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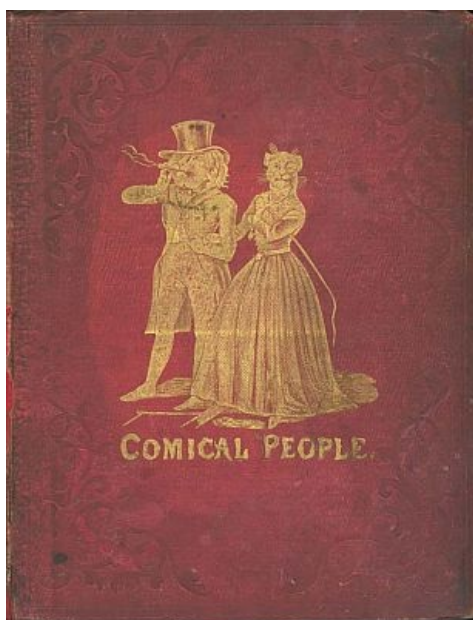
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK COMICAL PEOPLE ***



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COMICAL PEOPLE

ILLUSTRATED

WITH SIXTEEN PICTURES

TAKEN FROM THE EMBROIDERED TAPESTRY CONTRIBUTED
BY MARIA FUSINATA, OF BELLUNO,
TO THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

Drawn and Grouped from the Designs

OF
J. J. GRANDVILLE.

LONDON:



LADY CHAFFINCH'S BALL

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PREFACE.

AMONG the contributions to the Great Exhibition which, from their position, did not acquire that popularity and praise which was due to them, were some fine specimens of embroidery from

Vienna and various towns in Austria.

Hung high up, beyond the glance of the casual observer, the elaborately-worked tapestry of Maria Fusinata attracted little attention. Those, however, who had the good fortune to notice it were always delighted with the excellent adaptation of the clever designs of Grandville, which the embroiderer had so faithfully rendered. The expression of the animals was most cleverly given, and the brightness of the colours added much to the effect of the compositions.

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Had Ploucquet added some of these designs to his "Reynard the Fox," he would have increased the attraction of his show, deservedly popular as it was. Grandville, in these delineations of the faculties of animals, is quite equal to Kaulbach; and, though the French artist had not the honour of having his pictures copied in stuffed animals, they are thought to be quite worthy of being formed into a volume as a sequel to the "Comical Creatures from Wurtemberg."

[1]

LADY CHAFFINCH'S BALL.

HEIGH-HO! well, I am at home again at last. I wonder if I am the same innocent little Linnet that left these bowers only three months ago. What have I seen, where have I been?—or rather, What have I not seen, where have I not been? I have visited China and Peru, Nova Scotia, Trinidad, and Tuscany; I have been to Sweden, Egypt, Germany, and Mexico, and I have some recollections of Sardinia, and the United States. This is good travelling for three months, is it not?

Let me think: how shall I tell you about it? I will begin at the beginning—

Three months ago, as I was sitting in our summer-house, warbling one of my newest songs, our page Tom—Tom-tit we call him, he is such a funny little fellow—brought me a letter that had just been left by the postboy.

I have it by heart.

"My dear little Songbird,"—this is a name they gave to me from my infancy, for they say I could sing before I could speak,—*"My dear little Songbird,"* thus the letter began, "All the world is coming to London this spring to see the most wonderful of sights; try and persuade my dear sister, that kind Mamma of yours, to let you pay your long-promised visit to me. You must come in May, and you may stay with me as long as you can bear to be away from your delightful home. Let me know when I may expect you.

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"Your loving Aunt,
"JENNY GOLDFINCH."

And I remember that the envelope was addressed, "Lady Linnet, Gorse Bush, Somersetshire;" and that in the left-hand corner there was written, "For Miss Linnet."

Did not I fly to my "kind Mamma" as soon as I had read this note, and when she had consented that I should go to see that dear old Aunt of mine in London, did not I half smother her with kisses. I thought the first of May would never come,—but it did; and Tom-tit was sent to London with me by the railway to take care of me.

My good Aunt received me with the greatest kindness, and her son Drinkwater, one of the handsomest young fellows I ever saw in my life, began whispering compliments to me as soon as ever we were left together. I had a lovely little boudoir entirely for my own use, and my page Tom-tit had nothing else to do but wait on me. My cousin Drinkwater and I were soon great friends; he took me to the Opera, where I listened to singing such as I had never heard at Gorse Bush; he took me to the Chiswick Fête, where I saw flowers such as I had never dreamed of; and he took me—how many times? well, I can't recollect—to that dear, delightful Crystal Palace, where we visited more foreign countries than I knew of in my Geography, and where we often found ourselves quite alone, looking at those charming seeds from the West India Islands; and where we enjoyed some of the most delightful days of all our lives,—at least, Drinkwater said so; and I think I must say so too.

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Every one has been to the Crystal Palace, so it is of no use talking about the Koh-i-noor, or the fierce-looking Amazon, or the beautiful Veiled Vestal, or the Greek Slave, or those terrible-looking owls or funny foxes, or the other Comical Creatures that came from Wurtemberg. I will, therefore, tell you how we amused ourselves when we were not inclined to have our brains bewildered.

First, let me inform you that my cousin, who was born in London, knows all the grand people by sight, and bows to a great many of them. You may imagine what a treat it was to me, who had lived in a country village all my life, to see with my own eyes His Royal Highness the Prince, or His Grace the Duke, or Her Grace the Duchess, or His Excellency the Marquis, or the Most Noble the Marchioness, pass by in their grand carriages. How I used to stand on tip-toe to get a glimpse of their faces over the people's heads, and how Drinkwater used to laugh at me.

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One morning we were walking in Hyde Park, amusing ourselves in the usual way, when Drinkwater whispered to me hurriedly, "Here come a great Lion and Lioness." You may imagine my sensations. Bewildered with terror, I was about to leave him, and fly; but when I turned with

trembling limbs and looked in the direction he pointed out, I saw that these fearful creatures appeared quite harmless: in fact, the great Lion, though he looked very magnificent, was quietly smoking a cigar; and except that the Lioness stared very fiercely, and wore spurs, and carried a riding-whip, I really don't think I should have known that she was a Lioness. A little Tiger, leading the Lioness's horse, followed them at a short distance.

I noticed that every one made way for these important members of society, who, indeed, seemed to think the earth hardly good enough for them to walk upon; but when they had passed by, I heard the people say, "That's the great Mr. Grandboy. He is one of our celebrated Lions. He is a perfect literary Beau Brummel; the author of several novels, that have been read prodigiously; he composes operas, sets the fashion of the cravat, and, they say, writes leaders for 'The Times.'"

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THE GREAT MR. GRANDBOY, AND THE HON. MRS. DELMACARE.

"And who, pray, is the Lioness?"

"That is the Hon. Mrs. Delmacare. She writes novels, too, follows the hounds, and often whips her Tiger."

Such were the remarks of the crowd.

Drinkwater told me that some of these Lions and Lionesses do most extraordinary things, and that people run after them and invite them to the most costly entertainments, where they are expected to amuse the guests by their roars. I am glad I am not a Lioness.

When I had somewhat recovered from the agitation caused by this rencontre, Drinkwater persuaded me to take a walk to St. James's Park, to see those charming ducks, and the black swans, and the queer little creatures that dive so prettily. We passed under the arch with the great horse on the top. I asked my cousin if he knew what country such horses were found in, but he could not tell me, and we walked on and soon came to the Queen's Palace.

