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HAPPY-THOUGHT HALL.

BY

F. C. BURNAND,

AUTHOR OF "HAPPY THOUGHTS," "MORE HAPPY THOUGHTS,"

"OUT OF TOWN," &C.

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.
1872.

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HAPPY THOUGHT HALL.

CHAPTER I.

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APPY THOUGHT.—To get a country house for the winter. To fill it with friends. To have one wing for bachelors. Another wing for maidens with *chaperons*. To have the *Nave*, as it were, of the house, for the married people.

"I'll tell you what you ought to do," says Cazell to me. "You ought to build a nice little snuggery in the country."

I object to the cost.

"Cost? Bah! that's nothing. You can always get a Building Society," says he, enthusiastically, "to advance you *any* sum."

I ask how these Building Societies proceed.

CAZELL.

"Simply enough," says Cazell, who invariably knows everything about anything, only if you act on his information and go wrong, he generally denies warmly afterwards that "he ever said such a thing." "Simply enough," he continues. "You go to the Society, you give 'em some security,—any security will do, and you could get *that* easily enough." I nod cheerfully, more to encourage him to proceed, than from any feeling of certainty as to the means of obtaining the security. Then, having, satisfactorily to himself, disposed of this difficulty, he continues:—"Well, your security in this case would be your title-deeds of the house and land."

Happy Thought.—Title-deeds.

"Then," he goes on, as if he'd been accustomed to do this sort of thing every day, "you say how much you want. Then they ask you" (it's becoming quite dramatic), "where's your house? You say . . . . wherever it is, you know." Cazell puts it in this way, as impressing upon me that before the Building Society I *must* tell the truth and not pretend to them that my house is in Bedfordshire, for example, when it isn't. "Well," he resumes, "then they ask you what sort of a house do you intend to build? Then, you lay your plan before them."

Happy Thought.—The Plan of my House.

"They examine it, that is, their architect does . . . they inquire about the land . . . and then they decide, whether they'll buy it for you, or not."

("*Not*" I should think, but I don't say so.)

"Then," he goes on. "You make the purchase, and hand over the title-deeds. Pay them a rent and a per-centage every year until the whole is paid off, when it becomes yours."

"In fact," I put it, bluffly, to him, "I can build a house without having any money; I mean, by getting the money from the Building Society?"

"Precisely. Any day."

I hesitate. It really is—if Cazell is correct—much better than hiring a house . . . or taking lodgings. And what does Cazell think the cost will be?

“Well,” says he, “put it at £2,000, the outside.” I reflect that the inside, too, will be a considerable expense. “A good, strong house. Why, I knew a fellow build one for £1,500. Just what you want. Then, there's the ground—say at another two. And there you are. Four thousand altogether. Well, you'd pay 'em a mere rent for that, and so much tacked on, which would, each time, reduce the principal. And when you pay your last year of rent and interest, it ought to have come down to a five-pound note.”

This is admirable. What a glorious society is the Building Society . . . *if* Cazell is only right.

I will draw out plans at once.

Will he come down with me, somewhere, and choose the land?

“Certainly. Why not try Kent?” he asks. I have no objection to Kent. “But,” I suggest, “wouldn't it be better, first, to settle the sort of thing wanted?”

Happy Thought.—Put it down on paper. 5

A billiard-room, *absolute necessity*.

Stables. *Do.*

“Bath-room,” adds Milburd, to whom, on his accidentally looking in, we appeal for assistance.

Happy Thought.—“While I *am* about it” (as Milburd says), “why not a Turkish bath?” In the house. Excellent!

MILBURD.

What after this?

Milburd suggests smoking-room, and library. Yes. That's all.

Not *all*: Milburd thinks that a Racquet Court wouldn't be bad, and *while I am about it*, it would be scarcely any more expense, to have a Tennis Court; and, by the way, a positive saving to utilise the outside walls of both, for Fives.

Query. Won't this cost too much?

“The question is,” says Boodels (he has been recently improving his own house), “What is your limit?”

“No, I argue, let's see what an imaginary house will cost, and then *I'll have so much of it as I want*. Say,” I put it, “a house is to cost two thousand——”

“Can't be done for the money,” says Boodels, positively. 6

This is rather damping, but, on consideration, it's just what Boodels *would* say in anybody's case, except his own.

BOODELS OF BOODELS.

I pass over his opinion and continue.

“For argument's sake, let's say the house costs four thousand——” (This I feel sounds very pleasant, but what will the Building Society say, and how about the security? These, however, are details for subsequent consideration. One thing at a time: and these extras rather hamper one's ideas. So I say £4,000, and leave it at that.)

“More,” says Boodels, “but you *might* do it for that.”

I repeat “For argument's sake.” Formula admitted.

Well then, I suppose it to cost four thousand, I can only spend two thousand. Very good, I'll only have, as it were, two thousand pounds' worth of house.

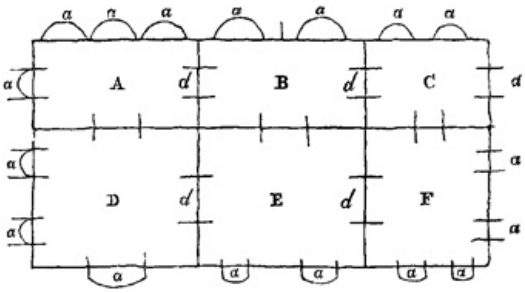
“Half a house, in fact,” says Milburd. 7

This is not the way to put it, but I am, I feel, right, somehow.

I appeal to my friend Jenkyns Soames, who is writing a book on Scientific Economy.

He replies that mine is correct, in theory, if taken from a certain point of view. We admit that this is a sensible way of putting it. And are, generally, satisfied.

“There's one thing I *must* have,” I remember, aloud, as I sit down to draw a first plan, “my Study.”



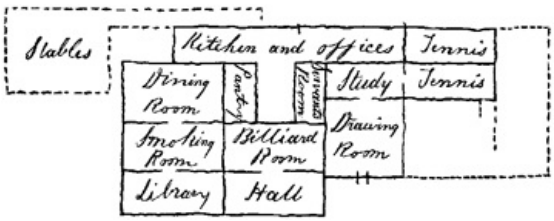
A. Billiard Room.
B. Tennis Court.
C. Racquet Court.
D. Library.
E. Study.
F. Dining Room.
a a a &c. all bay windows and lights high up, according to room.
d d d &c., doors.

On this plan every room is *en suite*.

“How about your staircases,” says Boodels, “and your kitchen, eh?” 8

I observe that this is only a commencement. That my object is to remember everything gradually, and so omit nothing.

Happy Thought.—Only one floor and one flight of stairs.



Here I find the library has been forgotten.

Add on the library in dots; like a railway map.

“How do you get there from the study?” asks Milburd.

“Why, by doors, through the dining-room.”

“Awkward,” suggests Boodels.

“No; I don't think so.”

“How do you light your study?” asks Cazell.

“Eh? . . . . . Ah! . . .” 9

Happy Thought.—From above.

“Then,” says Milburd, as if there was an end of the whole thing, “you lose a

bed-room by that, and another over the billiard-room."

True.

Happy Thought.—Bring study more forward and light it by big window in front. (I do so in dots.)

Milburd says: "Throw out a bay."

This is his invariable resource.

I throw out a bay-window (also in dots) and then we survey it carefully.

Happy Thought.—To have an In-door Amusement Hall for Wet Weather.

"Will your Amusement hall be *the* Hall?"

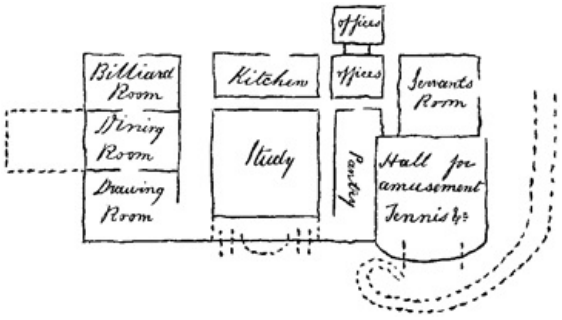
"Well . . . Yes."

"Then the front door will be . . .?"

I indicate in dots the front door, and the drive.

"Precisely," says Boodels, "and just as you're in the middle of a game of something, up comes a party to call; you can't say you're not at home, and the servants can't open the door while the ball, or whatever it is, is flying about."

True . . . Then . . . bring it more forward. Or make a new plan. 10



"Then the bath-room's forgotten," says Milburd. Add it in dots to tennis court.

Then over every room there'll be a bed-room and dressing-room. So that'll be a good house.

"What style?" asks Cazell.

"Elizabethan, decidedly," I reply. They think not.

"Gothic's useful," says Boodels.

"Italian's better," observes Milburd.

"Something between the two," suggests Cazell.

Twelve rooms below, twelve above. Stables outside, added subsequently. 11

Happy Thought.—Submit this to Chilvern, my architectural friend.

I say, Estimate it roughly.

He does it, after a day or so.

Rough Estimate. About £8,000.

"That," I say, a little staggered, "is rather *over* the mark than under it, eh?"

"*Over?* No," he replies, "*Under.* I mean, of course, to have everything done well, thoroughly well. Of course," says he, "there are men who will run you up a house in a few weeks and charge you about £4,000. But what's the result? Why you're always repairing, and it costs you, in

the end, double what you'd have paid for having it thoroughly well done at first."

CHILVERN.

I ask how long the building would take? Chilvern is of opinion that it would be six months at the least. 12

Then I say I'll give it up. I wanted it for Christmas.

Then the notion of the party must be abandoned.

Happy Thought.—An abandoned party! Dreadful character.

Boodels says he's sorry for that, as he can't go into his own house just now, it being under repair.

Cazell suddenly exclaims, "I tell you what we ought to do!" We listen. He goes on. "We ought to take a house for the Winter Season, the lot of us together, and then ask our own friends."

Boodels observes, that, if we agree to this, he will supply some servants, as *his* are doing nothing. Chilvern can tell us where there's a place to be let. Just what we want, about an hour's train from town. Queer old mansion, a bit out of trim, he tells us, in fact he was going to have had the job of restoring it, only the people suddenly left; but he'd put that to rights. Would we go and look at it?

Carried nem. con.

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CHAPTER II.

NOTIONS—GUIDE WANTED—BLACKMEER—CHILVERN—HIS ELEMENT—VIEWS—OBSERVATIONS—DISCUSSIONS—FISHING—TROUT—SHROPSHIRE—THE LAKE—THE SOLITARY CASTLE—HERMITS—GAMES—DIFFERENCES—AT THE HOUSE.

E go down. Hertfordshire. I find on inquiry that there is no Guide to this county. Black ignores it, Murray knows nothing about it, and Bradshaw is silent on the subject.

Happy Thought.—While at Our Mansion write a Guide to Hertfordshire.

Arrived at the station we inquire for Blackmeer Hall. Six or seven miles to drive. I ask if this distance isn't against it? I am met by the unanimous answer, "Not at all."

Chilvern points out the beauties of the road as we go along. We become silent, not liking to have things perpetually pushed under our notice, as if we couldn't see them for ourselves.

"There's a fine bit," he says, pointing to a gate. We nod. "Aren't the colours of the trees lovely?" he asks. We agree with him. For the sake of argument, I observe that I've seen finer. "Where?" he inquires. I don't know at this moment *where*, but, being on my mettle, I am certain that I *have* seen finer. 14

Happy Thought.—In Derbyshire.

He pooh-poohs the notion of Derbyshire. Then he continues giving us bits of useful information, like a disjointed lecture.

"There's a tree for you!" he exclaims. Then, "There's a queer old roof, eh?" No notice being taken of this, he continues, "Fine beech that!" "Beautiful view, isn't it?" Presently, "Just look at the sky *now*!" and so on.

Cazell begins to resent it, so does Boodels.

Chilvern says, pointing left and right, “Ah, these fields are the place for mushrooms.”

Boodels says that his own fields in Essex are better.

“Not better than this,” says Chilvern.

Boodels returns that they are, and that *he*, Boodels, *ought* to know.

Chilvern pauses to allow the subject to stand and cool, as it were; then he begins again.

“That's a fine cow there. This is a great place for cows. It's where all the celebrated cheeses are made.” 15

“Ah, my dear fellow,” cries Boodels, “you should see the cows in Gloucestershire. They *are* cows.”

Cazell agrees with him, but caps it with, “Yes, but I'll tell you what *you* ought to do,” to Chilvern: “you ought to go to the Scilly Islands, and see the cows there.”

Milburd says if it's a question of going to islands, why not to the Isle of Wight and see Cowes there? I laugh, slightly; as it doesn't do to encourage Milburd too much. The others, who are warming with their conversation, treat the joke with silent contempt.

“There's a larch for you,” cries Chilvern, in admiration of a gigantic fir-tree.

“That!” exclaims Cazell. “My dear fellow”—whenever he is getting nettled in discussion, he always becomes excessively affectionate in his terms—“My dear fellow, you ought to go to Surrey to see the larches, and the firs.” Boodels observes in a chilly sort of way that he doesn't care for larches, *or* firs.

In order to divert the stream of their conversation, I remark that I have no doubt there's some capital trout fishing about here. I say this on crossing a bridge.

“Ah!” says Chilvern, “see the trout in Somersetshire. My! Why in some places you could catch twenty, with as many flies, all at once.” 16

Cazell tops this without a pause; he says, “Ah! if you want trout you should go to Shropshire. I *never* saw such a place for trout. You've only got to put your hand down, and you can take them asleep in the ditches.”

Milburd exclaims incredulously, “Oh yes,” meaning, “Oh no.”

“My dear boy,” says Cazell, emphatically, “I assure you it's a known thing. Tell a Shropshire man about trout in any other county, and he'll laugh in your face.”

Except for politeness, we feel, all of us, a strong inclination to act like the ideal Shropshire man, under the present circumstances.

We enter an avenue.

The driver tells us we are approaching the house. We pass a large pond partially concealed by trees. In the centre there is an island with a sort of small ruined castle on it. It is, as it were, a Castle for One.

Happy Thought.—Sort of place where a Hermit could play Solitaire. And get excited over it. Who invented Solitaire? If it was a Hermit, why didn't the eminent ascetic continue the idea and write a book of games?

Happy Thought.—To call it “Games for Hermits.” 17

Milburd exclaims, “Stunning place for fireworks. We might do the storming of the Fortress there.”

Happy Thought.—“Good place,” say, “for a retired study.”

Cazell says, “I tell you what we ought to do with that; make it into spare rooms. A castle for single gentlemen. They could cross in a boat at night.”

Chilvern is of opinion it ought to be restored, and made a gem of architectural design.

Boodels says, if anything, he should like it to be an observatory, or, on second thoughts, a large aquarium.

Cazell says at once, “If you want to see an aquarium you should go to Havre.”

Chilvern returns that there's a better one at Boulogne.

Milburd caps this by quoting the one at the Crystal Palace.

Cazell observes quickly that *the* place for curious marine specimens is Bakstorf in Central Russia.

“*You've* never been to Central Russia,” says Milburd, superciliously. Professing to have travelled considerably himself, he doesn't like the idea of anyone having done the same.

