Chive caught up his hat. "Threat of assault!" he cried. "By God! you'll pay for it! You've let yourself in for it now!" He had more to say, but by this time James had shut the door on him.

* * * * *

Soames received a cheque for six thousand next morning, with a very polite letter from the Syndicate. He cashed the cheque, warehoused his furniture, and went down to the sea to rest.

The Doddington Hotel is now completed and doing very well. Mr. Chive, who, after all, decided to do nothing about that threatened assault, has retired from the directorate. It is always better to retire than to be thrown out.



SIR FRANCIS C. BURNAND

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VII

SIR FRANCIS C. BURNAND

IF there were any truth in that ancient saw, variously attributed to Dr. Donne, to John Dennis and to Dr. Johnson, "He who would make a pun, would pick a pocket," what a capacity for pocket-picking had Francis Burnand! He has made more puns, perhaps, than any living writer; and if the art is not a high one—even in the hands of Shakespeare—it has at least been practised with high spirits and much good humour by the distinguished wit whose most terrible example was that upon his own name: "A Bur'n'and's worth two in the bush!"

But it is cheering to know that one who has been the veritable prince of sinners in this crime of verbicide, arrived many years ago at a due sense of his iniquity and wrote to one of his contributors, "For goodness' sake, send no more puns; *they have all been made.*" Yet, do I fear, if one made close inquiry evidence would be forthcoming that he has had many lapses from the path of verbal rectitude since that writing; once a punster, always a punster.

It is, of course, a popular habit to sneer at the

making of puns, and, admittedly, humour that consists of nothing more than the twisting of words is of all the least worthy. But there is something about the good pun, as distinguished from the vile one, that is of the essence of wit: if it occurs in repartee and by a sudden and unexpected association of ideas produces amused surprise, then, surely, the pun is not a subject for sneering.

For example, when young Burnand turned Roman Catholic, and, under the delusion that he had been called to the priesthood, became for a time an oblate at Bayswater, and then in turn imagined that he was better cut out for an actor, he approached Cardinal Manning with his confession, saying that he thought the stage and not the Church was his vocation. With cold sarcasm the Cardinal replied:

“Why, you might as well say that to be a—a—cobbler—is a ‘vocation.’”

“Whereupon, nervously inspired, I blurted out: ‘Well—er—a—a—a cobbler has a great deal to do with the sole.’”

Even Manning smiled at this, although a very similar jape had been introduced into a play of *Julius Cæsar*, by a person writing under the name of William Shakespeare a few centuries before. “Mr. Burnand’s puns are generally good, and sometimes very good,” said a writer in the *Spectator*; “but they are really too plentiful. . . . When it comes to be a question of a volume of four hundred pages, with an average of ten puns to a page, the reader is likely to suffer from an indigestion.” Which means, I suppose, that one can have too much of a good thing.

But Sir Francis Burnand, for all his dexterity as a juggler with words, could never have achieved his reputation as a humorist had this been his sole accomplishment. I am inclined to think, indeed, that his genuine gift of humour has been at times in danger of being obscured to some extent by his proclivity to punning. Even the critic just quoted was constrained to recognize the essential quality of wit in a passage such as this :

“ There was a dead pause in the room. How long it had been there it was impossible to say, for it was only at this minute that the three became aware of it. And the Bishop sniffed uncomfortably, as though there was something wrong with the drainage.”

Worthy to be remembered with Mark Twain's humorous reference to the report of his death as being “ greatly exaggerated,” is Sir Francis Burnand's disclaimer of relationship to a police-court prisoner of the same family name, who alleged that he was the brother of the then editor of *Punch*. “ I beg to say,” wrote the humorist “ that I have no brother, and never had any brother. I have two half-brothers (this man is neither of them), but two half-brothers don't make one whole brother.”

Francis Cowley Burnand was born on November 29, 1836, being descended on his father's side from an old Savoyard family, and maternally from Hannah Cowley, the poetess and dramatist. Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, he studied under Liddon at Cuddesdon, with a view to taking holy orders, but, coming under the influence of Manning's teaching, he had the courage of his

convictions and brooked severe parental displeasure by avowing himself a Roman Catholic, with the result that, for a time at least, he had to change a life of ease for one of struggle and stress.

After the episode already mentioned, when, though veering in no degree from his religious convictions, he abandoned the idea of becoming a priest, he had the sorrow of discovering that the play-going public had no ardent desire that he should regard the stage either as his vocation or his avocation! Hence he read for the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, was called in 1862, and practised occasionally.

But meanwhile he had begun to write, and was introduced by Mr. George Meredith to *Once a Week*, where some of his earliest work appeared. And if he had failed as an actor, he was still determined to succeed as a dramatist (he had produced a farce at Eton when he was fifteen), his first piece being brought out successfully at St. James's Theatre under the management of Chatterton and Willet. Presently he found that his pen was more potent to earn for him a sufficient livelihood than were his forensic qualifications, so he speedily decided that Literature and the Drama had clearly "called" him.

At the starting of Henry J. Byron's *Fun*, the once successful penny rival of *Punch*, young Burnand joined the staff; his connexion with the paper continued for a year only, being brought to a sudden end by the editor refusing to adopt a suggestion from his young contributor, to whom he could not have rendered a greater service, as Burnand took the idea to Mark Lemon, who immediately recognized

its value, and thus appeared in *Punch* the memorable "Mokeanna," in which he satirized the sensational romances then deplorably popular. The first instalment of "Mokeanna" was published in the issue of February 21, 1863, with an illustration by Sir John Gilbert burlesquing his own style, the whole feature being a faithful imitation of the manner in which the late G. W. M. Reynolds's absurd serials were then printed in the *London Journal*. The success of the burlesque was immediate; Thackeray was credited with it; and from that day until the year 1906 its author's connexion with *Punch* endured, twenty-five and a half years of the time being devoted to the editorship.

If *Punch* gave to Sir Francis Burnand an ideal medium for the exercise of his wit, he, on the other hand, gave to our one comic journal fully as much distinction as he received. In 1866 he began in its pages his first series of *Happy Thoughts*, which achieved for *Punch* and the author a success only equalled by that attending the publication of Douglas Jerrold's *Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures*. In book form, also, *Happy Thoughts* enjoyed extraordinary popularity, close on twenty editions of the celebrated work having appeared, and Sir Francis Burnand might be content to rest his reputation as a humorous writer on that most characteristic production of his wit, which, by the way, was translated into French under the title of *Fridoline*.

It would be impossible in so short a sketch as this to enumerate all his subsequent writings; but *Strapmore*, that ingenious burlesque of Ouida's manner; *Out of Town*, a collection of comic travel

papers, which includes the famous *Guide to Bradshaw*, full of rollicking humour and genuine fun; and *The Modern Sandford and Merton*, must be mentioned; while the name of his plays is legion.

It was after the death of Tom Taylor, in August of 1880, that Burnand was called upon to assume the control of *Punch*, and under his guiding hand our national journal of humour enjoyed the most brilliant era in its history, no greater contrast being possible than a comparison of its pages at almost any period of the Burnand editorship with those which marked the nadir of its liveliness and mirth in the days of Tom Taylor.

A true humorist, whose best work has taken the form of burlesque, but whose knowledge of character and whose literary gifts are of so high a quality that, had his inclinations tended that way, he might well have been one of our most notable novelists, Sir Francis Burnand has contributed in rich measure to the amusement of the British public, and none of the honours conferred in the coronation year was more popular than the knighthood with which King Edward marked his appreciation of the services of the veteran editor of *Punch*.

Sir Francis as a writer of humorous verse is less familiar to us than several of his old colleagues on *Punch*, yet he has the lyrical gift, as his famous song "True to Poll" bears eloquent witness. Written originally for *Punch*, it was many years later altered somewhat and sung by Mrs. John Wood with great success in *My Milliner's Bill*. The version here given is that of which Mrs. Wood possesses the copyright. "The Fisherman's Chant" is a *jeu d'esprit*

selected from *Happy Thoughts*, from which work "A Game of Whist" has also been reprinted by permission by the author and Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew & Co., Ltd.

A GAME OF WHIST

BY F. C. BURNAND

CHILDERS proposes "Whist." I never feel certain of myself at whist: I point to the fact that they are four without me. Poss Felmyr says if I'll sit down, he'll cut in presently. "I play?" I reply, "Yes, a little." I am Stenton's partner: Englefield and Childers are against us. Sixpenny points, shilling on the rub. Stenton says to me, "You'll score." Scoring always puzzles me. I know it's done with half-a-crown, a shilling, a sixpence, and a silver candlestick. Sometimes one bit of money is under the candlestick, sometimes two.

Happy Thought.—To watch Englefield scoring: soon pick it up again.

First Rubber.—Stenton deals: Childers is first hand, I'm second. Hearts trumps: the Queen. It's wonderful how quick they are in arranging their cards. After I've sorted all mine carefully, I find a trump among the clubs. Having placed him in his position on the right of my hand, I find a stupid Three of Clubs among the spades: settled *him*. Lastly, a King of Diamonds upside down, which seems to entirely disconcert me; put *him* right. Englefield says, "Come, be quick": Stenton tells

me "Not to hurry myself." I say I'm quite ready, and wonder to myself what Childers will lead.

Childers leads the Queen of Clubs. I consider for a moment what is the duty of second hand; the word "finessing" occurs to me here. I can't recollect if putting on a three of the same suit is finessing: put on the three, and look at my partner to see how he likes it. He is watching the table. Englefield lets it go, my partner lets it go—the trick is Childers'. I feel that somehow it's lost through my fault. His lead again: spades. This takes me so by surprise that I have to rearrange my hand, as the spades have got into a lump. I have two spades, an ace and a five. Let me see, "If I play the five I"—I can't see the consequence. 'If I play the ace it *must* win unless it's trumped.'" Stenton says in a deep voice, "Play away." The three look from one to the other. Being flustered, I play the Ace: the trick is mine. I wish it wasn't, as I have to lead: I'd give something if I might consult Poss, who is behind me, or my partner. All the cards look ready for playing, yet I don't like to disturb them. Let me think what's been played already. Stenton asks me, "If I'd like to look at the last trick." As this will give *me* time, and *them* the idea that I am following out my own peculiar tactics, I embrace the offer. Childers displays the last trick: I look at it. I say, "Thank you," and he shuts it up again. Immediately afterwards I can't recollect what the cards were in that trick: if I did, it wouldn't help me. They are becoming impatient.

About this time somebody's Queen of Diamonds

is taken. I wasn't watching how the trick went, but I am almost certain it was fatal to the Queen of Diamonds: that's to say, if it *was* the Queen of Diamonds; but I don't like to ask. The next trick, which is something in spades, trumped by Englefield, I pass as of not much importance. Stenton growls, "Didn't I see that he'd got no more spades in his hand." No, I own, I didn't. Stenton, who is not an encouraging partner, grunts to himself. In a subsequent round, I having lost a trick by leading spades, Stenton calls out, "Why didn't you see they were trumping spades?" I defend myself; I say I *did* see him, Englefield, trump *one* spade, but I thought that he hadn't any more trumps. I say this as if I'd been reckoning the cards as they've been played.

Happy Thought.—Try to reckon them, and play by system next rubber.

I keep my trumps back till the last; they'll come out and astonish them. They *do* come out, and astonish *me*. Being taken by surprise, I put on my king when I ought to have played the knave, and both surrender to the ace and queen. I say, "Dear me, how odd!" I think I hear Stenton saying sarcastically in an undertone, "Oh, yes; confoundedly odd." I try to explain, and he interrupts me at the end of the last deal but two by saying testily, "It's no use talking, if you attend, we may just save the odd."

Happy Thought.—Save the odd.

My friend the Queen of Diamonds, who, I thought, had been played, and taken by some one or other at

a very early period of the game, suddenly reappears out of my partner's hand, as if she was part of a conjuring trick. Second hand can't follow suit and can't trump. I think I see what he intends me to do here. I've a trump and a small club. "When in doubt," I recollect the infallible rule, "play a trump." I don't think any one expected this trump, Good play.

Happy Thought.—Trump. I look up diffidently ; my partner laughs, so do the others. My partner's is not a pleasant laugh. I can't help asking, "Why ? isn't that right : it's ours ?" "Oh, yes," says my partner, sarcastically, "it *is* ours." "Only," explains little Bob Englefield, "you've trumped your partner's best card."

I try again to explain that by *my* computation the Queen of Diamonds had been played a long time ago. My partner won't listen to reason. He replies you might have *seen* that it wasn't." I return, "Well, it couldn't be helped, we'll win the game yet." This I add to encourage him, though, if it depends on *me*, I honestly (to myself) don't think we shall. *Happy Thought.* After all, we *do* get the odd trick. Stenton ought to be in a better humour, but he isn't ; he says "the odd ! we ought to have been three." Englefield asks me how Honours are ? I don't know. Stenton says, "Why you (meaning me) had two in your own hand." "Oh, yes, I had." I'd forgotten it. "Honours easy," says Stenton to me. I agree with him. Now I've got to score with this confounded shilling, sixpence, half-crown, and a candlestick.

Happy Thought.—Ask Bob Englefield how *he* scores generally.

He replies, “ Oh, the usual way,” and as he doesn’t illustrate his meaning, his reply is of no use to me whatever. How can I find out without showing them that I don’t know ?

Happy Thought (while Childers deals).—Pretend to forget to score till next time. Englefield will have to do it, perhaps, next time, then watch Englefield. Just as I’m arranging my cards from right to left—

Happy Thought.—To alternate the colours black and red, beginning this time with black (right) as spades are trumps. Also to arrange them in their rank and order of precedence. Ace on the right, if I’ve got one—yes—king next, queen next—and the hand begins to look very pretty. I can quite imagine Whist being a fascinating game—Stenton reminds me that I’ve forgotten to mark “ one up.”

Happy Thought.—Put sixpence by itself on my left hand. Stenton asks what’s that for ?

Happy Thought.—To say it’s the way I *always* mark.

Stenton says, “ Oh, go on.” I look round to see what we’re waiting for, and Englefield answers me, “ Go on, it’s you ; you’re first hand.” I beg their pardon. I must play some card or other and finish arranging my hand during the round. Anything will do to begin with. Here’s a Two of Spades, a little one, on my left hand ; throw him out.

“Hallo!” cries Englefield, second hand, “trumps are coming out early.” I quite forgot spades were trumps; that comes of that horrid little card being on the left instead of the right.

Happy Thought.—Not to show my mistake: nod at Englefield, and intimate that “He’ll see what’s coming.”

So, by the way, will my partner. In a polite moment I accept another cup of tea. I don’t want it, and have to put it by the half-crown, shilling, and candlestick on the whist-table, where I’m afraid of knocking it over, and am obliged to let it get quite cold as I have to attend to the game.

Happening to be taking a spoonful, with my eyes anxiously on the cards, when my turn comes, Stenton says, “Do play, never mind your tea.” Whist brutalizes Stenton; what a pity!

Happy Thought.—Send this game, as a problem, to a Sporting Paper.

Happy Thought.—Why not write generally for Sporting papers?

Stenton says, “Do play!” I do.

Happy Thought.—Write a treatise on Whist, so as to teach myself the game.

We finish a second game, and Stenton says, “We win a single.” This I am to score: having some vague idea on the subject, I hide my half-crown under the candlestick. When our adversaries subsequently win a double, and there is some dispute about what we’ve done before, I forget my half-crown under the candlestick, until asked rather

angrily by Stenton if I didn't mark the single, when I am reminded by Poss Felmyr that I secreted the half-crown. This I produce triumphantly as a proof of a single.

Happy Thought.—Buy *Hoyle's Laws of Whist*. Every one ought to know how to mark up a single and a double.

I get very tired of whist after the second round of the third game. Wish I could feel faint, so that Poss Felmyr might take my place; or have a violent fit of sneezing which would compel me to leave the room.

Happy Thought.—If you give your mind to it, you can sneeze sometimes. I talk about draughts and sneezing, while Englefield deals. Englefield says, à propos of sneezing, that he knew a man who always caught a severe cold whenever he ate a walnut. If a fact : curious.

Old Mrs. Childers has woke up (she has been dozing by the fire with her knitting on the ground) and begins "to take notice," as they say of babies. She *will* talk to me : I can't attend to her and trumps at the same time. I think she says that she supposes I've a great deal of practice in whist-playing at the Clubs. I say, "Yes ; I mean, beg her pardon, no," and Stenton asks me, before taking up the trick, if I haven't got a heart, that being the suit I had to follow. I reply, "No," and my answer appears to disturb the game. On hearts coming up three hands afterwards, I find a two of that suit, which being sticky had clung to a Knave of Diamonds.

Happy Thought.—"Heart clinging to Diamonds ;"

love yielding to the influence of wealth ; or by the way, vice versâ, but good idea, somehow. Won't say it out, or they'll discover my revoke.

Happy Thought.—Keep the two until the end of the game, and throw it down among the rubbish at the end. I suppose the last cards which players always dash down don't count, and mine will go with them unobserved.

Happy Thought.—One act of duplicity necessitates another, just as one card will not stand upright by itself without another to support it. [Put this into "Moral Inversions," forming heading of Chapter 10, Book VI., Vol. XII. of *Typical Developments*. Must note this down to-night.]

The game is finishing. Luckily, our opponents have it all their own way, and suddenly, much to my surprise and relief they show their hands and win, we only having made one trick.

Happy Thought.—Poss Felmyr takes my place. On reckoning up I find that somehow or other I've lost half-a-crown more than I expected. You can lose a good deal at sixpenny points. Stenton, who hears this remark made to Mrs. Childers, observes, "Depends how you play." I do not retort, as I am fearful about the subject of revoking coming up. *Moral Query.* Was what I did with my Two of Hearts dishonesty or nervousness? Wouldn't it lead to cheating, to false dice, and ultimately to the Old Bailey? I put these questions to myself while eating a delicate piece of bread-and-butter handed to me by Mrs. Felmyr. I smile and thank her, even while these thoughts are in my bosom. Ah,

Bob Englefield has no such stage for his dramas as the human bosom, no curtain that hides half as much from the spectators as a single-breasted waist-coat. More tea, thank you, yes.

TRUE TO POLL

BY F. C. BURNAND

I'LL sing you a song, not very long,
But the story somewhat new,
Of William Kidd, who, whatever he did,
To his Poll was always true.
He sailed away in a gallant ship,
From the pretty port of jovial Bristol,
And the last words he uttered,
As his handkercher he fluttered,
Were, "My heart is true to Poll."

His heart was true to Poll,
His heart was true to Poll,
It's no matter what you do,
If your heart be only true ;
And his heart was true to Poll.

'Twas a wreck. William on shore he swam,
And looked about for an inn,
When a noble savage lady, of a colour rather shady,
Came up with a kind of grin—
"Oh marry me, and a king you'll be,
And in a palace loll ;
Or we'll eat you willy-nilly."
So he gave his hand, did Billy,
But his heart was true to Poll.

His heart was true to Poll,
His heart was true to Poll,
 It's no matter what you do,
 If your heart be only true ;
And his heart was true to Poll.

Away a twelvemonth sped, and a happy life he led
 As the king of the Kikerywikeryboos ;
His paint was red and yellar, and he used a big
 umbrella,
And he wore a pair of overshoes ;
He had corals, he had knives, he had six and twenty
 wives,
Whose beauties I will not now here extol.
 But one day they all revolted,
 So he back to Bristol bolted,
For his heart was true to Poll.

His heart was true to Poll,
His heart was true to Poll,
 It's no matter what you do,
 If your heart be only true ;
And his heart was true to Poll.

THE FISHERMAN'S CHANT

BY F. C. BURNAND

OH! the Fisherman is a happy wight!
He dibbles by day, and he sniggles by night.
He trolls for fish, and he trolls his lay—
He sniggles by night, and he dibbles by day.

Oh, who so merry as he!

On the river or the sea!

Sniggling

Wriggling

Eels, and higgling

Over the price

Of a nice

Slice

Of fish, twice

As much as it ought to be.

Oh! the Fisherman is a happy man!
He dibbles and sniggles, and fills his can!
With a sharpen'd hook and a sharper eye,
He sniggles and dibbles for what comes by.

Oh, who so merry as he!

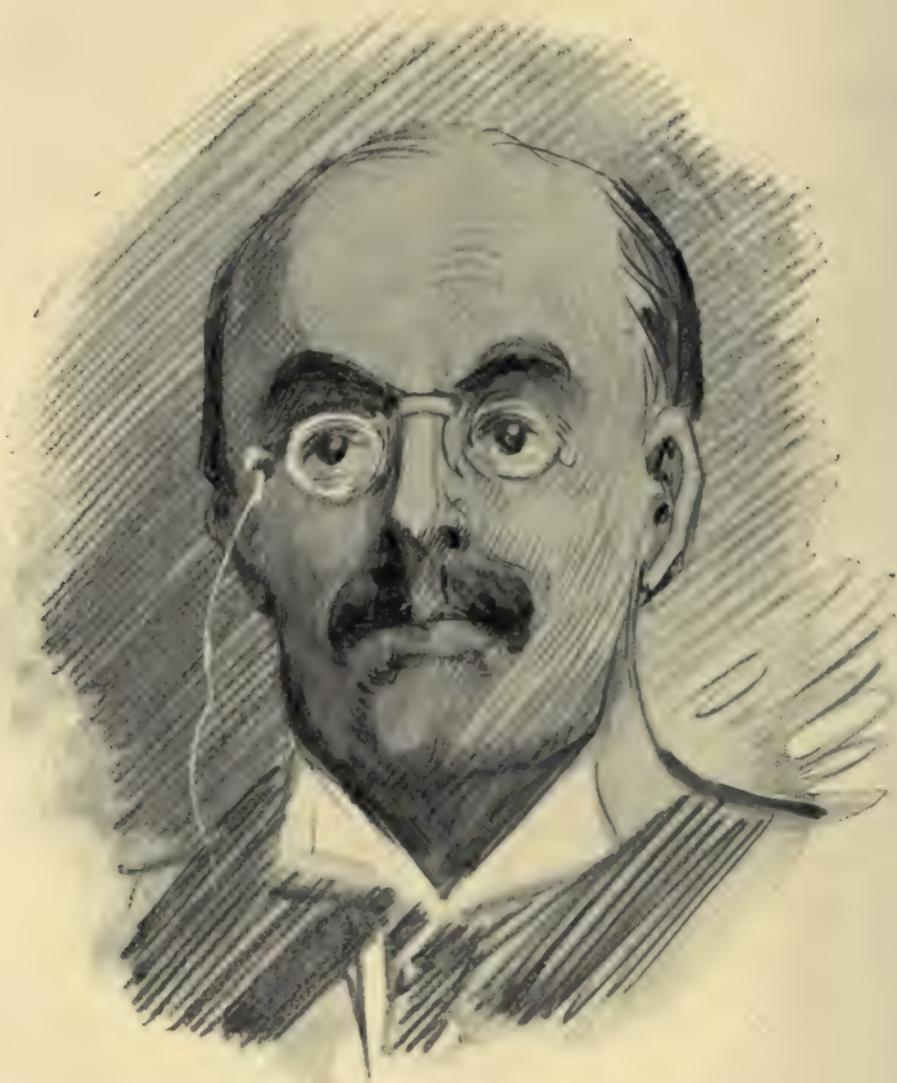
On the river or the sea!

Dibbling

Nibbling

Chub, and quibbling

Over the price
Of a nice
 Slice
Of fish, twice
As much as it ought to be



"F. ANSTEY"

From an unpublished sketch by HARRY FURNISS

To face page 131

VIII

F. ANSTEY

WHEN one hears the familiar fiction that "*Punch* is not so good as it was," to which the historic reply, "*Punch* never *was*," is usually forthcoming, it is only necessary to point out to those who repeat this piece of fatuous criticism that among Mr. *Punch*'s merry men to-day there are several who are as brilliantly gifted as any of those in the past who enriched its pages with their work. That genuine humorist who writes over the pen-name of "F. Anstey" is a host in himself, and no journal boasting him as a member of its staff could fairly be accused of shortage in humour.

Mr. Thomas Anstey Guthrie, to give him his baptismal style, is in every sense worthy to rank with the most famous wits who in the past generation built up the world-wide reputation of *Punch* as the repository of our national humour.

Jerrold and Thackeray and Gilbert à Beckett are names to which the affected critic of our time refers when he wishes to show how sadly are our living humorists behind the mighty dead. "The dead have all the glory of the world," and 'tis easy to be generous to them; but I am among those

who believe that ours is no age of pigmies, and we can muster to-day a roll of humorists equal if not superior to that of fifty years ago. Certainly "F. Anstey" is entitled to be classed with any of the brilliant trio I have mentioned.

Mr. Anstey Guthrie was born at Kensington in 1856, and educated at King's College School and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he took his B.A. degree in 1879. In common with so many who have risen to distinction in the world of letters, he was called to the Bar in 1880, but although he would seem to have been serious enough in his intention to follow the profession for which he had qualified, he soon drifted into the pleasant paths of authorship, and in 1882 achieved his first notable success with *Vice Versâ*.