Here let me take breath;—just at the very moment we reached the gateway, out rolled the royal carriage, and in it, to our great happiness, we beheld her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, and His Royal Highness the Prince Albert; and with them were those dear children, the Princess Royal and the Prince of Wales—Heaven bless them! How I did long to kiss them both. When the last wheel of the royal carriage was quite out of sight, we turned to look at the palace that the Queen lived in, and Drinkwater pointed out to me the funniest creature that ever I saw standing on a pedestal by the gate. He said it was a Unicorn, and that it was put there on purpose to make the Queen laugh. After we had counted the thousand and one windows in the front of the Palace, we strolled along the pleasant path by the little lake, and watched the children as they came with cakes in their hands to feed those greedy geese, that seemed as if they would gobble up cakes, and children, and all.

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While we were resting ourselves on a seat under the trees, some distant relations of ours, the Sparrowes of Evryware, passed by. It was well they did not see us, for some of them know me, and I must confess that I should not like to have been seen speaking to such shabby, ill-looking fellows. I wonder what their relations in the country would have said, had they seen them in such wretched condition. Their coats were torn, one of them had lost part of his tail, and their faces looked as if they had not been washed since the last shower of rain. Fearing lest the Sparrowes should return and discover us, I asked Drinkwater to take the ferry-boat to the other side; and just as we landed we had the pleasure of seeing the great Lord Bison introduce his sister, Lady Dorothy Zebu, to the renowned Admiral Macaw. You should have seen the polite bow of the admiral, and the delightful curtsy of the lady. I was charmed beyond expression. Lord Bison has a fine military air; they say he fought many battles on the American prairies. Lady Dorothy, who has just come from India, has, on the contrary, a mild, benignant countenance, and, I am told, is very religious. The admiral was covered with gold, and purple, and scarlet, and looked for all the world like one of his namesakes in that beautiful place, the Zoological Gardens.



LADY ZEBU AND ADMIRAL MACAW.

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This was one of my most eventful days in London, and I shall long remember it.

But now I must tell you of that evening—shall I confess it? the happiest evening of my life—when Drinkwater and I went to Lady Chaffinch's ball. My Aunt was too indisposed to accompany us; she therefore called her son, and told him to take great care of me, as much as if I were his own sister. I have an idea that if my dear Aunt knew all, she would have said that he rather exceeded his instructions; but never mind, he took great care of me.

The carriage came for us at ten o'clock, when, had I been at Gorse Bush, I should have been fast asleep on my perch,—as Drinkwater says, for he loves to plague me about being a Linnet. My Cousin was beautifully attired; he wore a most superb cravat, of a deep ruby colour, and an under-waistcoat of the brightest amber; but, in fact, he always attracts admiration; and I think, without vanity, that I looked extremely well in the new brown dress I took with me from home. At a quarter past ten we entered Lady Chaffinch's ball-room, and, for a moment, I was perfectly bewildered; indeed, Drinkwater had to apologise to our hostess for my strange behaviour by saying I was not quite well. However, her ladyship, whom I had often seen in the country, was very kind to me, led me to a seat, and began asking after her old friends. This soon brought me to my senses; and after a little while I could bear to look at the dazzling chandeliers, the magnificent pier-glasses, and the splendidly-dressed people, without being giddy at the sight. Soon after our arrival, the band commenced playing, and some of the company arranged themselves for a dance. Old Sir Cayman Alligator, an East-Indian Director, led out the graceful Lady Caroline Giraffe, who, I must say, deserved the praise young Nightingale bestowed upon her, when he said, she was one of "Nature's nobility." I could not but admire her large, full eyes, which looked at you so tenderly, and the gentle bending of her beautiful neck; and then, what a contrast she was to her horrid-looking partner! I suppose he must be very rich, or I cannot think why Lady Chaffinch should have invited him. Opposite to them stood young Lord Crowe, a younger brother of the noble Earl of Ravenskind, and with him was the Honourable Miss Pigeon. Lord Crowe is a good-looking fellow, rather dark, it must be confessed; but as he wears glasses, he looks very interesting. They say that his brother, the Earl, has picked up his great wealth in a most unaccountable manner, and that the whole family have a singular want of discrimination in the meaning of the words *meum* and *tuum*. His partner, who had a nice, dove-coloured dress on, appeared very desirous of pleasing the young Lord, and I thought they seemed very happy together. The other couples were Sir Hector Downcharge, of Kennelhouse, a great sportsman, who came in his militia uniform, and Miss Pie, the daughter of the celebrated Mrs. Margaret, or Mag Pie, as her neighbours call her. And opposite to them were a Mr. Puddock, a person connected with the City, who, through the death of a relative, has just come into possession of a fine marshy estate among the Lincolnshire Fens; and Miss Lavinia Greyhound, who, as all the world knows, was a long time engaged to young Hare, who ran away from her in a very shameful way, and hurt her feelings so much that she did not appear again in public for several months.

Drinkwater and I stood aside, and entertained ourselves with quiet remarks to each other, not always complimentary to the company. He thought Miss Pie the prettiest of the dancers, and certainly she was sweetly dressed, and looked very well. Her partner, Sir Hector, was, without doubt, the handsomest of the gentlemen, though he appeared to me to give himself airs, like an overfed spaniel that has been too much petted, and to lounge about in a way not at all becoming a lady's ball-room. The little fellow from the City, his *vis-à-vis*, was a very different person—he seemed determined to let us all know that he had lately been taking twelve dancing-lessons of Madame Hopper, for he turned his toes out in the most *elegant* way, and was evidently quite impressed with a belief that he was astonishing the spectators with his surprising agility. The very tie of his cravat made Drinkwater nearly die with suppressed laughter; and when the youth began dancing, we were obliged to take a walk into the adjoining Conservatory, lest our merriment should be discovered. I never knew a more delightful place than this Conservatory; the flowers in it are brighter than I have seen elsewhere; and some that Drinkwater gathered for me were far sweeter than any I had ever known before. We staid sometime in this Conservatory looking at the beautiful exotics, and talking of *nothing* else but of them and the weather; and it was not till we had been there more than half-an-hour that I discovered that we were quite alone. We immediately returned to the ball-room, where, luckily, our absence had not been discovered, and in a few minutes were whirling round in a most delightful waltz.

But I have forgotten the rest of the company. Foremost in dignity was the Countess Auk, of Stornaway Rock, in the Hebrides; and with her were her two nieces, Lady Isabella Snipe and the Honourable Miss Woodcock. I saw Mr. Reynard, the celebrated member for Hollowoak, having a long gossip with the Countess and her young charges, for both of whom he seemed to profess great admiration. Mr. Jay, the member for Chatterfield, was likewise there, and paid a good deal of attention, I thought, to the Honourable Miss Dove, a cousin of Miss Pigeon's. Miss Dove plays very nicely, and sometimes, when the band required rest, she rattled off a waltz in fine style, Mr. Jay most attentively turning the music-leaves.

Drinkwater also pointed out to me Miss Stork, the daughter of the Attorney-General, so famous for the length of his bill; Miss Blaccap, who, they say, sings as sweetly as a Robin-Redbreast; Lord Bruin, who has just come from a tour in Russia; the Right Honourable Mr. Ramshead; and a crowd of folks, more or less known, most of whom *would* stand by the doorway and prevent the servants and the fresh air from entering the room.