“I wish,” exclaims Cazell, using a formula of his own, “I wish I had as many sovereigns as I've been in Central Russia.” 18

This appears conclusive, and, if it isn't, here we are at the House. Blackmeer Hall. Elizabethan, apparently.

AN OLD WOMAN RECEIVES US AT THE DOOR.

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CHAPTER III.

WITHIN—THE HOUSEKEEPER—WINDOWS—INFORMATION—THE ORIEL—VIEW—FLOOR—MILBURD'S INQUIRY—TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT—MATERIAL—AN EXAMPLE—CRONE—POOR—MEDITATIONS—THE FRESCO—TAPESTRY—ARMOUR—MICE—RATS—THE GHOST.

N old woman curtseys, and ushers our party into the Hall itself, which is lofty and spacious, but in a mildewy condition.

The floor is partly stone partly tiles, as if the original designer had been, in his day, uncertain whether to make a roof of it, or not.

A fine old chimney, with a hearth for logs, and dogs, is at one end, and reminds me of retainers, deer hounds, oxen roasted whole, and Christmas

revels in the olden time.

The windows are diamond-paned. To open in compartments.

The old woman tells us that this was rebuilt in fifteen hundred and fifty-two, and then she shows us into the drawing-room. 20

This is a fine apartment with an Oriel window, giving on to a lawn of rank and tangled grass. Beyond this chaos of green, is a well timbered covert, dense as a small black forest.

The distance between the trees becoming greater to the left of the plantation, we obtain a glimpse of the lake which we passed on our road.

There is another grand fire-place in this room. The wainscot wants patching up, and so does the parqueted floor.

The old woman tells us that “they say as Queen Elizabeth was once here.”

Milburd asks seriously, “Do you recollect her, ma'am?”

The crone wags her head and replies “that it was afore her time.”

Mentioning the word Crone to Boodels, I ask him what relation it bears to ‘Cronie.’ “‘Cronie,’ almost obsolete now, means ‘a familiar friend,’” I explain to him. He says thank you, and supposes that the two words have nothing in common except sound.

The notion being in fact part of my scheme for *Typical Developments* (Vol. XIII. Part I. “*On sounds of words and their relation to one another*”), I offer him my idea on the subject. 21

He asks, “What is it?”

Happy Thought.—“Crone” is the feminine of “Cronie.” “Cronie” is an old friend, “Crone” is an old friend's old wife. Which sounds like a sentence in one of my German Exercises. “The Old wife of the Old friend met the Lion in the garden.”

Boodels says “Pooh!” If he doesn't understand a thing at once he dismisses it with “pooh.” As I ascend the wide oak staircase, with room enough for eight people abreast on every step, I reflect on the foolishness of a man saying “pooh,” hastily. How many great schemes might anyone nip in the bud by one “pooh.” What marvellous inventions, apparently ridiculous in their commencing idea, would be at once knocked on the head by a single “pooh.” The rising Artist has an infant design for some immense historical Fresco. He comes—I see him, as it were, coming to Boodels to confide in him. “I mean,” says he, “to show Peter the Great in the right-hand corner, and Peter the Hermit in another, with Peter Martyr somewhere else, . . . in fact, I see an immense historical subject of all the Celebrated Peters . . . . Then why not offer it to St. Peter's at Rome, and why not . . .?” “Pooh!” says Boodels, and the artist perhaps goes off and drowns himself, or goes into business and so is lost to the World. If I'd listened to Boodels' “Pooh,” I should never have got on so far as I have with my work on Typical Developments. I hope to be remembered by this. 22

Milburd is calling me. Everyone in ecstasies. What wonderful old chambers. Oak panels, diamond panes. Remains of tapestry, containing probably a fine collection of moths. Old rusty armour on the walls. Strange out-of-the-way staircases leading to postern-doors and offices.

Chilvern observes that it all wants doing up, and commences making plans and notes in a book, which he takes from his pocket, in company with a small ivory two-foot rule.

“Plenty of mice,” says Cazell, looking at the old woman for corroboration.

“Yes, in winter-time,” she says.

“And rats?” inquires Milburd.

“I've met 'em on the stairs,” replies the old lady, quite cheerfully.

“Ghosts, too?” suggests Boodels. [He has become somewhat melancholy of late and says that he is studying the phenomena of “Unconscious Cerebration,” which Milburd explains is only a name for thinking of nothing without knowing it. Boodels, in consequence, thinks Milburd a mere buffoon.]

“Well, my husband,” she answers in a matter-of-fact way, “my husband, he see the Ghost. . . I think it were last Christmas twelvemonth.”

“*The* Ghost!” exclaims Boodels, much interested.

“Yes, the White Lady,” says the old woman as pleasantly as possible. “There's the marks on the floor of the stain where she was murdered. There! that gentleman's standing on it.”

Good gracious! so I am. A dull sort of mulberry-coloured stain. “It won't wash out,” she goes on. “I've tried it. And it won't plane out, as they've tried *that*. And so,” she finishes with a sniff, “there it is.”

CHAPTER IV.

ALONE—THE SECRET DOOR—UNSOCIABILITY—THE PICTURE—GRIM THOUGHTS—ONE CHEERFUL IDEA—MELON—HIDING—CRUEL JOKES—SPIRAL—ANGLES—ASSASSINS—WHITE LADY—A COMFORT—NERVES—THE DOOR—A GROWL—SNIFFS—A FOLLOWER—REASONING—SAD THOUGHTS—OUT AT LAST.

VERY one is silent for a minute, and then we smile at the absurd idea of there being a ghost about. I linger for a few seconds after the others. They go out on to the landing. When I leave the room I pass out there too. They are all gone. I catch sight of a small door, in the panelling, on my right at the end of this corridor, closing quickly. They are gone evidently to visit some other quarter of the house. They might have stopped for me. Very unsociable. One seems to hear every footfall in this house. And even when you're not speaking, your thoughts appear to find an echo, and to be repeated aloud. In this short narrow gallery, there is an old picture of a man in a Spanish dress, holding a melon in his hand. His eyes follow me. Curious effect. I stop for a moment. They are fixed on me. Remember some story about this somewhere, when it turned out that there was a man concealed, who came out to murder people at night, living happily behind the picture in the day-time. Cheer myself up by thinking that if Milburd had seen this picture he'd have named it “The Meloncolic Man.”

Odd. I don't hear their voices. They can't be playing me any trick, and hiding. If there is a thing I detest, if there is one thing above another absolutely and positively wicked and reprehensible, it is hiding behind a door or a curtain . . . or in fact behind anything . . . and then popping out on you suddenly. Heard of a boy to whom this was done, and he remained an idiot for the rest of his life.

Happy Thought.—To look cautiously *at* the corners. To open the small door quietly, and say, “Ah!” . . . No. No one there. All gone down. A dark narrow winding staircase (lighted only by loopholes), so that one is perpetually

going round angles and might come upon anyone, or anyone upon you, without any sort of preparation. I can quite understand assassins coming down on their victim, or up on their victim, or up and down, simultaneously, on their victim, in one of these old places. Assassins in the olden time. I wonder if it's true about the White Lady? The old woman's husband was not a bit frightened of her, so she says. Perhaps he had come home rather tipsy, and mistook some shadow in the moonlight for a ghost.

My eyes are fast becoming accustomed to this obscurity.

Happy Thought.—There are no such things as ghosts.

On the whole, I'd rather meet a ghost, than a rat, or a blackbeetle, or a burglar.

The diminishing scale, of what I would rather *not* meet in a narrow staircase at night, is, the burglar, rat, blackbeetle, ghost.

I hear something moving. . . below or above. . .

I look cautiously back round the last corner. . .

Nothing.

Happy Thought.—To shout out, “Hi! you fellows!” Shouting would frighten a burglar, or a rat, but would have no effect on a blackbeetle, or a ghost.

No answer. I descend a few more steps. Something seems to be coming down behind me. Almost in my footsteps, and at my pace. Ah! of course, echo. But why wasn't there an echo when I shouted? . . . I will go on quicker. I'm not a bit nervous, only the sooner I'm out of this, the better. At last a door. Thick, solid, iron-barred, and nail-studded door. Where's the handle? None. Yes, an iron knob. It won't be turned. It won't be twisted. It's locked; or, if not, fastened somehow. No; a faint light is admitted through the keyhole, and by putting my eye to it, I can see a stone passage on the other side. Perhaps the old woman has locked this by accident. And perhaps they are not far off. I shake it. A deep, low savage growl follows this, and I hear within two inches of my toes, a series of jerky and inquisitive sniffs. The sniffs say, as it were, “There's no doubt about it, I know you're there;” the growl adds, “Show yourself, and I pin you.”

Happy Thought.—Go upstairs again and return by the other door.

Hope nobody, while I am mounting the steps again, will open the door and let the dog up here for a run, or to “see who it is,” in a professional way.

No. Up—up—up. Excelsior. I seem to be climbing double the number of steps, in going up, to what I did in coming down. My eyes too, after the keyhole, have not yet become re-accustomed to the light. I pause. I could almost swear that somebody, two steps lower down behind me, stopped at the same instant.

Is there anyone playing the fool? Is it Milburd? I'll chance it, and ask. I say, “Milburd?” cautiously. No. Not a sound. I own to being a little nervous. Someone—Boodels, I think—once said that fine natures were always nervous.

Happy Thought.—When nervous, reason with yourself quietly.

I say, to myself, reasoning, this is not *fright*: this is not *cowardice*: it's simply nervousness. You wouldn't (this addressed to myself) be afraid of meeting a . . . a . . . for instance . . . say . . . a ghost . . . no. Why should you? You've never injured a ghost that you know of, and why should a ghost hurt you? Besides . . . nonsense . . . there are no ghosts . . . and as to burglars . . . the house doesn't belong to us yet, and so if I meet one, there'd be no necessity to struggle . . . on the contrary, I might be jocosely polite; I might say, “Make yourself at home; you've as much right here as I have.” . . . . But, on second thoughts, no one would, or could, come here to rob this place. It's empty. . . . . .

Odd. I cannot find the door I came in at. I thought that when I entered by it, I stepped on to a landing, but I suppose that it is only a door in the wall, and opens simply on to a step of the stairs.

Perhaps this is an unfrequented staircase. One might be locked up here, and remain here, for anything that the old woman, or her husband, would know about it.

If one was locked away here, or anywhere, for how long would it remain a secret? 29

When one has been absent from town for instance, for months, and then returns, nobody knows whether you've been in your own room all the time, or in Kamschatka. They say, “Hallo! how d'ye do? How are you? Where have you been this age?” They've never inquired. They've got on very well without you. Important matters, too, which “absolutely demand your presence,” as the letter says, which you find on your table six months afterwards, settle themselves without your interference.

The story of the Mistletoe Bough, where a young lady hides herself in an oak chest, and is never heard of for years (in fact never at all until her bones were found with her dress and wreath,) is not so very improbable.

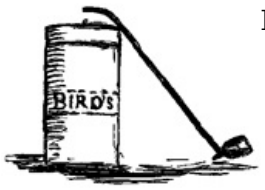
Suppose the old woman forgot this staircase, suppose my party went off thinking that I was playing them some trick; supposing they stick to that belief for four days, what should *I* do? . . . I don't know. I could howl, and shout. That's all.

What chance of being discovered have I, except by a tradesman wanting his quarter's account settled very badly and being determined upon hunting me up wherever I was.

A door at last! And light and fresh air through the chinks. It opens easily, and I am on the leads of the roof. 30

With a

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW



of the surrounding country. I breathe freely once more. Now the question is how to get down again.

“SICH A GITTIN' UP STAIRS MASSA.”

31

CHAPTER V.

ON THE ROOF—DOWN AGAIN—FURTHER INSPECTION—VARIETY—ELIZABETHAN—NORMAN—COLOUR—RAYS—FILTERED—CUI BONO?—SUGGESTION—PLAY IN STORE—THE STABLES—PREVIOUS TENANTS—GOOD INTENTIONS—NAME.

UST as I am asking myself this, I meet Chilvern on the roof. He is examining the chimneys. The others are below choosing their rooms. It appears that no one has been up the narrow staircase except myself. He shows me a different way down.

We take another turn over the house. This time more observantly. Various orders of architecture. Chilvern, as an architect, makes a professional joke. He says, “The best order of architecture is an order to build an unlimited number of houses.”

Happy Thought.—Who was the first scientific builder? *Answer.*—Noah, when he invented arky-tecture. (N.B. This will do for a Sunday conundrum.) 32

Part of it is very old, (the staircase and tower part where I've been), and wall of the yard at the back, overgrown with ivy, shows the remains of a genuine Norman arch.

Another quarter is decidedly Elizabethan, while a long and well proportioned music room,—of which the walls and ceiling, once evidently covered with paintings, are now dirty, damp, and exhibiting, here and there, patches of colour not yet entirely faded,—is decidedly Italian.

Of this apartment, the crone can tell us nothing. She never recollects it inhabited. We undo the huge shutters for ourselves, and bring down a cloud of dust and cobwebs.

The rays of light, bursting violently, as it were, into the darkness—become —after once passing the square panes, or where there are no panes, the framework—suddenly impure, and in need of a patent filter before they are fit for use.

Chilvern admires the proportions, and asks what we'll make, of this room?

A pause.

Happy Thought.—A Theatre. Nothing more evident; nothing easier.

I notice that both Boodels and Milburd catch at this idea. From which I fancy, knowing from experience Boodels' turn for poetry, that they have got, ready for production, what they will call, “little things of their own that they've just knocked off.” 33

Almost wish I hadn't suggested it. But if they've got something to act, *so have I*. If they do *theirs*, they must let mine be done.

Settled, that it is to be a theatre.

Odd that no one part of the house seems finished. Saxons started it; Normans got tired of it; Tudors touched it up; Annians added to it.

Happy Thought.—(*Alliterative, on the plan of “A was an Apple pie.”*)

Saxons started it:
Normans nurtured it:
Tudors touched it up:
Annians added to it;
Georgians joiced it:
Victorians vamped it.

“Joice,” I explain, is a term derived from building; “to joice, *i. e.* to make joices to the floors.” Chilvern says, “Pooh!” To “vamp” is equal, in musical language, to “scamp” or to dodge up. The last owner evidently has done this. 34

Happy Thought.—Good name for a Spanish speculative builder—Don Vampa di Scampo. Evidently an architect of *Châteaux d'Espagne*.

We visit the stables. The gates are magnificent, two lions sit on their tails, and guard shields on two huge pillars. After this effort, the owner seems to have got tired of the place and left it.

We notice this of every room, of various doors, of many windows.

DON VAMPA DI SCAMPO IN AN ARCHITECTURAL OPERA.

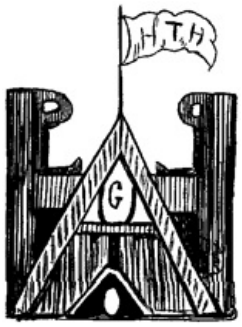
Successive tenants have commenced with great ideas, which have, so to speak, vanished in perspective.

Boodels becomes melancholy. He says, “I should call this ‘The House of Good Intentions.’”

I point out that these we are going to perfect and utilise.

A brilliant idea strikes me. I say—

Happy Thought.—Let us call it, “Happy-Thought Hall.” I add that this will look well on the top of note-paper. 35



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CHAPTER VI.