That book is one of the few written more than twenty years ago that still retain their hold on the public; it may fairly be described as one of the classics of modern humour. The root idea of an exchange of personalities, a father being suddenly rejuvenated and a son by the same stroke thrust forward to his father's normal condition, was not new, and in some shape or other has been used by many humorous writers before and since—Mr. Barry Pain's *The One Before* being a recent variant of the old theme—but the absurdities of the situation thus created were treated with such an air of comic gravity and so perfect a touch of humour that the whole work was original and characteristic in the best sense of these words.

There followed from Mr. Guthrie's pen in annual succession *The Giant's Robe*, *The Black Poodle*, *The*

Tinted Venus, all worthy successors of his first book; and the editor of *Punch* realized that here was an author of whom jocular journalism stood in need. So "F. Anstey" was invited to exercise his pen on behalf of Mr. Punch, and on November 4, 1885, his first contribution, entitled "Faux et Preterea Nihil," appeared, and fourteen months later he took his seat at the historic table, around which some of the greatest of English wits have gathered.

The literary career of Mr. Anstey Guthrie for over twenty years has been part and parcel of the story of *Punch*, as most of the books that stand against his name since that time have been in whole or part reprinted from the journal to which he has been the most industrious of contributors.

Some of his happiest efforts have been inspired by the journalistic impulse, if I may employ such a phrase in referring to work that is always essentially literary. What I mean is that the follies of the passing hour have, in the very nature of the journal for which he has written so much, dictated in large measure the subjects of his writings.

But while so much of his humour has thus been expended on topical subjects, there can be no better proof of the enduring value of his work than the fact that these pieces when subsequently collected and issued in book form have proved equally acceptable to the reading public; the most difficult of literary achievements is to deal with topics of temporary concern in a way that renders them permanently interesting. For examples of Mr. Guthrie's success in this connexion it is only

necessary to mention his *Voces Populi*, *Mr. Punch's Model Music Hall*, *Mr. Punch's Young Reciter*, *The Pocket Ibsen*, *Salted Almonds*, and other volumes of his collected sketches.

As Mr Spielmann has very happily reminded us, the humour of "F. Anstey" has served good purpose not only in adding to the gaiety of our nation, but in covering with ridicule, and so helping to banish, such banalities as the stupid old music-hall song and the mock-heroic recitation. "No one with a sense of humour who has read that series (*Mr. Punch's Young Reciter*) can now stand up and recite a poem of a sentimental or heroic nature from the pen of Mr. Clement Scott or Mr. G. R. Sims without genius to back him." The same critic also points out that "the burlesques in the *Model Music Hall* are often as good as their originals—just as some of the *Rejected Addresses* by the Smiths were as good as the genuine poems they parodied; and the representation of them is placed before the reader with more than photographic truth. In 'So Shy!' we see the lady 'of a mature age and inclined to a comfortable *embonpoint*,' who comes forward and sings :

'I'm a dynety little dysy of the dingle,
So retiring and so timid and so coy—
If you ask me why so long I have lived single,
I will tell you—'tis because I am so shoy!'"

The distinguishing quality of Mr. Anstey Guthrie's humour is not that flavour of a quaint and original personality such as we find in Mr. J. M. Barrie, but springs rather from a wonderfully truthful repro-

duction of actual life ; not photographic, but more truthful than any photograph could ever be ; because, with keen appreciation of the humorous aspect of the life around us, the author seizes only on the salient features that will illustrate his point of view.

His command of dialect and his ease in dialogue are particularly noteworthy, while he is as eminently endowed with the power of satire as with the gift of reproducing and suggesting the humours of social life.

No better example of the humour of " F. Anstey " could be desired than almost any of his famous *Voces Populi*, one of which has been included here by permission of the author and the publishers, Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. From *Mr. Punch's Young Reciter* has been chosen " Burglar Bill," as a specimen of his humorous verse, Messrs. Bradbury, Agnew & Co. having kindly granted permission for its inclusion here.

AT THE FRENCH PLAY

BY F. ANSTEY

SCENE—*A British Theatre, on stage of which that irresistibly funny farcical comedy, "Les Vivacités d'un Vrai Lapin," with the celebrated PATATRAS in the principal rôle, is in course of representation. "Les Vivacités," though comparatively unobjectionable in its main idea, contains incidents and allusions by which British propriety would be painfully scandalized in a literally translated version, but which, in their native form, do not seem somehow to outrage the susceptibilities of the highly respectable Anglo-Saxons of both sexes and various ages who occupy all the best seats.*

ON THE STAGE. M. PATATRAS is piteously detailing the story of his domestic unhappiness to a cynical friend, interrupted by frequent merriment from the audience.

IN THE STALLS. *British Matron (whose mirth is far less restrained than it would be in any other Stalls). Oh, it is really too funny! I'm sure I don't know what it is that makes one laugh so!*

[*And, to do her justice, she does not in the least, the only phrase she caught being—*
"Et c'est toujours comme ça!" *But it*

is so silly not to laugh when everybody else is in fits.

BRITISH PARENT (*to his DAUGHTER, whom he has brought here with a view to discover how far she has profited by that year at the Boulogne Boarding School—he himself is “a little rusty in his French”*). Well, I haven't heard *you* laugh much yet! Thought you understood the language?

THE DAUGHTER (*hurt*). I *do*, Papa, I understand every word they say—only I don't always quite know what the jokes *mean*.

B. P. (*indignantly*). And this is what they call education nowadays! Ah, well, I might have spared my money, it seems.

ON THE STAGE. Mlle. MAQUILLÉE, as “*Mme. Gandinois*,” says to Visitor, “*Asseyez-vous donc, je vous prie, vous nous ferez l'amitié de diner avec nous ce soir, n'est ce pas?*” *The Visitor*. “*Comment donc—mais c'est moi au contraire qui,*” *etc., etc.*

IN THE DRESS CIRCLE. FIRST BRITON (*with a smile of subtle appreciation*). Very smartly written, this dialogue, eh?—that *last* bit!

[*He chuckles wickedly.*

SECOND BRITON (*who has been secretly wishing they wouldn't speak so confoundly fast*). Full of *esprit*—full of *esprit*! We're no match for them *there*!

[*An aside is spoken on stage, which convulses the initiated; both Britons a little late in laughing, and resolve to watch one another's face in future—result being that before end of Second Act each darkly suspects the other of being a humbug.*

ON THE STAGE. " *L'Ami de la Maison* " to " *M. Gandinois* : " " Froide ? (*Aside.*) Ah, non, par exemple ! " [Roars of laughter.]

BRITISH FIANCÉE (*who is determined JOHN shall not think her dull ; behind her handkerchief.*) Isn't it killing ?

JOHN (*who has been beginning to think her rather too lively, with a slight stiffness.*) Well, some people might find it a trifle broad—but so long as you're amused——

B. F. (*in extreme confusion.*) Oh, I thought *this* piece was all right—or I wouldn't . . . that's the worst of French, you never know !

[Wishes they had gone to " *Dorothy* " instead.]

BETWEEN THE ACTS.

LADY IN BOX (*to her friend.*) Enjoying it, dear ?

THE FRIEND (*rapturously.*) Oh, so much ! it's perfectly delightful ! (*With a sudden impulse to candour.*) You know, I didn't quite follow everything they said.

FIRST LADY. Oh, but one *doesn't*—you get into it by degrees, you know. You'll find yourself beginning to get more accustomed to it by the time they come to the end of the last Act—at least that's *my* experience.

IN THE PIT. PLAIN MAN (*to QUIET NEIGHBOUR.*) Comical kind o' piece, eh ? Find you manage to catch the drift of it at all ?

THE Q. N. (*who has spent much of his time abroad.*) Oh—yes, I—a—think so.

THE P. M. So did I, first-rate, and without

knowing a single word o' French either, mind you ! I manage to pick up what it's all about as I go along, and I'll lay I'm not far out. I knew at once that that old chap in the smoking-cap was put out about the way his daughter carried on—that was very good, and then his old wife, *she* came in, and there was a shindy——

THE Q. N. Oh, pardon me, but you're wrong there. The old lady was his *mother-in-law*, and the girl his young wife. He has no daughter in the piece, and the idea is——

THE P. M. Well, *I* made it out different myself, anyway.

[*He evidently prefers his own interpretation, which the Q. N. does not make any further efforts to correct.*]

DURING SECOND ACT.

ON THE STAGE. Mlle. MINAUDIÈRE, *as the inevitable ingénue*. “ Si je m'amuse ici ! Figurez-vous que——”

[*She says something very naïve indeed, which is received with uproarious merriment.*]

IN THE STALLS. YOUNG WIFE (*who is always meaning “ to take up her French again,” to her husband, who has given her to understand that he is perfectly at home in the language*). But, Harry, what was there so very funny about *that* ?

HARRY (*who has been laughing, solely to keep up his reputation*). Well, you see—it's impossible to translate these things. (*Which it is, for him.*) It's Parisian, you know—very Parisian !

CLOSE OF ACT. M. PATATRAS (*after peering through curtains*). “Aie, aie ! la dame de l’ombrelle rouge ! Pincé ! . . . Cette porte !” (*Opens door and shuts it sharply*.) “Mme. la Baronne !” (*Opens another, same business*.) Le Général ! lui aussi ! ou me fourrer ? Ah, sous le canapé !” (*Starting back wildly*.) “Quoi ? Ma femme—ici !”

[*Sits down heavily on a work-basket. Other characters rush on, and form tableau as Curtain falls.*]

CHORUS OF ENTHUSIASTS, IN STALLS. It’s all so perfectly *natural*, isn’t it ? So unlike *our* noisy horseplay—*did* you notice how neatly they do all their business ? and the *ensemble* ! How delightfully easy he was when he kicked the butler ! Yes, and wasn’t he *deliciously* funny when he came down to the footlights and told us what he meant to do ! So thoroughly artistic ! I shall *never* forget him trying to hide that photograph under his waistcoat.

[*And so on.*]

IN THE UPPER BOXES. (PORTLY GAUL, *to* BRITON (*who is laughing industriously at everything*)). Très égayante, la pièce, n’est-ce pas ?

THE BRITON (*who has a vague idea that the GAUL is apologizing for being about to pass*). Par de too, Mossoo !

THE GAUL (*astonished*). Comment “pas du tout ?” Et vous qui pouffez de rire !

THE BRITON. Le Buffet ? c’est derrière—en dessus—I—I mean—au dehors !

THE GAUL. Ah, vous riez donc aux éclats sans avoir rien compris ? Vous êtes un original, vous !

THE BRITON (*who feels that he may expose himself*

if he goes on much longer). Wee, Mossoo, vous avez raisong—say sar!

[*Escapes to lobby, and hears remainder of the piece from the back of the Dress Circle.*

Two ACQUAINTANCES, *meeting at Refreshment Bar.*

FIRST ACQ. Wonderful actor, Patatras! How good he was in that first scene when he was explaining that about the—you remember the part I mean?

[*He doesn't mean any part in particular.*

SECOND ACQ. (*quickly*). Oh, very funny, very funny! and (*not to be outdone*), and then that scene with the—with the, bless my soul! where they—you know!

FIRST ACQ. (*who doesn't, of course*). Yes—yes; but it's all capital. By the way (*confidentially*), is there a book of the words to be got anywhere?

SECOND ACQ. Just what *I've* been looking out for.

DURING THIRD ACT.

THE BRITISH PARENT (*to his DAUGHTER*). What did he say *then*?

THE DAUGHTER. Oh, Papa, I can't explain *everything* they say!

B. P. You explain? I believe *I* know more about it than you!

THE D. (*demurely*). Then you can explain to *me*, Papa.

[*B. P. pretends he hasn't heard; triumph of DAUGHTER.*

AT THE CLOSE.

CRITICAL PLAYGOER (*who has understood, on an average, about one word in fifty*). I must say I was

a little disappointed with the *dialogue*—nothing *like* so witty as I expected!

HIS FRIEND (*whose average was one in a hundred*).
There were one or two good things in it, though—
but, of course it's Patatras one goes to see!

BURGLAR BILL

BY F. ANSTEY

STYLE : *The "Sympathetic Artless."*

THE Compiler would not be acting fairly by the young Reciter if, in recommending the following poem as a subject for earnest study, he did not caution him—or her—not to be betrayed by the apparent simplicity of this exercise into the grave error of underestimating its real difficulty.

It is true that it is an illustration of Pathos of an elementary order (we shall reach the advanced kind at a later stage), but, for all that, this piece bristles with as many points as a porcupine, and consequently requires the most cautious and careful handling.

Upon the whole, it is perhaps better suited to students of the softer sex.

Announce the title with a suggestion of shy innocence—in this way :

BURGLAR [*now open both eyes very wide*] BILL

[*Then go on in a hushed voice, and with an air of wonder at the world's iniquity.*]

I

Through a window in the attic,
Brawny Burglar Bill has crept ;

Seeking stealthily a chamber

Where the jewellery is kept.

[Pronounce either "jewelry" or "joolery," according to taste.

II

He is furnished with a "jemmy,"

Centre-bit, and carpet-bag,

For the latter "comes in handy,"

So he says, "to stow the swag."

["Jemmy," "centre-bit," "carpet-bag," are important words—put good colouring into them.

III

Here, upon the second landing,

He, secure, may work his will ;

Down below's a dinner party,

Up above—the house is still.

[Here start and extend first finger, remembering to make it waggle slightly, as from fear.

IV

Suddenly—in spell-bound horror,

All his satisfaction ends—

For a little white-robed figure

By the banister descends !

[This last line requires care in delivery, or it may be imagined that the little figure is sliding DOWN the banisters, which would simply ruin the effect. Note the bold but classic use of the singular in "banister," which is more pleasing to a nice ear than the plural.

V

Bill has reached for his revolver.

[*Business here with your fan.*

Yet—he hesitates to fire . . .

Child is it? [*in a dread whisper*] or—apparition,

That provokes him to perspire?

VI

Can it be his guardian angel,

Sent to stay his hand from crime?

[*In a tone of awe.*

He could wish she had selected

Some more seasonable time!

[*Touch of peevish discontent here.*

VII

“Go away!” he whimpers hoarsely,

“Burglars hev their bread ter earn.

I don’t need no Gordian angel

Givin’ of me sech a turn!”

[*Shudder here, and retreat, shielding eyes with hand.*

[*Now change your manner to a naïve surprise; this, in spite of anything we may have said previously, is in this particular instance NOT best indicated by a shrill falsetto.*

VIII

But the blue eyes open wider,

Ruby lips reveal their pearl;

[*This must not be taken to refer to the Burglar.*

“I is not a Garden anzel,

Only—dust a yickle dirl!

[*Be particularly artless here and through next stanza.*

IX

“ On the thtairs to thit I’m doin’
 Till the tarts and dellies tum ;
 Partinthon (our Butler) alwayth
 Thaves for Baby Bella thome !

X

“ Poor man, ’oo is yookin’ ’ungry—
 Leave ’oo burgling fings up dere ;
 Tum viz me and share the sweeties,
 Thitting on the bottom thtair ! ”

[In rendering the above the young Reciter should strive to be idiomatic without ever becoming idiotic—which is not so easy as might be imagined.]

XI

“ Reely, Miss, you must excoose me ! ”
 Says the Burglar with a jerk :

[Indicate embarrassment here by smoothing down the folds of your gown, and swaying awkwardly.]

“ Dooty calls, and time is pressing ;
 I must set about my work ! ”

[This with a gruff conscientiousness.]

XII

[Now assume your wide-eyed innocence again.]

“ Is ’oo work to bweak in houses ?
 Nana *told* me so, I’m sure !
 Will ’oo see if ’oo tan manage
 To bweak in my *doll’s-house* door ?

XVIII

Gain he counts it, on departing,
Should he have avoided strife.

[*In tone of passionate lament—*

Ah, my Brothers, but the Burglar's
Is a sad, a lonely life !

XIX

All forgotten now the jewels,
Once the purpose of his " job " ;
Down he sinks upon the door-mat,
With a deep and choking sob.

XX

Then, the infant's plea recalling,
Seeks the nursery above ;
Looking for the Lilliputian
Crib he is to crack—for *love* !

[*It is more usually done for MONEY.*

XXI

In the corner stands the doll's-house,
Gaily painted green and red ;

[*Colouring again here.*

And its door declines to open,
Even as the child has said !

XXII

Forth come centre-bit and jemmy : [*Briskly*
All his implements are plied ;

[*Enthusiastically—*

Never has he burgled better !
As he feels, with honest pride.

XXII

Deftly is the task accomplished,
 For the door will open well ;
 When—a childish voice behind him
 Breaks the silence—like a bell.

XXIV

“ Sank 'oo, Misser Burglar, sank 'oo !
 And, betause 'oo's been so nice,
 See what I have dot—a tartlet !
 Gweat big gweedies ate the ice.”
[Resentful accent on “ ate.”

XXV

“ Pappa says he wants to see 'oo,
 Partinthon is tummin too—
 Tan't 'oo wait ? ”

[This with guileless surprise—then change to a husky emotion.

—“ Well, *not* this evenin',
 So, my little dear,—*[brusquely]*, adoo ! ”

XXVI

[You are now to produce your greatest effect ; the audience should be made actually to SEE the poor hunted victim of social prejudice escaping, consoled in the very act of flight by memories of this last adventure—the one bright and cheering episode, possibly, in his entire professional career.

Fast he speeds across the housetops !—

[Rapid delivery for this.

[Very gently.] But his bosom throbs with bliss,

For upon his rough lips linger
Traces of a baby's kiss.

[*Most delicate treatment will be necessary in the last couplet—or the audience may understand it in a painfully literal sense.*

* * * * *

[*You have nothing before you now but the finale. Make the contrast as marked as possible.*

XXVII

Dreamily on downy pillow

[*Soft musical intonation for this.*

Baby Bella murmurs sweet :

[*Smile here with sleepy tenderness.*

“ Burglar—tum adain, and thee me . . .

I will dive 'oo cakes to eat ! ”

[*That is one side of the medal—now for the other.*

XXVIII

[*Harsh but emotional.*

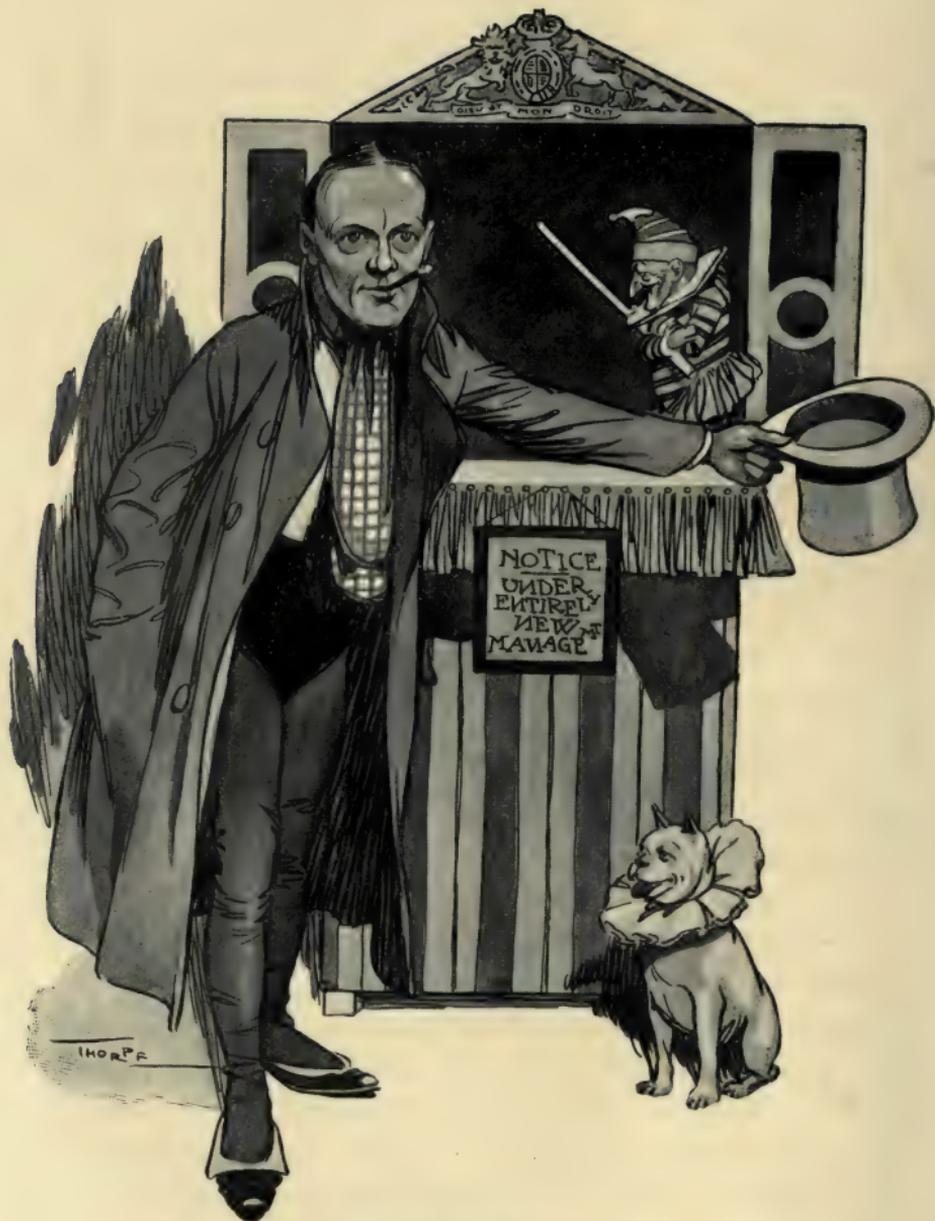
In a garret, worn and weary,

Burglar Bill has sunk to rest,

Clasping tenderly a damson-

Tartlet to his burly breast.

[*Dwell lovingly upon the word “ tartlet ”—which you should press home upon every one of your hearers, remembering to fold your hands lightly over your heart as you conclude. If you do not find that several susceptible and eligible bachelors have been knocked completely out of time by this little recitation, you will have made less progress in your Art than may be confidently anticipated.*



OWEN SEAMAN

From "Capt. Tweenie and the Press," by permission of
Messrs. Martins, Ltd., Cheapside

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IX

OWEN SEAMAN

ALTHOUGH Mr. Owen Seaman must surely be tired of hearing himself described as successor to the mantle of Charles Stuart Calverley, the veritable prince of parodists, he is like to hear the same statement repeated many times more. For he is indeed our most brilliant and cultured writer of parody, both in prose and verse, since the author of *Fly Leaves* died in 1884. The future fame of Mr. Seaman will to a certainty be bound up with that of *Punch*, to the editorship of which he succeeded in the spring of 1906; but before he became associated with that journal, whose interests he has served so well, he had won his spurs as a writer with several books of classical parodies.

Born in 1861, Mr. Owen Seaman was educated at Shrewsbury, where he was captain of the school in 1880, and at Clare College, Cambridge, where he was University Porson Prizeman in 1882, and took first class in Classical Tripos the succeeding year. The study of the classics and the healthful pursuits of the river seem to have been his passions at Cambridge, as he became captain of the Clare boats before he left in 1884 to fill the post of master at

Rossall, the well-known school near to Fleetwood, on the Lancashire coast. Here he remained until he was appointed Professor of Literature at Durham College of Science, Newcastle-on-Tyne, in 1890; but he had already made several appearances as an author, his first venture in that direction having been made in collaboration with a fellow-scholar while still at the university. Both *Ædipus the Wreck* and *With Double Pipe* were published in 1888, and were favourably received; but the real beginning of his literary reputation may be said to date from the time when he started writing for *Punch*.

At Cambridge Mr. Seaman had been among the contributors to Mr. R. C. Lehmann's bright little magazine, *The Granta*, and Mr. Lehmann, being already a distinguished member of the staff of *Punch*, introduced his former contributor to the notice of Sir Francis Burnand, with the result that, in the issue of January 13, 1894, there appeared Mr. Seaman's "Rhyme of the Kipperling," occupying nearly a page of the paper. This was a delicious parody of Mr. Rudyard Kipling's "Rhyme of the Three Sealers," and the witty author became forthwith one of the most productive of Mr. *Punch*'s outside contributors, being promoted three years later to the regular staff, and in 1902 to the assistant editorship.

Mr. Seaman had been called to the Bar in 1897, and, while pursuing his legal studies in London, he had also been a frequent contributor to the *National Observer* and the *World*, his first real hits in a literary way being *Horace at Cambridge*, published

in 1894, and *Tillers of the Sand*, a book of delightful political verse which appeared a year later. In 1896 he issued another collection of poetical parodies, *The Battle of the Bays*, and in 1899 a further series of his reprinted pieces appeared under the title of *In Cap and Bells*. Mr. Seaman has probably never done better work than in the last-named book. How cleverly does he travesty the mannerisms of our eminent authors, and yet always with a rollicking good humour which must make even the subjects of his wit join in the laughter!

But these parodies are not merely amusing—though that is indeed the great thing—they are of high value as literary criticism. For when we get Mr. Alfred Austin or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle or Mr. George Meredith reflected in Mr. Seaman's mirror of modes, we are left with a more vivid impression of their mannerisms than could be conveyed by a serious essay in criticism. For example, if you have worried over the mysteries of Mr. Meredith's *Odes to the Song of French History*, turn to Mr. Seaman's parody of the ode to Napoleon, and the strange extravagances of Meredith's later poetry will be cleared for you in a trice. Or if perchance you are of the benighted many who know not Meredith's style you have a most truthful criticism of it, far more vivid than an essay of 10,000 words could make it, in Mr. Seaman's marvellously accurate imitation of Meredithian prose, which appears in his *Borrowed Plumes* (1902), a book that contains a number of exquisite burlesques of contemporary novelists and prose writers. Nothing could be more ingenious in the way of prose parody

than these passages in the manner of the great novelist :

“ Her versatile nature swung in a dazzling orbit of aptitudes. Intrepid horsewoman, with an edged wit for dialectics, she could also sit the downy of postprandial armchairs with a firmness to wonder at, smiling a focussed attention on bovine inanity.