About three o'clock the Countess of Auk's carriage was summoned, and the company began to retire. Drinkwater and I stood shivering on the stairs full half-an-hour before Lady Goldfinch's brougham was announced; and when we reached home, I found I had been fast asleep with my head on Drinkwater's shoulder.

Ten days after Lady Chaffinch's ball, I was obliged to tear myself away from my kind aunt and my dear cousin, and with only Tom-tit for my companion, to return to this dismal Gorse Bush, which I used to think the sweetest of homes. Now I do nothing but wonder how long it will be before my aunt invites me to London again. Tom-tit brings me letters from the post-boy much oftener than before, and were it not for them, I do not think I could bear my existence.

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This is the substance of some letters I have lately received from my dear friend, Julia Linnet. She is a warm-hearted little thing, easily led away by her enthusiasm. At first, I was afraid she would pine away with melancholy; but all my uneasiness was dispelled a few mornings since, when a lace-bordered envelope reached me, enclosing two cards tied together with silver-cord, on one of which was written,—



THE LORD OF THE MANOR.

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THE POACHER.

SIR VANE PEACOCK was the owner of large estates in Cumberland, and a great game preserver. His tenantry were bound to protect all the hares, partridges, and pheasants that fed on their young corn; and, in return, Sir Vane entertained them once a-year with a dinner of roast mutton and potatoes, when good luck enabled them to bring their rents on Old Michaelmas-day. A great personage was Sir Vane Peacock. He was the possessor of two thousand acres of the richest arable land in the county, besides his own park and grounds, of a hundred and twenty acres, well covered with fine trees. Sir Vane would have been happy but for one circumstance: he could not prevent the village poachers from destroying his game. It was in vain that he employed keepers and offered rewards for every depredator they apprehended or *killed*; year after year rolled by, and still Sir Vane's great struggle in life was to preserve his partridges. Sir Vane was a county magistrate, and it may be imagined how summarily he dealt with all offenders brought before him. In one year, two young fellows, named Martin and Weesel, both belonging to the village, were shot by his keepers, Martin in the leg and Weesel in the back, because they were found near a rabbit-warren at a

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suspicious hour in the evening; and an old fellow, whom they called Horny Owl, was so severely beaten on the head by one of the Baronet's men, that he only lived two days afterwards. Old Horny was concealed in the trunk of a hollow oak, and was found there with no less than three young partridges in his possession, which he pleaded he was about to take home for his little ones' supper. But Sir Vane could never catch the rascals who did the most mischief: one was a notorious character, known as Bill Kite; the others a family of brothers, whose name was Lurcher. These were too old at the sport, and too cunning, to let the keepers get near them, and it is believed they made a very excellent living out of Sir Vane's game-preserves.

Among the Baronet's tenantry was a Mr. Pointer, a thoroughly well-bred individual, who lived at a farm close by the park, and who generally accompanied Sir Vane on his shooting-excursions. Mr. Pointer had but one son, named Carlo, with whose training he had taken much pains, and at an early age Carlo promised soon to know as much about field matters as his worthy father. But Carlo had one failing which his parent little dreamed of. On one occasion, when on a visit to a neighbouring farm, the youth had tasted a hare, and ever afterwards he longed to regale himself again on such delightful food. One unlucky morning Carlo was rambling about his father's farm with a gun on his arm, merely to shoot the rooks and frighten away the sparrows, when a hare jumped out of her form and ran away straight before him. The opportunity was too tempting. Bang! went Carlo's gun, and poor pussy tumbled head over heels. Carlo looked round him with anxious glances, and fancying the coast was clear, took up his prize and put it in his pocket; but just as he was vaulting over a gate, Towser, the head-keeper at the park, emerged from behind

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the hedge, and, without a word, took Carlo's gun from his arm and the hare from his pocket. Carlo was no match for Towser, so he allowed himself to be led before the great Sir Vane without opposition. Towser related the whole of Carlo's terrible offence, which he had witnessed from behind the fence, and the indignant Sir Vane demanded the criminal's reply. Carlo assumed a bold and careless air; told the Baronet that he wished to have the hare for his dinner, and that he could see no harm in killing animals that were feeding on his father's corn. This enraged Sir Vane to such an extent that he started from his chair, seized the gun from Towser, and would certainly have shot Carlo on the spot, had not the youth sprung upon the Baronet, wrenched the gun out of his hands, and laid him sprawling on the floor. Towser ran to his master's assistance, and Carlo, without waiting for his sentence, jumped through the open window into the garden, flew across the lawn with the speed of a greyhound, and quickly put forty long miles between himself and Peacock Hall.

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Ten days afterwards Carlo read in "The Sportsman's Chronicle" that, much to the regret of his family and a numerous circle of admiring friends, Sir Vane Peacock had died suddenly of apoplexy, brought on by a fall. Not a word was said about the cause of the accident; indeed the Baronet, on his deathbed, remembering that he himself had commenced the outrage, had expressly forbidden Towser to mention it, and Carlo thought that he might as well return home at once.

Sir Vane Peacock left no children, and the estates descended to his cousin, Sir Java Peacock, who, fortunately for Carlo, had been too long a witness of the evils arising from game-preserving to wish to continue them. Immediately after taking possession, the new landlord sent a note round, informing every tenant on his estate that he was at perfect liberty to shoot or course all the game he found on his own farm.

It is said that from that time Carlo dined off roast hare and currant-jelly at least once in every week for the remainder of his life.

MY NEIGHBOURS.

[17]

A COUNTRY STORY. BY WARREN RABBITT.

IN a charming retreat, upon the borders of a wood in Gloucestershire, I once enjoyed the society of some friends, named Leverett, with whom I was very intimate. They seemed to be the happiest little family in the world, subsisted mostly on the produce of their farm, and always welcomed a neighbour like myself with great hospitality. I resided at that time at a pleasant place called the Sandpits, not far from their abode, and I often looked in as I passed by, for half an hour's chat with the old lady, or to ask Jack or his brother Bob to take a stroll with me in the woods. The father was remarkable for his extreme caution, seldom went far from home, and never meddled with other people's affairs. It would have been well had his sons followed his example; but then I should not have had this tale to tell.



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THE DUEL.

Close by us, at the largest farm-house in the county, there lived a Mr. Chanticleer, one of the proudest and most irritable fellows I ever had the misfortune to meet with. To see the airs with which he strutted about his farm-yard, and drove all the ducks and geese flying to make way for him, often made Jack Leverett and myself laugh: but when he went out for a walk with his wife and daughters, his consequence appeared to be increased tenfold, and one wondered where the path was broad enough for him to walk upon.

Mr. Chanticleer was extremely jealous of any intrusion upon his property, and warned off every one who did but set foot on his land. Tom Leverett knew this well enough, and knew what a pugnacious and litigious fellow his neighbour was, so he ought to have been more careful than to give Chanticleer any ground of complaint. Tom, it appears, had a great taste for botany, and often rose early to indulge in his favourite pursuit. One morning, in the ardour of his search for some particular plant, Tom crept through the hedge into one of his neighbour's fields; and so much absorbed was he in the discovery of some sweet-tasting grass which he had never before met with, that he did not notice the approach of Mr. Chanticleer, until that worthy was close upon him.

Chanticleer, it appears, always made a practice of rising early; but though Tom had distinguished his voice—so loud you might have heard it half a mile off—calling to the people in the farm-yard, he did not at all expect a visit from him in the particular field that he was

examining.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Chanticleer to Tom, in an authoritative tone as he came close up to him, "may I ask what brings you here?"