CHOOSING A PARTY.

ROOMS—DECISION—ODD MEN—RETURN—ARRANGEMENTS—THEORIES—OBJECTION—PROPOSITIONS—ELECTIONS—THE LADIES—WHO'S HOST?—GUESTS—HOSTESS—MORE PROPOSALS—GRANDMOTHERS—AUNTS—HALFSISTERS—SISTERHOOD PROPOSED—GRAND IDEA—CHAPERONS—TERMS—IDEAL—A PROFESSION—A DEFECT—OR ADVANTAGE—ADDITIONAL ATTRACTIONS—OLD MAN—DULNESS—THEATRICAL—PLANS—THE PRESIDENT—EXPLANATION—IDEA.

HERE are, it appears, sixteen bed-rooms in the house, independently of servants' rooms.

The question is, How shall we decide?

Happy Thought.—Toss up.

We do so. The “odd man” to toss again, and so on. I am the last odd man. Boodels chooses the room with the stain on the floor. He says he prefers it.

We drive back to Station. Thoughtful and sleepy journey. 37

Chilvern is to arrange all details as to fitting up and furnishing. This, he says, he can do, inexpensively and artistically, in a couple of weeks' time.

Milburd points out clearly to us that the old woman in charge evidently

doesn't want to be turned out, and so invented the ghost. We all think it highly probable, except Boodels, who says he doesn't see why there shouldn't be a ghost. We don't dispute it.

The next thing is to make up a party. Cazell tells us "what we ought to do." "We ought," he says, "to form ourselves into a committee, and ask so many people."

"I'LL TELL YOU WHAT YOU OUGHT TO DO."

We meet in the evening to choose our party. Rather difficult to propose personal friends, whom every one of us will like. We agree that we must be outspoken, and if we don't like a guest proposed, we must say so, and, as it were, blackball him.

Or *her*?—This remark leads to the question, Are there to be any ladies? Boodels says decidedly, Yes.

Chilvern, putting it artistically, says, "We want a bit of colour in a house like that."

Cazell wants to know who is to be the host. Boodels proposes me.

I accept the position; but what am I *exactly*? that's what I must clearly understand.

Milburd explains—a sort of president of a Domestic Republic.

Very good. Then how about the ladies?

Chilvern says we must have a hostess. We all suppose, doubtfully, that we must. I ask, Won't that interfere with our arrangements?

Boodels replies, that "we can't have any arrangements without a hostess." He says, after some consideration, that he has got a Grandmother who might be useful. Chilvern, deferentially, proposes an Aunt of his own, but does not, as it were, press her upon us, on account of some infirmities of temper. I've got a half-sister who was a widow about the time I was born, and if she's not in India . . . .

On the whole we think that if Boodels would have no objection to his grandmother coming. . . . .

"Not in the least," says Boodels. "I think she can stand a fortnight of it or so."

Carried nem. con. Boodels' grandmother to be lent for three weeks, and to be returned safely.

Happy Thought (to suggest to ladies).—Why shouldn't there be a sisterhood of chaperons? Let somebody start it. "Oh!" says a young lady, "I can't go there wherever it is, because I can't go alone, and I haven't got a chaperon."

Now carry out the idea. The young lady goes to The Home (this sort of establishment is always a Home—possibly because people to be hired are never *not* at home),—well, she goes to the Home, sees the lady superioress or manageress, who asks her what sort of a chaperon she wants. She doesn't exactly know; but say, age about 50, cheerful disposition, polished manners.

Good. Down comes photograph book.

Young lady inspects chaperons and selects one.

She comes downstairs. "Is she," asks the lady manageress, "to be dressed for evening or for day, a fête or for what?"

Well then, that's all settled.

Terms, so much an hour, and something for herself. What the French call a *pour boire*.

This is a genuinely good idea, and one to be adopted, I am sure. What an excellent profession for ladies of good family and education, of a certain age, and an uncertain income. 40

They might form a Social Beguinage, on the model of the one at Ghent. No vows. All sorts of dresses. All sorts of feeding. Respectable address. And a Home.

Boodels' grandmother, it turns out, is deaf.

Here again what a recommendation for a chaperon! and how very few employments are open to deaf people. No harmless, bodily ailment would disqualify, except a violent cold and sneezing.

JENKYNS SOAMES, ESQ. (*Professor of Scientific Economy.*)

A chaperon with a song: useful. Consider this idea in futuro. Put it down and assist the others in our list.

We ought to make our company a good salad.

I propose my friend, Jenkyns Soames.

Jenkyns Soames is a scientific man.

"We mustn't be *dull*," says Boodels, which I feel is covertly an objection to my friend.

Chilvern says that he thinks we ought to have an old man. 41

What for?

Well, . . . he hesitates, then says, politely, that with all young ones, won't Mrs. Boodels be rather dull?

(*Happy Thought.*—Old man for Mrs. Boodels, to talk to her through her ear-trumpet.)

Boodels says, "Oh, no! his grandmother's never dull."

Milburd observes, that this choosing is like making up characters for a play. He takes in a theatrical newspaper, and proposes that we should set down what we want, after the style in which the managers frame their advertisements.

Wanted.—A First Old Man. Also A Leading Heavy.

He proposes "Byrton—Captain Byrton. He was in a dragoon regiment." 42

Happy Thought.—Good for "Leading Heavy."

Milburd's man is Byrton. Mine is Soames. I have an instinctive dislike to Byrton, I don't know why, perhaps because I perceive a certain amount of feeling against Soames.

THE "LEADING HEAVY."
"But—soft! I must dissemble!"

Boodels' Proposal.—That we should meet once a week to determine whose invitations should be renewed, and whose *congé* should be given.

As President I say, "Well, but I can't tell our guests that they must go."

Cazell strikes in, "I tell you what we ought to do—only ask everyone for a week, and then, if we like them, we can ask 'em to stop on."

Agreed.—That we take these matters into weekly consideration.

Milburd wishes to know who is to order dinner every day.

Happy Thought.—Take it in turn, and I'll begin as President.

Boodels, when this has been agreed to, says that we ought to have good dogs about and outside a large house like that.

I tell them that there is one—a very fierce beast.

Boodels says he's sure I must be mistaken, as they went all over the house, and there was only a little snarling, growling puppy making darts at a mouse, or a rat, which he saw moving behind some door which was locked. 43

[*Happy Thought.*—Keep the facts to myself. Only a Puppy! and I thought it was a mastiff! [Good name, by the way, for a novel—*Only a Puppy*.] If I'd shaken that door again, then they could have let me out.]

We've all got dogs, except myself. I have, I say, my eye on a dog. I remember some one promising me a clever poodle a year ago. Will think who it was, and call on him.

Cazell is of opinion that we ought to wear some peculiar sort of dress, and call ourselves by some name.

Happy Thought.—Why not be an Order?

Someone is just going to speak, when I beg his pardon, and say, “Look here!” I am 44

STRUCK BY A HAPPY THOUGHT.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW ORDER.

A BROTHERHOOD—SIMPLICITY—A DIFFICULTY MET—ILLUSTRATIONS—PROCEEDINGS—INTERVIEW—QUESTION—ANSWER—MODELS—PETITS FRÈRES—TERMS—RULES AND REGULATIONS—THE SCHEME DISMISSED—THE LIST SETTLED.

PROPOS of the Home for Chaperons.

The Happy Thought.—Why not start a new Brotherhood?

A social and sociable one. An order.

“What do I mean?” asks Milburd.

Simplest thing possible.

Hosts are so often in want of some one to “fill up.” A guest disappoints them at the last hour, and where are they to get another?

“Well,” says Boodles, “how *is* another to be got?”

Easily: if, in a central situation, there were a House, a large House, where male guests of all sorts could be obtained. 45

I explain myself more clearly.

A lady says, “Oh dear! Our ball will be overdone with ladies. I mean, we've got plenty of gentlemen, but—I don't know what's the matter with the young men now-a-days, hardly any of them *dance*.”

If my Happy Thought is carried out, why here's her remedy.

Down she goes to the Home. Rings. Enters. Sees the Brother Superior, or Manager.

“What sort of young men do you want?”

“Well, specially for dancing, and generally effective.”

THE EFFECTIVE "LITTLE BROTHER."

THE INTELLECTUAL "LITTLE BROTHER."

Good. Here is the very thing to suit you. "We've got only three of these in, as there's such a demand just now for this article, during the season." 46

THE SPRIGHTLY "LITTLE BROTHER."

THE THEATRICAL "LITTLE BROTHER."

THE SERIOUS "LITTLE BROTHER."

THE MUSICAL "LITTLE BROTHER."

"Very well. Send them at ten."

"With pleasure, and if any of the dancing brothers come in, they shall be forwarded to you later in the evening."

Terms, so much an hour. Supper *ad lib.* included. Breakages not allowed as discount. Any complaints as to inebriety, serious and compromising flirting, or of *laziness*, to be made to the manager or brother superior. 47

I would call this Order,

THE LITTLE BROTHERS OF THE RICH.

There should be no vows, and the rules to be strictly observed should be:—

1. To live in community, the House being supported by the labour of the Brothers, who shall receive a certain allowance, each one, per annum, out of the profits.

2. Always to be ready to fulfil engagements, whether for dancing parties, dinner parties, or other social gatherings.

3. The Serious Brothers will devote their time only to such literature as suits their professional duties.

4. The Sprightly, or dining-out Brothers, shall pass, monthly, an examination in good stories, anecdotes, and bons mots.

5. The Musical Brothers must be up in all new songs, and arrangements shall be made with publishers for Singing Brothers and Playing Brothers to receive a fair percentage on sale of pieces (indirectly).

6. The General Utility Brothers must be up in anecdotes and jokes, play a little, sing a little, sport a little, and do everything more or less, so as to make themselves *indispensable* to country houses where there are large gatherings. 48

7. The Theatrical Brothers must be perfect companions for amateurs, and know all about charades and extempore costumes.

Any Brother found *dining, or doing anything, at his own expense, to be immediately dismissed*.

I submit this scheme to the civilised world, hoping to meet a Want of the 19th century.

Boodels says that, practically, a Cricketing Eleven means something of this sort, being, generally speaking, merely a society organised for the purpose of staying at other people's houses free of charge.

Cazell wishes to know if we are going to waste our time in talking nonsense, or are we going to settle about our guests?

The question, I say, is whether my proposal *is* nonsense or not.

Chilvern hopes we'll make out our list.

Jenkyns Soames settled. Byrton ditto. Old Mrs. Boodels. 49

BYRTON, AN ETONIAN, IN TWO FORMS.

Upper Form. *Lower Form.*

BOODELS' GRANDMOTHER. (*Now.*)

Happy Thought (on seeing these pictures).—To ask Boodels' grandmother "*then*."

Milburd votes for asking the Chertons. Capital girls, he says, and appeals to Boodels. Boodels opines that—yes, they are very nice girls. 50

"No humbug about them," says Milburd.

With this recommendation we put down the Chertons.

Miss Adelaide and Miss Bella.

BOODELS' GRANDMOTHER AT EIGHTEEN. (*Then.*)

ADELAIDE CHERTON.
Happy Thought.—Pine Apple Style.

BELLA CHERTON.

Boodels says that, as they often go on a visit to his grandmother, she can bring them both. 51

Settled.

Boodels lends us a butler. Pious, with a turn for hymns in the pantry. Milburd brings a valet. A sociable creature, with an inclination to be affable, and join in the conversation round the dinner-table.

OUR BUTLER.

Milburd presents us with a groom, whose wife cooks. The groom himself has waited at table occasionally. At first he says “Woa” to the vegetables and the sauces. He cannons against the butler, and tells the dogs to “get out, carn't yer!” After a few days he is in good training.

Byrton brings a soldier-servant who will only attend to his master.

OUR GROOM.

The Chertons have a ladies' maid, who affects the latest fashion, but is a failure in gloves. 52

Mrs. Boodels' maid is an elderly female. The vinegar in the kitchen salad.

THE CHERTONS' MAID.

We engage, on her recommendation, a housemaid, and a charwoman of irreproachable antecedents.

Chilvern, who gives himself a holiday, brings his clerk, a sharp little fellow of sixteen, to clean the boots, and render himself generally useful. The first day he was impudent to Mrs. Boodels' maid, and was thrashed by Byrton's servant. He is now quiet and subservient.

MRS. BOODELS' MAID.

OUR PRETTY PAGE.

53

CHAPTER VIII.

A MORNING DISCUSSION.

ON DEAFNESS—ESCAPES—BUTTONHOLED—A DISCUSSION—MORNING LOST—RAGE—DESPAIR.

EAF people are very happy," says Boodels, thoughtfully.

"Perhaps," replies the Professor of Scientific Economy; "a deaf person can gain no information from conversation."

"Who does?" asks Bella, pertly.

"Who finds mushrooms in a field?" asks Chilvern, who has been engaged in this lately.

"Give it up," says Milburd. That's the worst of Milburd, when a conversation is beginning to promise some results, he nips it in the bud with the frost of his nonsense.

Bella asks what Mr. Chilvern was going to say. He has nearly forgotten, but recalls it to his mind, on Cazell repeating the word mushrooms. 54

"Ah, yes," says Chilvern, evidently feeling that the brilliancy of his simile has been taken off by the interruption. "I was going to say *à propos* of Miss Bella's remark about no one gaining any information from conversation ——"

"I didn't say *that*, Mr. Chilvern."

No, of course not. We all side with Miss Bella.

Chilvern nowhere. "Ah, well," he says, "I thought you did."

"And if I had?" asks Miss Bella, triumphantly.

"Eh!—well, if you *had*—" Chilvern meditates, and then answers, "—if you had, why then I was going to say that . . . ." here he breaks off and finishes, "—well, it doesn't matter now, but it *was* very good when I first thought of it."

He disappears, *i.e.*, from a conversational point of view, in our laughter. He is extinguished.

"What's he saying?" asks Mrs. Boodels.

Milburd takes up the trumpet. "He says," shouts Milburd, it being quite unnecessary to shout, "that he's a very clever fellow."

"Ah," says Mrs. Boodels. "Mr. Chilvern's always joking."

"I never said anything of the sort," says the injured Chilvern to her, defending himself through the ear-trumpet.

"Ah," observes Mrs. Boodels, perfectly satisfied. "I was sure he never could have said that." Then she considers for a few seconds. After this she remarks, "Cleverness, is not one of his strong points." 55

Whereupon she smiles amiably. Chilvern walks to the window.

"We were saying," says the Professor, who evidently has a whole three-volume lecture ready for us, "that deaf people are happy. Now I controvert that opinion. To be deaf, is not a blessing."

"Then," says Milburd, "a person who is deaf, is not a blessed old man, or old woman, as the case may be."

"You misapprehend me, my dear Milburd. What I would say about deafness, is this—" (*exit* BELLA, *quietly*,)—"is this—that the loss of the sense of hearing

——”

“Is seldom the loss of hearing sense,” interrupts Boodels, at the door.

[*Exit* BOODELS.