“ Present, you could swear to her for a glowingly constant ; absent, she wrote ‘ Will wire,’ and telegraphed ‘ Will write ’—to the chilling of assurance.

“ Poetry and the affiliated indiscretions had always been viewed by the Family with profound distrust. To the Head, not incurious of the Burgeoning Period, this graft of Romance on a stem already shooting Rhythmics had hinted at a deranged heredity. A botany specialist, hastily summoned from Leipzig, checked the development at nick of vernal.

“ Bachelor by habit and a graceful seat by force of application, he had the manner of riding straight after hounds and women ; but tempered by an instinct for country and a taste for the durable. He would choose the open gate at the fallow’s corner, in contempt of incredulous eye-lifts thrown over shrug of shoulders leaning back for the rise, rather than risk his stable’s best blood over a low hedge, flushing young Spring, with heavy drop at fourteen stone on macadam flints, shrieking menace of a wrung fetlock for the ten miles home. In the other kind of chase he had cried off on suspicion that the lady’s mother had died fat.”

And, again, there is perfect parody and good-

natured criticism of Mr. Hall Caine's best *Eternal City* style in the following :

"It was a summer evening, Kaspari's work was done. Beside his cottage door, on the hills above Megara, the fine old shepherd was sitting in the sun. He had just returned from Athens, after a one-day excursion.

" 'Papous !' (grandpapa), cried little Petrokinos, ' what is that you have in your pocket, so large and smooth and round ? '

" ' My child,' replied Kaspari, ' 'tis a present from Athens for a good boy. 'Tis a bit of the Bust of the great Dotti ! '

" With that he drew forth a cast of the lately discovered fragment of a portrait head which that day had been set up, to the accompaniment of the massed bands of all available brotherhoods, on the tomb of Athena in the Potters' Quarter (Karamaikos).

" ' Who was Dotti, grandpapa ? '

" ' Dotti, my boy ? Why, that's ages ago—back in the early part of the twentieth century, before they did away with kings and boundaries and such-like relics of barbarism. '

" ' Is it a pretty story, grandpapa ? ' asked the boy wistfully.

" ' That's a matter of taste, my child,' replied the old man ; ' but I know it's a — long one. ' "

Mr. Seaman is to my mind especially happy in his travesty of Mr. Maurice Hewlett—whose romantic manner as in *Richard Yea and Nay* is admirably adapted to parody—but that is so laden with topical references to the course of the war in South

Africa that it loses point to-day. Subjects so difficult as Mr. Henry James and Mr. Bernard Shaw he can render for us as "to the manner born," and the more elusive the characteristics of the writers the more successful does Mr. Seaman seem to be in capturing and reproducing them with comic effect.

I have mentioned in my reference to the parody of Mr. Hewlett what I cannot but think is an unfortunate feature of Mr. Seaman's work: its topical interest. Most of the brilliant verse which we find week by week in *Punch*, with the familiar initials "O. S." subscribed, is so closely concerned with events of passing moment and the politics of the fleeting day as to be soon out of date and pointless in its allusions. It seems a pity that so much cleverness should be spent on subjects so ephemeral—though *Punch* has benefited enormously thereby—but fortunately Mr. Seaman still contrives to consecrate part of his rare gifts of parody and fluent verse to writings which, while instinct with the spirit of the hour, and charged with witty criticism of contemporary life and manners, are of permanent value as additions to our national library of wit and humour.

The parody of Miss Corelli's style is reprinted from *Borrowed Plumes* by permission of Messrs. A. Constable & Co., Ltd., and that of Mr. Swinburne's poetry from *The Battle of the Bays*, by permission of Mr. John Lane, the author having also permitted their use in the present work.

A SONG OF RENUNCIATION

(*After A. C. S.*)

BY OWEN SEAMAN

IN the days of my season of salad,
When the down was as dew on my cheek,
And for French I was bred on the ballad,
For Greek on the writers of Greek,—
Then I sang of the rose that is ruddy,
Of “pleasure that winces and stings,”
Of white women and wine that is bloody,
And similar things.

Of Delight that is dear as Desi-er,
And Desire that is dear as Delight ;
Of the fangs of the flame that is fi-er,
Of the bruises of kisses that bite ;
Of embraces that clasp and that sever,
Of blushes that flutter and flee
Round the limbs of Dolores, whoever
Dolores may be.

I sang of false faith that is fleeting
As froth of the swallowing seas,
Time’s curse that is fatal as Keating
Is fatal to amorous fleas ;

Of the wanness of woe that is whelp of
 The lust that is blind as a bat—
 By the help of my Muse and the help of
 The relative THAT.

Panatheist, bruiser and breaker
 Of kings and the creatures of kings,
 I shouted on Freedom to shake her
 Feet loose of the fetter that clings ;
 Far rolling my ravenous red eye,
 And lifting a mutinous lid,
 To all monarchs and matrons I said I
 Would shock them—and did.

Thee I sang, and thy loves, O Thalassian,
 O “ noble and nude and antique ! ”
 Unshamed in the “ fearless old fashion ”
 Ere washing was done by the week ;
 When the “ roses and rapture ” that girt you
 Were visions of delicate vice,
 And the “ lilies and languors of virtue ”
 Not nearly so nice.

O delights of the time of my teething,
 Félice, Fragoletta, Yolande !
 Foam-yeast of a youth in its seething
 On blasted and blithering sand !
 Snake-crowned on your tresses and belted
 With blossoms that coil and decay,
 Ye are gone ; ye are lost ; ye are melted
 Like ices in May.

Hushed now is the bibulous bubble
Of "lithe and lascivious" throats ;
Long stript and extinct is the stubble
Of hoary and harvested oats ;
From sweets that are sour as the sorrel's
The bees have abortively swarmed ;
And Algernon's earlier morals
Are fairly reformed.

I have written a loyal Armada,
And posed in a Jubilee pose ;
I have babbled of babies and played a
New tune on the turn of their toes ;
Washed white from the stain of Astarte,
My books any virgin may buy ;
And I hear I am praised by a party
Called Something Mackay !

When erased are the records, and rotten
The meshes of memory's net ;
When the grace that forgives has forgotten
The things that are good to forget ;
When the thrill of my juvenile trumpet
Is dead and its echoes are dead ;
Then the laurel shall lie on the crumpet
And crown of my head !

AFTER MISS MARIE CORELLI

(Choice Sayings)

BY OWEN SEAMAN

SURELY there is Something, if we could but find out what it is. O unfathomable deeps !

* * * * *

Each of our actions, however seemingly trivial, is a link in the chain of moral and physical evolution. Try to rise from your bed without having first lain down, and you will discover, all too late, how indispensable is the value of the missing link.

* * * * *

Methinks that we whom the gods hold dear are not the last to die. And what, indeed, were their immortal existence if reft of love? 'Twere as a *Hamlet*-play without the essential pervading Spirit.

* * * * *

Man glories in titles. A woman is content with Genius.

* * * * *

What is this tiny terrestrial ball as compared with the vast invisible Universe? It is a mote, a bubble, a gnat in the Great Inane.

* * * * *

Oggi! Oggi! cry the ice-cream wayfarers from far Campanian hills. To-day! To-day! How

true ! There is no time precisely like the present.
The past is over ; the future yet to be.

* * * * *

It is the curse of existence that we are compelled
to keep silence. The heart's blood pulses, yet we
must hide it from the crowd. So great is the numb-
ing, stifling influence of convention. How seldom
can we be ourselves !

* * * * *

What is the Good ? And what is the Beautiful ?
Who can say ? All we know is that both terms are
synonymous, the one quite as much as the other.

* * * * *

Science is but the confession of man's ignorance.
Art, with a few exceptions, is the effort of woman,
everywhere clogged and thwarted, to express herself.

* * * * *

The mighty Ocean may run dry in the far-off to-
be ; but the welling tears of Beelzebub flow on for
ever.

* * * * *

If we could only understand all mysteries, then
the Ultimate Cause would become plain to the
intelligence of the meanest critic.

* * * * *

We are swimmers, cast upon the dilemma-horns
of two swift currents. Each stroke for the True
bears us upward and onward ; each surmounted
rung of the ladder makes the next but easier,
especially if we bear others with us.

* * * * *

Is there not in us women an infinite capacity for
the Transcendent ? Touch that slumbering mole-

cule with the right spark, and a heavenly flame shoots up, beaconing the mariner to port.

* * * * *

What is it, that ethereal essence which permeates our mortal frame to the finger-tips, and colours our daily existence as with rainbow-hues? Is it a conundrum? Go to! Know thyself!

* * * * *

It is not the frank, glaring vulgarity of the masses which sets a furrowed frown upon the stern forehead of the Thinker. Rather it is the enervating Hedonism of the epicurean aristocrat, that insidious poison which slowly undermines society. A degenerate world, my masters!

* * * * *

When woman rises to her true stature, and shakes off the strangulation-gripe of the harem, she is said to be "unsexed."

* * * * *

What avails it to throw the jewels of Genius to a swinish public, when the aforesaid herd loves best to wallow in an *ollapodrida* of filthy rags?

* * * * *

The age is *ennuyé*. It has grown tired of the wise, pure, poetic ideals of Greece and Rome. The day dreams of a Sappho or a Juvenal are accounted less *piquant* than the ugly facts of an Old Kent Road. Who was it that said, *O Tempora?* and, again, *O Mores?*

* * * * *

Nous avons soif! It is the cry of humanity, peering into the unsearchable wells of Truth. "Who, who," it asks, like the Danaids of yore,

“has put a rift within the bucket? We would drink! *Nous avons soif!*”

* * * * *

What is criticism? It is the earth-serpent Jealousy, that goes upon its belly, leaving a slimy trail upon the springing Tree of Knowledge to which it may never hope to climb.

* * * * *

What a terrible gift is this of unerring insight! To read Sham at a glance: to dive beneath the whitewash of Superficiality: to recognize, as the outside critic never can, the limits of one's own creations; all this is to feel the exquisite torture of an archangel temporarily confined in an earthly pig-sty.

* * * * *

Noël! What thoughts, what emotions the little word awakes! It is the French for Christmas!

* * * * *

Listen, I say, to the pure, sweet, passionate idylls of the birds! Is there not a tacit reproach in the lyric of the lark? Does not the pæan of the bullfinch make you blush? They do not throttle one another in a sordid struggle on the Stock Exchange; or mar the beauty of creation with petty theories of Science, so-called.

* * * * *

You ask me why I am so modest. No great Artist regards her work as her own. She is but the inspired medium. And when her labour attains fruition it passes from her possession and becomes the heritage of all time. She may admire it with

whole heart ; but only as one of the crowd, the unnumbered atoms of humanity.

* * * * *

A dog has more honesty and good faith than a man. That is why we pay an annual penalty for keeping dogs. Yet you may shelter a man-tyrant under your roof, and pay nothing for the privilege, except in hot, indignant tears, wrung from you by vile oppression and the viler counterfeit of love.

* * * * *

The year, not less than the month, the week, the day, must eventually pass and be no more. The Temporal can never outlive the Eternal.

* * * * *



WALTER EMANUEL

From an original caricature by E. T. REED

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X

WALTER EMANUEL

TO contribute occasionally to the columns of *Punch* is not exactly to have the *cachet* of wit placed upon one's work ; for if we consult the index of authors which *Punch* now publishes at the end of each volume, we shall be surprised to notice the number of names therein quite unknown to the general, and indeed to the literary, public. That is because the great comic journal is the natural repository to which most people turn with any happy thought that strikes them, and to which writers who behave with gravity during most of their time forward the frivolous fruits of their rare intellectual frolics. But to be employed week by week filling several columns of Mr. Punch's precious space with your witticisms is indeed to have some title to the fame of a jester. Although the name of Mr. Walter Emanuel may not be so familiar to my readers as others that appear in these pages, there must be many thousands of his fellow-countrymen who enjoy his fun every week, as "Charivaria" is perhaps the most widely quoted feature of *Punch*, and he is its writer.

It would be interesting to examine the lives of

some of our famous humorists with a view to discovering exactly how and why they came to exercise the faculty of humour. In most cases, I imagine, we should find that they gradually acquired a reputation as wits without deliberately and studiously aiming in that direction. Thackeray, for example, became a great humorist simply because he was a humorist, as a man has red hair or black, or of some other colour. Jerrold may have been a humorist of his own volition; Hood also; Mark Twain certainly not; Sir Francis Burnand is probably one who determined to become a wit "of malice aforethought"; not so, I would suggest, Mr. Anstey Guthrie or Mr. Pett Ridge; but I am persuaded that Mr. Walter Emanuel is of those who have deliberately set themselves to excel in wit.

There is no disposition here to hypercriticism, and I am sure that Mr. Emanuel will not suspect me of pedantry at his expense, since I have been a warm admirer of his writings long before he attained to the dignity of *Punch*. But the distinction I have endeavoured to indicate is, I venture to think, more real than apparent, and conditions the character of the wit. The difference resulting is one of kind, not merely of degree. Mr. Barrie I cannot conceive as sitting down "to be funny," and I have a suspicion that if he did the result would not be at all amusing. He is unfailingly entertaining simply because he is Mr. Barrie and writes as he listeth. But I am quite as sure that Mr. Walter Emanuel sits down to his desk with the intention of writing something that will be

funny, and succeeds in doing so ! He is essentially a wit as distinct from a humorist, and there you have the reason.

A keen and nicely balanced intellect, a sense of the comic which enables him to invest the most commonplace statements of fact with an aspect that amuses us, a precise ear for the wit of words, though not greatly dependent upon punning for his humorous effect—these are among the chief qualities of Mr. Walter Emanuel. These are the qualities he has cultivated and can now use with something approaching precision ; for this kind of mental nimbleness (given, of course, the mind to begin with), this faculty of wit, is capable of being directed by its possessor, and of achieving certain results ; while, on the other hand, it may be said that the humorist does not so much possess humour as he is possessed by it.

Mr. Richard Whiteing, himself one of our truest humorists, told me once that he knew an American journalist who had been trained to science, but settled down to the writing of the joke column in one of the great American dailies. Mr. Whiteing had expressed his surprise that one of scientific mind should find jesting a congenial or a possible business ; but the scientist assured him that he had reduced his work to something approaching a science, and could make jokes as easily as work out an equation in algebra. Still, I cannot doubt that " the personal equation " is of first importance, and although Mr. Emanuel might similarly explain to us how he arrives at the exact form of his terse and telling *Punch* paragraphs, we might have

considerable difficulty in constructing others equally clever.

Mr. Walter Emanuel, who, like Mr. Israel Zangwill, may be quoted against those who tell us that the Jews are deficient in wit and humour, was born on April 2, 1869, so that he is well among the younger *littérateurs* of the day. His career has been by no means eventful, for being comfortably provided with this world's gear he has had none of the adventures arising out of hunger and the need of a dry roof, which might conceivably have modified his point of view, and introduced more of humour than of wit into his writings. He had scribbler's itch first in the form of editing his school magazine; but it was in *Judy* that he began as a comic writer, and then to *Pick-Me-Up* he was a frequent contributor, when it was edited by Mr. Arthur Girdlestone and Mr. Raven-Hill. He was also actively associated with the production of two admirable magazines of light literature, *The Bohemian* and *The Butterfly*, neither of which, unhappily, were commercial successes. For a time also he was on the staff of the *Idler*, doing the theatres with Mr. J. Sime as artist.

In the spring of 1901 his first book, a collection of prose parodies, skits, and comic trifles was published under the title of "*Me*" and *Some Others*. Here were brought together a considerable variety of sketches which had appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Westminster*, *Black and White*, and other journals, as well as those mentioned above. This "little book of fun," as he described the volume, gave an admirable sampling of his

wit, and I personally recall the pleasure with which I there read again many pieces I had first encountered in the periodicals, and found them stand the test of a second reading, as, indeed, in several cases they have stood the test of a third, a later revised edition with added matter having been published by Messrs. Routledge under the title of *Only my Fun*. For caustic wit the chapter of "Little Tragedies" is almost perfect in the economy of words wherewith the jester makes his points. Note this of "The Clumsy Nephew":—

"The Rich Uncle was very ill indeed. The Favourite Nephew had come to pay him a visit. The Rich Uncle bade him pour himself out a glass of wine. 'Well, my dear Uncle,' said the Nephew, as he raised the glass, 'here's a speedy end to all your sufferings.'"

To Mr. M. H. Spielmann is due, I believe, the credit of bringing Mr. Emanuel's work to the notice of *Punch*, where his first contribution, entitled "Coronation Notes," appeared in May, 1902. In July of the same year he suggested a weekly contribution of topical notes, and having submitted a sample of what he purposed writing he had the gratification to find his first "Charivaria" in the issue of July 30, since when he has continued most acceptably to crack his jokes with regularity and despatch.

In 1902 he published his second and most successful book, *A Dog Day*, in which he gave a genuinely comic autobiography of a day in the life of a terrier; and the next year he wrote that extremely clever collection of what may be termed

character snapshots, *People: Being some Nasty Remarks*, which had a distinct success in the "Wisdom while you Wait" series. His later books have been, in a way, companions to *A Dog Day*. One, *The Snob*, recounts the mis-spent youth of a dog whose character is sufficiently indicated by the title, and the other, *The Dogs of War*, is a very droll sketch of doggie ways, which had the honour of first appearing serially in *Punch*.

The selections from Mr. Emanuel's *Only my Fun* are included here by permission of the author and Messrs. Routledge & Co., Ltd.

THE SKELETON AT THE FEAST

BY WALTER EMANUEL

THE poor little wife!

To start with, she did not come down in the best of tempers, for we had had a few words upstairs. She had been to town the day before to give her orders for this evening's dinner-party, and, as usual, she had forgotten several things, including my cigars. "You should make out a list before you start," I said; "I have told you so again and again." "Yes, and then, when you have had all the trouble of writing it out, you probably forget to take it with you." "Very probably," said I. "Anyhow, you have only yourself to blame." "That's just what makes it so hard," she answered, with more perspicacity than I had credited her with. "You should be methodical," I went on. "No, I *won't* be methodical," she cried, "like—like a man. And, besides, you shouldn't smoke cigars; you should smoke cigarettes." There I had let the matter drop.

We sat down to breakfast. "Hadn't we better wait for Aunt Jane?" I suggested, wishing to mollify her by showing some consideration for her relative. "No!" she answered, quite snappishly. The letters were brought in. There was one for

me (a bill, of course), and one for her. She opened hers, and read it. "Oh, bother!" she cried; "everything seems to be going wrong to-day," and she banged her little fist on the table, thereby upsetting and breaking a rather valuable cream-jug. (I do wish women would learn to swear: it's so much cheaper.) "What is it?" I asked. "Read," she answered dramatically, handing me the letter. I read as commanded. It was from young Armfield, saying that, owing to the death of an uncle the day before, he would be unable to come. "Well," I said, "I don't suppose the poor uncle foresaw how it would put you out. And, anyhow, young Armfield is no great loss to us." "Oh, but you don't understand!" she cried, stamping her foot. "*We're thirteen now.*"

I suppose I ought to have fainted at that announcement. But I didn't. I simply said, "Good gracious, Kit, I thought you were above all that sort of rubbish." "So I am," she replied, in the most barefaced way. "It's Aunt Jane." "Oh, I don't believe Aunt Jane would mind a bit," I said; "I'll run up, and ask her through the key-hole." "No; finish your breakfast," she said. "Aunt Jane hates being talked to in her bedroom." However, I ran up, and asked her. "It's all right!" I cried, when I came down again, "Aunt was quite annoyed at the suggestion—says she doesn't mind a bit." "Yes, she does," answered my enigma of a wife, "and, even if she doesn't, others do." "Then you shouldn't encourage them in such silly fads. It is ridiculous. The only time when grown-up people have any right to object to

sitting down thirteen to dinner is when there is only food enough for twelve." "Well, anyhow, I won't have thirteen," she said, letting the cat out of the bag at last. That was different, of course. "But, surely, if you throw salt over your left shoulder, or something or other, it'll be all right?" I suggested vaguely. "No, it won't. Some one's bound to die within a year." "Well," said I, "think how nice it would be if it were Aunt Jane. Ought we to lose the chance?" "If you are going to attempt to be funny," she said, "I shall leave the room." After that there was a pause for quite two minutes, and then she opened her mouth again. "Tom," she said, "you must be a dear, and find some one else." "You forgive me, then, for your having forgotten to order my cigars?" The only answer vouchsafed by She-who-must-be-obeyed was to ring the bell and give the word for the trap to be brought round.

Then came the question of who should be asked. That is the worst of living in the country—you are so very restricted. As it was, we had invited the only friends we cared about, and you have to know people pretty well to ask them at the last moment. We racked our brains and finally decided that the most likely person was Mr. Alworthy. "Only, whatever you do, don't ask *her*," said the wife. I must mention that there were ridiculous tales about Mrs. Alworthy. Myself, I rather liked the woman. She was decidedly handsome; but she was not considered "nice." Foolishly, I consented to do as bid by the wife.

The whole rudeness of asking him without her

did not strike me until I found myself in the presence of Madam. "Oh, we are having a few friends to dinner this evening," I said, "and we shall be so pleased—that is to say, I hope your husband is disengaged this evening, if you will excuse the lateness of the invitation." "Certainly," she said; and just then the husband came in. "Mr. Horton has kindly asked us to dinner this evening," said Mrs. Alworthy. "Oh, that is to say," I broke in—for a vision of an irate wife rose up before me—"that is to say, we—we only wanted Mr. Alworthy." I don't think I could have done it more clumsily had I tried; beads of perspiration stood upon my forehead, and I cursed the floor because it would not open and swallow me up. "Oh, I shall be delighted," said Mr. Alworthy. "Bob!" said Mrs. Alworthy, giving her husband such a look, "you forget you are engaged this evening." "Eh? Oh, yes; I forgot that," came the obedient answer. Bob is a cur. I tried to explain, and, of course, made things worse. "You understand how it is?" I ended up appealingly. "No, I don't think I do," said Mrs. Alworthy, like a piece of ice, as I took my departure with all the spring gone from me. She and I were enemies for life now, that was clear. I would not have minded, only, as I remarked before, I rather liked the woman.

"Well, here's a nice thing," I said to my wife, as I told her all about it; "here's a nice thing you have let me in for!" Her only comment was, "And yet you would not believe me when I told you she was a horrid person." It would have been waste of breath to argue that over again.

"So I suppose I must try some one else," I sighed. "Please," she said prettily, giving me a kiss, and declaring that I was quite the best husband she had ever had. "I'll try old Gillespie, if you like," I said; "he married his cook, you know, and is used to being asked without his wife. And then I'll have a shot at the Arlingtons; and then I'll go to the Sandfords; and if that is no good, I'll telegraph to Hugh." (Hugh is my brother.) So I started off again. But it was a wild-goose chase. Gillespie had gone to town; the Arlingtons (I had got permission to ask the two of them) accepted at first, under the impression that the invitation was for a week hence, and refused when I explained that it was for that very night—evidently piqued at the short notice; and the Sandfords were out. So I telegraphed to Hugh, and went home and took off my boots, and awaited an answer. It came at 2.30: "Sorry. Engaged." I might have guessed that; for, the last time Hugh had honoured my house with his presence, he had had the good taste to tell me, in an outburst of confidence, that he found me devilish slow, and that if I had not been his brother he would certainly never have known me. He only wondered how my wife could put up with me.

The wife tore up his telegram into hundreds of little pieces, and then threw them viciously into the fire. Then she flung herself into an armchair, and moped. "I tell you what, Kit," I said, "don't give up all hope. How would this be? I am perfectly willing. You know I don't like dinner-parties. I won't appear. I'll be unwell. Then

there will be only twelve." "You are silly," she answered. I took a few more whiffs at my pipe. "Or there's John, the gardener; he is a decent-looking chap. We might have him shaved, and he could wear my second dress-suit, and then there would be fourteen." "Tom, you are enough to annoy a saint!" cried my wife, sitting up and kicking a footstool halfway across the room. "Evidently," I replied. After that I dozed for five minutes, then woke up and shouted, "Eureka!" "Don't," said the wife, "you make me jump. What is it?" "Well, I only wonder neither of us thought of it before," I went on. "Why on earth cannot two of the guests sit at a separate table?" "That would not be fair," came the reply, delivered in a stern, reproachful voice. "That would be *cheating*." "Well, now, I like that," I cried, getting angry, "I like that from you. You certainly have the queerest conscience I ever came across. You think nothing of cheating a railway company——" "Oh, don't let's have that all over again. I told you before, a railway company is a big affair, and there can be no talk of cheating there, and I—I think it's horrid of you to——" and she began to cry. I looked up at her. Perhaps she was right; it was a shame to bully her, poor little woman. It would mean my having to turn out again, but I decided to produce my trump card—for I could not bear to see her in tears. So I went over to her and said, "Cheer up, little wife. There is still corn in Egypt. There's that artist fellow Jackson, who lives over at the cottage; I am sure he would come." She stopped crying.