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"I am studying botany," replied Tom.

"Studying fiddlesticks!" cried his neighbour; "what business have you in my fields?"

"I have examined all the plants on our side," answered Tom, meekly.

"Then go back and examine them again," cried Mr. Chanticleer, putting himself in a great passion, "and don't let me see you here any more!"

"You need not be angry, sir," said Tom, "I have done no mischief."

"Angry, sir! what do you mean by angry?" spluttered out the other. "I'll teach you to tell me I'm angry!" and so saying, he thrust Tom with all his force into the hedge.

Luckily there was a gap there, and Tom was able to get through, and thus escape from any further insult. He heard Chanticleer's voice shouting after him; Tom did not stay to listen, but ran towards the wood as fast as his legs would carry him.

It so happened, that just before Tom reached home he met Captain Bulldog, an old officer of the Guards, who had retired on half-pay, with an extra pension for the loss of one of his legs, which he had left on the field, and to him Tom recounted all the circumstances of the assault. The Captain immediately told Tom that he had but one course to pursue, which was, to call Chanticleer out. Tom did not at first understand this phrase; but, on its being explained to him, his knees knocked together, and he begged the Captain to say nothing more of the matter. But the Captain, who owed Chanticleer a grudge, insisted that Tom should place himself entirely in his hands, took the poor youth to his own house, and did not let him rest till Tom had fairly indited a challenge. This the Captain had the great satisfaction of delivering personally to Mr. Chanticleer, who turned very red in the face on reading it, and made some little attempts at an apology. These the Captain would not listen to, saying, the insult was too great for apologies; and Chanticleer was at last obliged to refer him to his friend, Sir Wiley Reynard, of Underwood, to arrange a meeting.

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Poor Tom! I think I see him now, as he came with his long face to tell me of the scrape he had got into.

"I would stay at home," said the unfortunate youth, with tears in his eyes, "but that I am afraid of offending Captain Bulldog, who will, perhaps, challenge me himself, if I don't fight Chanticleer; and of the two enemies," added Tom, forcing a faint smile, "you know which I should prefer."

Afterwards, Tom told me where the meeting was to be; and as I thought my young neighbour might want a friend, I determined to be near at hand.

It was about six o'clock on a cold, grey, autumn morning, that I concealed myself in a thicket by the side of Goose Common, and waited the arrival of the combatants. Captain Bulldog, with young Leverett by his side, were first on the field, and I could see that poor Tom shook in every limb. They did not wait long. A post-chaise soon came clattering along the road, and out of it jumped Sir Wiley Reynard, Doctor Crane, and Mr. Chanticleer. Sir Wiley and the Captain soon arranged the preliminaries, and Chanticleer walked boldly and jauntily to his post. Not so my friend. Poor Tom, fainthearted at all times, was now terrified to such a degree, that the Captain had absolutely to support him, or he would certainly have dropped. Presently, Sir Wiley gave the signal to fire; Tom complied at once, and sent his bullet flying somewhere above my head, about as wide of the mark as it well could be; and then, without waiting for the compliment of a return, off he started as fast as ever his legs carried him in his life, cleared the hedge at a bound, and ran straight into a thick wood. I nearly died with laughter, not only to see Tom run, but to behold the terrible look of the Captain, as he gazed after his flying friend; to watch the surprised and somewhat pleased look of Chanticleer, who seemed half inclined to fire after the fugitive; and to see the puzzled expression of Sir Wiley's face, and the comical grin on Dr. Crane's, as he tapped his box and offered the Baronet a pinch. After a few moments of silence, no one knowing what to do in such an unusual dilemma, the Captain walked up to Sir Wiley, and offered, if the Baronet were not satisfied, to fight either Mr. Chanticleer or the Baronet himself, whichever was preferred. But Sir Wiley replied very politely that he was perfectly satisfied with Captain Bulldog, and that he only regretted that the Captain should act for such a coward as Mr. Thomas Leverett. On this the Captain began abusing poor Tom so terribly, that I thought it best to beat a retreat and see after my runaway friend. When I arrived home I found him sitting in my little back-parlour, just as I expected. He had covered his face with his hands, and was crying bitterly. I comforted the poor fellow as well as I could, and did not give him the least grounds for suspecting that I had been a witness of his behaviour. In a little time he became calmer, and then he told me that the report of his own pistol had frightened him so much, that, for his life, he could not help running away.

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It was not many days after this that Tom came to me again, evidently in great pain; and, from the broken sentences that escaped him, I learned that as he and his brother Bob were walking in the public road, Chanticleer had met them; and after calling Tom by every abusive name he could think of, had ended by thrashing him with a riding-whip, till the unfortunate youth could scarcely stand. I thought this was carrying the matter too far,



MR. LEVERETT'S INTERVIEW WITH SHARPE VULTURE, ESQ.

so I walked home with him to speak to his father about it. The old gentleman was very much excited at Tom's account of the quarrel; he had not heard a word about it till that day, and said that Chanticleer should pay dearly for what he had done; and as for Tom's mother, she fainted away at first, and ended by urging her husband to prosecute that rascal Chanticleer, even if it cost them their last grain of food. She thought but little of what she was saying then, but she remembered it afterwards.

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On that very afternoon old Mr. Leverett and Bob took the railway to Gloucester, and went at once to the celebrated lawyer, Mr. Sharpe Vulture, of Billocost Row. Mr. Vulture, who was just going home to dinner, and was both hungry and savage, heard their story with great impatience, told them to come again the next morning, and bade them good day. He thus saved his dinner hot, and pocketed an extra fee for an additional consultation. His client, little used to lawyers' pleasantries, thought this behaviour very strange; but as he had some relations close by the town, he resolved that he and Bob would spend the night with them, and they told me they were most hospitably entertained.

On the next morning the father and son again called on the celebrated Mr. Sharpe Vulture, and this time with better success, for that worthy recommended that Mr. Leverett should first apply to a magistrate for a warrant against Mr. Chanticleer; and, secondly, that Tom should commence an action against him for the assault.

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To both these courses old Leverett offered no opposition; and on Bob's evidence Sir Simon Graveowl, a magistrate of noted wisdom, granted a warrant against Chanticleer, which Mr. Sharpe Vulture immediately gave to an active young policeman to execute. Now, it happened to be market-day at Gloucester, and as Mr. Chanticleer was a large consumer of barley, he usually attended the Corn Exchange during certain hours. This the policeman knew; so no sooner had he received the warrant than he walked straight to Mr. Chanticleer as he stood talking loudly to a large circle of friends and neighbours,—old Mr. Drake, young Mr. Gosling, Mr. Peacock, Mr. Pidgeon, Mr. Swann, and several others,—and forthwith arrested him. Poor Mr. Chanticleer! how crest-fallen he looked! All his crowing was stopped in a moment. He walked by the policeman's side in silence, and looked as much like a culprit as any thief that was ever found with the stolen goods in his possession.

The policeman, thrown off his guard by Chanticleer's quietness, walked by his side without holding him, and of this my neighbour was not slow to avail himself; for just as they had passed a narrow street, he suddenly ran back, and, with a loud noise, flew along the pavement as if twenty Sharpe Vultures were pursuing him. The policeman was not slow to follow; and when the unfortunate Chanticleer was stopped by a sentinel at the gate of the barracks, he seized his prisoner with such violence by his red neck-tie, that he almost strangled him there and then.