“To a certain extent,” continues the Professor, who has Milburd, now, as it were, in his grasp. “Boodels, although putting it lightly, was right. Sense is uncommon—”

“'Specially common sense,” I observe. Being my first remark for some time. But I like the Professor; and his philosophic views have an interest for me that they evidently do not possess for natures which will be always butterflying about. 56

“You are right,” says the Professor turning to me, whereupon Milburd rises quietly, and gets to the door. (*Exit* MILBURD.) “But common sense, though, I admit, wrongly designated, does not convey to us a positive pleasure. The question, which we are considering—namely, whether to be deaf, is a happiness or not—should be treated in the Socratic method, and the whole reasoning reduced to the simplest syllogisms.”

Through the window, I see Bella going out with Milburd. Adelaide is with Boodels. Chilvern is pointing at me: they are all laughing. I smile *to* them, and at them, as much as to say, “Bless you! I'm with you in spirit, but the Professor has my body.” Byrton I see meeting them. He has his driving coat on. Hang it, they're going for some excursion without me.

Thoughts while the Professor is talking on the pleasures of deafness.—Where are they going to? Why didn't they tell me? I think Bella *might* have given me some notion. If she's with Milburd, won't he make fun of *me*? Is he trying to cut me out, or not? If “yes,” it's deuced unfair of him. Bella doesn't look back, or make any sign to me to come. If I joined them now, should I be *de trop*? No. How can I? It's all *our* party generally. They disappear into the shrubbery.

Professor suddenly asks me, “That *you'll* admit, I suppose.” 57

Happy Thought.—(As I haven't heard a single word of what he's been saying, to reply guardedly), “Well, to a certain extent, perhaps—but—” then I pause, and frown, as if considering it, whatever it is.

The Professor is lost in amazement. “But,” he exclaims, “you *must* admit *that*. By what theory of approximation can you show that we do not attain to such perfectibility of number; unless you would say, as I *have* heard advanced by the Budengen school, that the expression is but a formula adapted to our human experience.”

I wonder to myself what point he is arguing with me. His subject was Deafness.

Happy Thought.—(In order to find out where he's got to in his lecture, ask him). “Yes, but how does this tell upon Deafness.”

“I will show you; but it is impossible to discuss conclusions unless we settle our premisses.” [I hear the trap in the stable yard and Byrton woa-woaing. Bother!] “Will you bring some deep objection to a premiss which is fundamental . . . .”

I beg his pardon, which premiss?

Happy Thought.—Better find out what he *is* talking about, then differ from him point blank, and leave the room.

Happy Thought.—Pair off. Same idea as that excellent parliamentary arrangement, when you agree to differ with another member, for a whole session, on every question, and then go away and enjoy yourself. 58

“The premiss,” repeats the Professor, “that you would not admit just now. I do not say,” he adds—[I hear the wheels. Can I jump up and say, “Excuse me!” and run out. I could if I was a young lady, or an elderly one. But a man

can't do it, specially as President, or Host, without being rude]—“that you had not good grounds, but what are those grounds?” Here he plants his *binocle* on his nose, leans back and stares at me.

Good Heavens! If I hadn't differed from him, or, I mean, if I'd only understood what the——

Happy Thought.—(*To ask seriously*), “Re-state, exactly, the premiss I disputed.” [I'm sure to catch a glimpse of the trap and horses as they drive past the lake. Hang the Professor!]

“Simply,” says he, “in putting the first premiss, I used the old formula, viz., that the point in question was as clear as that two and two make four.”

“Good Heavens! have I been disputing *that* with you?” I almost shout.

“What else?” he asks, astonished.

“Why . . . I . . .” I really cannot speak, I am so annoyed. I've lost a whole morning, and whole day, perhaps, and a jolly party, and—and—and— 59

“What's the matter?” asks Mrs. Boodels, handing her instrument of torture to the Professor. “What does he say?”

“He says—” commences the Professor . . . .

Je me sauve! (*Exit myself, hurriedly.*) I rush to the stable.

“James! Where are they gone?”

“They said, sir, as they were gone to the meet. 'Ounds is out near 'ere.”

“GONE TO THE MEET.”

60

CHAPTER IX.

A WET DAY.

RAIN—THE MEDFORDS—CONVERSATION—A PROPOSAL—ACCEPTED—THE TRICK—THE LECTURE.

ROVOKING! “I do believe,” says Miss Adelaide Cherton, “it's literally set in for rain.”

Mrs. Boodels, without troubling herself to raise her ear-trumpet, smiles blandly and proceeds with her knitting.

Happy Thought. A deaf person can always talk to herself, and obtain a hearing.

Miss Bella exclaims, “Oh, what shall we do if it rains?”

Whereupon Miss Medford observes that the gentlemen will amuse us.

[Miss Medford is an addition to our party. She was brought by Mrs. Orby Frimmely, and Mr. Frimmely subsequently came down with her brother Alfred Medford, a celebrated musical amateur, “of the nobility's concerts.” “A very interesting looking young man,” Mrs. Boodels observes aloud when 61

he arrives, but she is a little afraid of him on finding that he can do *a* conjuring trick. He only has one.]

I continue reading the newspaper. I determine to withdraw presently to my own room, where I shall lock myself in and . . . .

MISS MEDFORD. *Happy Thought.* —"Japanese Tommy" style.

62

Happy Thought for Wet Day. Write letters. Jenkyns Soames observes that he shall devote his day to correcting his great work on Scientific Economy for the press. Mrs. Orby Frimmely says, that "it's wonderful to *her*, how Mr. Soames thinks of all the clever things he writes."

Soames remarks upon this, modestly, that "he has made the one subject his study, and all his thoughts are given to its development."

Mrs. Boodels requests that the Professor's last observation may be repeated to her.

MRS. ORBY FRIMMELY. *Happy Thought.*— The Anyhow style.

Solo on the Ear-trumpet by Miss Medford. Milburd strolls in, then Boodels. Mrs. Boodels suddenly informs everyone that she is deeply interested in Mr. Soames' work, and, as it is a wet day, will he read some of it aloud to amuse us?

The ladies look at one another and smile. Mrs. Orby Frimmely exclaims, "Oh do," and laughs.

Milburd says it's just the thing to while away a happy hour, and instances the Polytechnic as being his favourite place of amusement in London.

Mr. Soames replies to this that the Polytechnic and himself are different institutions.

"All right," says Milburd; "go ahead!" Whereupon Milburd rushes into the library. Silence during his absence. It is broken by Medford asking Boodels if he's ever seen the trick with the shilling in the tumbler? Boodels replies that he has, but would like to see it again. Medford is just producing his shilling when the Professor returns. The Professor, who has been searching for something in his note book, now asks if they (the ladies) really wish to hear some of his new book.

63

"Oh! do!" enthusiastically everybody.

"I will fetch it down," says the Professor, much pleased, and leaves the room.

Medford holds up the shilling and says, "You see this shilling." Boodels begs his pardon for a minute, and, referring to the Professor, asks, "I say, haven't we let ourselves into too much of a good thing?"

Mrs. Frimmely observes "that it'll be something to do."

Miss Adelaide says, "I hate lectures."

Miss Bella strikes in with, "Well, if he bores, we can ask him questions."

It appears that he's going to have a lively time of it.

Milburd re-enters; he has arranged the library, and begs us to "Walk up!" as if it were a show.

Medford observes that there will be time before the lecture begins to show his conjuring trick with the shilling.

Cazell interrupts him with the gong from the hall, and Chilvern plays a march on the piano. Medford pockets his shilling and observes that "he'll do it afterwards."

The Professor appears on the scene. He requests that there may be no Tomfoolery. 64

I say to him, “No, of course not,” as I really do wish Milburd would show some consideration, and treat the matter seriously.

Milburd apologises for his fun, and we attend the Professor to the library. There we find a black board, a glass of water, and a piece of chalk.

“I propose,” commences the Professor, “dealing with the Pleasures of Wealth.” “Brayvo!” from Milburd. Immediately frowned down by everybody.

“I have reduced the calculation to a simple formula, intelligible to all intellects of more or less cultivation.”

Medford asks me in a whisper if I *do* know his trick with a shilling. I return “hush” and look serious.

Winks between Byrton and Chilvern.

Catching the Professor's eye, Chilvern looks suddenly solemn and deeply interested. It *is* a pity that they will go on being buffoons.

“The study of algebra suggests the mode of treatment.”

Wry face made by Mrs. Frimmely.

Mrs. Boodels is seated, placidly, with her ear-trumpet raised and on her lips a smile of calm contentment, from which we subsequently infer that she doesn't catch one word.

“As the wealth so the Pleasure. [*Here he draws on his slate. Milburd inquires, ‘What's that?’ but is hushed down.*] 65

$$\text{“As } x : 2 :: b : 5.$$

“The product of the extremes equals the product of the Means, and as long as this sum in proportion is observed, Ruin is impossible.

“⁂ The key here is that b = £1,000,000.

“Then:—

$$5x = 2b$$

$$\therefore\ x = {}^{2b}\!/_{5}$$

$$= {}^{2{,}000{,}000}\!/_{5} = £400{,}000.$$

“Not a bad sum per annum,” says the Professor, smiling, in order to throw a little pleasantry into the matter, which is becoming a trifle heavy. Mrs. Boodels asleep. “Though I thought it was more when I commenced the equation.

“I will now,” he says, “write down a text.”

[*Watches out . . . . a yawn from Cazell . . . . ladies restless.*]

“To *Give* is a Wealthy Pleasure.

“And on this I make what I call ‘suggestions.’

“The poor man has it in his power to cause the Rich great pleasure. 66

“Let **I** stand for me.”

(“Impossible,” interrupts Milburd, *sotto voce*. Our Philosophic Lecturer takes no notice. He is rising with his subject).

“Let us say ‘**I** is poor.’”

Miss Bella says, “Excuse me a moment,” and vanishes. Wish I could get out.

"Let all **I**'s rich friends subscribe according to their means from £5 upwards.

"Result, easily attained, £5,000.

"Say that eighty people subscribed £62 10*s.* apiece. Are there not eighty people in London, Manchester, and Liverpool who could do this and not miss it so much as I should miss a farthing put by accident into a Church plate—of course I mean by mistake for half a sovereign.

"But how could such a mistake arise? you would say."

(We wouldn't, but *he* couldn't tell that.)

"Why simply because I never give less in Church than half a sovereign. *Ergo*, I never give in Church unless I have half a sovereign in my pocket. *But* I *never* have half a sovereign in my pocket."

[Smiles from everyone, and applause from Milburd, towards whom the Professor looks appealingly, as much as to say, "There, I can be just as funny as *you*, only without Tomfoolery."] 67

"*Ergo . . . cela va sans dire.*

"So, you see, eighty people could make '**I**' happy.

[Medford is practising his trick with a shilling by himself.]

"Which is equivalent to saying that eighty people could make *me* happy.

"And '**I**' has it, you observe, in his power to make eighty people happy by accepting the subscription."

Note, which I suggest to the Professor. Should this ever meet the eye of Baron Rothschild, let him remember, that by his single act, he can attain to the happiness of eighty people.

"If any of you, here present, happen to be acquainted with the Baron, and will introduce me to him, it will be, I am sure, a step in the interests of humanity generally, and not without its beneficial results to individuals particularly." ("Hear! hear!")

. . . . . .

With this bit of Practicality the lecture concludes.

He tells me, in confidence, that he finished quickly because he felt he was "above his audience."

Milburd subsequently offers to introduce the Professor to Baron Rothschild "for a consideration." 68

* * *

No one, as yet has found any of the pleasures of Poverty.

Some one says "Absence of Income-tax." This is met with Absence of Income. Solution rejected.

* * *

We found afterwards on our Scientific Lecturer's table MSS. of

"Letters to Rothschild" by a Professor of Scientific Economy.

One commences thus:—

Dear Baron,

You will doubtless be surprised at hearing from an humble individual who has nothing but his Scheme of Personal Scientific Economy, and his unblemished character, to recommend him to your notice.

I am getting up a subscription for myself. This sounds, put shortly, egotistical. On the contrary, it is Cosmopolitanly Philanthropical. If I am enabled to teach my doctrines for nothing, I shall, then, be slave to no man, no, not even to myself, as represented by my own necessities. May I head the list with a sum worthy your munificence and perfectly Oriental wealth? Yes. I hear you say 'yes.' I knew it. I shall put your Lordship down for £20,000, and will be careful to send you a receipt for the money. Business is business.

69

Yrs., &c.

J. Soames.

* * *

Perhaps one day the Professor of Scientific Economy will publish his "*Letters to Baron Rothschild*." But I don't think there will ever appear a very voluminous collection of "*Letters of Baron R. to Mr. Jenkyns Soames*."

———

Milburd asks him "what he should say were the pleasures of poverty."

The Professor considers.

We all consider.

The Professor wishing to do everything methodically, writes on the slate in large type THE PLEASURES OF POVERTY.

First Pleasure . . . . . .

. . . . .

. . . .

Then he pauses. Then he speaks. "On thorough consideration, I am convinced that Poverty has no pleasures.

70

"If any, they are peculiar.

"They are Grim Pleasures.

"One grim Pleasure of Poverty is talking about ourselves."

"A very poor subject," observes Miss Medford.

After a silence, during which I am just on the point of saying something, but don't, the Professor adds,

"No. We try very hard, but can *not* see any pleasure in Poverty."

PENNY WISE AND POUND FOOLISH.

71

CHAPTER X.

UERY—What shall we do?

We lounge over the room undecidedly. Mrs. Boodels thinks it's still raining. Pouring. Miss Bella says, “What a bother!” Miss Medford remembers having heard a problem worthy the Professor's attention. We pause in our indecision, and she reads from her album.

What circumstance most justifies loss of patience?

The Professor of Scientific Economy replies, a smoky chimney.

72 ⁂ He explains that he is thinking of a bitterly cold day in winter when he wanted to sit in his study, and write a treatise on the *Amount of change to be obtained out of a Roman Denarius*, B.C. 108. On this occasion his chimney *would* smoke, and he had to sit with the door and window open. Then the smoke choked him; next, the draught gave him cold; then his fingers became frozen; finally, his feet were like icicles in refrigerating stockings. After standing this for about two hours, he could not help saying. . . . . .

Evidently a case where the Recording Angel would not even chance a blot.

Happy Thought.—What a mess that book *will* be in. Perhaps *illegible*!!

⁂

Miss Adelaide Cherton thinks that to find a wasp inside the only peach on the wall was most provoking.

Byrton's Opinion. Hot coffee over your new cords on a “show-meet” day.

It strikes me that to come on shore after taking a swim in the river, and not to be able to find your clothes, is a circumstance quite justifying loss of patience.

Apropos of this, Chilvern says he recollects a fellow—Smith, a friend of his—bathing, and when he came out he couldn't find his clothes. So, as some people were coming along the bank, Smith retired to the stream, and 73 Chilvern went to search for the habiliments. The fact was, that Smith had gone down *with the stream*, and his clothes had been consequently left a mile behind.

Chilvern found the clothes, then returned, but couldn't find Smith.

The current had taken him down stream another mile.

So it might have gone on; had not the river been a tidal one (or worked on some peculiar principles, which Chilvern doesn't explain)—and, the stream changing, back brought Smith with it, and then he was happy,—only with a cold for ever after.

Mrs. Boodels being informed of the discussion through her ear-trumpet, said that losing a thimble was quite sufficient to justify any loss of patience.