“That creature? Oh, he’s impossible. Why, I doubt if he even has a dress-suit. And whom could we give him to take down?” “Aunt Jane,” I said, “is short-sighted.” “Well, you can go and see if he will come,” said the wife. So I had out the trap again and drove round.

I found him at work on a huge canvas—an awful daub, I thought, but then I am no judge. He seemed pleased to see me, and asked what I thought of it. I told him I thought it wondrous fine. I always feel uncomfortable when I go to see Jackson, as I am quite sure he looks upon me as a possible patron, while, as a matter of fact, I never buy pictures, and, even if I did, his would be the last in the world to attract me. However, it was all right to-day, as I could never have got such an enormous thing into my little house. I broached the subject at once. “Jackson,” I said, “my wife and I want you to come and dine with us this evening.”

“My dear sir,” he answered, “it’s very kind of you, but I am afraid that dinner-parties are not at all in my line.” “Well, it is never too late to begin,” I said. “I haven’t had a dress-suit on for years,” he pleaded. “Oh, that’ll be all right. Come. I shall take it as a favour.” He thought for a few minutes. He saw in me the possible patron. “All right, as you put it that way, I’ll come,” he said. I heaved a sigh of relief.

The little wife brightened up wonderfully when I rushed in and told her that the difficulty was at last surmounted. It was certainly a close shave, for it was now half-past four. Our guests began

to arrive at half-past seven. Jackson turned up to the minute, in a disgracefully shabby and ill-fitting suit ; and his shirt-front was far from clean. My wife declared that he smelt horribly of paint, but that was her fancy, I am sure. Still, he was distinctly a " blot on the landscape." By a quarter to eight all were there except Milburn the novelist, and I could see the poor wife glancing up at the clock every now and then, and giving distracted answers to the people who were talking to her.

At five minutes to eight a telegram was handed to her. " Excuse me," she said, as she tore it open. She turned pale as she read it, and bit her lip. " What is it, dear ? " I asked. She came over to me and silently gave me the telegram. I read it, and, as I read it, I smiled. Milburn was unavoidably prevented from coming, and we were thirteen again !

I looked at the wife, and the wife looked at me. " Shall I tell Jackson he may go ? " I asked. But —was there ever a woman with a sense of the humorous ?—all she answered was, " Brute ! "

" Dinner is served," bawled the butler.

BY THE SILLY SEA ; OR, WHAT THE WILD
WAVES ARE SAYING

(With apologies to a certain Daily Paper)

BY WALTER EMANUEL

MURLBY

THIS charming little resort is growing more and more popular. Last year there were only two visitors. This year there are three. The seat which has been placed on the parade is a great success, and even those members of the Corporation who were opposed to the enterprise at the time of its inception, now acknowledge that it is an additional attraction to the town. It is seldom without an occupant.

Much indignation has been aroused among all classes in the town by a dastardly outrage in the Victoria Diamond Jubilee Recreation Ground. Two of the new blades of grass have been wantonly trodden under foot. No pains will be spared to discover the miscreants. It is pretty generally believed that it is the work of agents of a so-called rival watering-place, distant not two miles from Murlby.

BALLYROO (IRELAND)

A fire broke out at the new Fire Engine Station yesterday evening, and owing to the fact that the engine was inside, the station and the engine were destroyed.

Such a spell of fine weather as we are at present having has never been known before. We have had no rain since yesterday.

BRIGHTON

This place was thrown into a state of intense excitement on Sunday last, when a Christian was seen to enter the town.

REIKJAVIK (ICELAND)

(Here's enterprise !) It is nice and cool here.

FOLKESTONE

This morning there was quite a little excitement on the Lees. A lady had just left her bathing machine, and had scarcely entered the water, when she suddenly emitted a series of heart-rending shrieks. Some bystanders at once rushed to her assistance, when it was discovered that, in stepping into the water, her costume had got wet.

Our visitors, and even the inhabitants, have been favoured with delightful weather lately.

HICLIFFE

Two children were drowned here yesterday. This place is becoming more and more popular with fathers of large families.

ILFRACOMBE

Some haze rested on the water this morning, but really no one could blame it, the weather was so hot and tiring.

WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE

Some amusement but more annoyance has been caused in this town by a misprint in one of the London papers on Monday last, when four of the commodious steamboats of the popular Belle line were described as arriving here loaded with human frights.

A party of three gentlemen and two ladies were upset in a pleasure-boat yesterday through a surfeit of tinned lobster.

BEXLEY-SUPER-CHIC

The roads about here are becoming unpleasantly loose owing to the continued heat, and motorists are beginning to ask for rain, and, as they are a wealthy and influential body, it is expected they will get it.

Much annoyance continues to be expressed by the visitors to this exclusive little resort, that the townspeople should be allowed to use the esplanade on Sundays.

There is no appearance of an early break-up in the prolonged delightful meteorological conditions, which therefore continue to prevail.

MARGATE

It's very 'ot 'ere.

DRERE

Much has been done to remove the reproach of dullness which has been levelled so unjustly at this little town. For the last two days a monkey-organ has delighted dozens on the beach, and every Saturday a man comes round with toffee and brandy-balls. Next week we are to have an Organ Recital at St. Saviour's, and other attractions (including a Church Bazaar) are to be announced shortly. As a visitor recently remarked, this town is getting quite Continental in its gaiety.

CROMER

The annual Illuminated Procession of Cyclists took place yesterday evening. An untoward incident was the burning of one of the cyclists (an excursionist from London), who accidentally caught fire. The sadness of the episode was only compensated for by the prettiness of the effect.

HAYLING ISLAND

It is very hot here, and the whale, which was captured recently with such difficulty, is now having its revenge. The whale has gone bad, and the visitors are leaving.

PORTLAND

This retired spot continues to be patronized as much as ever. In fact, its popularity seems to increase rather than to diminish. Visitors are not slow to realize that there is plenty to do here, and, once on the spot, find it difficult to get away. Few

stay for less than three years. The costumes to be seen on the beach are really wonderful.

TROUVILLE

(*More enterprise!*) The weather here is brilliant, and hundreds of people during the past week have been bathing in glorious sunshine, but very little else.

HASTINGS

An excursionist from London yesterday saw a whole school of sea-serpents playing off the Parade, and it required the services of no fewer than five police constables to take him to the station.

RHYL

This morning a pleasure-boat, containing a curate and two friends, was overturned on the Marine Lake, and the occupants thrown into the water. Fortunately the lake is shallow, and all three succeeded in scrambling out, but much amusement was caused to the onlookers by the behaviour of the curate, who, though on the preceding Sunday he had given a glowing account of Heaven, showed the most palpable unwillingness to enter that place.

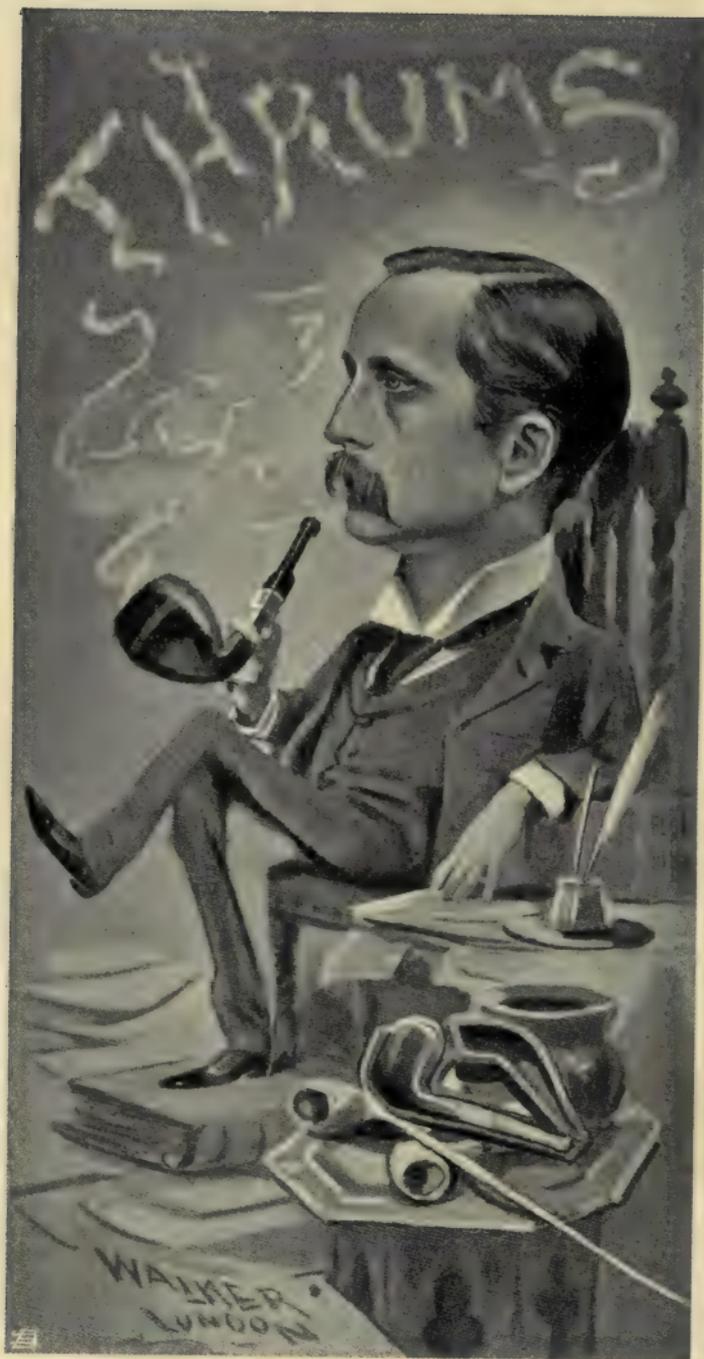
YARMOUTH

The company here is still select.

A crowd of about 2,000 persons witnessed a dog-fight on the Esplanade this morning.

The *élite* of the town were present yesterday

evening at the Torchlight Carnival. Immense fun was caused by the use of lady's tormentors, and a bizarre effect was caused by the two sexes, in many cases, wittily changing hats.



J. M. BARRIE

From the cartoon by OLIVER PAQUE

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XI

J. M. BARRIE

MR. J.M. BARRIE is an author of such eminent endowments that humour is with him, as in the case of a Meredith or a Hardy, only incidental to his work and not the sum of it. It was, however, on his humorous side that the author of *Auld Licht Idylls* made his appeal to the reading public and met with his first welcome. And though he has travelled far since then, and has shown himself one of the most versatile and imaginative writers of our time, he is still and always the same quaint humorist who won all our hearts well nigh twenty years ago with those true and tender sketches of the humours of lowly life in his native village. His later phenomenal successes as a playwright are also due to this same quality of humour which is so peculiarly his own, and inimitable, rather than to any unusual ability in the difficult art of the stage.

Mr. James Matthew Barrie was born in the town of Kirriemuir, Forfarshire, May 9, 1860, his parents belonging to the thrifty middle-class, so that, although they were able to send their sons to the university, there was no overplus of this world's gear in the early

domestic circle of him who has become, while still a young man, one of the wealthiest of living authors.

This is really a case of cause and effect, since it was precisely because his own circumstances enabled him to understand and to appreciate the humble life of his "ain folk," that he achieved such brilliant success when, in the fullness of time, the literary impulse came to him and he set himself to depict and interpret to the world the life he knew best.

At Dumfries Academy his early schooldays were spent, and thence he went to Edinburgh University, where, in 1882, he graduated M.A. After finishing his college course, Mr. Barrie remained for some months in the Scottish capital, waiting for something to turn up, and that something took the shape of an engagement as leader-writer on the *Nottingham Journal*, which work he began in February of 1883, spending a brief but fruitful year in the interesting old town by the Trent.

Of Mr. Barrie's experiences in Nottingham that delightful book *When a Man's Single* contains, in the guise of a most entertaining fiction, a fairly circumstantial and actual narrative; while his little portfolio of personal sketches, *An Edinburgh Eleven*, describes with gay humour something of his life at Edinburgh University.

It was while still employed in Nottingham journalism that he began those studies of Scottish character which were soon to carry his name around the world; and Mr. Frederick Greenwood, then editing the *St. James' Gazette*, having published a good many articles from his pen, the young journalist decided to make for London, though Mr.

Greenwood advised him to delay his venture until he had achieved a more substantial success than had yet fallen to his lot. Confident of his own powers, however, he came and wrote and conquered.

The pages of the *British Weekly* and the encouragement of its distinguished editor, Dr. Robertson Nicoll, opened the gates of fame and fortune ; but Dr. Nicoll would be the first to admit that Mr. Barrie required no adventitious aid to bring him into his kingdom, since he possessed in his own personality the great gifts of humour, insight, imagination and literary expression, which were bound soon or later to set him on the unique pedestal he occupies in our gallery of literary celebrities.

An absurd charge has been advanced against Mr. Barrie on the score that Tammas Haggart, one of the most memorable of his fictional characters, is a poor specimen of wit to advance as representative of his native town. Mr. Barrie has never implied anything of the sort ; his whole attitude to Tammas is one of gentle irony. Persons of the standing of Tammas Haggart and Snecky Hobart in an English town as parochial as " Thrums " would not be chosen as types of English wit, nor would they compare very favourably with the old-fashioned folk of Thrums in intellectual capacity or range of knowledge. Tammas is really represented as a ponderous blether. He is made to say :

" A humorist would often no ken 'at he was ane if it was na by the wy he maks other fowk lauch. A body canna be expeckit baith to mak' the joke an' to see't. Na, that would be doin' twa fowks wark."

“ Weel, that’s reasonable enough, but I’ve often seen ye lauchin’,” said Henry, “ lang afore other fowk lauched.”

“ Nae doubt,” Tammas explained, “ an’ that’s because humour has twa sides, juist like a penny piece. When I say a humorous thing mysel’ I’m dependent on other fowk to tak’ note o’ the humour o’t, bein’ mysel’ ta’en up wi’ the makin’ o’t. Aye, but there’s things I see an’ hear ’at maks me lauch, an’ that’s the other side o’ humour.”

From this one might fairly conclude that Tammas “ joked wi’ deeficulty,” but I am sure nobody would more quickly repudiate such a charge being levelled at the Scottish people than Mr. Barrie himself. Doubtless there are many Tammas Haggarts, but assuredly they are not typical of Scotland’s humorists. The humour of the North is not deficient in what can only be described as “ unconscious humour,” and this was evidently the kind that Tammas Haggart dealt in, but Scottish humour is less characterized by this form of fun than English humour, which abounds in it; Irish is little else.

But here we are not greatly concerned as to whether the folk of Thrums “ had humour,” since their author has it in such abundance; and even if we are sometimes laughing with him at their expense we think none the less of the quaint, leal-hearted worthies for all that. In *The Courting of T’nowhead’s Bell* and *How Gavin Birse put it to Mag Lownie*, two of Mr. Barrie’s most successful humorous sketches, the fun is all with the reader and the writer.

As *Auld Licht Idylls* may be said to illustrate

chiefly the humours of life in Mr. Barrie's native town, so *A Window in Thrums* is concerned mainly with the deeper things of common life ; but humour and pathos, which always lie close together, are deftly mingled in every book that Mr. Barrie has written, with the exceptions of his first little work *Better Dead* and *My Lady Nicotine*, both of which are born of his spirit of whimsicality and never touch the minor chords.

A distinct feature of Mr. Barrie's humour is that it so successfully at times apes the solemnity of fact as to beguile those who are themselves deficient in the sense of the comic. Thus an early journalistic skit, entitled "The Strange Case of Sir George Trevelyan and Mr. Otto," in which he made out that Sir George Otto Trevelyan had a dual personality like "Jekyll and Hyde," being in one form a rampant Home Ruler but in the other a staunch Unionist, was denounced by the *North British Daily Mail* as a scandalous and libellous fabrication, and years later, when the present writer referred to it in an essay on Mr. Barrie, the same journal, discovering the authorship of the skit for the first time, did not hesitate to describe it as a shameful blot on Mr. Barrie's fair name ! Again, when Mr. Barrie wrote in *The Fortnightly* a most amusing paper entitled "Pro Bono Publico, purporting to be the prospectus of a "Society for Providing Materials for Volumes of Reminiscences," together with "specimens" and the prices at which they were offered, a German gentleman communicated with the editor of *The Fortnightly*, saying that he had been engaged for some time on a volume of reminiscences of German

authors, but was short of material, and would be very glad indeed to place an order with the Society to supply as much as would complete his book !

Some of Mr. Barrie's most delicate humour is to be found in *The Little Minister*, *Sentimental Tommy*, and its sequel *Tommy and Grizel*, and for humour that is gossamer-like in its lightness, tender and true, one has but to turn to that enchanting book, *The Little White Bird*. His humour is essentially his own. It is not of the Mark Twain order ; it seldom makes us laugh consumedly, but it keeps us in that constant mood of pleasure described as ' chuckling.' It is quiet, reserved, never by any chance boisterous ; appeals to the intellect and the heart, rather than to the sense of the purely ludicrous or to the love of buffoonery. Like all true humorists he touches the tenderest chords of pathos with consummate ease and effect. He is therefore best represented by a sketch in which his warm human sympathy mingles with his amused interest in his fellow-creatures, and for this reason one of the most characteristic chapters from *The Little White Bird* has been chosen. "The Little Nursery Governess" is here reprinted by permission of the author and his publishers Messrs Hodder & Stoughton.

THE LITTLE NURSERY GOVERNESS

By J. M. BARRIE

As I enter the club smoking-room you are to conceive David vanishing into nothingness, and that it is any day six years ago at two in the afternoon. I ring for coffee, cigarette, and cherry brandy, and take my chair by the window, just as the absurd little nursery governess comes tripping into the street. I always feel that I have rung for her.

While I am lifting the coffee-pot cautiously lest the lid fall into the cup, she is crossing to the post-office; as I select the one suitable lump of sugar she is taking six last looks at the letter; with the aid of William I light my cigarette, and now she is re-reading the delicious address. I lie back in my chair, and by this time she has dropped the letter down the slit. I toy with my liqueur, and she is listening to hear whether the postal authorities have come for her letter. I scowl at a fellow-member who has had the impudence to enter the smoking-room, and her two little charges are pulling her away from the post-office. When I look out at the window again she is gone, but I shall ring for her to-morrow at two sharp.

She must have passed the window many times before I noticed her. I know not where she lives, though I suppose it to be hard by. She is taking the little boy and girl, who bully her, to the St.

James's Park, as their hoops tell me, and she ought to look crushed and faded. No doubt her mistress overworks her. It must enrage the other servants to see her deporting herself as if she were quite the lady.

I noticed that she had sometimes other letters to post, but that the posting of the one only was a process. They shot down the slit, plebeians all, but it followed pompously like royalty. I have even seen her blow a kiss after it.

Then there was her ring, of which she was as conscious as if it rather than she was what came gaily down the street. She felt it through her glove to make sure that it was still there. She took off the glove and raised the ring to her lips, though I doubt not it was the cheapest trinket. She viewed it from afar by stretching out her hand ; she stooped to see how it looked near the ground ; she considered its effect on the right of her and on the left of her and through one eye at a time. Even when you saw that she had made up her mind to think hard of something else, the little silly would take another look.

I give any one three chances to guess why Mary was so happy.

No and no and no. The reason was simply this, that a lout of a young man loved her. And so, instead of crying because she was the merest nobody, she must, forsooth, sail jauntily down Pall Mall, very trim as to her tackle, and ticketed with the insufferable air of an engaged woman. At first her complacency disturbed me, but gradually it became part of my life at two o'clock with the coffee, the cigarette, and the liqueur. Now comes the tragedy.

Thursday is her great day. She has from two to three every Thursday for her very own ; just think of it : this girl, who is probably paid several pounds a year, gets a whole hour to herself once a week. And what does she with it ? Attend classes for making her a more accomplished person ? Not she. This is what she does : sets sail for Pall Mall, wearing all her pretty things, including the blue feathers, and with such a sparkle of expectation on her face that I stir my coffee quite fiercely. On ordinary days she at least tries to look demure, but on a Thursday she has had the impudence to use the glass door of the club as a mirror in which to see how she likes her engaging trifle of a figure to-day.

In the meantime a long-legged oaf is waiting for her outside the post-office, where they meet every Thursday, a fellow who always wears the same suit of clothes, but has a face that must ever make him free of the company of gentlemen. He is one of your lean, clean Englishmen, who strip so well, and I fear me he is handsome ; I say fear. for your handsome men have always annoyed me, and had I lived in the duelling days I swear I would have called every one of them out. He seems to be quite unaware that he is a pretty fellow, but Lord, how obviously Mary knows it. I conclude that he belongs to the artistic classes, he is so easily elated and depressed ; and because he carries his left thumb curiously, as if it were feeling for the hole of a palette, I have entered his name among the painters. I find pleasure in deciding that they are shocking bad pictures, for obviously no one buys

them. I feel sure Mary says they are splendid ; she is that sort of woman. Hence the rapture with which he greets her. Her first effect upon him is to make him shout with laughter. He laughs suddenly *haw* from an eager exulting face, and then *haw* again, and then, when you are thanking Heaven that it is at last over, comes a final *haw*, louder than the others. I take them to be roars of joy because Mary is his, and they have a ring of youth about them that is hard to bear. I could forgive him everything save his youth, but it is so aggressive that I have sometimes to order William testily to close the window.

How much more deceitful than her lover is the little nursery governess. The moment she comes into sight she looks at the post-office and sees him. Then she looks straight before her, and now she is observed, and he rushes across to her in a glory, and she starts—positively starts—as if he had taken her by surprise. Observe her hand rising suddenly to her wicked little heart. This is the moment when I stir my coffee violently. He gazes down at her in such rapture that he is in everybody's way, and as she takes his arm she gives it a little squeeze, and then away they strut, Mary doing nine-tenths of the talking. I fall to wondering what they will look like when they grow up.

What a ludicrous difference do these two nobodies make to each other. You can see that they are to be married when he has twopence.

Thus I have not an atom of sympathy with this girl, to whom London is famous only as the residence of a young man who mistakes her for some one else,

but her happiness had become part of my repast at two p.m., and when one day she walked down Pall Mall without gradually posting a letter I was indignant. It was as if William had disobeyed orders. Her two charges were as surprised as I, and pointed questioningly to the slit, at which she shook her head. She put her finger to her eyes, exactly like a sad baby, and so passed from the street.

Next day the same thing happened, and I was so furious that I bit through my cigarette. Thursday came, when I prayed that there might be an end of this annoyance, but no, neither of them appeared on that acquainted ground. Had they changed their post-office? No, for her eyes were red every day, and heavy was her foolish little heart. Love had put out his lights, and the little nursery governess walked in darkness.

I felt I could complain to the committee.

O you selfish young zany of a man, after all you have said to her, won't you make it up and let me return to my coffee? Not he.

Little nursery governess, I appeal to you. Annoying girl, be joyous as of old during the five minutes of the day when you are anything to me, and for the rest of the time, so far as I am concerned, you may be as wretched as you list. Show some courage. I assure you he must be a very bad painter: only the other day I saw him looking longingly into the window of a cheap Italian restaurant, and in the end he had to crush down his aspirations with two penny scones.

You can do better than that. Come, Mary.

All in vain. She wants to be loved; can't do

without love from morning till night ; never knew how little a woman needs till she lost that little. They are all like this.

Zounds, madam, if you are resolved to be a drooping little figure till you die, you might at least do it in another street.

Not only does she maliciously depress me by walking past on ordinary days, but I have discovered that every Thursday from two to three she stands afar off, gazing hopelessly at the romantic post-office where she and he shall meet no more. On these windy days she is like a homeless leaf blown about by passers-by.

There is nothing I can do except thunder at William.

At last she accomplished her unworthy ambition. It was a wet Thursday, and from the window where I was writing letters I saw the forlorn soul taking up her position at the top of the street : in a blast of fury I rose with the one letter I had completed, meaning to write the others in my chambers. She had driven me from the club.

I had turned out of Pall Mall into a side street, when whom should I strike against but her false swain ! It was my fault, but I hit out at him savagely, as I always do when I run into any one in the street. Then I looked at him. He was hollow-eyed ; he was muddy ; there was not a *haw* left in him. I never saw a more abject young man ; he had not even the spirit to resent the testy stab I had given him with my umbrella. But this is the important thing : he was glaring wistfully at the post-office and thus in a twink I saw that he still adored

my little governess. Whatever had been their quarrel he was as anxious to make it up as she, and perhaps he had been here every Thursday while she was round the corner in Pall Mall, each watching the post-office for an apparition. But from where they hovered neither could see the other.

I think what I did was quite clever. I dropped my letter unseen at his feet, and sauntered back to the club. Of course, a gentleman who finds a letter on the pavement feels bound to post it, and I presumed that he would naturally go to the nearest office.

With my hat on I strolled to the smoking-room window, and was just in time to see him posting my letter across the way. Then I looked for the little nursery governess. I saw her as woebegone as ever; then, suddenly—oh, you poor little soul, and has it really been as bad as that!