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Old Leverett chuckled to himself, and was greatly delighted to see Chanticleer brought into the magistrate's room by two policemen, one holding him tightly by each arm. Mr. Sharpe Vulture immediately brought forward the accusation against the prisoner. Bob's evidence was taken: it was declared that Tom was too unwell from the effects of the assault to attend in person, and Mr. Chanticleer was fined five pounds. For this amount he immediately wrote an order on his bankers,—Brier, Primrose, and Whitethorn; and then, greatly to old Leverett's chagrin, the prisoner was discharged, and all parties left the court.

Mr. Sharpe Vulture advised instant proceedings at law. Accordingly, an action was brought for damages; but through some *little* informality, the plaintiff was defeated, and had to pay his own and Mr. Chanticleer's lawyers' costs. Mr. Sharpe Vulture advised a second action, which was tried, I remember, at the Assizes just twelve months after the assault complained of. Counsel were engaged on each side. Mr. Badger was for Chanticleer, and the Hon. Mr. Muff for the Leveretts. Badger had Captain Bulldog put into the witness-box, and the whole story of the duel was told in court, making even the learned judge roar with laughter. Badger proved, beyond a doubt, that Tom had well deserved castigation for his cowardice, and that Mr.



THE ARREST OF MR. CHANTICLEER

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Chanticleer had only laid his whip lightly across his shoulders; that Bob, as one of the family, was not to be believed; and that the defendant bore the highest character for gentleness of disposition. The Hon. Mr. Muff proved nothing, but that he richly deserved his name, and the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff, damages one farthing.

Poor old Leverett! this trial completely ruined him. Sharpe Vulture seized all his property, and the once happy little family were sent adrift on the wide world without a home.

The last time I heard of them, the mother and the two sons were living in an humble way not far from the sea-side; the father was dead; Tom still continued his favourite study, but he always took great care not to trespass in other people's fields.

THE DE MOUSAS.

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A TALE.



THE DE MOUSAS.

IN one of those charming Italian villas lately built at Bayswater, live Mr. Persian and Lady Angora De Mousa, personages of much consequence in the society to which they belong. Late hours, and a somewhat gay life, have a little impaired Lady Angora's beauty; but she still attracts great admiration, and her husband is as proud of her as ever.

A highly respectable couple, but of plainer pretensions than the De Mousas, reside in Cypress Cottage, a small house in the adjacent Gravel-pits,—Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Tabitha Tortoshell, with a family of one son and two daughters. Mr. De Mousa is of foreign extraction, but Mr. Tortoshell claims him as a cousin by his mother's side, and is not a little proud of the relationship.

The De Mousas are in very easy circumstances, and indulge in many expensive luxuries, having Devonshire clotted cream every morning at breakfast, and a fricassee of some small deer, that they appear to be very fond of, for their supper. Their carriage is the handsomest in the villas; and *when* they go to church, two pages always attend them.

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Before the arrival of the De Mousas—for they have but lately come from abroad—the Tortoshells lived in the most unpretending way; but within the last twelve months they have started a brougham, and a livery-servant with a gold-laced collar, much to the surprise of their neighbours, who wondered what sudden good fortune had befallen them. But I am sorry to say this extravagance was all owing to the vanity of Mrs. Tortoshell, who is most anxious to be introduced into society by Lady Angora De Mousa, as you shall hear.

Mr. Tortoshell called on his cousin soon after his arrival in the neighbourhood of the Gravel-pits, and explained to him their relationship, which Mr. De Mousa, who is extremely well bred, professed great delight in hearing of, at the same time he invited the whole family of the Tortoshells to dinner on the next day. Lady Angora was not over-pleased at this arrangement, and assumed a haughty air when the Tortoshells came; but being naturally of a warm-hearted disposition, she quickly became attached to the elder daughter Minnie, though it must be confessed she showed no great partiality for the mamma. The son also, Young Tom as he was called, to distinguish him from his father, won the good opinion of Mr. De Mousa, by his shrewdness and his intimate knowledge of London life among certain classes. So the day passed pleasantly enough, and Mr. and Mrs. Tortoshell and their family all walked home with greater consequence than they had before assumed. But it happened to be a rainy evening, Mrs. Tortoshell spoiled her best velvet dress, and easily persuaded her husband that it would be more economical for them to keep a brougham. Mr. Tortoshell pretended to believe her, and bought one.

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One day, about a month after, as Lady Angora and her husband were about taking their usual promenade in Kensington Gardens, they were astonished at the appearance of a footman in the smartest of liveries, who, instead of going as usual to the servants' gate, came straight up to them, and delivered a letter to Mr. De Mousa, who abruptly tore open the envelope, read the contents of the note, and handed it to his wife. Lady Angora, seeing it was an invitation from the Tortoshells to dinner on that day week, tossed her head as she gave it back, and Mr. De Mousa blandly informed the servant—a stupid lout, who had been bred in a farm-yard—that he would communicate with Mr. Tortoshell.

All down the broad walk in Kensington Gardens, all across by the flower-gardens, and all up

the path by the ha-ha, Lady Angora talked of nothing but the impudence of the Tortoshells, vowing and protesting that nothing on earth should induce her to visit them. But her good-natured husband was more inclined to treat the matter as a joke, and, by dint of persuasion and raillery, before they reached home he had induced Lady Angora to accept the invitation "for this once." A polite answer was, therefore, immediately despatched.

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The week elapsed. Mrs. Tabitha had worked herself into a perfect fever of anxiety; and her poor daughters, Minnie and Katty, were tired to death with their labour in carrying out their mother's injunctions. The dinner-hour was fixed for six o'clock. At half-past five Mrs. Tabitha was still adding vermicelli to the soup, Minnie and Katty were still turning out jellies and blanc-manges, and Sappy the footman was still cleaning the plate. Mr. Tortoshell was sitting uneasily by the window endeavouring to read "The Times," and young Tom was flying home from the City in a Hansom's cab at the rate of twelve miles an hour.

At a quarter past six, Mr. De Mousa and Lady Angora arrived. Neither Mrs. Tortoshell nor her daughters were ready to receive them. Sappy was in his shirt-sleeves, and the maids were not fit to be seen; so Mr. Tortoshell had to open the door, receive his company, and usher them into his drawing-room himself. Mr. De Mousa looked at his watch and said he was afraid they were early, which rather confused Mr. Tortoshell; but the cousins soon got to talking of the beautiful weather, and the beautiful moonlight nights, and Lady Angora amused herself by playing with a young kitten on the hearth-rug.

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At half-past six Mr. Tortoshell said he really must see why his wife and daughter did not come, and for that purpose left the room. Lady Angora looked at her husband, who, well-bred as he was, could not help observing, with a broad smile, that "such manners were enough to make a cat laugh."

At length Mrs. Tabitha and her two daughters appeared, very smartly dressed, but not very much at their ease, and a moment afterwards Sappy announced dinner. Mr. De Mousa escorted Mrs. Tabitha with much graceful dignity, and Mr. Tortoshell followed with Lady Angora; Young Tom just rushing into the room in time to offer his attendance to his sisters, who could not but wonder what extraordinary business could have kept him so late in the City. Dinner was served. The rats'-tail soup was burnt; Lady Angora could not touch it: but Sappy, in removing the plate, managed to spill a considerable quantity over her ladyship's dress. The fish was overdone on one side, and nearly raw on the other; so her ladyship could not eat that. The fowls were old and tough; the venison had not been hung long enough, and Minnie had forgotten the currant-jelly. The blanc-mange and the ices had somehow been placed near the kitchen fire; and, to crown all, Lady Angora declared that the only dish she cared for was fricasseed mice. Mrs. Tabitha, excited to desperation, jumped up from her seat with an expression of horror, as though she had been dining with a cannibal; but the effort was too much for her, for she immediately fell back in a swoon. Minnie flew to her mamma's assistance, Katty rushed for the eau de Cologne, old Tom and young Tom both rang the bells, and did nothing but create confusion; and Mr. De Mousa and Lady Angora, without staying for a formal leave-taking, quitted the room and the house with evident precipitation.