The gentlemen present observe, that they have no doubt it is so, but they have had no experience.

Milburd thinks that the button off your collar, or, losing your stud, *at the last moment*, is the most trying thing.

Bella Cherton, after walking to the window several times and seeing no sign of fine weather, says, “I'll tell you what I consider most justifies loss of patience.”

“What?” we inquire.

“*Sitting here*!” she replied. 74

Note. This sort of reply rather throws a damper over efforts to be genial. Mrs. Boodels wishes it to be repeated to her through the trumpet. Damper through the ear trumpet.

Mrs. Orby Frimmely says, that trying to get through your favourite valse with a bad partner. . . Ah!

Mrs. O. F.'s Happy Thought. "By the way, as it is so wet, why not have a dance? Mr. Medford can play."

Seconded by Byrton, and supported by the ladies.

Adjournment to Drawing-Room. Odd. We suddenly fall into our ball-room manners. Talking to partners quietly. Going out to get cool,—on the stairs.

Byrton is dancing with Mrs. Orby Frimmely. Mr. Orby Frimmely being engaged in town is not here.

Byrton is certainly very much struck, in fact he says so; and shows it. However, he is always being struck, always saying so, always showing it, and . . . that's all.

Jenkyns Soames has retired to his room; probably to write to Rothschild.

Chilvern is Miss Cherton's partner.

Milburd is Miss Bella's.

I don't dance. I debate with myself whether I *can* or not. I used to. In a waltz for instance, I know two steps out of three. The third is where I fail. 75
Dances change so. My waltz is the *Deux temps*, for the simple reason that the *Deux temps* does also for the galop, that is, it does for my galop.

I flatter myself on my galop. Here, so to speak, I am at home. If Medford can only play a galop, and if Miss Bella will give up Milburd, or Milburd give her up, why *je suis son homme*. I am her man.

Medford will do a galop, he says; and immediately before I have time to ask if Bella—if Miss Bella . . . he strikes into it and the dancers change their step, and are whirling round and round, then up and down. I can't stop them. As the opera books say, "Rage! Madness! Despair!"

I catch *her* eye.

She understands, I am sure.

She will . . .

If she does . . .

She stops, making some excuse to Milburd and looking at me. (Aha! Milburd! you think yourself such a lady killer, that a . . this to myself, *thinkingly*).

Happy Thought.—To go up to her and say, "You promised me."

I do it.

"Did I?" she says.

Milburd gives in, unexpectedly, and relinquishes her. 76

Aha! we are off! Round and round . . . carpet rather bad to dance on . . . up and down . . . I feel that we are just skirting chairs, and that another inch will bring down the fire-irons——we put on the pace . . . I haven't danced for . . . well, for some considerable time . . . we nearly come bang against the piano . . . my fault . . beg pardon . . . but we won't stop . . .

"Oh no!" says Bella . . . and we don't stop.

A little quieter, just to, as it were, regain consciousness, for everything is becoming blurred—(jerky sentences while dancing) . . . "It's more difficult . . . to steer when . . . there are a few . . . than when . . ." "Yes," says Miss

Bella, who quite understands. (*Myself tenderly.*) “Do you . . . like dancing?” . . . “Yes,” . . . (*whirl round, up and down* . . . then) . . . “This dance?” . . . What? . . . (*whirl round just to get the steam up again for the question, and put it sotto voce, finding myself close to her ear—such a pretty little ear—made to be whispered into*). “Do you like this dance?” . . . “Very much.” (*My heart is fluttering nervously, like a stray bird under a skylight*) . . . “With anyone?” . . . (*No answer . . . My question means do you prefer* ME *to dance with, and not only to dance with, but . . .*)

The music ceases. Medford is tired. We all thank him.

Gong. Luncheon. 77

If it hadn't been for the gong . . .

But at all events the wet morning is over.

“HOW DO
YOU LIKE
MY FIZZ”

78

CHAPTER XI.

A NIGHT SURPRISE.

OODELS and Milburd knock at my door at 2.30 a.m., after I've been asleep two hours, and wake me up to tell me that they had thought of a Pleasure of Poverty: it was, Milburd said,

> *To think that you can't be worse off, while you hope that others may.*

I say . . “*Oh* . . . don't bother—I mean—yes—capital . . . go to . . . bed,” and turning round, try to sleep again.

The Deputation thanks me and withdraws.

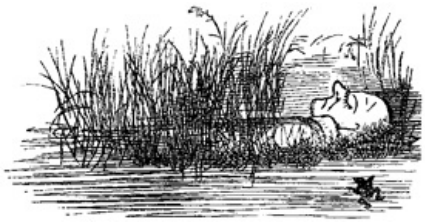
“What an idiotic thing to do,” I say to myself . . . . “What a foolish thing” . . . . getting more wakeful . . . “What a cruel thing . . . . Hang it! it's positively selfish . . . it's” . . . turning for the fifth time, and my pillow becoming as hot as a blister . . . “Confound Boodels . . . and Milburd . . . it's all *his* doing, I know” . . . sitting up in bed. 79

It occurs to me that counting one hundred and forty backwards, and then getting out and drinking a glass of water, is a capital way of inducing sleep . . .

Odd, but in Milburd and Boodels coming to rouse me at this time, I find *a* solution to the other question that we had occupied part of our morning in discussing.

What circumstance justifies loss of patience?

Why, loss of sleep.



SOFT REPOSE.

80

CHAPTER XII.

OUR LIBRARY—BUSTS—DISTINGUISHED CHARACTERS—MELANCHOLY—GUESSES—SOAMES—MRS. BOODELS AGAIN—MILBURD—HIS JOKE—A NUISANCE.

F all the melancholy objects of Art Busts are the most so.

Do you want a sensation of Miserable Melancholy?

Take, yourself——

Off to a dusty library of bookshelves, chiefly empty, and the remainder having an occasional medical treatise in the original Latin, with diagrams of the human frame, no fire, rain pouring, damp mist over the landscape, no pens, ink, or even paper to tear up into fanciful shapes, and nothing for company except busts of celebrated people, looking like the upper part of the ghosts of half-washed chimney-sweepers.

After a time, they only resemble one thing, a collection of several homicidal criminals. 81

Sit before a bust, any bust, under the above circumstances.

You wonder to what you would have condemned this hideous creature had he been brought up, in his lifetime, before you, as a magistrate.

On every feature is stamped Ruffian. This man *must* have been hung, were there any justice in the world.

No. This bust is of the late venerable and excellent Archbishop Snuffler.

Is it possible. And all these other savage-looking creatures? . . . “Are,” says my informant in the damp library who only comes in for a minute, “Archbishops, Bishops, celebrated Philanthropists, Doctors, and men of science.”

And here they are perched up aloft, like overgrown cherubs, whose wings have been taken off by some surgical operation.

Happy Thought.—If you want to be revenged on somebody, and don't mind expense, have his portrait painted with all his defects glaringly rendered, and present it, as a mark of esteem, to his family.

On his fiftieth birthday give him a bust of himself to be placed in his hall. Depend upon it you've punished him. 82

Jenkyns Soames, our Professor of Scientific Economy, was talking of the Zoological Gardens.

“I dispute,” says he, “the fact of the Hyæna laughing.”

“Why?”

“Why? Solvitur ambulando, or rather non ambulando, for I've stood in front of his cage for half an hour, and I've never seen him laugh once.”

This was repeated to Mrs. Boodels.

“Yes,” says she, “that's very probable. But when Mr. Jenkyns *went away* * *”

Milburd tried to cap this by asking as a conundrum “why the Hyæna wouldn't laugh in your face?”——

As Mrs. Boodels rose, the ladies had to go out too, so no one stopped for the answer. He caught me alone in a corner and told me what it was. I think he said that it was because the Hyæna was an *Hy-brid* animal. He explained that he meant “*high-bred*.”

Happy Thought.—To say, “Oh, that's very old.” This has the same effect on a conundrum-maker as the most brilliant repartee.

Unless it leads him to come to you three times a day ever afterwards, with fresh ones, all hot as it were from the baker's, and ask you perpetually, “Well, is *this* old?” 83

JO MILLER,
(*Bringing more Material for Joke*).

84

CHAPTER XIII.

MUSIC—MEDFORD—MILBURD'S SONG—CONSEQUENCE—OPINIONS—NOTE—COMPLIMENTS—EPIGRAM—THE DAMP FIREWORK.

MILBURD asks Medford to accompany him in a “little thing of his own.” The ladies have taken their turn at the piano, and Medford himself has favoured us with half an hour's worth of his unpublished compositions. Milburd announces his song as “A WAITING GAME.”

(*Suggested by “A Dreary Lot is Mine.”*)

A waiting game is mine,
Fair maid,
A waiting game is mine;
One day I shall not be afraid
To ask, then hear “I'm thine!”
And when that word I've spoo-ō-ken, 85
Ere yet I am quite grey,
Ne'er will it, dear, be bro-o-o-ken
For ever and a day!

Mrs. Boodels wants to know if he won't kindly sing it to her through her ear-trumpet. He promises to do so, one day when they are alone.

SECOND VERSE.

A waiting game is mine, fair maid,
  A waiting game is mine,
I'll stay until my debts are paid,
  The contract *then* I'll sign.
Unless you've fifty thousand pounds,
  To bring me as a dower,
If so . . . . those are sufficient grounds
  For wedding—now—this hour.

Nobody asks him to sing again. Mrs. Frimmely says, “She only cares for French songs. English comic songs,” she adds, “are *so vulgar*.” Settler for Milburd. Glad of it.

After this Milburd says he's got another; a better one.

We say, sing it to-morrow. 86

Happy Thought (expressed in a complimentary manner).—A good song, like yours, is better for keeping.

Note to Myself.

The age for compliments is gone. The courtly and polished Abbé, who would have said the above epigrammatically when it would have been considered remarkably witty, has passed away. No one believes in compliment. It has no currency, except done in a most commonplace way. But the epigrammatic compliment, the well-prepared impromptu, the careful rehearsed inspiration, is out of date. Now-a-days there are no wits, and no appreciation of The Wits. Conversation is damped by a bon-mot. An awful silence follows the most brilliant *jeu de mot*, as sombre as the darkness after a forked flash, or as the gardens at the Crystal Palace after the last bouquet of fireworks.

Conversation is like a boot. When damped it loses its polish.

[The above remarks occasioned by no one having taken any notice of my epigram, and Milburd only replying to it by saying, “Oh! bosh!”] 87

I've just tried to draw a firework in my pocket-book. It doesn't exactly express my idea. But is a very good sketch of a joke which has failed.

This evening I am melancholy. 88

CHAPTER XIV.

KNOCK at the door.

Complaints made to the President of Happy-Thought Hall of the non-delivery or late delivery of letters, and newspapers.

I promise to see to it.

“George,” I say to our servant, “let me see the postman when he comes.” George grins, says Yes. Exit George.

Why does he grin?

Half an hour after this I am in the yard. I hear a shrill piping voice. It says, “It carnt b' elped n'ow. 'Taint no farlt o' mine. It's them at th' office as is irregylar. I says to them, I do, allus; come now, I says, you ain't to your time, I says, which you carnt say to me all the years as I've been up-a-down on this road, summer nor winter, and no one never lost nothin' nor complainin'. Tell the gendlemun fromme as——” here I step in, and interrupt an old woman talking. I ask. “Has the postman come?” 89

The old woman with a bag bobs a curtsey, and says,

“I'M THE POSTMAN, SIR.”

And so she is; and has “carried the bag”—only without the dishonesty of a Judas—for the last twenty years. Wonderful old lady. About seventy, and walks twelve miles, at least, in all weathers, every day of her life. 90

A little girl, her granddaughter, walks by her side, and a sharp terrier accompanies the pair.

Poor old woman! blind.

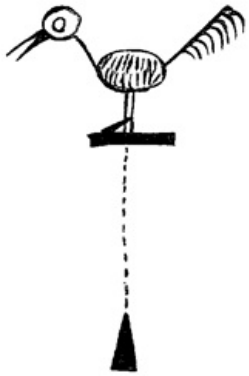
I am disarmed.

The little girl informs me that “it's the folks at the post office as is wrong.”

Generally true.

“Good-bye old Martha, and here's a Christmas-box for you.”

“Ar, thank'ee kindly, sir.”



CHAPTER XV.

MRS. BOODELS—BOODELS—HIS GRANDMOTHER'S OBSERVATION—HER FATE SEALED—THE COMEDY—HER DEPOSITION—NEW PROPOSAL—AWKWARD—MILBURD'S RELATION—INVITATION—THE DINNER HOUR—RECOMMENDATION—DECISION.

BEING deaf, Mrs. Boodels has, as our friend Captain Byrton expresses it, six to four the best of us. Repartees through an ear-trumpet lose their sting. And then you can't in politeness, and in all respect, sting an old lady of seventy-five.

The other evening Boodels says, blushingly, that some of his friends tell him that he is just the man to write a comedy.

This is repeated to his grandmother through the trumpet.

“Yes,” she says, quietly; “I've heard John's friends say that he can write a comedy, and I've heard 'em add that *they hope he won't*.”

⁂

Since this we've not heard any more of Boodels' comedy. I rather think that he's got it all ready to read to us.

Next morning after this observation of Mrs. Boodels, her grandson comes with Milburd to my room.

“OUT FOR THE DAY.”

Boodels says he thinks his grandmother's a little too old for the work.

I reply that we all like her, and that she's a charming old lady.

Milburd agrees.

Boodels says, rather testily, of course she's all *that*, but we want some one more sprightly, and having to repeat everything to her through the trumpet is tedious.

We own that we should not have liked to have been the first to hazard this objection, but as he *has* made it himself, why we perhaps on the whole agree with him rather than not.

Boodels is satisfied with this craftily qualified assent.

“The old girl,” he says,—(odd, how she's suddenly come down in his estimation—down to “old girl”)—“has told me this morning that the late hours are beginning to tell upon her, and she wants to dine earlier!”

Ah! there we *are* touched nearly. Alter the dinner hour! Never!

“She's accustomed at home, you see,” continues her grandfilial relation, “to dine at one o'clock or thereabouts, and tea at six.” 93

Nursery hours! we couldn't think of it.

“Of course not,” returns Boodels; “so I said to her . . . . She was rather huffed at the idea of my calling them ‘nursery hours,’ and wanted to know if I meant that she was in her second childhood. In fact,” says Boodels, blurting it all out, “there's been a row, and the old girl threatened to take away the Chertons.”

“Pooh!” from both of us.

“But if she goes—” commences Boodels, who has a strict and severe sense of propriety.

“If she does,” cries Milburd, “look here! I've got it.” He subdues his excitement, and proceeds, “I've a letter from the Regniatis.”

“Regniatis! let's see,” considers Boodels. “They're relations of yours?”

“Yes. Count Regniati, an Italian, and the jolliest fellow in the world”—he adds this as a set-off against his nationality, which may, he evidently thinks, suggest secret societies, daggers, carbonari—“married my Aunt. The Chertons are also some sort of distant connection. At least they often stay with Madame. So that *she'll* be their chaperone. I'm sure you'll like 'em 94 immensely,” he adds, “and the Signor, my uncle, is first-rate.” We decide. Abdication of Mrs. Boodels and enthronement of the Regniati dynasty.