She was crying outright, and he was holding both her hands. It was a disgraceful exhibition. The young painter would evidently explode if he could not make use of his arms. She must die if she could not lay her head upon his breast. I must admit that he rose to the occasion; he hailed a hansom.

“William,” said I gaily, “coffee, cigarette, and cherry brandy.”

As I sat there watching that old play David plucked my sleeve to ask what I was looking at so deedily; and when I told him he ran eagerly to the window, but he reached it just too late to see the lady who was to become his mother. What I told him of her doings, however, interested him greatly; and he

intimated rather shyly that he was acquainted with the man who said, "Haw-haw-haw." On the other hand, he irritated me by betraying an idiotic interest in the two children, whom he seemed to regard as the hero and heroine of the story. What were their names? How old were they? Had they both hoops? Were they iron hoops, or just wooden hoops? Who gave them their hoops?

"You don't seem to understand, my boy," I said tartly, "that had I not dropped that letter, there would never have been a little boy called David A——." But instead of being appalled by this he asked, sparkling, whether I meant that he would still be a bird flying about in the Kensington Gardens.

David knows that all children in our part of London were once birds in the Kensington Gardens; and that the reason there are bars on nursery windows and a tall fender by the fire is because very little people sometimes forget that they have no longer wings, and try to fly away through the window or up the chimney.

Children in the bird stage are difficult to catch. David knows that many people have none, and his delight on a summer afternoon is to go with me to some spot in the Gardens where these unfortunates may be seen trying to catch one with small pieces of cake.

That the birds know what would happen if they were caught, and are even a little undecided about which is the better life, is obvious to every student of them. Thus, if you leave your empty perambulator under the trees and watch from a distance, you will see the birds boarding it and hopping about

from pillow to blanket in a twitter of excitement ; they are trying to find out how babyhood would suit them.

Quite the prettiest sight in the Gardens is when the babies stray from the tree where the nurse is sitting and are seen feeding the birds, not a grown-up near them. It is first a bit to me then a bit to you, and all the time such a jabbering and laughing from both sides of the railing. They are comparing notes and inquiring for old friends, and so on ; but what they say I cannot determine, for when I approach they all fly away.

The first time I ever saw David was on the sward behind the Baby's Walk. He was a missel-thrush, attracted thither that hot day by a hose which lay on the ground sending forth a gay trickle of water, and David was on his back in the water, kicking up his legs. He used to enjoy being told of this, having forgotten all about it, and gradually it all came back to him, with a number of other incidents that had escaped my memory, though I remember that he was eventually caught by the leg with a long string and a cunning arrangement of twigs near the Round Pond. He never tires of this story, but I notice that it is now he who tells it to me rather than I to him, and when we come to the string he rubs his little leg as if it still smarted.

So when David saw his chance of being a missel-thrush again he called out to me quickly : " Don't drop the letter ! " and there were tree-tops in his eyes.

" Think of your mother," I said severely.

He said he would often fly in to see her. The first thing he would do would be to hug her. No,

he would alight on the water-jug first, and have a drink.

“Tell her, father,” he said with horrid heartlessness, “always to have plenty of water in it, ’cos if I had to lean down too far I might fall in and be drowned.”

“Am I not to drop the letter, David? Think of your poor mother without her boy!”

It affected him, but he bore up. When she was asleep, he said, he would hop on to the frilly things of her night-gown and peck at her mouth.

“And then she would wake up, David, and find that she had only a bird instead of a boy.”

This shock to Mary was more than he could endure. “You can drop it,” he said with a sigh. So I dropped the letter, as I think I have already mentioned; and that is how it all began.



H. G. WELLS

From a caricature by MAX BEERBOHM, by permission of *The Sketch*
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XII

H. G. WELLS

“WHAT is *he* doing in this galley?” I can imagine some persons asking, but I am persuaded that the question would condemn them as lacking in knowledge of the man. For while in the public mind the name of Mr. H. G. Wells is associated chiefly with speculative philosophy and the imaginative treatment of scientific problems, he is essentially a humorist. One of his recent books, *The Food of the Gods*, may not strike all who read it as a work into which the element of humour enters. Yet I will make bold to say that at the back of it lie precisely those qualities which are essential to all genuine humour. “Herakleophobia,” as the food of the gods is named, has the property of making anything already instinct with life, in animal or vegetable form, to grow abnormally. Granted this starting-point, it will be seen at once that the possibilities for imaginative treatment are unbounded: rats partaking of this food grow as big as wolves, wasps that have sipped it develop into death-dealing monsters, and men can become as giants whose tread will shake the earth. The conception is entirely humorous—it recalls the fun of Rabelais—

and even if it be treated with the gravity of a scientific discourse the original element must remain. Indeed, it would be no difficult matter to argue that a keen sense of humour is essential in the equipment of one who deals in speculative science, but that is an attractive line of thought we cannot for the moment pursue.

Mr. H. G. Wells at least is a humorist and a scientist, and whether the two qualities of mind are always or often present in the same individual need not concern us. He came to the exercise of both faculties in a curious and roundabout way. Born at Bromley in Kent on September 21, 1866, he was the son of a well-known professional cricketer, and received his education at a local school and later at Midhurst Grammar School and the Royal College of Science, taking first-class honours in zoology and graduating B.Sc. at London University.

His start in life was not by any means auspicious : on leaving Bromley Academy at the age of thirteen he was apprenticed to a draper, but soon tiring of this he became in succession a pupil-teacher, a chemist's apprentice, and oddly enough, a draper's assistant again, before at the age of seventeen he went to Midhurst Grammar School as an usher. All this indicates a somewhat restless, but decidedly experimental, youth. For three years he was a teacher at South Kensington, studying assiduously the while for his degree in science, and he went next as assistant master at a small private school in Wales, where an accident in the football field resulted in an internal injury, which left him delicate for life. In London once more we hear

of him as a master at a private school in Kilburn, and later as biological tutor in connexion with the University Correspondence Classes, his leisure hours now being devoted to the writing of semi-scientific essays.

At that time an article in the *Fortnightly Review*, and a treatise on biology were his chief attainments in a literary way, editors having little hospitality for the scientific disquisitions of an unknown writer. He might have continued indefinitely as a tutor, but for a breakdown in health, which rendered a more sedentary employment imperative. We are told that at this critical issue of his fortunes, when his prospects were most disheartening, one of the books of a fellow-humorist served not only to inspire him with thoughts of journalism, but also to indicate the way to success therein. This was Mr. J. M. Barrie's clever and truthful story of literary life *When a Man's Single*. Profiting by hints received from it he soon became a frequent contributor to the *Globe*, the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *St. James's Gazette*. In the *Pall Mall* especially he met with a ready welcome, and Mr. Marriot Watson, then assistant editor of that paper, brought Mr. Wells's work to the notice of the late W. E. Henley, who gave the young author hearty encouragement, and to whom his first important book, *The Time Machine*, was dedicated. His career since then has been one of increasing success, until he stands to-day in the first rank of our popular authors, but occupying a position that is entirely individual.

Mr. Wells was just twenty-nine years of age when he came into public favour, and in the course of that

year he had the hardihood to issue no less than four books, the first being a series of short and amusing sketches entitled *Select Conversations with an Uncle*, the second his scientific novel above mentioned, and the others *The Stolen Bacillus* and *The Wonderful Visit*. The last is to my thinking a work of the quaintest humour, and must rank among his most characteristic productions. From this point onward the scientific possibilities of his imaginative inventions would seem to have engaged his mind more closely than the humorous, but in *The Wheels of Chance* and *Love and Mr. Lewisham*, and again in *The Sea Lady*, he gives head to his fancy with the most entertaining results, his own opinion of the second of these books being that it is "as near beauty as I am ever likely to get."

His entirely serious works, such as *Anticipations*, which he describes as "my biggest thing, my most intimate thing, my first-line-of-battleship," and *Mankind in the Making*, are of course outwith our present survey, and equally so the bulk of his scientific fiction, such as *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *The First Men in the Moon*, where the inspiration is rather from Edgar Allan Poe than from Jules Verne.

Perhaps his capacity for handling the farcical in a delicate but never finicking manner is as well illustrated in *The Sea Lady* as in anything he has written, though we can imagine how differently Mr. Anstey would have elaborated the delicious incongruities following upon the introduction of a veritable mermaid into domestic life ! Both humorists would make the most of the situation from different points

of view : where Mr. Anstey would be entirely farcical, and delightfully so, Mr. Wells displays what one might call a certain philosophic restraint. He is indeed a laughing philosopher, and in his essays especially "the marriage of wit with wisdom" is admirably illustrated. *Certain Personal Matters*, published originally in 1897, is a collection of such miscellaneous writings in which Mr. Wells the humorist may be studied to advantage.

In *Mankind in the Making* he seriously advanced the proposition that nearly all our well-known authors have been writing too much, and suggested that a national pension scheme should be devised for them. "Few authors but must have felt at times the desire to stop and think, to work out some neglected corner of their minds," he says. "Let us, therefore, pay our authors as much not to write as though they wrote." 'Tis an alluring prospect, and how great would be the desire to become authors under such circumstances, but I am sure no one could wish Mr. Wells to write less, while there may be many who would like him to write a great deal more on the lines of *The Wonderful Visit* and *The Sea Lady*.

The humorous sketch by Mr. Wells here reprinted is taken from *Certain Personal Matters* by permission of the author.

THE POET AND THE EMPORIUM

BY H. G. WELLS

“ I AM beginning life,” he said, with a sigh. “ Great Heavens ! I have spent a day—*a day!*—in a shop. Three bedroom suites and a sideboard are among the unanticipated pledges of our affection. Have you lithia ? For a man of twelve limited editions this has been a terrible day.”

I saw to his creature comforts. His tie was hanging outside his waistcoat, and his complexion was like white pasteboard that has got wet. “ Courage,” said I. “ It will not occur again——”

“ It will,” said he. “ We have to get there again to-morrow. We have—what is it ?—carpets, curtains——”

He produced his tablets. I was amazed. Those receptacles of choice thoughts !

“ The amber sunlight splashing through The leaky—leafy interlacing green,” he read. “ No ! —that’s not it. Ah, here ! Curtains ! Drawing-room—not to cost more than thirty shillings ! And there’s all the Kitchen Hardware ! (Thanks.) Dining-room chairs—query—rush bottoms ? What’s this ? G. L. I. S.—ah ! ‘ Glistening thro’ deeps of glaucophane ’—that’s nothing. Mem. to see can we afford Indian needlework chairs—57s. 6d. It’s dreadful, Bellows ! ”

He helped himself to a cigarette.

"Find the salesman pleasant?" said I.

"Delightful. Assumed I was a spendthrift millionaire at first. Produced in an off-hand way an eighty-guinea bedroom suite—we're trying to do the entire business, you know, on about two hundred pounds. Well—that's ten editions, you know. Came down, with evidently dwindling respect, to things that were still ruinously expensive. I told him we wanted an idyll—love in a cottage, and all that kind of thing. He brushed that on one side, said idols were upstairs in the Japanese Department, and that perhaps we might *do* with a servant's set of bedroom furniture. Do with a set! He was a gloomy man with (I should judge) some internal pain. I tried to tell him that there was quite a lot of middle-class people like myself in the country, people of limited or precarious means, whose existence he seemed to ignore; assured him some of them led quite beautiful lives. But he had no ideas beyond wardrobes. I quite forgot the business of shopping in an attempt to kindle a little human enthusiasm in his heart. We were in a great vast place full of wardrobes, with a remote glittering vista of brass bedsteads—skeleton beds, you know—and I tried to inspire him with some of the poetry of his emporium; tried to make him imagine these beds and things going east and west, north and south, to take sorrow, servitude, joy, worry, failing strength, restless ambition in their impartial embraces. He only turned round to Annie, and asked her if she thought she could *do* with 'enamelled.' But I was quite taken with my

idea—— Where is it? I left Annie to settle with this misanthrope, amidst his raw frameworks of the Homes of the Future.”

He fumbled with his tablets. “ Mats for hall—not to exceed 3s. 9d. . . . Kerbs . . . inquire tiled hearth . . . Ah! Here we are: ‘ Ballade of the Bedroom Suite ’ :—

Noble the oak you are now displaying,
 Subtly the hazel’s grainings go,
 Walnut’s charm there is no gainsaying,
 Red as red wine is your rosewood’s glow ;
 Brave and brilliant the ash you show,
 Rich your mahogany’s hepatite shine,
 Cool and sweet your enamel: But oh!
Where are the wardrobes of Painted Pine?

“ They have ’em in the catalogue at five guineas, with a picture—quite as good they are as the more expensive ones. To judge by the picture.”

“ But that’s scarcely the idea you started with,” I began.

“ Not; it went wrong—ballades often do. The preoccupation of the ‘ Painted Pine ’ was too much for me. What’s this? ‘ N.B.—Sludge sells music stools at——’ No. Here we are (first half un-written) :—

“ White enamelled, like driven snow,
 Picked with just one delicate line.
 Price you were saying is? Fourteen!—No!
Where are the wardrobes of Painted Pine?

“ Comes round again, you see! Then *L’Envoy* :—

“ Salesman, sad is the truth I trow:
 Winsome walnut can never be mine.

Poets are cheap. And their poetry. So
Where are the wardrobes of Painted Pine?

“Prosaic! As all true poetry is, nowadays. But how I tired as the afternoon moved on! At first I was interested in the shopman’s amazing lack of imagination, and the glory of that fond dream of mine—love in a cottage, you know—still hung about me. I had ideas come—like that Ballade—and every now and then Annie told me to write notes. I think my last gleam of pleasure was in choosing the drawing-room chairs. There is scope for fantasy in chairs. Then——”

He took some more whisky.

“A kind of grey horror came upon me. I don’t know if I can describe it. We went through vast vistas of chairs, of hall-tables, of machine-made pictures, of curtains, huge wildernesses of carpets, and ever this cold, unsympathetic shopman led us on, and ever and again made us buy this or that. He had a perfectly grey eye—the colour of an overcast sky in January—and he seemed neither to hate us nor to detest us, but simply to despise us, to feel such an overwhelming contempt for our petty means and our petty lives, as an archangel might feel for an apple-maggot. It made me think. . . .”

He lit a fresh cigarette.

“I had a kind of vision. I do not know if you will understand. The Warehouse of Life, with our Individual Fate hurrying each of us through. Showing us with a covert sneer all the good things that we cannot afford. A magnificent Rosewood love affair, for instance, deep and rich, fitted com-

plete, some hours of perfect life, some acts of perfect self-sacrifice, perfect self-devotion. . . . You ask the price."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Where are the wardrobes of Painted Pine?" I quoted.

"That's it. All the things one might do, if the purse of one's courage were not so shallow. If it wasn't for the lack of that coinage, Bellows, every man might be magnificent. There's heroism, there's such nobility as no one has ever attained to, ready to hand. Any one, if it were not for this lack of means, might be a human god in twenty-four hours. . . . You see the article. You cannot buy it. No one buys it. It stands in the emporium, I suppose, for show—on the chance of a millionaire. And the shopman waves his hand to it on your way to the Painted Pine.

"Then you meet other couples and solitary people going about, each with a gloomy salesman leading. The run of them look uncomfortable; some are hot about the ears and in the spiteful phase of ill-temper; all look sick of the business except the raw new-comers. It's the only time they will ever select any furniture, their first chance and their last. Most of their selections are hurried a little. The salesman must not be kept all day. . . . Yet it goes hard with you if you buy your Object in Life and find it just a 'special line' made to sell. . . . We're all amateurs at living, just as we are all amateurs at furnishing—or dying. Some of the poor devils one meets carry tattered little scraps of paper, and fumble conscientiously with stumpy

pencils. It's a comfort to see how you go, even if you do have to buy rubbish. 'If we have *this* so good, dear, I don't know *how* we shall manage in the kitchen,' says the careful housewife. . . . So it is we do our shopping in the Great Emporium."

"You will have to rewrite your Ballade," said I, "and put all that in."

"I wish I could," said the poet.

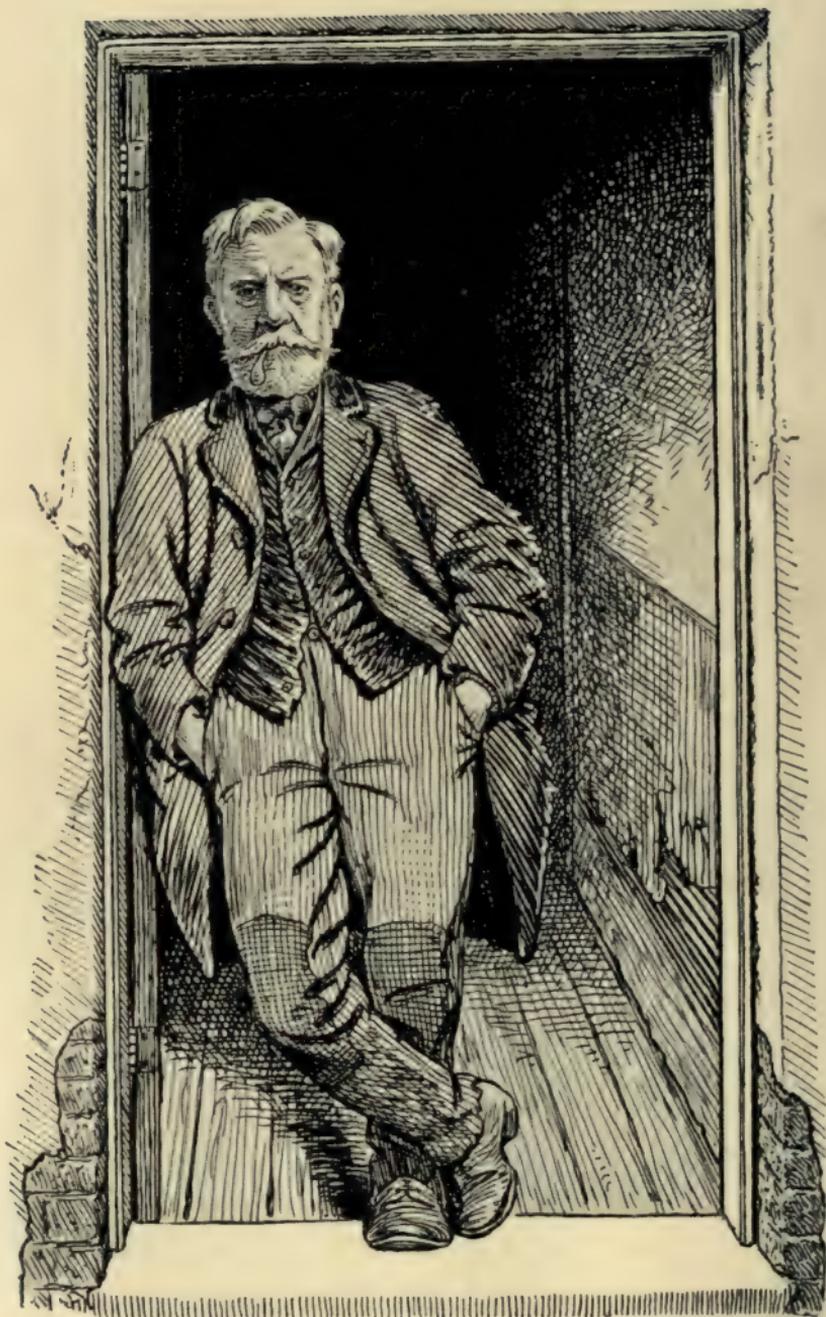
"And while you were having these very fine moods?"

"Annie and the shopman settled most of the furniture between them. Perhaps it's just as well. I was never very good at the practical details of life. . . . Cigarette's out! Have you any more matches?"

"Horribly depressed you are!" I said.

"There's to-morrow. Well, well. . . ."

And then he went off at a tangent to tell me what he expected to make by his next volume of poems, and so came to the congenial business of running down his contemporaries, and became again the cheerful little Poet that I know.



№ 5 JOHN STREET

RICHARD WHITEING

From an original caricature by WILLIAM RALSTON

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XIII

RICHARD WHITEING

FORTY years have passed since Mr. Richard Whiteing made his first appeal to the public as a humorist pure and simple—his first and last. For though he is surely in the very forefront of our novelists who have been inspired by the comic muse and could not be ignored in any consideration of humour *in* literature, *Mr. Sprouts: His Opinions* represents his only contribution to humorous literature. It was in 1847 that Mr. Whiteing created this most entertaining character, and since somewhat tardily he has come to fame with *No. 5, John Street*, a book rich in humour and character, we have the double interest of *Mr. Sprouts'* intrinsic merit and its value as the first book of a famous novelist to warrant our turning attention to it in the present work. Moreover, the opportunity of including so engaging a personality as that of Mr. Whiteing in our portrait gallery cannot be allowed to pass.

It is some seven years since I first made his acquaintance, and to a young man of letters it is no small privilege to know Richard Whiteing, for in him are united the sound judgement and mellow humanity of the older school with the alertness of the

new ; humour doubtless has kept his character sweet with the passing of the years and all the dusty days of journalism. The best part of his life was given to journalism ; for long years he toiled through the midnight hours as a leader-writer on the *Daily News*, and not until his success with *No. 5, John Street*, did he shake himself free from the thralldom of daily journalism. Yet his journalistic experience had much to do with the making of *No. 5, John Street*, for it brought to Mr. Whiteing the knowledge of how to interest readers. "The first desire of all writers is to be read," he observes, and the first essential thereto is the ability to be interesting. That faculty may be acquired, certainly cultivated, and there is no better apprenticeship than the need of having to make oneself interesting every day to the readers of a newspaper on any subject under the sun that can be treated or touched within the space of a column. No amount of journalistic experience, however, would secure to a man that charming gift of humour which is Mr. Whiteing's most marked characteristic. Here we have something direct from Nature. Yet have the exigencies of journalism affected it in some degree.

Mr. Whiteing's quaint and strongly individual style owes something to the demand for condensed thought which every leader-writer has to answer. And, concerning style, surely never was Buffon's dictum more applicable than in this case. "Style is the man." To know Richard Whiteing is to follow in the spoken word the study of a style which, written, had first beguiled in *No. 5*, or more luckily, in *The Island*, which appeared ten years earlier,

and brought its author neither fame nor fortune, though vastly inferior books have done both.

There is a charming, indescribable savour about Mr. Whiteing's style: the sharp turn of a phrase, the quick allusion to some far-off but entirely apposite thought, the fondness for similes from the classics, the happy introduction of archaic expressions—all these give to his writings a most engaging individuality. It is sad to think of such splendid literary work having been squandered for years in the editorial columns of a daily paper, in whose forgotten files it lies securely buried. Not only so, but much of Mr. Whiteing's best journalistic writing was usually attributed to Mr. Andrew Lang, who boasts a "style" no doubt, but one greatly inferior to that of the author of *No. 5, John Street*. His written expression is precisely his manner of speech. The same elements are present and the same charm is there. His conversation is rich in allusiveness: an hour or two with him is as good as an afternoon's browsing in a well-stocked library.

Concerning the novel on which Mr. Whiteing's fame may be said to rest, there is much that is interesting to record. It is as unlike any other novel of the day as it well could be; almost innocent of plot, with scarcely anything of a story to tell, it holds the reader by sheer charm of style, trueness of portraiture, and warmth of humour. His is assuredly the very salt of humour, so sincere is his sympathy with lowly life. There is also something of the genial cynic in his composition.

Whimsical as the scheme of the book, with its

diverting appeal to the governor of that mythical isle of the South Seas, may appear, there was nothing inconsequential about its working out. It was written with that best of art which conceals art, and it was only after experimenting in another direction that Mr. Whiteing finally hit upon his ingenious plan for getting an aristocratic West Ender into the very heart of the East End not merely as an inquisitive slummer, but as a rigid experimentalist, who would try to earn his food before he ate it, and under the precise conditions in which fate has compelled millions of our poor to live. The book was more than half written in a totally different way, when the author decided to start it all over again, and he is afraid to say how many years he was about the writing of it.

Every chapter was carefully planned before it took shape under his pen. The period to be covered by each instalment was noted in actual dates, so that the action should be correct in every detail. The house which served as the model for *No. 5* was roughly sketched out, each flat apportioned to its respective use, every room labelled with the name of its imaginary occupant ; indeed, Mr. Whiteing will show you a bulky volume of notes, ten times larger than the finished work, wherein are gathered together the data on which he worked. On this page is a striking phrase heard from a Hooligan, on another is pasted the menu of a princely banquet. Here are some newspaper cuttings that shed a sidelight on the character of a real, live Sir Marmaduke Ridler, there some further scraps respecting a Low Covey and a Tilda of real life. Every novelist has his own method : this is part of Mr. Whiteing's.

The intimate knowledge of slum-life which his great book discloses was not obtained, however, by any such plan as he suggests in *No. 5* ; it is the result of many years of observation in the poorer localities of London, to which he was drawn by the wonder that stirred within his soul when he contemplated the strange inequalities of life, the mysteries of Providence.

In Richard Whiteing we have thus a realist who is also an idealist. He writes of the things he has seen, the things he knows, and by the very perfection of his pictures, especially where the light and shade is marked—and that is to say in every page of his book—he proves himself a true idealist, no prating visionary.