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Since that day the cousins have not visited. Mr. Tortoshell has discovered that a carriage is not so *very* economical; and when by chance he meets Mr. De Mousa, his attention is sure to be attracted by something on the top of a neighbouring house. Mrs. Tabitha often reads of Lady Angora in the "Morning Post," but she has never been heard to mention that her ladyship has dined at Cypress Cottage.

ROOKWOOD HALL.

[33]

IN a quiet village in Cumberland, far retired from the great world, there stands a noble old red-brick mansion, partly in ruins, and mostly covered with ivy, which ever attracts the attention of the wayfarer who passes through that remote district. For many years Rookwood Hall—so is it called—has been in the possession of the ancient family of the Rookes; father and son have grown up beneath the shade of the grand old elms that line the majestic avenue and all but surround the mansion, and the bones of twenty generations of Rookes now lie together beneath the adjacent sod. Five years since the last of the family, Sir Whitewing Rooke, was killed as he was returning towards home on a quiet autumn evening. He was found lying under one of the tall elm-trees in the avenue, pierced with a bullet that had passed through his heart. Whether this occurred by accident or design, no one could ever tell; but there were dark suspicions afloat, and rumour said that the Rookes were not without their enemies.

Lady Rooke, the childless widow, mourned long for her husband, rarely ventured beyond the boundary of the park, but spent most of her time in endeavouring to benefit the neighbouring farmers, who had not gratitude enough even to thank her for her services.

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There was one exception. Young Gamecock, the owner of a small estate adjoining Rookwood Park, was full of gratitude, and often called upon Lady

Rooke to thank her for her kindness. Mr. Gamecock was an exceedingly good-looking fellow, dressed handsomely, always wore spurs, and had more manners than any other farmer within twenty miles; and, therefore, it is not to be wondered at that Lady Rooke somewhat encouraged these gratitude-visits. Her Ladyship often complained how dull and lonely she was, living without a protector in that old mansion, whose walls were covered with ghastly portraits of departed Rookes; and whose ancient casements rattled at night when the wind blew in its fitful fancies, and made the very stairs groan as it rushed up and down in its capricious impetuosity.

Young Gamecock listened to the good dame's stories, told her *he* knew no fear, that the wind might whistle as it willed for him; and that if he owned such a mansion, that the old pictures should decorate the garrets, where the bats and sparrows held undisputed possession.

At last people began to notice that young Gamecock went very often to Rookwood Hall, and many surmises were soon afloat. Mr. Crow, a cousin of the deceased Baronet's, laughed at the silly talk, as he called it, and said that her Ladyship was about to make Mr. Gamecock her bailiff. Mr. Howlet, the solicitor from the neighbouring village, shook his head, looked "wondrous wise," but said nothing; and that pert gentleman, Mr. Sparrow, reported that he had peeped in at the window one day, and knew more than he chose to tell. So matters went on for a time. At last, one fine day Mr. Howlet was seen to drive up to the Hall, and take in with him a large document. The whole village was astir: something must be going on, every one said; and within two days it was known that the document in question was a marriage-settlement, and that the wedding of Lady Rooke and young Mr. Gamecock was to take place in the following week.



THE MARRIAGE SETTLEMENT.

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Alas, for the uncertainty of this world! No sooner did the news of the approaching marriage reach the ears of Mrs. Partlett and her daughters—the aunt and cousins of Mr. Gamecock—than they vowed it should never be. It appears that Mr. Gamecock had long been affianced to Miss Hennie Partlett, and the news of his desertion so preyed on her delicate constitution, that she pined away and lost all her good looks. Fired at the indignity offered to his family, her brother Redcomb sought his opportunity, met Mr. Gamecock as he was crossing the lawn in front of Rookwood Hall, and challenged him to mortal combat. Gamecock, in haste to visit his betrothed, passed on without heeding his adversary; but the valiant Redcomb flew at him, and with one stroke beat him to the earth. Gamecock rose, shook himself, and attacked Redcomb with such impetuosity, that at first he retreated; but, collecting his strength, he returned to the attack, and Gamecock again bit the dust. Lady Rooke was sitting by a window, watching for the arrival of her lover, whence she saw the whole of this deadly contest. At Gamecock's second fall she flew to his rescue, and arrived just as a fresh battle was begun. Urged by her fears for her beloved, her Ladyship threw herself between the combatants; but it was at a most unlucky moment, for a blow from Redcomb struck her on the temples, and she fell senseless between them. The combatants forgot their quarrel, and carried the poor lady into the room; a messenger was despatched for Dr. Stork, but before he could arrive, her Ladyship had breathed her last.

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Rookwood Hall passed into another family of the Rookes, distantly related; and after two years dallying, Miss Hennie Partlett, forgetting former grievances, became Mrs. Gamecock, and Redcomb gave her away.

CITY PEOPLE.

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MR. TRUNK, the great East India merchant, is an individual of immense weight in the City. Wherever he appears the crowd make way for him, and bestow upon him marked attention. His particular friend is old Mr. Parrot, whose connexions lie with the West Indies and South America, and who boasts of his relationship with the celebrated Macaw family. Whenever there is a sudden rise in sugar or tobacco, Mr. Parrot immediately goes on 'Change to consult his great friend, Mr. Trunk, as to the course he should pursue; and the united wisdom of the two merchants generally produces a result favourable to Mr. Parrot's interests.

Mr. Trunk lives in a large house in the Regent's Park, where he entertains very many visitors, in a way peculiar to himself, his chief pleasure consisting in the offer of his carriage for a ride round his beautiful gardens; for which, by way of joke, he always demands a cake or a bun from each visitor. His son, too, Master Suckling Trunk, contributes much to the gratification of the guests; and certainly he is a very amusing youth, such

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MR. TRUNK AND HIS ADVISERS.

as one does not often meet with.

Two years ago Mr. Trunk was greatly annoyed by the arrival of a young black prince from the banks of the Nile, who took a house close by him in the Park, and, much to Mr. Trunk's mortification, completely outshone him in the grandeur of his entertainments. All the fashionable and mercantile world flocked to the mansion of Prince Ippo, and considered it a great condescension if His Highness would but favour them with a sight of his eyes and ears.

The great Mr. Trunk, he who had never known a rival near his throne, felt deeply the slight cast upon him, and vowed to be revenged on his sable adversary. He talked of his grievance to old Mr. Parrot, till that worthy felt as indignant as his friend; but, as he could suggest no method of vengeance, Mr. Trunk called to his counsel, the celebrated City conveyancer, Mr. Starling.

"You see, sir," said old Mr. Parrot, when the three had met in consultation, "this black young fellow is an upstart; he has nothing to recommend him but his exceeding ugliness and his extreme inhospitality. Do

you know, sir," he continued, addressing the conveyancer, "some ladies of my family paid him a visit the other day, and the brute—yes, sir, I say the brute—had the ill manners to send word by his attendant that His Highness was in the bath and would not be disturbed?"