“Good,” exclaims Boodels. “Then I'll tell my grandmother to-day. I don't want to do anything unpleasant”—we agree with him, such a feeling does him honour—“and I'll take the opportunity of her wanting to go up to an aurist to *congédier* her. After all the old lady will be much happier away, and I'll tell her that we shall be so glad to see her whenever she likes to turn up again, that is, if the Hall is still going on.”

We admit that nothing could be more courtly, more diplomatic than this.

Milburd is to invite his Uncle and Aunt. And that's settled.

95

CHAPTER XVI.

FRESH ARRIVALS—DESCRIPTION—A HISTORY.

MRS. BOODLES is deposed and retires, *vice* Madame Regniati promoted.

Madame Regniati arrives alone. “The Signor,” as his nephew Milburd always affectionately terms him, “has not come by the same train.”

“It is just like Mr. Regniati,” observes Madame, severely. “He said he'd leave me to look after the luggage. Mr. Regniati has no notion of even looking after himself. Probably he has lost himself. My luggage has come with me. I have his ticket, and I know he has no money, as he has spent his allowance this week. When Mr. Regniati has found himself once more, I have no doubt he will appear.”

SIGNOR REGNIATI.

All this she delivers in disjointed sentences, with a little pause or a cough between each. She speaks without any action, and generally statuesquely. She prides herself evidently on her classicality. She is more the antique Roman than the English dame. It was this, Milburd, in smoking-room 96
confidence, informs us, that first inspired her with a liking for Mr. Regniati, whom she met in Rome. Mr. Regniati was then a sculptor, and might have gained, ultimately, a considerable reputation, if his good-natured indolence, 97
and his social qualities, had not, in the end, proved too much for his undoubted talent. Being possessed of small private means, he would probably have remained an amateur, seeing, not only without a particle of envy, but with a smile of positive encouragement, others far less able than himself, pass him on the road of art, and occupy pedestals which ought to have been his. One evening meeting Miss Milburd at an artistic reunion, she overheard him express his admiration of her classical lineaments. Being mistress of her own fortunes, and of her own fortune, she simply 98
determined to many Mr. Regniati; and did so. She foresaw his future greatness. She looked forward to his name being enrolled among those whom art has made illustrious. She was doomed to disappointment.

MADAME REGNIATI.
(*From a Classical Portrait in her own possession.*)

Transplanted to British soil, the Signor found himself a gentleman at large. He abandoned the chisel for the gun, and prided himself upon becoming a sportsman and an agriculturist. From the moment of his being thus thoroughly acclimatised, Madame Regniati gave him up, so to speak, then and there, as a bad job. The Signor's private means were not anything like enough to supply his peculiarly English tastes, and his wife would not “fritter *her* money away,” she said, “in pigsties.”

MADAME REGNIATI
(*in fact*).

So she decided upon giving up their rural retreat which she had chosen for the purpose of affording Mr. Regniati every opportunity of communing with nature, and took him up to London. Here she obtained a small house, with a studio, built out at the back by its previous artistic occupant, where she fondly hoped Mr. Regniati would once more devote himself to the study of the fine arts.

Her husband now appeared to be inclined towards her way of thinking. The more, because his funds were in her hands, and she “allowanced” him.

He commenced a group, several sizes larger than life, of *The Judgment of Paris*. 99

The process was slow, and, apparently, far from inexpensive. Moreover it was excessively fatiguing, and Madame, proud of her husband's design, and sanguine as to his future, willingly permitted the Signor to take occasional relaxation in the country.

He was obliged to come to her from time to time for money. The allowance was insufficient.

This gradually aroused her suspicions. She had permitted the introduction of living models to the studio, out of regard for the necessities of art, but it was her invariable custom to bring her work thither, while Mr. Regniati was engaged in modelling from nature. He was seldom out of her sight, nor did he, indeed, appear at all anxious to be other than most eager for her companionship, except on the holiday occasions, when he sought invigoration in the country. Then he represented that he loved solitude, and generally selected a time when Madame was too indisposed even to offer to join him in his excursion.

Madame became, in fact, jealous.

Being a woman of deeds, not words, she determined to ascertain the truth, before she startled the Signor with the expression of a suspicion.

The Signor asked her for money. She gave it to him cheerfully, regretted 100
that her rheumatism was so bad as to confine her to her room, begged him to stay away until he felt quite restored and able to go on with Minerva's toes (he had got so far with the three goddesses, but, having commenced with the toes, this was not much as representing the labour of nearly a year and a half), and wished him good-bye.

The Signor went to Dunby Dale, a small, out-of-the-way village in Hampshire, totally unaware of being closely followed by Madame's maid, who gave the information, and then by Madame herself.

The Signor was traced to a small farm-house, beautifully situated, and in the most perfect order.

He was welcomed, respectfully, at the door by a fresh-looking, buxom country wench.

The following conversation was overheard.

[The Signor's English is far from perfect.

He divides every syllable, *more Italiano*, and talks not unmusically in rather a high key. Most of his conversation is, as it were, written for a tenor, and he strains at it like a low baritone. *Figurez-vous* a portly gentleman, brown
as walnut juice, dark black hair, moustache and beard. Teeth flashing and 101
brilliant, like a set of impromptu epigrams in the mouth of a wit. Laughing lips, and eyes beaming with good-nature. Height five feet seven. *Voilà le Signor Regniati.*]

“Ah! Mar-ree!”—this was to Mary the maid who had received him. “You look all rose and pink. And 'ow does my leet-tel Clo-teel-da? She is vell, I 'ope?”

“She gets on beautiful, sir,” was the answer. “She's thrivin' wonderful.”

“Oh!” exclaimed the Signor, lighting up, and evidently intensely delighted. “I *am* so glad. I come avays to see *'er*. Tell me,” he continued, becoming suddenly serious, “'ave she 'ad 'er bart?” [The Signor almost sings his sentences. He went up the scale to the verb “'ad,” and took a turn down again three notes to the noun “bart,” which, by the way, was his way of pronouncing “bath.”]

“Every day, sir,” replied the maid, cheerfully, “and her skin looks as white as a young infant's.”

Again the Signor was in ecstasies.

“Come!” he cried, “let us go an' see 'er.”

A good deal of the Signor's conversation resembles easy lessons in one syllable for beginners. His “let us go and see 'er,” was delivered with a slight halt between each word, like a child in a state of doubt over a column in a spelling book. 102

They went into the house, and out, by the back way.

Madame Regniati soon discovered the worst. When the Signor had gone, she called at the house herself, and found that the Signor rented a lodging of the farmer, and, *kept a pig*.

Though forced to give up the country, he could not deny himself this agricultural pleasure. His first pig had won a prize, and the farmer showed Mrs. Regniati the account of the Cattle Show in a local paper, with Mr. Regniati exhibiting under the name of “Tomkins,” and then, in the fulness of his heart, he brought out a silver medal, tied to a blue riband and preserved in a case of morocco leather, on which was inscribed that this represented the second prize for pigs awarded by the Judges to Mr. Regniati, as “Tomkins,” for the sow Selina, and then followed date, place, and other particulars.

After this discovery there was an arrangement. Mr. Regniati was allowed a small farm-house in the country, on condition of his not *wasting* money upon it, and only taking to it as a recreation, while the greater portion of his time he would be, henceforth, in honour bound to dedicate to his Art.

The Signor accepted these terms.

In six years' time he had got as far as the third pair of knees,—Juno's,—and had obtained the first prize for pigs, and the second for bullocks, at a County Show. 103

This success lured him on to his ruin. At the expiration of ten years, Venus had a head on her shoulders, and he had almost lost his own. There had been years of disease among the cattle, insects in the turnips, and rottenness in the heart of his mangels; his expenses had become enormous, the Inspector of Nuisances had complained of the state of the drains round and about his farm, his oxen had strayed, two bulls had got loose and had maimed several people for life, whom he had to pension as long as they were unable to work,—and their inability to work appeared to increase with the duration of the pension. In fact Mr. Regniati's model farm promised to eventuate in a gigantic failure. At this crisis Madame stepped in and saved the citadel.

She simply got rid, *sur-le-champ*, of the live-stock, man and beast.

Then she disposed of the house and outbuildings.

The Signor went down, and sat, like Marius, or rather like a second Cincinnatus, when, on returning from the metropolis, he found that his farm had gone utterly to the bad.

After this, Signor Regniati went hard to work on Juno. A year's toil brought its reward. Madame his wife was pleased to sit as his model, and, ultimately, to purchase for him a small game preserve, and a shooting box in Bedfordshire, at an easy distance from town. 104

It was on his way to Budgeby Box that the Signor came to us at Happy-Thought Hall, and brought Madame; or rather, that Madame came and brought the Signor.

Milburd was now the Signor's constant companion. Madame trusted, she said, Mr. Regniati to his nephew. Mr. Regniati, she adds, is a child. “I expect no responsibility from him. I look to Richard for that. Richard must take care of his uncle, and go out shooting with him, as I will *not* have,” she says, emphatically “I will *not* have Mr. Regniati going out with a gun, *alone*.”

If Mr. Regniati is present when these remarks are made, he merely smiles, quite happily, stretches out his arms, and exclaims, in a tone of the

slightest remonstrance possible, “Oh, my dear! I can shoot! I am quite safe.”

“Yes,” returns Madame, “and I mean you to keep so.”

“I vas born for a sport-mans,” Mr. Regniati observes to us.

I notice that he is fond of putting words into a sort of plural of his own invention.

“You're lucky, Mr. Regniati,” observes his wife, “to find *that* out at all events. For my part I can't make out why you were ever born at all.” 105

Again the Signor smiles, and says in cheerful remonstrance, “Oh my dear!” but he is too wise to continue a conversation which would only involve an argument, and perhaps, the loss of his “lee-tel shoot-box at Bod-ge-bee.”

Dick, *i.e.* Milburd, benefits considerably by this arrangement. His aunt pays all the expenses (trusting Mr. Regniati with no money), as long as he and his uncle are together.

“Richard,” she says, “is clever and careful. My husband is a schoolboy. I can only trust a schoolboy with a tutor.”

We are at dinner when the Signor arrives.

He enters in a state of great excitement.

“Ah!” he exclaims, “'Ow do you do?” this to everyone generally. “Ah Deeck!” this to Milburd, reproachfully. “Vy you not meet me at ze Rail-vays?”

“You'd better go and dress yourself, Mr. Regniati,” remarks Madame, drily, finishing her soup, “or you won't have any dinner.”

“My dear!” he cries, “No din-ner! I am so 'ongry. I 'ave no-sing to eat since my break-fast.”

“You should have been here before,” says Madame.

“My Jo!” he exclaims, in a very high key, almost between laughing and crying. I find out that “My Jo,” is *his* rendering of “By Jove!”—a very harmless oath—“My Jo! I could not!” Then he enters appealingly to us into an explanation. “Madame Regniati vas in ze car-ri-age, and she say to me, Mr. Regniati, she say, I did not see ze boxes-put-in,”—this is all one word. —“I say my dear eet ees all right. She say No you go see it, for I tinks not. Den I go. I say vere ees my box, but I see no-sing, no veres, den ven I try to find my car-ri-age again ze train goes off. I jomp into a carri-age and a man say you most not do zat, but I tomble in. I do not know vere de train goes to, but it vas not to come 'ere and ven I stop—My Jo!—dey ask-a-me for my tee-kets. ‘I 'ave not zem,’ I say, ‘my vife 'as zem.’ Zen zey say to me I most buy vun. My Jo! I say I can-not! I 'ave no money. I vant I say to go to Blackmeer. Oh zey say zat is on a-noser line, in a-noser contry. My Jo! I say to 'im vot shall I do? Zen I meet a gentle-mans who know me and he say ——” 106

“Nonsense, Mr. Regniati. I believe you stopped at the refreshment-room in London——”

“Oh My Jo! my dear! I as-sure you,” he commences, but Madame cuts him short.

“Go and dress, Mr. Regniati,” she says, “and don't be long. Dick, show Mr. Regniati his room, and bring him down in five minutes. Don't let him chatter.” 107

Milburd takes his uncle out, and we hear him repeating his story to his nephew, as he crosses the hall, and ascends the stairs.

“PIGGY
WIGGY.”

108

CHAPTER XVII.

SUNDAY—SUNDAY REASONS—A CHAMBER DIALOGUE.

UNDAY Meditations.—When we first saw this place we called it The House of Good Intentions. It recurs to me forcibly at this moment, as I look over my note-book.

Under the heading of “Operanda,” or Works to be done, I find:—

a. *Continuation of Typical Developments. Vol. III.*

b. *A Guide to Hertfordshire.*

c. *A Lesser Dictionary of French words not generally found in other Lexicographical compilations.*

d. Theories on Dew. Practical utilitarian results.

e. A Commentary on hitherto obscure portions of Shakespeare's plays, with a life of the Great Poet, gathered from *obiter dicta*, which nobody has, up to this time, noticed.

f. “All Law founded upon Common Sense,” *being a few steps towards the abolition of technicalities and antique repetitions in our legal proceedings*. 109

g. *Pendant to the above, “Every man his own lawyer and somebody else's.”*

h. *Studies in the Country.* I thought I should have been able to write a good deal in this line while at the country-house. This was to include botany, farming, agriculture generally, with a resumption of what I took up years ago, as a Happy Thought, namely, “Inquiries into, and Observations upon, the Insect World.”

Nothing of all this have I done. Not a line. It is afternoon. We have most of us been to Church in the morning, except Boodels and Chilvern. Those who have not been, gave the following reasons for arriving at the same conclusion.

Boodels' reason. That he had a nasty headache, and should not get up. [This he sent down to say at breakfast.]

Milburd's reason. That the weather looked uncommonly like rain. That to get wet *going* to Church is a most dangerous thing, as you have to sit in your damp clothes.

My own statement on the subject. Milburd has puzzled me by saying it's going to rain. Is it? If it isn't, nothing I should enjoy more than going to Church. Wouldn't miss it on any account, except of course out of 110

consideration for one's health.

Happy Thought.—I don't feel very well this morning, and damp feet might be followed by the most serious results.

Miss Adelaide and Miss Bella are going. Their chaperonship this morning devolves upon Mrs. Frimmely, as Madame and the Signor are Catholics, and have been to mass, early in the morning, at St. Romauldi's Missionary College, near here. Madame is very strict, and the Signor is not partial to early rising. The College Service being at half-past eight in the morning, they have to rise at seven on Sundays, and then there is a drive of four miles. The following dialogue is overheard:

> *Time, 7.15* A.M. *Scene,* Signor *and* Madame's *room.* Madame *is up and dressing rapidly. The* Signor *is still under the bedclothes.*

Madame (*severely*). Mr. Regniati.

The Signor (*pretending extra sleepiness*). My dear! (*He won't open his eyes.*)

Madame. It is exactly a quarter past seven.

The Signor (*snuggling down into the pillow*). I vill not be two me-neets. (*Disappears under bedclothes.*) 111

Madame (*before the looking-glass, with her head bent well forward, her hands behind her back, lacing herself into determination*). Get up, Mr. Regniati. (*No sign of life in the bed.*) Don't pretend to have gone to sleep again. (*Not a movement.*) I know you haven't. I shan't wait for you when I'm once dressed. It's twenty-five minutes. (*Sharply.*) Do you hear, Mr. Regniati?