It is simply because he is no mere realist for the sake of realism that *No. 5, John Street*, is a triumph, a work of enduring merit, whereas *The Record of Badalia Herodsfoot* and *Tales of Mean Streets* are cleverly dismal productions which nobody would care to read a second time, and few would be the better for reading once. It is not enough to see misery and write faithfully of it. That is not the way to produce a classic of the slums. The mind of the humorist is the best of all endowments to the man who would write of the life of the poor ; for it implies sympathy, and it means that the result will not be merely to sadden, or nauseate, but to add oil to the lamp of hope which, low flicker as it may, is never quenched for the poorest of humanity. All true humour is surcharged with an abiding love of humanity, and contemporary literature possesses no better example of that than may be found in *No. 5, John Street*.

I have necessarily dwelt chiefly on Mr. Whiteing's most notable work in fiction, but *The Island* or *The Yellow Van* might have equally engaged one's consideration, as he is in nowise a "one book" man. To illustrate his humour, however, I shall turn to none of the books mentioned, but, as indicated at the outset, to his solitary work of the avowedly comic order. In the 'sixties Mr. Whiteing made his first hit in journalism as a contributor to the *Evening Star*, in whose columns he wrote the series of satirical papers on political and social topics afterwards collected and published in book form as *Mr. Sprouts* by John Camden Hotten, a publisher who specialized in works of humour. Mr. Whiteing was twenty-six years of age at the time, but the book is eminently *sui generis*, and in its successor of more than thirty years later there are many touches which bring *Mr. Sprouts* to mind when reading *No. 5, John Street*. The former is conceived on lines as quaint as the latter. Dedicated to Robert Coningsby in a most characteristic epistle, the author observes: "At the beginning of the year 1866 the town was startled by Mr. Greenwood's account of his 'Night in a Work-House'; you then, it appears, suggested that as middle class had been to see low class, low class should return the visit—hence the 'Night in Belgrave Square,' the first of this series." This gives the notion of the book in a few words, and the first chapter, which is here reprinted, gives an excellent specimen of the humour of *Mr. Sprouts*; it stands the test of forty years wonderfully well.

MR. SPROUTS IN BELGRAVE SQUARE

BY RICHARD WHITEING

It was jest about half past seven as near as a toucher, last Toosday night, when a little barrer might ha' bin' seen a drivin' round the corner of a street leadin' into Belgrave Square.

The cove as druv it stops the donkey just afore they turned into the square, and another cove jumps down, as the sayin' is, in a twinklin'; he was togged for all the world like a head waiter in a music-hall; he'd got on a swaller-tailed coat, a slap-up pair of dark kickseys, and a hat with no shine on it as had been kivered with black cloth; likewise he wore gloves carried in his hand.

"How do I look, Jem?" says he.

"Slap up, old feller," says the other. "Good-bye; gee hup, Neddy," he says to the donkey, and druv off. The cove in the black garments was me; and I'll tell you how it all come about.

I'm a costermonger, I am, as can yarn a pound and pay his rent and things, with here-an'-there a one; but what signifies boastin'? Well, I give a bit of a party on Christmas Day, not half a bad 'un, though I say it. We'd done pretty well in greens and lighter wegetables durin' the week, tho' pertaters wasn't much account; howsumever, we wasn't

hard up for a sov. There was just a nice lot on us. First there was me and the old woman and the seven children; then there was the old lady's sister and her husband as is in trade, keepin' a greengrocer's shop; and a young feller my daughter's keepin' company with, and his second cousin what's under Government, bein' a lamplighter; and there was gran'mother and Mrs. Beccles rentin' my back kitching, by the same token bein' three weeks behind in her rent, and never mind, says I, arsk her hup, and let bygones be bygones on Christmas Day.

Well, arter we'd had the goose and the pudden, the old lady puts the gin and chestnuts on the table and some more coke on the fire, and the young 'uns gits into the corner and has a game at lickin' the colour orff some pretty sojers and sailors I bought 'em at the sweetstuff-shop in the court, made artificial like; the two young people was a havin' a spell of talk together about goin' in a van to Hampton Court, and the rest on us was a sittin' round the fire a talkin' to one another.

"Well," ses I, liftin' o' my glass up, "here's God bless us all, them as is enjoyin' o' theirselves, and them as ain't."

"Amen to that," says the lamplighter. "Lord," he ses, casual like, "it's hard to think there's many a poor creeter without so much as a old jacket to pawn for a toothful o' juniper this day."

"Ah! and many as has got a drop," says the old ooman, "can't enjoy it; what with natterin' and worritin' o' theirselves with this and that."

"Well, I fancy you're wrong there, old lady," I

says. "Every cove as has brass enough to get a bit or a drop must be jolly in the natur' o' things."

"Not a bit of it," says Brockey, the greengrocer. "If you was to see the gentlefolks together," ses he—he's waited on 'em, with his hands kivered with white kid gloves, and pumps tied with ribbon, which is quite the gentleman hisself—"not a bit of it," ses he. "If you was to see 'em a moonin' and manderin' about at what they calls their parties, it 'ud give yer the neuralgy. The fust party I went to they all seemed so cold like they give me the spasms : and I was obliged to take a drop o' summat afore I could fetch my breath, as the saying is."

I don't know how I come to think on it, but I broke out all of a sudden with a "Lor! I'd give the price of a farden cake to go and see the poor miserable things."

"Would yer?" says he, snappin' me up in a minnit; "I'm goin' to be a nextra down in the kitching at a real slap-up affair in Belgrave Square next week, and if you'd fancy to go," he says, "I'll put yer up to a dodge as 'll parse yer in."

"Get a order for two while you're about it," ses the old lady.

"It ain't done with orders," he says; "this is it. There's a very curus old gentleman, a major from Indy, and his wife, which hates one another like pison, and is always a squabblin' together when they think nobody's there to hear 'em; but afore company they make believe to be the most lovin' in the world. Well, they gives a dinner party now and then, and he's got his set o' people he likes and she's got hern, and he hates her set and she can't

abear his'n ; so this time they've cum to a sort of agreement together. The major ses, ses he, 'Dam it, madam,' he ses, 'let's divide the honour,' he ses. 'We are goin' to ask fourteen,' he ses, 'and I'll get seven of my set, and you shall get seven of yours ; I shan't ask no questions, and don't you neither. If you'll be civil to my friends, I'll be the same to yourn, and nobody 'll be none the wiser.' 'Very well,' says she, 'agreed, on condition,' she says, 'that you don't ask to superwise my list, or grumble if I asks people you don't know.' 'Not a bit of it,' he says. 'I don't care who you ask. Only, don't you bother yourself about my people, either.' So that's the agreement ; now, as I've happened to hear from the footman as how one on 'em have sent to say he can't come, why, I'll tog you up like a lord, and you can easy slip in and take his place."

"Yes," says my old lady, "but then they'll find him out."

"How?" says he: "the old lady 'll think he's a friend o' the major's, and the major 'll think he belongs to the old lady's set, and they'll both be awful civil on that account, and if he keeps hisself quiet he'll pull through it rattlin'," says he.

Well, I felt a little narvous at first, but havin' talked so pert like about goin' I didn't like to draw back. So we settled as how he should come round and see to my dressin' on Tuesday afternoon, and then, when the time came, Jem should drive me round in the barrer.

I've told yer how he druv me round in the barrer, and about his sayin' "Gee hup, Neddy," and leavin' me alone.

I must say it timied me a little when I found myself all by myself, and see a policeman, too, near the railins. But I says to myself, a thinkin' of the donkey, "Gee hup," I says, and with that I turns the corner, and walks up to the door of the house.

I expected to find a lot o' people waitin' outside, but there warn't nary one, and not so much as a song to be heard from a winder—so I gives a knock.

The door was opened like lightnin' by as big and fine a feller as ever stepped in shoe. He'd got on a snuff-coloured bob-tail coat and weskit, with brass buttons and plush breeches, and stockings that looked for all the world like silk; so I jest puts down my hand to try, and touched his calf, and, by George, I found they was—real Chaney silk.

"You're a going it, you are," says I, pleasant like, but he gave me a hawful look; and then I remembered that Brockey had said something about keeping quiet; so I walked past him, and was just goin' into the parlour. "Here," he says—"here," a callin' after me, "I'll jest take your hat and coat," says he.

"Right you are," I says, glad to see him come round again to his temper. "It's a narsty sort o' night," ses I. "How's master?" wishing to show 'im that I bore no malice, and it was all right. But he only stared at me more than ever, and at last he said, "What name shall I say, sir, if you please?"

I was just a goin' to pop out Sprouts; but I remembered what Brockey had told me. So I says, stately like, to show I could be up in the sterrups too, "Look in the right-hand pocket of the coat, young man, and you'll find it written on a card, and there's

tuppence in the other pocket," I ses, wishin' to do the gentleman, "for a drink o' beer for yourself."

So he rummages out a card, and he marches straight upstairs with it ; not so much as sayin' With your leaf or By your leaf.

At last, when he'd got to the top of the first flight, he turns round, and says he to me, rather contemptuous, says he, "Come this way if you please."

"Who taught you manners?" says I, now fairly bilin' over, "a walkin' up stairs before your betters, young man." But I never seed such a spiritless chap ; he only give me another look ; so I walked up.

The place was clean enough ; but there was doosed little furniture in the hall ; just a hard sort of chair without a bit of stuffin' on it and a largish mat. The stairs was nice, and the carpets soft like to the feet in going up. At last we gits to the fust floor, and the feller opens a door and sings out the readin' on the card, "Horatio Weer de Weer."

I felt a sort o' chokin' at the throat, and a coldness too, more especial as I wore a high starched collar and a little tuppenny-'a'penny white rag twisted round my neck instead of the old belcher. Howsomever, in I goes.

Well, the room was a big 'un, and looked awful uncomfortable ; I never was in such a dreary place in all my life. There was a lot of little chairs in it as wasn't big enough for anybody over seven stone to sit down upon ; and they'd taken the bed out of the back room, and made it all into one, with open doors. When I got in there was about a dozen

or fourteen people a sittin' on 'em, and a sort of cheeky little fellow with white hair standin' in the middle of the room.

I guessed he was the major, tho' he hadn't so much as his eperlettes on, bein' dressed in black and white, like me and the rest.

Anybody with half a eye could ha' seen the major didn't know nothin' o' me, though he didn't like to show it. So, with a sort o' sidelong glance at his wife, which she didn't seem to twig, he makes me a very perlite bow.

Brockey's last words to me was "You've got nothing to do but bow," says he, "and you'll pull through all right."

So I gives the major a reg'lar scraper, and then I sits down on a sort of sofa bedstead in the middle of the room, and I takes a look round. I never see such a lot of cures in my life as the rest of the people was. There was six or seven females, old and young, and ne'er a decent cap amongst the lot. As for dresses I can't talk about 'em, for of all the skimped up things as ever I see they was the wust; just for all the world like my little gal's frocks when she was turnin' o' nine. There was skirt enough in 'em to have made harf-a-dozen bodies over and over again. But I suppose they'd all bin bought by contract of a slop dressmaker, and she'd made some mistake in the cut of the lower part and took it out by scampin' the rest. Their poor arms, too, was bare and cold, and they'd tried to keep their chilly fingers warm by puttin' on their gloves.

One on 'em, rather a old party, had a eyeglass

and a hooky nose, and she got a starin' at me with it till I felt rather uncomfortable.

The men was just as bad. They was dressed for all the world like a batch of undertakers, and precious miserable it was. Tight shining boots with the huppers made of hile-cloth, and cut away coats with nothing to keep yer warm round the waist and lines, then the hair o' most o' the great gabies was parted down the middle, and likewise a eyeglass too.

The room was furnished hawful shabby ; there was ne'er a cupboard in it, and as for chaney ornaments on the mantlepice, not a single one. There was a good fire enough blazin' in the grate, but devil a kettle o' bilin' water on it for a drop o' grog, and ne'er a dog, or cat, or child to be seen in all the blessed place. This don't soot my fireplace, ses I to myself, but without speakin'.

I think they was all as frightened o' one another as I was o' them, for they talked so low it was more like a buzz, and they hadn't the pluck to laugh out loud, but only grinned. As for me, I said nothin', rememberin' what Brockey had told me, till an oldish cove come out and posted hisself near me, and begun a talkin' about pictures and heart.

" I seldom touches it," I ses, " except once in a way with sage and onions ; and I ain't verry nutty on it then." Arter that he walked away.

I was a gettin' awful hungry. At last a little fat sort of a covey throws the door open and looks at the major, and he says, " Dinner ! " Then the major's old lady begun bobbin' about a askin'

of everybody to take everybody's arm. I was just a goin' to make up to a sweetly pretty little thing when the old gal says to me, says she, "Will you take Lady Hawkey, Mr. de Weer?" says she; and afore I could say Jack Robinson the old party with the hook nose and the eyeglass puts her harm in mine, and in this here stoopid fashion we galli-wanted downstairs.

Well, at last we got into a big room where I couldn't see a blessed thing to eat but flowers and candles, which was stuck all over the table and looked very pretty, but wasn't satisfyin'. Some on 'em took their gloves orf, fearin' to sile 'em, I suppose, but I made up my mind to show 'em as the value of a pair o' kids was nothin' to me, so I kept mine on.

Presently in walks that imperdent feller, quite demure, as took my coat, along with two or three more fellows, and he says to me, "What soup 'll you take?"

"Pea," ses I, in a low tone.

"We ain't got it, sir," he says.

"Then bring me a basin o' mutton broth," ses I, quite haughty.

The old woman with the eyeglass gave me a look but said nothin'. Whether he heard me or not I can't say; but, howsumever, he brought me a plate with the bottom just kivered by some sort o' brown stuff I never see before. I thought I wouldn't make a rumpus, so I fell to. But I see him in a corner a whisp'rin' to one of his mates and lookin' at me.

"It's a capital drop o' soup," ses I to the old lady at last, not likin' to seem glum.

What she said I don't know, for I was too busy with the spoon. When the young feller come round I gives him the plate, and ses, "I'll take a drop more."

Cunnin' like he tries to do me again. So says he, as if he was hard of hearin', "Turbot, sir, or salmon, did you say?"

Says I, still low, but betwixt my teeth like, says I, "Soup, you lubber." I thought it was gettin' high time to stop him dictatin' to me in his own master's house.

So he gave a nasty sort of a smile, and brought me another spoonful of the brown.

Well, when I was eatin' of it, the old woman stared at me that bold—I never see the like; and when I advised her to take a drop more she moved her chair a little from me, and never said a single word.

After the soup they brought on lots o' things with crackjaw names, too long for me to remember. Most of the people seemed to know all about 'em. As for me, every time the old major offered me anything I jest bowed to him, and so got on werry well. But that feller behind my chair was spiteful to the last, and seemed to have took a dislike to me the moment I come in the place, as had done no harm to 'im. If ever I turned my head a moment he whipped away my plate like a flash o' lightnin', and there was no such thing as gettin' a good taste of anything flesh or fish. I didn't get a single drop o' gravy, for he allus managed to take it away from me jest as I'd got my knife ready to clear it off the plate.

The rest on 'em was the okkurdest creetures at eatin' as ever I see, rammin' their phawks into their mouths like mad. So I made one more trile to make things pleasant with the old lady. "Mind you don't prick yourself, Mrs. Hawkey," I says, smilin'.

"Pray do not distress yourself on my account," says she, as pleasant as a vinegar-bottle havin' words with a pepper-box.

I was werry nigh garspin', for I hadn't had a drop to drink, so I ses to the feller in the black coat, "I'm thirsty," says I. "What'll you take, sir?" says he. "Anythink you've got in the house," I says; and if he didn't give me a dose of the sourest muck I ever put to my lips, I'm a Dutchman.

So I made up my mind to punch his head just as I was a leavin' of the house.

Well, then the old fellow as had spoke to me on the fust-floor began a talkin' about "fleebottomy," which I suppose is Latten for flower, for it seemed to be all about buds, and plants and the old major says, quite fine:

"That there last lekture o' yourn at the Institushun," says he, "was werry instruktiv' and even entertainin'."

They've got a way o' talkin' that's somehow different from ourn, but, if you're sharp, you soon ketch hold on it.

"It would ha' bin more so," says the other one, pat enuff with his arnser, "if I'd 'ad the advarntij of your Injun experience."

That reg'lar tickled the old major; he quite seemed to warm up like, and begun chattin' away

a good 'un. His talk hadn't much to do with flow'rs as I could see, but it was about everything else, and I suppose it's all fleebottomy. It was all about Injer, and punkers, and doolies, and helefants, and tigers, and ragers—some sort o' wild beast I ain't seen, but I thought I'd show him he hadn't got it all his own way.

“I've been with the tigers myself, major,” says I, “leastways I've seen 'em in the Sologikal Gardins.”

This was the first thing I'd spoken out loud, and it reg'lar turned the larf agin the major. All on 'em tittered a bit except him and his wife, and they looked quite wild and savij at one another, as if they was arskin' questions.

“One o' their rows agin, I suppose,” says I, and felt glad I'd got over my shyness, and come out so well.

Then in comes all them idle fellers and strips off two slips o' cloth like round towels, and kivers the table with a lot of wine in decanters and all sorts o' fruit; as for me, I was dyin' for a smoke, but I see ne'er a pipe nor a bit o' baccy in the place.

The old major's wife was more spiteful than I thought, for arfter lookin' awful evil at me she gives a kind o' glance at the rest on 'em, and blowed if the stuck-up creatures, old hook-nose and all, didn't sail right out o' the room. All the better, thinks I to myself. Let 'em stay there till I sends for 'em, if our company ain't good enuff for 'em, thinks I, they'll come back soon enuff after their tantrums. Now I hope we shall have a song, I says, and I begun a thinkin' of the toasts I should give 'em if they put me in the chair.

But no—ne'er a hammer, or a chairman, or a song. They all talked away like schoolboys over their lessons instead—about gettin' into Parliament and huntin' and heart and somethin' about last month's review in Edinburgh, that one old fellow said he'd seen that mornin', and nobody laughed or seemed to twig the blunder, except me; but I didn't say anythink, for I didn't want to make the old boy look like a fool. As for most o' their talk, it was such a pack o' stuff and nonsense that I ain't got the 'art to put it down.

Once or twice some on 'em had a drop o' wine together, and bobbed their heads at one another like heathens without so much as sayin' I looks towards yer, or Here's luck.

By and by the old feller gits up, tired o' waitin', I suppose, so says he, "Let's go and jine the ladies," ses he, as if his sperrit was reg'lar broken. I'd harf a mind to say—Let 'em wait till they get out o' their tantrums; but I thought o' Brockey, and I didn't.

If my old lady was to see me give in like this, thinks I, I should be a mere plaything in my own place.

Well, we went upstairs. Some other time I'll tell yer about that second part in the drawin'-room, but I ain't got the heart to do it now. I sit it out for an hour or two, till I felt as twittery as a kitten, and then I come away.

The barrer was waitin' for me round the corner, Jem, and you was there. Never shall I forget the taste of that drop o' porter yer brought out of the can, or the relish o' that lump o' bread and the

onion you give me from the pocket of yer coat. For yer own privit year, old fellow, I got many things as I can't let out to the public; but this I will say, that unless I'd seed it myself, I couldn't ha' believed as creeturs wi' money in their pokkets and eddication could be so miserable. They're deservin' of all the pity of them as knows the blessin' of a good meal, pleasant conversation, and a easy way o' meetin' one's friends, and, tho' p'r'aps I may larf at 'em along wi' you, I'd be the fust person to put a trifle down for 'em at any public meetin', or get up a friendly lead or a sing-song to purvide the poor things with a Christian meal o' wittles and make their miserable lives more comfortabler and 'appy.



ISRAEL ZANGWILL

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XIV

ISRAEL ZANGWILL

PERHAPS some one will suggest that Mr. Israel Zangwill is a humorist only as one whom "we loved long since and lost awhile," because of late years—indeed, for more than a decade—little that is entirely humorous has come from his pen. On the other hand, he has never been a humorist who inspires affection: he is somewhat too intellectual for that. There is no novelist who, with greater justice, takes himself and his art more seriously than Mr. Zangwill has done since, in 1892, he wrote that masterpiece of modern fiction, *Children of the Ghetto*; yet, as he began his literary career as a humorous writer and is beyond question one of our masters of epigrammatic wit and intellectual *point-de-vice*, he may with sufficient reason be included in this series; and any survey of modern humour that failed to take account of the brilliant author of *The Bachelors' Club* would be surely incomplete. Moreover, despite the high and serious purpose of all his later work, his attendant imps of mirth are ever at his elbow, and we find him with welcome frequency acknowledging their presence in the writing of even his soberest stories.

Born of Jewish parents in London forty-three years ago, Mr. Zangwill shares the distinction of such celebrities as Napoleon and Wellington in not knowing his birthday. He is aware that the year was 1864, but the day would seem to have been "wropt in mystery." He has, however, got over the difficulty by choosing his own birthday, and for this purpose he selected February 14. "It is not merely," he says, "that St. Valentine's Day is the very day for a novelist," but as he has a dog "whose pedigree has been more carefully kept" than his own, and it bears the name of Valentine from having been born on the saint's day, master and dog can celebrate their birthday together. This canine favourite he has thus addressed in verse :

Accept from me these birthday lines—
If every dog must have his day,
How bless'd to have St. Valentine's!

But, asked on one occasion to give the date of his birthday, Mr. Zangwill replied, expressing his inability to do so, and suggested that the inquirer might "select some nice convenient day, a roomy one, on which he would not be jostled by bigger men."

As he is eminently original in his personality as well as in his work, it is not surprising to know that during his boyhood his favourite reading was not found among the conventional classics, but that he loved to rove in the strange realms of fiction created by writers whose names will be found nowhere in the annals of bookland; the fabricators of cheap boys' stories to wit. Yet his scholastic training was eminently respectable, as he was the most successful scholar of his time at the Jews' Free School in

Spitalfields, and before he was twenty-one he had graduated B.A. at the London University with triple honours.

His literary career began obscurely enough with a prize story in *Society*, a weekly paper dead these many years. He was then just under seventeen years of age, engaged as a pupil-teacher in East London, at which occupation he continued for some years, his first real literary venture being made in collaboration with a fellow-teacher, Mr. Louis Cowen, and the joint product of their labour was that whimsical romance of politics *The Premier and the Painter*, published in 1888. The book, though full of most sparkling humour, was not a success: "It did not even help either of us one step up the ladder; never got us a letter of encouragement, nor a stroke of work," says Mr. Zangwill. But although its failure damped somewhat his youthful enthusiasm for authorship, and the writing of a few serious poems, some short stories, and a long essay on religion, together with assisting in the production of a few playlets, represented all his literary work for the next two or three years, he did in 1890 throw up his scholastic engagement and contrive to make an existence out of journalism. In this connexion his editorship of the wittiest rival to *Punch*, the short-lived *Ariel*, represented his most notable work.

In the pages of that sprightly little weekly, of which I cherish the most agreeable memories, there appeared some minor portions of the book that in 1891 brought him immediate success both in England and America. This was *The Bachelors' Club*, which would have appeared as one of the volumes in "The

Whitefriars Library of Wit and Humour" along with Mr. Barry Pain's *In a Canadian Canoe*, had not the editor of that series in his wisdom declined to include it, with the result that the same publishers (since defunct) issued it as an independent book. Trying five years later to extract the moral of his own experience for the benefit of fellow-scribblers, the author declared it to be this: "That if you are blessed with some talent, a great deal of industry, and an amount of conceit mighty enough to enable you to disregard superiors, equals and critics, as well as the fancied demands of the public, it is possible, without friends, or introductions, or bothering celebrities to read your manuscripts, or cultivating the camp of log-rollers, to attain, by dint of slaving day and night for years during the flower of your youth, to a fame infinitely less widespread than a prize-fighter's and a pecuniary position which you might with far less trouble have been born to."

It was inevitable that *The Old Maids' Club* should have followed the other, and for diverting cynicism it was a worthy successor; but these two entertaining volumes represent the sum total of his work in which he is avowedly a humorist, for *Children of the Ghetto* appeared within a few months of *The Old Maids' Club* in 1892, and the author has never again returned to the manner of his earliest books, though he has written many short stories full of the most delightful comedy.

As a humorist Mr. Zangwill may be said to delight in a sort of intellectual by-play; often, indeed, the nimble pursuit of an idea suggested by the chance use of a word—as, for example, "Here we all drew

a breath, and O'Roherty a champagne cork"—the entertaining quality of his writing springs from this more frequently than from such broadly comic, but human, effects as Mr. Jerome or Mr. Jacobs makes use of. The root idea of *The Bachelors' Club* is, of course, comic enough as the basis of a series of amusing stories: a coterie of men banded together against marriage, who, one by one, fall away from their ideals and sink into the ranks of married men. But the book is humorous not so much because of the episodes it contains as by reason of the ingenuity of the author's style, whereby incidents that might otherwise be commonplace derive an aspect of humour from the way they are related. Mr. Zangwill is, in fact, more of a wit than a humorist, as I imply by what I have just said; for, instead of interpreting to us, with the sympathetic knowledge of the humorist, certain phases of actual life, he is more apt in projecting his own witty personality into some imaginative episode.