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"I wonder," growled Mr. Trunk, "that, as the ladies had so much curiosity, they did not go and see him in his bath."

"Well, the fact is," replied Mr. Parrot, "that they did try, but the monster would only just show them the tip of his nose."

"He has become quite a nuisance to the neighbourhood," said Mr. Trunk.

"I wonder," observed the conveyancer, "if the Alderman could put him down?"

"Put *him* down!" growled Trunk again; "the fellow's too fat. You might as well try to put down a whale!"

"Then what can *we* do?" said the conveyancer. "Could we manage to drown him in his bath?"

"A likely idea!" returned the great merchant. "Do you not know that the fellow lives half his life in the water, and can swim as well as a fish?"

"Can we bring an action for ejection?" suggested Mr. Starling. "Can we not discover some flaw in his title-deeds?"

"I wish you'd try," answered the merchant. And the result of this conspiracy against the offending Prince was, that Mr. Starling, by some means best known to himself, obtained a copy of the title-deeds he wanted, and soon picked two or three holes in them.

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This good news he quickly communicated to the City merchants, who were delighted beyond measure. An action was immediately commenced against Prince Ippo, who did not seem in the least concerned about it, but took his bath and drank his twenty bottles a-day as usual. The conveyancer met with but little opposition, and gained the day.

Mr. Trunk and old Parrot were in raptures at the result. They warmly congratulated Mr. Starling, and the three conspirators rejoiced over a handsome dinner, which the great merchant gave on the occasion. But, alas! their delight was of short duration: the friends of Prince Ippo took up his cause, appealed against the decision, and after two trials, threw the case into Chancery.

There it is likely to remain.

THE PORTRAIT-PAINTER.

[41]

MANY years ago there lived a celebrated artist who became very famous for his portraits of the great men of the day. His name was Porcupine. It is recorded, that noblemen of the highest rank used to visit his studio, take luncheon with him, and honour him with their criticism.

In his earlier time he was much patronised by two of the great nobility, both members of the Dilettante Society, who did much to bring the young artist into notice—these were the great Lord Forestking and the well-remembered Sir Hyde Jungle. His Lordship's patronage had, in the first instance, been solicited for Mr. Porcupine by an eccentric individual, a Mr. Munkey, a hanger-on

of the aristocracy, who aped their manners, but who had little of his own. He had met with Porcupine in the country, had expressed great admiration at his peculiar talent, and promised, if he would visit London, to introduce him to the very first society. Mr. Porcupine, innocently believing him, left his country hedgerows, and took a garret in a back-street in London. It was here that Lord Forestking first visited him, and gave him the commission to paint his portrait.

Porcupine generally had an old friend with him, whom he had long known in the country, who had come to see the town, and who lodged in the same house. His name was Dobbin.

When Porcupine had made some advancement in the portrait, Lord Forestking and his friend, Sir Hyde, came one day to inspect it, attended by the ever meddling Mr. Munkey. His Lordship seated himself in a chair opposite the picture, and expressed himself very much satisfied with the likeness, declaring, that he never before knew that he was so handsome a fellow.



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MR. PORCUPINE'S STUDIO.

"The portrait is—ah—very well, and the painting is—ah—admirable," said Sir Hyde; "but do not you think—ah—that the nose is a *leetle* too long? and are you sure," addressing Porcupine, "that the left eye is not—ah—slightly awry?"

"I have not remarked it," returned Mr. Porcupine, meekly.

"The colouring is excellent; but—ah—'pon my honour, I never saw his Lordship wear a coat of that tint; and do not you think the hair is *rayther* darker than his Lordship's?"

"Perhaps," suggested Mr. Porcupine, "you would see it better in another light;" and he immediately moved the easel.

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"Do you know," said Mr. Munkey to Mr. Dobbin—they were at the other end of the room—"Sir Hyde Jungle is esteemed one of our finest critics in the arts? He has visited most of the great Continental galleries, and can tell you the dimensions of every celebrated picture, and the exact spot on which it is hung."

"How *can* one individual be the possessor of so much learning!" said Dobbin. "I cannot even remember the dimensions of the common in my native village, though I have been round it often and often."

"Oh! Sir Hyde is, as you remark, a possessor of great learning. He studies anatomy too, and is very fond of dissecting all kinds of animals. I am told that no professor at St. Bartholomew's can do it more rapidly."

"What a wonderful individual!"

"Ah! now that I see it better," said the Baronet, "I think the hair as near right as it can be; but—ah—you have given his Lordship two—ah—curls on the left temple, which I do not think his Lordship ever has."

"Would your Lordship wish to have them taken out?" inquired Porcupine.

"Pon honour, Sir Hyde," said his Lordship, "I really think the portrait is a very good one; and I like those two curls so much, that I'll make my barber give them to me to-morrow morning."

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"I perfectly agree with your Lordship," replied the connoisseur; "and if Mr. Porcupine will but attend to the suggestions I have thrown out, this picture will make his fortune;" and the learned critic began to put on his gloves and seek his hat.

The Lord and the Baronet wished the artist good morning, and, with their attendant, departed.

Poor Porcupine threw himself into his chair, and gazed wistfully at the picture. His first thought was to thrust his foot through the canvass, but the word "suggestions" and "make his fortune" rang in his ears, and he burst into a long loud laugh.

"He is very learned, that Sir Hyde Jungle," observed his friend, Mr. Dobbin, at the conclusion of the laugh.

"A very learned man," said Porcupine.

"And did he not promise to make your fortune?"

"He did," replied the artist; "and if he can he may."

The next time Sir Hyde saw the portrait, he thought the nose and the eyes were quite right—the tone of colour on the coat admirable—and the hair marvellously exact. The day after, Lady Jungle and several friends came to see the picture, and one gave Mr. Porcupine a commission for a portrait of her darling Wilhelmina. A rush of orders followed, and the great Sir Hyde Jungle did what the artist never believed, he kept his promise, and, by his wonderful talk, made Mr. Porcupine's fortune.

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THE STUFFED ANIMALS IN THE EXHIBITION.

[46]

A STORY. BY POLICEMAN X X.

ONE night as I was a-going my rounds, seeing that all things were right, I felt so tired and drowsy that I could hardly keep awake; so, when I came to the Stuffed Animals, I lay down on the bench there to rest myself. I have heard of many marvellous things, but nothing that ever I knew of equals the story I am going to tell you.

I had not been lying on the bench five minutes—not more than ten minutes certainly—when I heard a confused noise as if a crowd of visitors had been let into the building. You may be sure I was astonished, but fancying there might be something in the wind, I kept still and breathed very softly. Presently a large party came into the passage where the Stuffed Animals were, and you may imagine how I did stare—sure enough they were a lot of the beasts from the Zoological Gardens. But the most curious thing was, that many of them were dressed just like Christians. First came the big Elephant, putting me in mind, for all the world, of Mr. Trunk, the great City merchant; then the Hippopotamus, with a fez cap on exactly like the Abyssinian prince, Ippo, that was in the Exhibition a few days before; then a Kangaroo, with a smart bonnet and shawl, in the same style as Mrs. Jumper's; then a Wild Boar, looking like a country lout in a smock-frock; then a Beaver, no better dressed than one of our navvies, and who stamped on the Cat's toes, and made her squeak out so shrilly, that she made my ears tingle; then came a Parroquet, dressed like a dandy, and with him were two fashionable birds, Miss Cockatoo and Miss Snowy Owl; then followed an old Crocodile, looking like one of those withered Indian nurses, and in her arms she carried a young Frog that might have been an Indian baby. Besides these, there was a young Monkey, exactly like my brother's boy, Jack; a Mouse, dressed in the last-fashioned paletôt; and a little thing that for a long time I could make nothing of, but I fancy they call her a Duck-billed Platypus.