The Signor (*re-appearing as far as the tip of his nose. Both eyes blinking*). My dear—oh! (*as if in sudden agony. Then plaintively*) I 'ave such a pain in my nose.

Madame (*backhairing energetically*). Fiddlesticks.

The Signor (*in an injured tone*). Oh! Vy you say zat? You know I do sof-far from my nose—and my head ache all . . .

Madame (*coming to a dead stop in her toilette*). Mr. Regniati, you eat and drink too much.

The Signor (*as if horrified at lying under such an imputation, but showing no disposition to rise with the occasion*). Oh! My Jo! (*appealing to abstract justice in the bed-curtains.*) Good-ness knows (*he pronounces it 'Good-ness-knows'*) I eat no-sing at-all.

Madame (*coming to the point*). Mr. Regniati, I can't finish my dressing if you stop there. 112

The Signor (*bestirring himself with as much dignity as is possible under the circumstances*). I go. Vere is my leet-tel slip-pers? (*Protesting*) I shall catch my dets of cold. (*He finds them.*)

Madame. Now, Mr. Regniati, make haste, or we shall be late. (*Shuts his dressing-room door on him.*)

In about a quarter of an hour after this, the carriage is announced, and the Signor is hurried down stairs.

The Signor (*complaining*). Oh! I am so ongry. (*Procrastinating.*) Ve 'ave time to take som-sing to eat, be-fore zat ve . . .

Madame (*cutting him short*). Nonsense, Mr. Regniati. If you wanted to stuff, you should have got up earlier.

Mr. Regniati. Stoff! (*Protests.*) My Jo! I do not stoff! (*Unhappily.*) I 'ave no-sing in . . .

Madame (*asceticallly*). A little abstinence will do you good. Come.

Exeunt Madame, attended by the Signor. Carriage drives off.

Mrs. Orby Frimmely, whose new things came down yesterday—latest Parisian mode—the two Misses Cherton, Miss Medford, Captain Byrton, Chilvern, Cazell, are the Church party. 113

Mr. Orby Frimmely, having been busy in the City all the week, is what he calls “taking it out” in bed on Sunday morning. He emphatically asserts his position (a horizontal one), and with religious fervour claims Sunday as a day of rest.

Being uncertain of the weather I remain at home with Milburd.

Milburd shifts the responsibility on to my shoulders by saying, “I'll go if you'll go.”

Hesitation.

Happy Thought. Wait and see what the weather is like.

At a quarter to eleven (service is at eleven) the weather is like nothing particular.

10.50. A gleam of sunshine. We watch it. The Signor, to whom the weather is of consequence, as he intends walking to the nearest farm on a visit of inspection to some rather fine pigs, remarks, “It vill 'old-up. Ven de sun shine now, it shine all day.”

Milburd doesn't think so. My opinion is that these rays are treacherous.

10.55. First appearance of genuine blue sky. Peal of bells stopped, and one only going now. The last call. More hesitation, I ask Milburd what he thinks of it. Milburd, in an arm-chair before fire and the “Field” newspaper in his hand, says “that he doesn't know what to make of it.” Further hesitation. 114

Eleven. Cessation of all bells. Sudden silence everywhere. Sky bright and blue. Sun out.

Happy Thought.—If we'd only known this we might have gone to church.

Milburd (*from behind the “Field”*). “Yes. It's too late now.”

The Signor has started with Jenkyns Soames (who is of some philosophic form of religion, in which long walks and gymnastics play leading parts), for the Piggeries.

Of Boodels nothing has been seen, or heard, since his first message.

Mr. Orby Frimmely, under the impression that the ladies have disappeared from the scene, descends in his lounging coat, and breakfasts alone. After this he lights a cigar, and makes himself useful in the conservatory.

Madame is walking in the garden, enjoying the winter sun's warmth, and reading.

From my room I can see her. She comes pacing majestically right underneath my window. Her book is the *Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*. 115

I pause . . . .

Then . . . . My Pens! . . . . I write

CURRENTE
CALAMO.

116

CHAPTER XVIII.

MORE SUNDAY THOUGHTS—IN MY ROOM—A TELEGRAM—IMPOSSIBILITIES—INTERRUPTION.

APPY Thought for Sunday.—Write down meditations. Like Marcus Aurelius did. Why not go in for *Sunday Books*? Telegraph to Popgood and Groolly (my publishers, who have been in treaty with me for two years about *Typ. Developments*), and say,

FROM ME,
HAPPY THOUGHT HALL,
HERTFORDSHIRE.

Messrs. POPGOOD & GROOLLY,
THE WORKS,
BOOKMAKERS' WALK,
FINSBURY, E.C.

Good notion for you. Sunday book. Nothing solemn. Lightly contemplative. Will you? Wire back.

117

Forgot it's Sunday, and no telegrams can be sent. Very absurd. Why shouldn't one want to send a telegram on Sunday equally as much as on Monday? Telegraphic people might arrange for holidays easily enough, by having small extra Sunday staff.

Happy Thought.—Will commence my Meditations. Head them *Sunday Sayings*. No, they're *not* sayings. Prefer alliterative title. Try *Sunday Sighs*. But they're not sighs. Try another, *Sunday Sermons*. No, they won't be sermons. Put down a lot of titles and see which I like. *Sunday Songs. Sobs for Sunday. Sunday Solids.* (This is something more like it.) Or a double title. *Sunday Solids and Sunday Suctions.* No; won't do.

Happy Thought.—Write the meditations first, see what they come out like, and then give them a name. This will, so to speak, "suit my book," as to-morrow, with a name and everything cut and dried, I can write particulars to Popgood and Groolly.

For the nonce—(good word, by the way, "the nonce")—only it's always given me the idea of sounding like a vague part of the body, where one could be hit or knocked down. I mean it would never surprise me to hear that some one had met a man and hit him on the nonce. Result fatal.

118

> *"He was not found for some days after, but there is no doubt that he was killed by a blow on the nonce."*
>
> *Extract from local paper.*

To resume:—

For the nonce, I will head them merely for my own personal information, “Sayings for Sunday.”

Happy Thought.—Good Hebdomadal Alliterative Series.

Sayings for Sundays.	*1 Vol.*
Mysteries for Mondays.	*do.*
Tales for Tuesdays.	*do.*
Wit for Wednesdays.	
Themes for Thursdays.	
Fun for Fridays.	
Sonnets for Saturdays.	

And then, all, in a monthly volume, as Medleys for the Month. I distinctly see Popgood and Groolly's rapid and colossal fortune. Then there'd be a quarterly. Why not *Quarterly Quips*? No, this is not sufficiently general. [N.B. Joke by a man on a treadmill might be termed a *Quip on a Crank*.]

Happy Thought.—Quantity and Quality, a Quarterly Quintessence. Quips, Quiddities, Quibbles, and Quirks, by . . . dear me, I want to say “ready writers”—that's the style of *nom de plume* required.

Plume is suggestive. I have it. 119

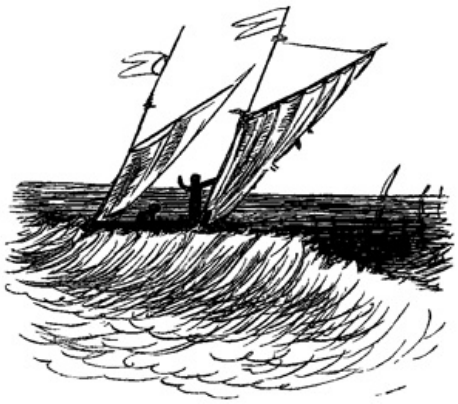
Happy Thought.—“Quick Quills.” Popgood's advertisement will say, “The above Quarterly by Quick Quills.”

Now I'll begin.

Knock at the door. Mr. Orby Frimmely wants to know if I will stroll out with him and meet the Signor returning.

With pleasure. Leave the sayings for another Sunday.

We stroll.



AWAY!

120

CHAPTER XIX.

A WALK WITH SIGNOR REGNIATI.

THE PROSAIC GENTLEMAN.

Weather fine. We are out for a walk. Mr. Orby Frimmely, of the City, represents the Prosaic. I put myself down as the Poetic, and the

Signor as the Enthusiastic. To us a small man in clerical black and Roman collar.

The Signor (*saluting cleric*). Ah, Father Cuthbert. 'Ow you do? (*Introduces us.*) You 'ave got beautiful flowers.

Father C. (*alluding to the bunch in his hand*). *Flores martyrum.* You have heard that we are ordered off for active service in China.

Self. China! (*We see in our "mind's eye, Horatio" the fearful tortures recently practised upon Christians in China and are speechless.*)

Frimmely (*the Prosaic*). Ah! You must take care what you're about there. (*Surprise of the Reverend F. Cuthbert.*) The Government won't protect you, you know (*he says this as if the reverend gentleman was going to China to rob an orchard*).

Father C. No. It will not. (*Nobly.*) We go to suffer and to preach the faith. 121

Signor. Oh, my Jo! I should not like to be eat. I 'ope you vill not go. Let us know before you start.

Father C. (*cheerfully*). It is certain. I'm afraid I shan't be at the College to see you next Sunday. Good-bye.

[*Exit Father C.*

We continue our walk.

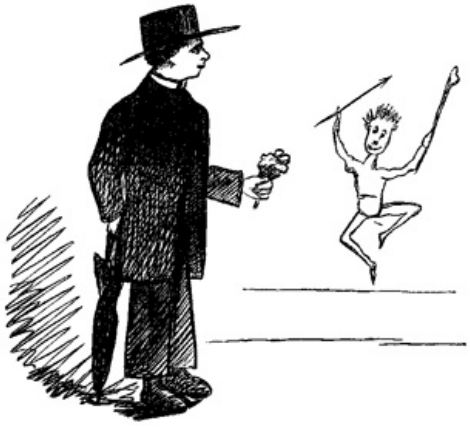
Myself (*the poetical*). Ah! What a grand lot! What a high and holy calling. Here we are, striving for comfort, and perhaps for fame, there the missioner goes forth, to die, perhaps in torments, unknown to the world until the Day of Doom.

[*I am impressed and silent.*]

Signor. Oh, my Jo! I vould not go to be eat. (*Nobly, and in true Christian spirit.*) I would say let me go, and I vill run a-vays.

Frimmely (*the Prosaic*). Martyr! . . . Well, I wouldn't mind being a martyr if I'd been brought up to it. I don't see why you should waste sentiment on Father Cuthbert or anybody else whose profession it is. (*Repeating incisively*) It's his profession, his business, to be uncomfortable, and, finis coronat opus, martyrdom signifies in his line, success. (*We are silent and he continues further to instruct us.*) You Catholics (*to the Signor*), you know, 122 have colleges of Missioners in training; I've seen 'em. As in a Law College there would be portraits of Chief Justices and celebrated Q.C.'s in the costumes of their rank, so in a Missioners' College you have pictures of Celebrated Martyrs in the peculiar Costumes of their particular torments. It's a regular business, with *you* I mean, not so much with Protestants. We do it more comfortably. With us it's rather a question of a foreign appointment, with a good income.

The Signor. Vell—(*considering*). I am ongry. Let us go an' eat some-sing.



123

ÊTRE MARTYR . . . . SON MÉTIER.

CHAPTER XX.

A SUNDAY CONVERSATION.

MISS ADELAIDE (*warming her toes on the fender before sitting down to luncheon*). Oh, how cold it was in Church.

Captain Byrton. Wasn't it. Upon my word if they expect people to go, they ought to keep the place warm.

Chilvern. It was so cold I couldn't go to sleep during the sermon (*knives and forks at work*).

Cazell. It wasn't such a very bad sermon. Pickles, please! Thanks.

Myself (*showing some interest*). Who preached?

Mrs. Frimmely. I don't know his name. He wasn't here last Sunday.

Boodels (*whose headache has entirely disappeared*). Ah, the Rector perhaps. There are two Churches here, and he has two Curates.

Miss Bella (*frowningly*). He preached in black.

Milburd. It *is* the Rector. It's what they call 'Low Sunday' here. 124

Chilvern. What's that?

Madame. Not Low Sunday with us; that is after Easter Day.

Medford (*explaining*). Ah yes, Boodels refers to the tone of their Churchmanship. The Rector is Broad Church, Mr. Marveloe, the senior Curate, is High Church, and Mr. Alpely, the junior Curate, is Low. This just suits the parishioners, and they take it turn and turn about at the two Churches, the Rector doing duty at both, accommodating himself to either view as the case may be. One Sunday they're high, another they're low, and the other Church is *vice versâ*.

Miss Adelaide. To-day it was the duett of parson and clerk.

Miss Bella. Oh, horrid! I'd rather stop at home than hear that. Why at S. Phillips at home we have vestments, and incense, and everything is done so well.

Miss Medford (*quietly*). Well, I'd just as soon go to one as another. May I trouble you for the salt, Signor Regniati?

Signor. My Jo! If zey do not preach I vould go—

Madame (*severely*). Mr. Regniati, hand the salt.

Mrs. Frimmely. What an absurd cloak that Mrs. Tringmer had. 125

Miss Bella. I suppose she thought it was quite the fashion.

Mrs. Frimmely. Who was that lady—Captain Byrton, do *you* know?—who came in rustling all up the Church, and so scented! as if she'd stepped out of a perfumer's.

Byrton. Don't know. Perhaps she *has* stepped out of a perfumer's, and is an advertisement.

Happy Thought (for a perfumer).—To send scented people about. Questions asked, *e.g.* Stranger (*sniffing*) goes up politely and inquires, "I beg a hundred pardons, but what scent—what delicious scent are you wearing?" Then the lady replies, "Don't mention it, Ma'am. It's (whatever the name is), and there's the card." And gives her the perfumer's address.

Miss Adelaide. I thought Miss Vyner rather prettily dressed.

Mrs. Frimmely. Oh! but *did* you see her gloves! Such a fit!

Miss Bella. And such a colour!

Cazell. I wonder who that bald-headed man in front of me was? There was a collection, and he put a sovereign into the plate.

Chilvern. I'm always unlucky in that way. Whenever I go to Church there's always a collection. 126

Captain Byrton. Yes. You kept the man waiting at the pew door for at least two minutes, while you fumbled in all your pockets. Anyone have any cheese?

Chilvern. I knew I'd got a shilling somewhere—but it was a fourpenny-bit after all.

Miss Medford. How very disturbing it must be for the clergyman, when a child persists in crying at intervals all through the sermon.

Mrs. Frimmely. Yes, little things like that oughtn't to be brought to church; at least, not to sit out sermons.

Boodels (*with some vague recollection of the baptismal service*). But you forget, Mrs. Frimmely, godfathers and godmothers promise to bring children to *hear* sermons. That's one of the three things they vow in the child's name.

Mrs. Frimmely. Really? (*seeing no help for it short of a second reformation, or disestablishment*). Well it's a great pity.

Milburd (*to Byrton*). I see by the *Field* to-day, that *Lysander* is going up for the Derby.

Byrton. He's nowhere. *Corkscrew's* at a hundred to fifteen.