This applies, however, only to his early and avowedly "funny" books. In his novels there is much that is humorous which springs easily and naturally from the real wells of character. *The King of Schnorrers*, for instance, is informed with the very salt of humour, and even in *Ghetto Tragedies* we find true human sympathy and insight expressed in a humorous way—the way that lies parallel to the road of tears. Still more is this the case in *Ghetto Comedies*. I had almost added "of course"; but really there is a sense in which "comedy" and "tragedy" are interchangeable terms; and certainly there is no more reason why the undertone of humour should not run through tragedy

than there is that the undertone of tragedy should not—as it so often is—be heard in comedy. It so happens, however, that I find myself, in the choice of a representative piece of Mr. Zangwill's humour, fixing upon a charming story of his that is midway between the whimsical and the humorous and by that token is peculiarly illustrative of his work. "The Semi-Sentimental Dragon" is published in the collection to which *The King of Schnorrers* gives the title, and is here reproduced by permission of the author and his publisher, Mr. William Heinemann.

Of late years Mr. Zangwill has devoted himself so unsparingly to the Zion movement among the Jews that his books have appeared at unduly long intervals. As a lecturer he has been very well received both in England and America, his remarkable command of witty and epigrammatic speech enabling him to keep audiences in a continual titter of amusement; indeed, I am half persuaded that Zangwill the man, in his natural unaffected conversation, is even more amusing than Zangwill the humorous author. One of the most interesting chapters in the late Major Pond's reminiscences of celebrities introduced by him to the American lecture platform, concerns Mr. Zangwill, whom he found a rather unbusinesslike novelist, but of whom he says, in true Yankee style: "There is good money for him in America whenever he wishes to set aside the time for it; but he will not do it." That was written before Mr. Zangwill went the way of the members of his Bachelors' Club and became a Benedict. Perhaps married life may rid him of some of his old bachelor carelessness! When Major Pond visited him at his

home in London, he asked the novelist if he had saved press notices of his various books. "He took me into the adjoining room," wrote the Major, "and lifted the lid of a trunk which was stuffed full of press cuttings, with the Romeike attachments (there must have been £100 worth). He had been in the habit of throwing them promiscuously into the trunk and pressing them down or stamping on them, until it looked like a trunk packed full of old waste paper or refuse packing material." We can imagine that Mrs. Zangwill will not tolerate this sort of thing, but it suggests a trait of character one can admire: Mr. Zangwill is too honestly engrossed in his literary work to care very much what the critics have to say of him. I know some authors who are not like that!

THE SEMI-SENTIMENTAL DRAGON

BY ISRAEL ZANGWILL

THERE was nothing about the outside of the Dragon to indicate so large a percentage of sentiment. It was a mere everyday Dragon, with the usual squamous hide, glittering like silver armour, a commonplace crested head with a forked tongue, a tail like a barbed arrow, a pair of fan-shaped wings, and four indifferently ferocious claws, one per foot. How it came to be so susceptible you shall hear, and then, perhaps, you will be less surprised at its unprecedented and undragonlike behaviour.

Once upon a time, as the good old chronicler, Richard Johnson, relateth, Egypt was oppressed by a Dragon who made a plaguy to-do unless given a virgin daily for dinner. For twenty-four years the menu was practicable; then the supply gave out. There was absolutely no virgin left in the realm save Sabra, the king's daughter. As $365 \times 24 = 8,760$, I suspect that the girls were anxious to dodge the Dragon by marrying in haste. The government of the day seems to have been quite unworthy of confidence and utterly unable to grapple with the situation, and poor Ptolemy was reduced to parting with the Princess, though even so destruction was

only staved off for a day, as virgins would be altogether "off" on the morrow. So short-sighted was the Egyptian policy that this does not appear to have occurred to anybody. At the last moment an English tourist from Coventry, known as George (and afterwards sainted by an outgoing administration sent to his native borough by the country), resolved to tackle the monster. The chivalrous Englishman came to grief in the encounter, but by rolling under an orange tree he was safe from the Dragon so long as he chose to stay there, and so in the end had no difficulty in despatching the creature; which suggests that the soothsayers and the magicians would have been much better occupied in planting orange trees than in sacrificing virgins. Thus far the story, which is improbable enough to be an allegory.

Now many centuries after these events did not happen, a certain worthy citizen, an illiterate fellow, but none the worse for that, made them into a pantomime—to wit, *St. George and the Dragon*; or, *Harlequin Tom Thumb*. And the same was duly played at a provincial theatre, with a lightly clad chorus of Egyptian lasses, in glaring contradiction of the dearth of such in the fable, and a Sabra who sang to them a topical song about the County Council.

Curiously enough, in private life, Sabra, although her name was Miss on the posters, was really a Miss. She was quite as young and pretty as she looked, too, and only rouged herself for the sake of stage perspective. I don't mean to say she was as beautiful as the Egyptian princess, who was as straight as a cedar and wore her auburn hair in wanton ringlets,

but she was a sprightly little body with sparkling eyes and a complexion that would have been a good advertisement to any soap on earth. But better than Sabra's skin was Sabra's heart, which though as yet untouched by man was full of love and tenderness, and did not faint under the burden of supporting her mother and the household. For instead of having a king for a sire, Sabra had a drunken scene-shifter for a father. Everybody about the theatre liked Sabra, from the actor-manager (who played St. George) to the stage door-keeper (who played St. Peter). Even her understudy did not wish her ill.

Needless, therefore, to say it was Sabra who made the Dragon semi-sentimental. Not in the "book," of course, where his desire to eat her remained purely literal. Real Dragons keep themselves aloof from sentiment, but a stage Dragon is only human. Such a one may be entirely the slave of sentiment, and it was perhaps to the credit of our Dragon that only half of him was in the bonds. The other half—and that the better half—was saturnine and teetotal, and answered to the name of Davie Brigg.

Davie was the head man on the Dragon. He played the anterior parts, waggled the head and flapped the wings and sent gruesome grunts and penny squibs through the "fire-breathing" jaws. He was a dour, middle-aged, but stage-struck Scot, very proud of his rapid rise in the profession, for he had begun as a dramatist.

The rear of the Dragon was simply known as Jimmy.

Jimmy was a wreck. His past was a mystery.

His face was a brief record of baleful experiences, and he had the aspirates of a gentleman. He had gone on the stage to be out of the snow and the rain. Not knowing this, the actor-manager paid him nine-pence a night. His wages just kept him in beer money. The original Sabra tamed two lions, but perhaps it was a greater feat to tame this half of a Dragon.

Jimmy's tenderness for Sabra began at rehearsal, when he saw a good deal of her, and felicitated himself on the fact that they were on in the same scenes. After a while, however, he perceived this to be a doleful drawback, for whereas at rehearsal he could jump out of his skin and breathe himself and feast his eyes on Sabra when the Dragon was disengaged, on the stage he was forced to remain cramped in darkness while Ptolemy was clowning or St. George executing a step dance. Sabra was invisible, except for an odd moment or so between the scenes when he caught sight of her gliding to her dressing-room like a streak of discreet sunshine. Still he had his compensations; her dulcet notes reached his darkness (mellowed by the painted canvas and the tin scales sewn over it), as the chant of the unseen cuckoo reaches the woodland wanderer. Sometimes, when she sang that song about the County Council, he forgot to wag his tail.

Thus was Love blind, while Indifference in the person of Davie Brigg looked its full through the mask that stood for the monster's head. After a bit Jimmy conceived a mad envy of his superior's privileges; he longed to see Sabra through the Dragon's mouth. He was so weary of the little

strip of stage under the Dragon's belly, which, even if he peered through the breathing-holes in the patch of paint-disguised gauze let into its paunch, was the most he could see. One night he asked Davie to change places with him. Davie's look of surprise and consternation was beautiful to see.

"Do I hear aricht?" he asked.

"Just for a night," said Jimmy, abashed.

"But d'ye no ken this is a speakin' part?"

"I did—not—know—that," faltered Jimmy.

"Where's your ears, mon?" inquired Davie sternly. "Dinna ye hear me growlin' and grizzlin' and squealin' and skirlin'?"

"Y-e-s," said Jimmy. "But I thought you did it at random."

"Thocht I did it at random!" cried Davie, holding up his hands in horror. "And mebbe also ye thocht onybody could do 't!"

Jimmy's shamed silence gave consent also to this unflinching interpretation of his thought.

"Ah weel!" said Davie, with melancholy resignation, "this is the artist's reward for his sweat and labour. Why, mon, let me tell ye, ilka note is not ainly timed but modulatit to the dramatic centerest o' the moment, and that I hae practised the squeak hours at a time wi' a bagpiper. Tak' my place, indeed! Are ye fou again, or hae ye tint your senses?"

"But you could do the words all the same. I only want to see for once."

"And how d'ye think the words should sound, coming from the creature's belly? And what should ye see! You should nae ken where to go, I warrant.

Come, I'll spier ye. Where d'ye come in for the fight with St. George—is it R 2 E or L U E ? ”

“ L U E,” replied Jimmy feebly.

“ Ye donnered auld runt ! ” cried Davie triumphantly. “ 'Tis neither one nor t'other. 'Tis R C. Why, ye're capable of deein' upstage instead of down! Ye'd spoil my great scene. And ye are to remember I wad bear the wyte for 't, for naebody but our two sel's should ken the truth. Nay, nay, my mon. I hae my responsibeelities to the management. Ye're all verra weel in a subordinate position, but dinna ye aspire to more than beseems your abeelities. I am richt glad ye spoke me. Eh, but it would be an awfu' thing if I was taken bad and naebody to play the part. I'll warn the manager to put on an understudy betimes.”

“ Oh, but let *me* be the understudy, then,” pleaded Jimmy.

Davie sniffed scornfully.

“ 'Tis a braw thing, ambeetion,” he said, “ but there's a proverb about it ye ken, mebbe.”

“ But I'll notice everything you do, and exactly how you do it ! ”

Davie relented a little.

“ Ah, weel,” he said cautiously, “ I'll bide a wee before speaking to the manager.”

But Davie remained doggedly robust, and so Jimmy still walked in darkness. He often argued the matter out with his superior, maintaining that they ought to toss for the position—head or tail. Failing to convince Davie, he offered him fourpence a night for the accommodation, but Davie saw in this extravagance evidence of a determined design

to supplant him. In despair Jimmy watched for a chance of slipping into the wire framework before Davie, but the conscientious artist was always at his post first. They held dialogues on the subject, while with pantomimic licence the chorus of Egyptian lasses was dancing round the Dragon as if it were a maypole. Their angry messages to each other vibrated along the wires of their prison-house, rending the Dragon with intestinal war. Weave your cloud-wrought Utopias, O social reformer, but wherever men inhabit, there jealousy and disunion shall creep in, and this gaudy canvas tent with its tin roofing was a hotbed of envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Yet Love was there, too—a stranger, purer passion than the battered Jimmy had ever known; for it had the unselfishness of a love that can never be more than a dream, that the beloved can never even know of. Perhaps, if Jimmy had met Sabra before he left off being a gentleman—!

The silent, hopeless longing, the chivalrous devotion yearning dumbly within him, did not stop his beer; he drank more to drown his thoughts. Every night he entered into his part gladly, knowing himself elevated in the zoological scale, not degraded by an assumption that made him only half a beast. It was kind of Providence to hide him wholly away from her vision, so that her bright eyes might not be sullied by the sight of his foulness. None of the grinning audience suspected the tragedy of the hind legs of the Dragon, as, blindly following their leader, they went “galumphing” about the stage. The innocent children marvelled at the monster, in wide-

eyed excitement, unsuspecting even its humanity, much less its double nature ; only Davie knew that in that Dragon there were the ruins of a man and the makings of a great actor !

“ Why are ye sae anxious to stand in my shoon ? ” he would ask, when the hind legs became too obstreperous.

“ I don’t want to be in your shoes ; I only want to see the stage for once.”

But Davie would shake his head incredulously, making the Dragon’s mask wobble at the wrong cues. At last, once when Sabra was singing, poor Jimmy, driven to extremities, confessed the truth, and had the mortification of feeling the wires vibrate with the Scotchman’s silent laughter. He blushed unseen.

But it transpired that Davie’s amusement was not so much scornful as sceptical. He still suspected the tail of a sinister intention to wag the Dragon.

“ Nae, nae,” he said, “ ye shallna get me to swallow that. Ye’re an unco puir creature, but ye’re no sa daft as to want the moon. She’s a bonnie lassie, and I willna be surprised if she catches a coronet in the end, when she makes a name in Lunnon ; for the swells here, though I see a when foolish faces nicht after nicht in the stalls, are but a puir lot. Eh, but it’s a gey grand tocher is a pretty face. In the meanwhile, like a canny girl, she’s settin’ her cap at the chief.”

“ Hold your tongue ! ” hissed the hind legs. “ She’s as pure as an angel.”

“ Hoot-toot ! ” answered the head. “ Dinna leebel the angels. It’s no an angel that lets her

manager give her sly squeezes and soft kisses that are nae in the stage directions."

"Then she can't know he's a married man," said the hind legs hoarsely.

"Dinna fash yoursel'—she kens that full weel and a thocht or two more. Dod! Ye should just see how she and St. George carry on after my death scene, when he's supposit to ha' rescued her and they fall a-cuddlin'."

"You're a liar!" said the hind legs.

Davie roared and breathed burning squibs and capered about, and Jimmy had to prance after him in involuntary pursuit. He felt choking in his stuffy hot black rollicking dungeon. The thought of this bloated sexagenarian faked up as a *jeune premier*, pawing that sweet girl, sickened him.

"Dom'd lear yersel!" resumed Davie, coming to a standstill. "I maun believe my own eyes, what they tell me nicht after nicht."

"Then let me see for myself, and I'll believe you."

"Ye dinna catch me like that," said Davie, chuckling.

After that poor Jimmy's anxiety to see the stage became feverish. He even meditated malingering and going in front of the house, but could only have got a distant view, and at the risk of losing his place in an overcrowded profession. His opportunity came at length, but not till the pantomime was half run out and the actor-manager sought to galvanize it by a "second edition," which in sum meant a new lot of the variety entertainers who came on and played copophones before Ptolemy, did card-tricks in the desert, and exhibited trained poodles to the

palm trees. But Davie, determined to rise to the occasion, thought out a fresh conception of his part, involving three new grunts, and was so busy rehearsing them at home that he forgot the flight of the hours and arrived at the theatre only in time to take second place in the Dragon that was just waiting half-manned, at the wing. He was so flustered that he did not even think of protesting for the first few minutes. When he did protest, Jimmy said, "What are you jawing about? This is a second edition, isn't it?" and caracoled around, dragging the unhappy Davie in his train.

"I'll tell the chief," groaned the hind legs.

"All right, let him know you were late," answered the head cheerfully.

"Eh, but it's pit-mirk here. I canna see onything."

"You see I'm no liar. Shall I send a squib your way?"

"Nay, nay, nae larking. Mind the business or you'll ruin my reputation."

"Mind my business, I'll mind yours," replied Jimmy joyously, for the lovely Sabra was smiling right in his eyes. A Dragon divided against itself cannot stand, so Davie had to wait till the beast came off. To his horror Jimmy refused to budge from his shell. He begged for just one "keek" at the stage, but Jimmy replied: "You don't catch me like that." Davie said little more, but he matured a crafty plan, and in the next scene he whispered:—

"Jimmy!"

"Shut up, Davie; I'm busy."

"I've got a pin, and if yeshallna promise to restore

me my rights after the next exit, ye shall feel the taste of it."

"You'll just stay where you are," came back the peremptory reply.

Deep went the pin in Jimmy's rear, and the Dragon gave such a howl that Davie's blood ran cold. Too late he remembered that it was not the Dragon's cue, and that he was making havoc of his own professional reputation. Through the canvas he felt the stern gaze of the actor-manager. He thought of pricking Jimmy only at the howling cues, but then the howl thus produced was so superior to his own, that if Jimmy chose to claim it, he might be at once engaged to replace him in the part. What a dilemma!

Poor Davie! As if it were not enough to be cut off from all the brilliant spectacle, pent in pitchy gloom and robbed of all his "fat" and his painfully rehearsed "second edition" touches. He felt like one of those fallen archangels of the footlights who live to bear Ophelia's bier on boards where they once played Hamlet.

Far different emotions were felt at the Dragon's head, where Jimmy's joy faded gradually away, replaced by a passion of indignation, as with love-sharpened eyes he ascertained for himself the true relations of the actor-manager with his "principal girl." He saw from his coign of vantage the poor modest little thing shrinking before the cowardly advances of her employer, who took every possible advantage of the stage potentialities, in ways the audience could not discriminate from the acting. Alas! what could the gentle little bread-winner do?

But Jimmy's blood was boiling. Davie's great scene arrived: the battle royal between St. George and the Dragon. Sabra, bewitchingly radiant in white Arabian silk, stood under the orange tree, where the pendent fruit was labelled three a penny. Here St. George, in knightly armour clad, retired between the rounds, to be sponged by the fair Sabra, from whose lips he took the opportunity of drinking encouragement. When the umpire cried "Time!" Jimmy uttered inarticulate cries of real rage and malediction, vomiting his squibs straight at the champion's eyes with intent to do him grievous bodily injury. But squibs have their own ways of jumping, and the actor-manager's face was protected by his glittering burgonet.

At last Jimmy and Davie were duly despatched by St. George's trusty sword, Ascalon, which passed right between them and stuck out on the other side amid the frantic applause of the house. The Dragon reeled cumbrously sideways and bit the dust, of which there was plenty. Then Sabra rushed forward from under the orange tree and encircled her hero's hauberk with a stage embrace, while St. George, lifted up his visor, rained kiss after kiss on Sabra's scarlet face, and the "gods" went hoarse with joy.

"Oh, sir!" Jimmy heard the still small voice of the bread-winner protest feebly again and again amid the thunder, as she tried to withdraw herself from her employer's grasp. This was the last straw. Anger and the foul air of his prison wrought up Jimmy to asphyxiation point. What wonder if the Dragon lost his head completely?

Davie will never forget the horror of that moment when he felt himself dragged upwards as by an irresistible tornado, and knew himself for a ruined actor. Mechanically he essayed to cling to the ground, but in vain. The dead Dragon was on its feet in a moment ; in another, Jimmy had thrown off the mask, showing a shock of hair and a blotched crimson face, spotted with great beads of perspiration. Unconscious of this culminating outrage, Davie made desperate prods with his pin, but Jimmy was equally unconscious of the pricks. The thunder died abruptly. A dead silence fell upon the whole house—you could have heard Davie's pin drop. St. George, in amazed consternation, released his hold of Sabra and cowered back before the wild glare of the bloodshot eyes. "How dare you?" rang out in hoarse screaming accents from the protruding head, and with one terrific blow of its right fore-leg the hybrid monster felled Sabra's insulter to the ground.

The astonished St. George lay on his back, staring up vacantly at the flies.

"I'll teach you how to behave to a lady!" roared the Dragon.

Then Davie tugged him frantically backwards, but Jimmy cavorted obstinately in the centre of the stage, which the actor-manager had taken even in his fall, so that the Dragon's hind legs trampled blindly on Davie's prostrate chief, amid the hysterical convulsions of the house.

* * * * *

Next morning the local papers were loud in their praises of the "Second Edition" of *St. George and the Dragon*, especially of the "genuinely burlesque

and topsy-turvy episode in which the Dragon rises from the dead to read St. George a lesson in chivalry ; a really side-splitting conception, made funnier by the grotesque revelation of the constituents of the Dragon, just before it retires for the night."

The actor-manager had no option but to adopt this reading, so had to be hooped and publicly reprimanded every evening during the rest of the season, glad enough to get off so cheaply.

Of course, Jimmy was dismissed, but St. George was painfully polite to Sabra ever after, not knowing but what Jimmy was in the gallery with a brickbat, and perhaps not unimpressed by the lesson in chivalry he was receiving every evening.

Perhaps you think the Dragon deserved to marry Sabra, but that would be really too topsy-turvy, and the sentimental beast himself was quite satisfied to have rescued her from St. George.

But the person who profited most by Jimmy's sacrifice was Davie, who stepped into a real speaking part, emerged from the obscurity of his surroundings, burst his swaddling clothes, and made his appearance on the stage—a thing he could scarcely be said to have done in the Dragon's womb.

And so the world wags.



G. K. CHESTERTON.

From a caricature by MAX BEERBOHM by permission of *The Idler*
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G. K. CHESTERTON

TO be the subject of controversy, receiving on the one hand frantic applause and on the other the most violent abuse, is a sure way to literary success. Hence the remarkable position to which Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton attained in the course of two or three years. So shrewd a critic as Mr. James Douglas positively shouts at the top of his literary voice when writing of Mr. Chesterton: "He is violently, frantically, riotously, ferociously, blasphemously himself," he screams, and goes on in a wild ecstasy of delight endeavouring to express the transports of his soul when it comes in touch with the mighty personality of G. K. Chesterton. Other critics have gone to the opposite extreme, and have denounced the same author for "a cheap, ignorant, and presumptuous young man, possessed of a bowing acquaintance with the outside of a great many books, whose so-called 'paradoxes' are merely attempts to conceal his mental deficiency." To be the subject of such diverse opinions is to be singularly fortunate; but it also implies the possession of a very distinctive and original personality.

Whatever we may think of Mr. Chesterton, we cannot deny him this, the surest distinction of the writing man. But, as the French say, he has the defects of his merits.

I have a suspicion that if the sense of humour were present in an equal degree in all men, and especially in those who criticize our authors, we should have a little less of the praise and vastly less of the blame to which this young and brilliant writer has been subjected. There is no man living who does not believe in his heart that he has a keen sense of humour, and yet for all the loud laughter that crackles throughout our land each day, there is no quality in which the average Briton is more deficient than a true, refined sense of humour. Whatever else Mr. Chesterton may or may not be, he is emphatically a humorist; but his methods are not of the good old British school of broad farce and comic dialogue, and there you have the reason for his mixed reception. Remember, however, that certain worthy contemporary critics of Charles Dickens honestly regarded *Pickwick* as "a low Cockney tale."

It is just about eight years since Mr. Chesterton took seriously to literature, his earliest work being in the shape of reviews for the *Bookman*, and in 1900 his first book, *The Wild Knight and Other Poems*, had a favourable reception, while a collection of fantastic verse, entitled *Greybeards at Play*, and illustrated by himself, also attracted favourable notice, though neither of these books can be described as "successful" in the hackneyed meaning of the word. Two other small works, consisting

of reprinted magazine articles, followed, but it was not until his study of Browning in the "English Men of Letters Series" appeared, in the spring of 1903, and set wagging the tongues of critical quidnuncs in two continents, that he had qualified for the distinction of a "Celebrity at Home" in the *World*. Then in the spring of 1904 came his first novel, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, and in its wake a prodigious froth of critical controversy. Since then we have had from his pen *The Club of Queer Trades*, a series of extravagant stories, somewhat in the manner of *The New Arabian Nights*; his admirable study of Dickens and a volume of collected essays.

His literary career is thus comparatively short, and if there are contemporaries who had made their mark even earlier in life than Mr. Chesterton, there must be few, if any, who at thirty years of age and after only five years of literary activity have found themselves the subject of so much public interest.

Born at Campden Hill, Kensington, in 1874, Mr. Chesterton is of mingled Scots and French parentage. He was educated at St. Paul's School, later studying art at the Slade, and making his first and final effort in business as an employé in a well-known publishing firm.

Up to this point I have achieved something not unworthy of remark—I have said nothing about Mr. Chesterton's being "a master of paradox"! But now this phase of him must receive attention.

A certain modern English writer acquired a reputation for wit by the simple process of taking a familiar proverb and inserting a "not," or giving

a negative twist to an obvious statement, as "A man's happiness depends on the woman he has not married," or "It's love that makes the world stand still." It is easy enough thus to attract attention to one's self by consistently denying the obvious, and finding an element of truth in the denial, but it would be very unfair to Mr. Chesterton to suggest that his talent relies to any great extent on this artificial aid, though it cannot be denied that there is in his work a deliberate device of attempting to prove that the opposite of a generally accepted fact is the true view of it.

All his qualities of paradoxical philosophy, gay humour, and Puck-like fancy are eminent in *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*, which from our present standpoint may be regarded as the most characteristic production of his genius. It recalls a score of famous works without being quite like any of them. But the book is in no sense imitative; it is unadulterated Chesterton, and by that token full of the most excellent entertainment.

The London to which we are introduced is that of a century hence, which in all outward guise is very like the London of to-day. But great changes have been effected in our national institutions; the King is no longer a hereditary ruler: he is chosen because he is an average man. Democracy has culminated in a despotism that is its logical outcome, argued thus by one of the characters:

"Why take the trouble to number and register and enfranchise all the innumerable John Robinsons, when you can take one John Robinson with the same

intellect or lack of intellect as all the rest, and have done with it? The old idealistic Republicans used to found Democracy on the idea that all men were equally intelligent. Believe me, the sane and enduring Democracy is founded on the fact that all men are equally idiotic. Why should we not choose out of them one as much as another? All that we want for Government is a man not criminal and insane, who can rapidly look over some petitions and sign some proclamations. . . . We want one man at the head of our State, not because he is brilliant or virtuous, but because he is one man and not a chattering crowd."