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THE STRANGE VISITORS AT THE EXHIBITION.

To have heard the remarks these animals made on their stuffed fellow-creatures would have made me die of laughter, but that I felt rather frightened and uncomfortable at my position so near them. The young Indian clapped his hands when he saw the two Frogs a-shaving, and the Snowy Owl flew up to see if the Great Horned Owl above her was really stuffed or not. The Cat seemed very much inclined to jump at the young Partridges; and the Mouse, dapper as he was, shrank back with fear when he caught sight of the Martins and Weasels.

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At length Dent's clock struck four. The noise seemed to frighten them away; for, when I jumped up, and rubbed my eyes, they were all gone, nor could I make out by which door they left.

When I reported all this to my inspector, the only rewards I got were, to be told I had been dreaming, and to have my night's allowance of porter stopped for a fortnight.

ALDERMAN GOBBLE'S AMBITION.

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NOR many years since, Mr. Alderman Gobble was a famous member of the Corporation of the City of London. No one was more esteemed at the great Guildhall feasts than he was. No one, at Christmas time, was more constant at the Mansion-House dinners, where he was invariably placed at the head of the table, close by the Lord Mayor.

Mr. Gobble was born in Norfolk, at one of those fine old-fashioned farm-houses so frequently met with in that county, and was often heard to tell the tale of his first coming to London, on a bitterly cold day, when the whole country was covered with snow, on the top of the "Telegraph" coach. It was Christmas-Eve, in the year 1815, and



LORD FALCON AND HIS LONDON GUESTS.

member of Parliament. In this laudable desire, he was greatly abetted by his beloved spouse, who was deeply impressed with the conviction that he would be one of the most eloquent members of the House.

It happened that, about this time, the borough of Woodside became vacant. Mr. Rabbetson, the member, while on a visit to Earl Falcon, the owner of half the village of Woodside, was accidentally killed by his Lordship while they were out together for a day's sport.

The Alderman no sooner heard of the accident than he flew home to his wife, and told her of the opportunity that had offered itself. By the next night's mail, Mr. and Mrs. Gobble travelled down to Woodside, and, on the following day, they hired a carriage and rode over to Lord Falcon's mansion. The servants at the gate said that his Lordship was too ill to see company; but, at the Alderman's pressing entreaty, their cards were taken, and soon afterwards they were ushered into the lofty apartments of Woodside Hall, and through the library into the Earl's private garden. There they found his Lordship walking up and down the terrace, evidently in a most unamiable state of mind. Mrs. Gobble drew back when she saw his fierce looks; and the Alderman, taking off his hat, seemed undecided whether it would not be advisable to beat a retreat before his Lordship ate them both up, for so he seemed inclined to do. At last Mr. Gobble told his errand, and solicited the favour of his Lordship's interest. If Earl Falcon was angry before, he was enraged to madness now; he screamed at his visitors, stamped his feet, and rushed at them, cane in hand, so impetuously, that the intruders flew away with all the haste they could, regained their carriage, and took a post-chaise back to London without delay.

Alderman Gobble returned to town sadder, but wiser; and was never afterwards heard to talk of the honour of being a member of Parliament.

As for the borough of Woodside, Lord Falcon gave to Mr. Weesel, the family lawyer, who, report said, was somehow the cause of the death of poor Mr. Rabbetson.

MRS. STRUTT'S SEMINARY.

THE bells of Farmfield's Church rang merrily when young Mr. Strutt married his neighbour's daughter, Miss Waddle. The school-children had a holiday, and the labourers at all the farms in the village dined off roast beef and plum-pudding. Young Mr. Strutt had passed the College of Surgeons, and set up in practice in London, in a new and fashionable neighbourhood at the West End; that is, he had hired two rooms in a respectable-looking house, and bargained to have his name on a great brass plate on the door. But neither his wedding nor his brass plate brought him any patients; and after a two years' trial, Mr. Strutt retired from the profession in disgust.

It luckily happened that Mrs. Strutt's papa, Mr. Waddle, determined that his daughter should receive a *superior* education, had sent her to a very distinguished seminary, where young ladies were taught the most wonderful accomplishments by the very first masters; but where, unfortunately, they did not include the art of making apple-dumplings.

As Mrs. Strutt had no children of her own, she now determined to devote her acquirements to the benefit of the children of other people. So Mr. and Mrs. Strutt opened an "Academy for Young Ladies and Gentlemen" at Kentish Town; and, as good fortune would have it, they were soon intrusted with the care of half-a-dozen "boarders," who brought their own forks and spoons, and were the children of very genteel parents, at least so Mrs. Strutt told her visitors.



THE WALK TO HIGHGATE.

through the country town where I lived, my attention was drawn to a great crowd of people assembled round some apparently very amusing objects. Led by curiosity, I mixed in with them; and what did I behold but a fellow whom I had long known, named Bruin, teaching a monkey to perform all kinds of tricks? The animal stood on his head, and, with his hind feet, threw sticks up into the air; then he leaped on Mr. Bruin's head, and balanced himself on one hand, and jumped over the heads of the spectators; among whom, I remember, were my neighbours, Mrs. Kangaroo and her daughter; my shoemaker, old Pidgeon, and his little girl; Shark the lawyer; Mrs. Whinchat the milliner; a fellow named Ratt, who had been twenty times taken up for thieving; and the poulterer's son, Bill Goose. I wish you had been with them to have seen how Bruin made Jocko the monkey dance, and how all these folks laughed. They capered about finely to get out of his way; but at last Jocko jumped from his master's head on to Mrs. Whinchat's back, tore off her bonnet, and in two seconds put it on the head of little Miss Kangaroo. Oh, how the crowd shouted! Bruin tried to beat the animal, but he laughed too much to be able to catch him; and Jocko, pleased at his own performance, jumped on to Ratt's back, and the rascal ran half way down the street before the monkey would dismount. Bruin ran after them, and so great was the crowd that pursued, that he was glad to hide both himself and Jocko in an inn-yard."

The young ones all laughed famously at this story; and then, as it was near tea-time, they set off home, where they had, for a treat, hot toast for tea, and a game at forfeits afterwards.

So Mr. and Mrs. Strutt got on much better with the Seminary than the Surgery; and it is said that after a few years they had more than fifty boarders who used often to take rambles in the Highgate Meadows.

One thing must be said, that both master and mistress were very kind and attentive to their young charges; and if they did not teach them much, it was simply because they did not know how.

One fine summer's afternoon they all went together for a ramble in the Highgate Fields. The elder Master Hawke took his drum, and the younger had Mrs. Strutt's parasol; Miss Duckling's two brother's had a kite and a boat; and Charley Lighthair a whirligig. They flew the kite high up till they could hardly see it, and sent card-messengers of every colour up to it: they swam their boat in the pond; and when it sailed beyond their reach, Mr. Strutt pulled it back with his walking-cane: they ran races across the meadows, and tried to see who could get over the stiles first; and then when they were hot and tired, they all sat under the shade of the great elm-trees, and Mr. Strutt told them the following anecdote:—

"Many years ago, as I was passing



THE TRAVELLING SHOWMAN.

[55]

[56]

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