The choice of the Government falls upon a young swell named Auberon Quin, in the Civil Service, who is cursed with too keen a sense of humour, and signalizes his election as King by introducing to the London boroughs all the pomp of mediævalism in the hope of bringing a little colour into the dull diurnal round of London life. The results are, as may be conceived, absurdly comic. One alone of the many Lord High Provosts takes King Auberon's folly seriously, being a man devoid of humour. This is Adam Wayne, who holds sway in Notting Hill. The question of driving a new highway from North Kensington to Westbourne Grove, through the heart of Notting Hill, results in war between the local boroughs, Bayswater joining with North and West Kensington in a martial effort to bring the Napoleon of Notting Hill to terms. How he, with masterly stratagem, successfully met and defeated their armies, is told with the most delicious gravity of manner, and affords the author many

opportunities for satirizing certain of the absurdities of our present social and national life.

At the close of the book the purpose of it all becomes evident; it is a fantastic exposition of the dual nature of the average man. "We are but the two lobes of the brain of a ploughman," says the voice of Adam Wayne, in converse with that of Quin, in the closing scene. "Laughter and love are everywhere. The cathedrals, built in the ages that loved God, are full of blasphemous grotesques. The mother laughs continually at the child, the lover laughs continually at the lover, the wife at the husband, the friend at the friend. Auberon Quin, we have been too long separated; let us go out together. You have a halberd and I a sword; let us start our wanderings over the world. For we are its two essentials." And "they went away together into the unknown world."

Mr. Chesterton, as our laughing philosopher, is at his best in this delightful fantasy. In brief, our author is a humorist simply because he has the same cheerful and childlike outlook on life that we find in the essays and fantasies of R. L. Stevenson, and indeed *The Club of Queer Trades* is a sort of *New Arabian Nights in excelsis*. His critical acumen is not in point, but I for one am ready to bear witness to the sincere pleasure I have derived from his joyous humour, which is the natural and welcome expression of a buoyant and optimistic personality well pleased with himself and this good old world he finds so mightily interesting.

So much that has been written of Mr. Chesterton the man is calculated to make him appear a person

of insufferable affectation, that I shall content myself by saying he is of Johnsonian proportions, delightfully boyish in his enthusiasms, brilliant in his talk to the despair of less nimble wits, and, as I should judge, with more zest in his work, a keener delight in the exercise of his pen, than ever Dr. Johnson had.

As an example of Mr. Chesterton's humorous writing I have chosen with his permission one of his Saturday essays in the *Daily News*.

THE ADVANTAGES OF HAVING ONE LEG

BY G. K. CHESTERTON

A FRIEND of mine who was visiting a poor woman in bereavement and casting about for some phrase of consolation that should not be either insolent or weak, said at last : " I think one can live through these great sorrows and even be the better. What wears one is the little worries." " That's quite right, mum," answered the old woman with emphasis, " and I ought to know, seeing I've had ten of 'em." It is, perhaps, in this sense that it is most true that little worries are most wearing. In its vaguer significance the phrase, though it contains a truth, contains also some possibilities of self-deception and error. People who have both small troubles and big ones have the right to say that they find the small ones the most bitter ; and it is undoubtedly true that the back which is bowed under loads incredible can feel a faint addition to those loads ; a giant holding up the earth and all its animal creation might still find the grasshopper a burden. But I am afraid that the maxim that the smallest worries are the worst is sometimes used or abused by people, because they have nothing but the very smallest worries. The lady may excuse herself for reviling the crumpled rose-leaf by reflect-

ing with what extraordinary dignity she would wear the crown of thorns—if she had to. The gentleman may permit himself to curse the dinner and tell himself that he would behave much better if it were a mere matter of starvation. We need not deny that the grasshopper on man's shoulder is a burden ; but we need not pay much respect to a gentleman who is always calling out that he would rather have an elephant when he knows there are no elephants in the country. We may concede that a straw may break the camel's back, but we like to know that it really is the last straw and not the first.

I grant that those who have serious wrongs have a real right to grumble, so long as they grumble about something else. It is a singular fact that if they are sane they almost always do grumble about something else. To talk quite reasonably about your own quite real wrongs is the quickest way to go off your head. But people with great troubles talk about little ones, and the man who complains of the crumpled rose-leaf very often has his flesh full of the thorns. But if a man has commonly a very clear and happy daily life, then I think we are justified in asking that he shall not make mountains out of molehills. I do not deny that molehills can sometimes be important. Small annoyances have this evil about them, that they can be more abrupt because they are more invisible ; they cast no shadow before, they have no atmosphere. No one ever had a mystical premonition that he was going to tumble over a hassock. William III died by falling over a molehill ; I do not suppose that with all his varied abilities he could have man-

aged to fall over a mountain. But when all this is allowed for, I repeat that we may ask a happy man (not William III) to put up with pure inconveniences, and even make them part of his happiness. Of positive pain or positive poverty I do not here speak. I speak of those innumerable accidental limitations that are always falling across our path—bad weather, confinement to this or that house or room, failure of appointments or arrangements, waiting at railway stations, missing posts, finding unpunctuality when we want punctuality, or, what is worse, finding punctuality when we don't. It is of the poetic pleasures to be drawn from all these that I sing—I sing with confidence because I have recently been experimenting in the poetic pleasures which arise from having to sit in one chair with a sprained foot, with the only alternative course of standing on one leg like a stork—a stork is a poetic simile; therefore I eagerly adopted it.

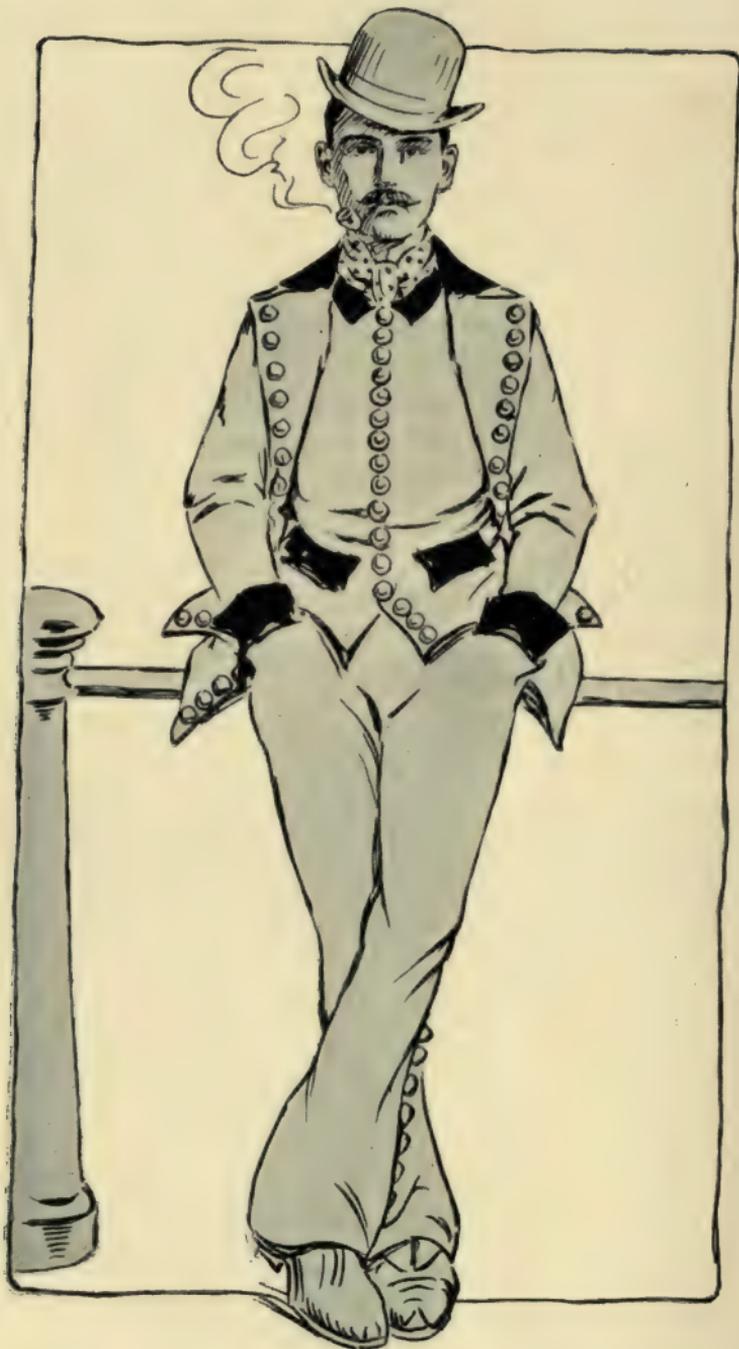
To appreciate anything we must always isolate it, even if the thing itself symbolize something other than isolation. If we wish to see what a house is, it must be a house in some uninhabited landscape. If we wish to depict what a man really is, we must depict a man alone in a desert or on a dark sea sand. So long as he is a single figure he means all that humanity means; so long as he is solitary he means human society; so long as he is solitary he means sociability and comradeship. Add another figure, and the picture is less human—not more so. One is company, two is none. If you wish to symbolize human building, draw one dark tower on the horizon; if you wish to symbolize light, let there be

onestar in the sky. Indeed, all through that strangely lit season which we call our day there is but one star in the sky—a large, fierce star which we call the sun. One sun is splendid; six suns would be only vulgar. One Tower of Giotto is sublime; a row of Towers of Giotto would be only like a row of white posts. The poetry of art is in beholding the single tower; the poetry of nature in seeing the single tree; the poetry of love in following the single woman; the poetry of religion in worshipping the single star. And so, in the same pensive lucidity, I find the poetry of all human anatomy in standing on a single leg. To express complete and perfect leggishness the leg must stand in sublime isolation, like the tower in the wilderness. As Ibsen so finely says, the strongest leg is that which stands most alone.

This lonely leg on which I rest has all the simplicity of some Doric column. The students of architecture tell us that the only legitimate use of a column is to support weight. This column of mine fulfils its legitimate function. It supports weight. Being of an animal and organic consistency, it may even improve by the process, and during these few days that I am thus unequally balanced the helplessness or dislocation of the one leg may find compensation in the astonishing strength and classic beauty of the other leg. Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson in Mr. George Meredith's novel might pass by at any moment, and seeing me in the stork-like attitude would exclaim, with equal admiration and a more literal exactitude, "He has a leg." Notice how this famous literary phrase supports my contention touching the isolation of any admirable

thing. Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson, wishing to make a clear and perfect picture of human grace, said that Sir Willoughby Patterne had a leg. She delicately glossed over and concealed the clumsy and offensive fact that he had really two legs. Two legs were superfluous and irrelevant, a reflection, and a confusion. Two legs would have confused Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson like two Monuments in London. That having had one good leg he should have another—this would be to use vain repetitions as the Gentiles do. She would have been as much bewildered by him as if he had been a centipede.

All pessimism has a secret optimism for its object. All surrender of life, all denial of pleasure, all darkness, all austerity, all desolation has for its real aim this separation of something so that it may be poignantly and perfectly enjoyed. I feel grateful for the slight sprain which has introduced this mysterious and fascinating division between one of my feet and the other. The way to love anything is to realize that it might be lost. In one of my feet I can feel how strong and splendid a foot is ; in the other I can realize how very much otherwise it might have been. The moral of the thing is wholly exhilarating. This world and all our powers in it are far more awful and beautiful than we even know until some accident reminds us. If you wish to perceive that limitless felicity, limit yourself if only for a moment. If you wish to realize how fearfully and wonderfully God's image is made, stand on one leg. If you want to realize the splendid vision of all visible things—wink the other eye.



INGLIS ALLEN

From an original caricature by F. ANGER

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XVI

INGLIS ALLEN

LIKE Mr. Pett Ridge, Mr. Inglis Allen has deliberately chosen to confine the field of his adventures in humour to that inexhaustibly interesting region of the Metropolis known as "within the radius." I am not unmindful, of course, that this brilliant young writer began by producing two novels which, in atmosphere as well as in humour, were certainly very much outside the radius. The first of these, *A 'Varsity Man*, and the other, *A Graduate in Love*, as the titles will imply even to those who have not read them, were the outcome of his life at Oxford, and were noteworthy for the aptitude their author displayed in character delineation no less than for their high good humour. Obviously the work of a young man; they were indeed from the pen of a youth, for Mr. Inglis Allen seems to have started earlier in the literary life than almost any of our popular authors of to-day.

He is the youngest of our humorists. Being still under thirty years of age it might be thought that we must talk of him as a writer of promise rather than as one with a distinct achievement to his credit. But no; I am inclined to think—and I imagine

he thinks so too—that Mr. Allen found his true *métier* in his third book, *Highways and Byways*, which, published in 1902, had an immediate and legitimate success. Practically everything that he has written since—and I should be surprised to find that I had omitted to read any of his sketches in the newspapers—has been in precisely the same vein, while it is evidence of a rare restraint in a young and successful author that he has not up to this present writing hurried another book on to the market. I judge from this that he has shrewdly estimated his own especial gifts and determined to husband them well.

So far as the story of his career is concerned there is but little to tell, although he began early enough in all conscience to ply his pen. He has permitted the publication of the following “poem,” written at the age of seven, the last two lines of which with his ripened literary judgment he now regards as “worthy of the Laureateship”:

By sheer force I leapt to my horse
And cast my spear at the charioteer,
Who with one bound leapt to the ground,
For I had missed my mark.
I rushed on like a wild bull,
For my lion heart with wrath was full ;
The charioteer now feels my spear
And wishes he had never been here
As he rolls a dead corpse to the ground.

Mr. Allen is a Londoner by birth, but his early schooling was obtained at Folkestone, whence he came back to town as a scholar at the Merchant Taylors' School. In due course he went to Oxford,

and at Oriel College his enthusiasm for athletics brought him to the secretaryship of the football club, and a place in his college eight. I know that he sets great store by these facts, as on a previous occasion he assured me it would be "sheer madness" to omit mention of them!

Unlike most young men, Mr. Allen would seem never to have been in doubt as to the profession he meant to follow; at school, as well as at Oxford, he had his mind fixed always on the literary life. After his precocious adventure on the lower slopes of Parnassus above quoted, he forsook the muse, and turning his attention to prose, produced, at the ripe age of eleven, a sensational serial with the alluring title, "Slipped from the Noose of the Hangman: a Tale of Mexican Life," which partly appeared in the school magazine at Folkestone, but was brought to an untimely end when the headmaster suppressed it on the ground of immorality! A year later, having rectified his morals, the youngster had the delight of getting into print with a story in *Old and Young*, which, by the way, was the same periodical, though the name had been changed, that printed Stevenson's *Kidnapped*.

On quitting Oxford, Mr. Allen, who had been writing to some purpose during his college days, came to London and settled down in earnest to put his literary ability to the test. Perhaps the fact that he was a great-grandson of Douglas Jerrold turned his thoughts to *Punch*, and an intimation that he should like to write for that famous periodical met with the response that he was free to submit contributions like any other

person in the United Kingdom. There is no royal road to *Punch*, but Mr. Allen sent in a sketch of Cockney humour and, lo, it was accepted. More, the editor asked that he should continue, and so for many months his brilliant series of "Highways and Byways" appeared in the pages of the great comic journal. His bow drawn at a venture had struck the bull's-eye; at the very outset of his literary career he thus found himself by sheer merit a frequent contributor to a paper that invests with something of academic dignity those whose work is considered worthy of its columns.

Mr. Allen is a slow and deliberate worker, and devotes a good deal of his time to the study of his Cockney characters in their native lairs. His sketches of working-class and lower life in London must rank with the most realistic interpretations of Cockney humour to be found in our literature. The dialect he reproduces with remarkable fidelity, and his dexterity in the use of dialogue is one of the most notable features of his writing. Written, as a rule, in the present tense, the sketches call up in the most vivid manner absolute pictures of things that are happening daily in our midst; the manners, the fatuities, the conscious and unconscious humours—seldom the pathos—of the lowly Londoners are reproduced in a form which, though entirely satisfactory to the literary sense, is yet perfectly obvious in its graphic reality to the reader who asks only to be amused. How comically true to life is such a passage as this from an account of a midnight squabble down White-chapel way :

“Wot I say is, I don’t corl people bloomin’ blighters unless——”

“I say I’m a respectable married woman——” breaks in his adversary, but is again compelled to pause—a pause whereby the sophist profits to the extent of interpolating “So are we” with solemn satisfaction and awaiting developments.

“I say I’m a respectable married woman,” cries the lady, having found her breath again, “an’ I won’t ’ave no cabbidge-leaves thrown at me.”

“That’s orl right,” approves the sophist. “An’ I don’t corl people bloomin’ blighters unless——”

“I don’t throw no cabbidge-leaves at nobody,” adds the lady idiomatically, “an’ I don’t want nobody throwin’ no cabbidge-leaves at me.”

“That’s orl right,” observes the sophist, “an’ it des yer credit.”

“No, it ain’t all right!” cries the lady with heat. “I’m a married woman, an’ I keep my place as sich!”

“So do I,” states the sophist.

“You keep yer place?” cries the lady. “Call it keepin’ yer place throwin’ cabbidge-leaves at ’alf-past twelve at night?”

At this point the fat man suddenly interrupts his duologue.

“It wasn’t a cabbidge-leaf!” he interposes loudly; whereupon the lady opposed to him checks herself in the middle of the word “tyke.”

“It *was* a cabbidge-leaf!” she cries shrilly.

“It wasn’t a cabbidge-leaf!” shouts the fat man.

“It *was* a cabbidge-leaf” cries his opponent.

“ It wasn’t ! ” reiterates the fat man triumphantly.
“ It was a bit o’ lettis.”

The field which Mr. Allen has chosen to cultivate is practically inexhaustible, for the writer who possesses the eye to distinguish character, appreciation of the humour of common things, and the artistic restraint necessary to their reproduction in literary form, will find in London’s highways and byways material to serve him all his days. Such writers are few indeed, but Mr. Inglis Allen is emphatically one of them.

“ Dare-Devils,” the sketch by which Mr. Allen is represented in the present collection, is reprinted by his and Messrs. Constable & Co’s permission from *Highways and Byways*.

THE DARE-DEVILS

BY INGLIS ALLEN

THE train, I am told, will be ready to start in ten minutes. Meanwhile the lights in the carriages have been turned off, and it stands by the platform a dark and inert mass, while its engine, enjoying a brief freedom, potters about short-windedly some little distance up the line. I grope my way into a compartment, and taking the seat near the window, gaze out on to the platform, occupied only by a meditative porter and a few sleepy passengers on seats.

After a time I hear several footsteps descending the stairs, and the sound of voices and shrill giggles. In a few moments the party comes into sight on the platform; two young women in semi-evening dress and cloaks, and two young men in silk hats, one of them carrying a net-bag with shoes in it. They are disposed to be somewhat rowdy in a subdued kind of way. As they advance up the platform, the weak-kneed young man in pince-nez, whom I immediately detect as the chief dare-devil of the party, begins to sing in a fairly audible voice a mild comic song of the parochial bazaar type. At this the ladies are very fluttered and shocked, and on the whole a little pleased with the conviction that he is a terribly rowdy fellow, and that they are rather a gay party altogether.

After questioning a porter, the quartet continue their march up to the extreme end of the platform. I have risen and am looking out of the window. As they turn, Pince-Nez pretends to knock off the hat of his companion, a fat young man, in face rather like a dazed sheep, and the pair fall to fencing with their umbrellas amidst cries of consternation from the ladies. This ends in one young man dropping his umbrella on to the line and jumping down for it, which shows courage; and the other young man lifting him bodily up, which shows strength; and the first young man pretending to fall down again, which shows wit. At all of which the young ladies are shocked and pleased, and plainly conscious that they never did have such a time in all their lives.

Soon the party approaches the train, which is still in darkness, and, as it chances, selects the compartment where I am seated once more in the corner. They enter, Pince-Nez displaying humorous terror at the darkness—a terror which suddenly assumes a distinctly genuine note when he sits down unexpectedly on top of me. However, he retrieves his character by putting his head out of window, and addressing the meditative porter in a voice which seems to me badly pitched if it is intended to reach him.

“Porter, old chap, why don’t you turn the lights on? I can’t see to hear myself speak.”

The ladies are quite overwhelmed by the reckless devilry of this last effort. Whereupon the Dazed Sheep is moved by a spirit of emulation to imitate a fog-horn, which gains a certain amount

of admiration, though totally eclipsed immediately after by Pince-Nez—on the lamps being suddenly turned on—pretending to be struck by lightning.

At last the train moves on. As we get clear of the station Pince-Nez boldly strikes up the "Swanee River"; the Dazed Sheep joins him, and the ladies opposite, with a nervous glance in my direction, chime in in still small voices with a visible consciousness of the audacity of the whole proceeding. The chorus finished, Pince-Nez, elated by his success, proceeds to the second verse—

"When I was playing with my brother,
Ha-ap-py was I——"

Suddenly Pince-Nez's top hat is whipped off his head from behind, and waved wildly in the air by a mysterious black hand. The ladies gasp, then almost shriek with terror at the apparition which has appeared above the partition, the apparition of a filthy face surmounted by a dented bowler hat.

"Tee tum tee tum tee tumty!" sings the apparition, beating time with the captured silk hat, "that's the style boys an' gals—orl together—

"Woh tike me to me dear ole mother,
Theer let me live han die."

The apparition pauses, and contemplates the scared group.

"Come on, some of yer," he urges; "that ain't 'arf singin'. Show 'em the wye, Bertie,"—addressing the Dazed Sheep, who has fallen into a kind of terrified trance—"any song you like. There ain't many as I cawn't sing, I give yer my word."

The quartet are silent.

"Tell yer wot I *will* do," remarks the apparition, replacing the hat boisterously over Pince-Nez's left eyebrow, "I'll give y' a chune myself."

He disappears for a moment behind the partition, then, reappearing again, lowers a greasy bundle on to Pince-Nez's lap.

"'Old my pawcel a minute, mate," he says, "while I git over." Then to the consternation of everybody, proceeds to clamber over the partition into our compartment.

"That's the wye ter do it," he observes, scraping a pair of muddy hobnailed boots down Pince-Nez's arm as he slides heavily on to the seat beside him. "'Ere we are orl together, snug an' comferble. I'll tike the pawcel, mate."

He is a huge burly man, connected, I should say, to judge from his hands and face, with some industry with a good deal of black oil in it. The train has just stopped at a station; I notice the quartet glance towards the window in a hunted way, but the platform is deserted. The train moves on again, and they regard their companion apprehensively.

"If it's a song yer want," he observes with enthusiasm, "I'm the bloke for yer. Tell yer wot I *will* do. I'll give yer a chorus, then yer can orl join in. More soserble. Narthen, boys an' gals, orl together!"

Amidst a general silence he proceeds to sing with energy—

"We're orl on the booze on the tiddley hi till Monday.
We won't be at 'ome with the missis an' the kids on Sunday,

If we get pinched we'll kick the copper in the eye.
We put away the lotion as if it was the ocean when we're
on the tiddley hi."

He desists, and mops his face with the loose end of Pince-Nez's muffler.

"Yer didn't 'arf sing up, any of yer," he observes cheerily. "Give us a recitashun, Chawley. You've got a comic fice."

Pince-Nez, very flushed, affects to be interested in something out of window. The oily man, in the best of spirits, turns to the lady opposite him.

"Woddyer think o' the Licensin' Act?" he inquires chattily. "Orl right, ain't it? Corl this a free country! Yer cawn't corl yerself free when y' ain't allahd t' 'ave a pint o' beer, can yer nar? I ask yer."

The lady makes no reply.

"Wot's more," he continues emphatically, "not only yer mayn't get boozed *yerself*, but y' ain't even allahd to 'elp a pal. I put it ter you, miss, serposin' you ain't on the Bleck List yerself an' yer meets a pal in the street wot *is*, an' she sez ter you, 'I'm on the Bleck List,' she sez, 'buy us a bottle o' Bass, ole gal'—are you goin' ter refuse 'er? O' *corse* you ain't. Not you. Why it ain't English.—Give us a song, Bertie. *You* ask 'im, miss, I see it's you 'e's a-mashin'. Why 'e's carryin' yer little tootsie-cases for yer. Wot ho, Bertie!"

I have never seen a sheep scarlet with confusion before, but I know now what it would look like under these circumstances. Pince-Nez is struggling between indignation, fear, and a desire to appear preoccupied.

“Let’s ’ave the chorus agine,” remarks the oily man cheerfully. “Narthen, boys, an’ gals—orl together—

“We’re orl on the booze on the tiddley hi till——

“’Ere, ’ullo! Turn’ill Pawk?”

He rises hastily, and seizing his bundle, stumbles over the Dazed-Sheep’s legs out on to the platform, then puts his head in at the window.

“So long, Chawley. Keep a-mashin’ of ’er, Bertie. Once more, boys an’ gals!—

“We’re orl on the booze on the tiddley hi till Monday.

We won’t be at ’ome with the missis an’ the kids on Sunday——”

The train has moved on, leaving the oily man on the platform, beating time and waving farewells alternately with the dented bowler hat. His song grows fainter and fainter, then is merged in the rattle of the train. The quartet are painfully subdued. Pince-Nez is the first to speak.

“I had half a mind,” he declares, “to chuck the fellow out at the first station.”

“Ah, that’s just the point,” puts in the Dazed Sheep; “but the question *is*—are you allowed to do it? How does the law stand?”

“That’s just what I was thinking,” avers Pince-Nez, and, the ladies being silent, the pair enter upon a highly technical legal discussion, in which each party is most conscientiously precise in putting the other right on the remoter details of hypothetical side issues.

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