Mrs. Frimmely. I was right last year. Wasn't I? (*To her husband.*) 127

Frimmely. Yes: for once. (*Mrs. Frimmely tosses her head.*)

Soames (*the Professor of Scientific Economy*). Betting can be reduced to the certainty of a mathematical calculation.

Cazell (*to him*). I tell you what *you* ought to do, then.

Soames (*innocently*). What?

Cazell. Make your fortune. (*A titter. Pause.*)

Medford. I see by the *Musical Times* that we're to have the new prima donna, Stellafanti, at Covent Garden.

Madame. We heard her years ago at Naples. (*Interest in her diminishes.*)

Mrs. Frimmely. We *must* get up some theatricals here.

Misses Adelaide and Bella. Oh yes, *do let's*!

Miss Medford. I think they *are* such fun.

Medford. We could do something musical, easily.

The Signor (*while the others talk about theatricals*). My Jo! I should like to get a leettel shoot vile I am here.

Capt Byrton. Birds very wild. Have you had good sport?

Signor. My Jo! at Bad-ge-bee zere are—oh—'eaps of birds! but ven zey see me, zey go avays. I go out to shoot zem, an' I shoot no-sing.

Here the conversation becomes general, some are hot on theatricals and musical matters, others on sporting. Mr. Frimmely and the Professor are discussing finance. Miss Medford and Mrs. Regniati have got on an ecclesiastical topic. 128

—"We might play an opera, with a part for—"

—“The Archbishop of Canterbury, he is a friend of our rector's and says—”

—“My Jo! I 'ave such a pig! and I 'ave a bull that—”

—“With skates on! in a frost—”

—“Will win the Derby, I'll back him unless he's—”

—“Dressed as a brigand. Charming! or else as—”

—“A simple sum in arithmetic—”

—“With a red nose—”

—“In the organ-loft. But he objected to—”

—“Cold cream the only thing! put that on first, and then—”

—“You may get within a few yards of the birds, they won't hear you, and when they're—”

—“Paying ten per cent. for your money. Why not leave it—”

—“On the top of your head with a feather—”

—“Or go up in the pulpit before the sermon, as the rector did—”

—“In a transparency; it's easily managed by—”

—“Another tax on the Spanish coupons—”

—“And a bath every evening with—” 129

—“My prize pig—”

—“And three or four fireworks—”

Milburd (*decisively*). A capital effect! We'll do it!

[*The ladies rise. Conversation finishes.*]

ONE OF THE SURPLICE POPULATION.

130

CHAPTER XXI.

COMMENCEMENT OF MY SAYINGS FOR SUNDAYS.

IRST.—Of the bee. If the bee could talk, he would always be boasting of his business, and would do nothing.

Moral.—Learn then from the bee, the lesson of silent perseverance.

(I think this *is* the lesson to be learnt.)

Second.—The wasp's sting is in its tail. So is a tale-bearer's.

Moral.—Avoid wasps and tale-bearers.

(This would come among the quips. Still I think it would be a fair Sunday quip, for even a serious circle.)

Third.—Stand by Niagara Falls, and abuse them. The falls will go on the same as ever. Throw mud at them. None will stick. The power of pure water will wash it away. 131

Moral.—A spotless character is protected by its own integrity, and though men will try to defame it, yet it triumphs in the end.

(Don't care about this moral. Get something better out of it before to-morrow. It will do for "*material.*")

Fourth.—We are born for the sake of one another.

Moral.—Find out for whom you were born, and stick to him, or her.

(Rather a frisky moral this. More for Mondays than Sundays, perhaps. Marcus Aurelius was a great man. One begins to appreciate the greatness of a maxim-maker or aphorist, when you try to do something in that line yourself.)

Fifth.—You yourself are often like those who offend you.

Moral.—When you detect the resemblance to yourself in others, treat them as you deserve to be treated. This may lead to difficulties.

(Something suggested here, by this last word.)

Sixth.—Difficulties were made to be surmounted. 132

Moral.—Go up Mount Ararat and down the other side.

Seventhly.—The sum of social Christianity: Love your neighbour, and hate your relations.

(This will do for Sunday. Irony for Sunday. Fun for Friday *à propos* of irony. Who ought to have been the best writer of *irony*? *Steele.*)

Eighthly.—In a woman's youth, coquetry is natural. It is the expression of amiable indecision. At thirty, it is a science.

(Somehow I think, I've slid away from Sunday literature.)

Ninthly.—A pretty woman well "made up" is an angel . . . with false wings.

(The mention of an angel, is something nearer to Sunday.)

Tenthly.—'Tis curious that when the Jews finish, the Christians begin. Their Sabbath is the last day of the week, our Sunday is the first.

(This is more like what I wanted. Only in the last three instances, there has been no moral.)

À propos of a moral.

Eleventhly.—A moral in a fable is like the hook in the bait. 133

Moral.—Take the bait . . . and leave the hook.

Twelfthly.—"The Devil," said Voltaire, "is at the bottom of Christianity. Without the Devil Christianity would not be."

Ah, but the Devil little thought this when he tempted Eve.

There is no particular moral to this. It does not require one.

Thirteenthly.—The bad man who attends to the convenances of religious observance, only puts polish on muddy boots.

Moral.—Clean your boots.

(Might add also, “take care of the puddles.” Popgood and Groolly will make a fortune of such a Sunday book as I am getting together. Only it will take some time to compile two hundred pages of maxims and morals.)

Fourteenthly.—Stars and pretty women at a ball don't show to advantage by daylight.

Moral.—Go to bed early.

Fifteenthly.—(*A pendant*). The Moon is pale from being up all night.

Moral.—Same as preceding. 134

Sixteenthly.—Marrying for Love is like digging for gold. It is to be hoped the speculation will succeed.

Moral.—Love in haste: marry at leisure.

(Altogether, I fancy, I'm wandering from Sunday Meditations. I don't think these are the jottings of Marcus Aurelius.)

Seventeenthly.—Here is something specially for Sunday:—

If you can't pay creditors, love them. It may not be exactly fulfilling the law of your country, but the sentiment is sublime and thoroughly Christian.

(This is a moral in itself. *Happy Thought.*—Make a moral first and invent the fable. Good.)

Eighteenthly.—We are all so vain that we can't imagine eternal happiness too much for us. The reverse of the medal is unpalatable.

Moral.—Be 'umble.

Nineteenthly.—There are few men, if any, with whom it is possible to reason concerning either Love or Religion.

Moral.—Don't try.

Twentiethly.—Theological discussion generally comes in after dinner with the third bottle of wine.

Moral.—Get to the fourth as quickly as possible.

Twenty-onethly.—Life is a perpetual Epitaph. 135

Moral.—Better than most epitaphs, because it's short. If you've got to write one remember this.

The last is so melancholy that I can only sit down and think. At present this will do for my Sunday Meditations.

THE MEDITATIONIST.

136

CHAPTER XXII.

FOR some days Milburd, Mrs. Orby Frimmely, Cazell, Chilvern, and the Medfords have been working hard at a new piece.

The order of the evening is dinner for a few, then theatricals to amuse the many, then refreshments, then a dance, and finally supper.

The Signor is in great force.

“My dear,” he says to his wife, “I shall do my lit-tel step. I shall valse.”

“Mr. Regniati,” returns Madame, severely, “you will do nothing of the sort.”

This rather damps his ardour; and the fact of being unable to consult his nephew on the best means of obtaining his chance of doing his “lit-tel steps,” still further depresses him.

He is perpetually looking into the theatre-room, and as often begging pardon, and being turned out.

The night arrives. I receive the guests as president, and I take the lady I don't want to in to dinner.

Dinner successful. 137

Madame rises at the proper moment; and after an hour, and the arrival of several carriages full, the gong summons us to the theatre.

Here Medford and myself hand round the programmes, and Miss Medford performs on the piano.

The programmes are in her writing too. Most neatly done.

This evening will be represented, for the first time on any stage, an entirely new and original Musical Farce, entitled

PENELOPE ANNE.

WRITTEN BY R. MILBURD, ESQ.

Dramatis Personæ.

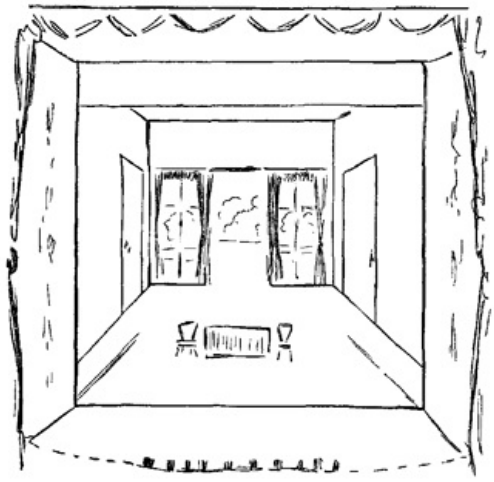
Don José John Boxos de Caballeros y Carvalhos y Regalias di Salamanca, *generally known, and without familiarity mentioned, as “*John Box*”*	S. Cazell.
Count Cornelius de Coxo, Land-Margrave of Somewhere, *with a Palazzo in Venice, commonly known as* “James Cox”	R. Milburd.
Karl, *the German* Waiter	T. Chilvern.
Mrs. Penelope Anne Knox	Mrs. Orby Frimmely.
Major-General Bouncer, B.L.H.	Captain Byrton.

The Scene is laid in Aix-la-Chapelle, at the Hotel known as Die Schweine und die Pfeiffer.

Time.—There being no time like The Present, we choose the present time. 138

The Orchestra under the superintendence of Miss Catherine Medford.

Stage Manager, R. Milburd.
Prompter, George A. Medford.



OUR STAGE.

PENELOPE ANNE.

The Curtain being drawn up:—

The scene represents a public room in the small Hotel above-mentioned, at Aix-la-Chapelle.

Doors R.H. *and* L.H. *Also a door* C. *leading on to a garden.*

Time, late in Autumn.

On the table are various papers, books, &c.

Enter Cox.

*Everybody applauds him. The Signor says, aloud, "*Oh 'ow good! eet is Deeck*," and looks about, proud of his penetration of his nephew's disguise, when Madame observes, "*Mr. Regniati, if you can't be quiet, you'd better go out*," whereupon the Signor confines himself to smiling and nodding to different people among the audience, intimating thereby his intense satisfaction with everything that is taking place on the stage.*

COUNT COXO.

Cox *is in full tourist style of the most recent fashion. Over this he wears a top-coat and round his throat a cache-nez. In one hand he holds a large glass of water.*

He walks up and down on entering. Drinks a little. Takes off his coat, which he throws on the sofa. Then drinks again. Then walks. Then removes the cache-nez, which he throws on to coat, then he stands still and respires freely.

COX.

Phew! I'm only gradually cooling. This is the sixth day I've taken the waters of Aix-la-Chapelle . . . and I'm beginning to be so sulphurous all over, that, if anybody was to rub against me suddenly, I should ignite and go off with a bang. I've written to my friend Box an account of it. I haven't seen Box for some years; but as I particularly wish him to remain in England just now, I've commenced a correspondence with him. I've told him that the doctor's orders here are very simple . . . . "Herr Cox," says he to me—Herr's German —I must explain that to Box, because, though Box is a good fellow, yet—he's —in fact—he's an ass. "Herr Cox," says he, "you must drink a glass of sulphur wasser." Wasser's German too; it didn't take long for my naturally fine intellect to discover that it meant water. But Box doesn't know it . . . for though he's an excellent fellow, he is—in fact he's an ignoramus. "Herr Cox," says he to me, "you must take the sulphur wasser, and then walk about." "What next, Herr Doctor?" says I. Note to Box. *Herr Doctor* doesn't mean that he's anything to do with a *Hair*-cutter. No, it's the respectful German for Mister—must explain that to Box, for though he's a tiptop chap,

yet Box is—is—in fact, Box is a confounded idiot. “Herr Doctor,” says I, “what next?” “Well,” says he “when you've taken the sulphur water and walked about, then you must walk about and take the sulphur water.” Simple. The first glass . . . ugh! I shan't forget it. I never could have imagined, till that moment, what the taste of a summer beverage made of curious old eggs . . . a trifle over ripe . . . beaten up with a lucifer match, would be like . . . now I know. But I was not to be conquered. Glass number two was not so bad. Glass number three . . . . less unpalatable than glass number two—glass number four . . . um, between number three and number four a considerable time was allowed to elapse, as I found I had been going it too fast. But now my enfeebled health is gradually being 142
renovated, and they tell me that when I leave this, I shall be “quite another man.” I don't know what other man I shall be. Yes I do. I am now a single man. I hope to leave here a double, I mean a married man. Cox, my boy, that's what you've come here for. Cox, my boy, that's why you want to keep, diplomatically, Box, my boy, in England, and in ignorance of your proceedings. Herr Cox, you're a sly dog. If I could give myself a dig in the ribs without any internal injury, I'd do it. I came here for the rheumatism. By the way I needn't have come here for *that*, as I'd got it pretty strongly. I caught it, without any sort of trouble. I bathed, at Margate, in the rain. Before I could reach my bathing machine, I was drenched through and through, I don't know where to, but long beyond the skin. The injury was more than skin deep. No amount of exterior scrubbings could cure me. Brandies and waters hot internally, every day for two months, produced more than the desired effect. I began to wander. I finished by travelling. And here I am. In six more lessons on the sulphur spring, I shall be quite the Cure. (*Dances and sings.*) “The Cure, the Cure, the Cure, &c.”

(*Great applause: from the Signor especially.*)

Enter WAITER. 143

(*More applause. An elderly lady with eye-glasses asks audibly if that isn't* Captain Byrton*?*)

WAITER (*putting newspaper on table*).

Aachen Zeitung, Herr Cox.

(*More applause for his German accent.*)

COX.

Nein danky. I mean, no thank you. Nix—nein—don't want any.

WAITER.

Nein, Herr Cox, zis ees de baber—de daily baber at Aix. Beebels come.

THE WAITER.

[*Exit.*

(*The Signor here observes aloud, “*Eet is so like ven I——*” Madame says, sternly, “*Hush, Mr. Regniati*,” and he contents himself by finishing with a wink privately to me.*)

COX. 144

Ja. Goot. I flatter myself I'm getting on with my German. Here's the arrival column . . English . . I look at this every day . . . because . . . um (*reading it*) . . . “Mr. and Mrs. Bloater, from Yarmouth, and all the little Bloaters . . . Major Bouncer” . . . goodness gracious! how extraordinary! . . . Major Bouncer . . . Oh it can't be the same, it must be one of his ancestors . . . or his posterity . . . “Major Bouncer of the Royal Banbury Light Horse” . . . pooh! fancy Bouncer on a light horse!

Ride a cock horse
To Banbury gorse
To see Major Bouncer

Upon a light horse;
Rings on his
fingers . . . .

Stop a minute . . . Rings . . . Ah! (*reads*) “accompanied by Mrs. Bouncer, also of the Banbury Light Horse.” Of course, that settles it. It is *not* old Bouncer. Next, “Mr. and Mrs. Winkle, from Pinner.” Ah! at last . . . “Arrived at the Hotel, der Schwein und die Pfeife,” that's here—“Mrs. Penelope Anne Knox.” I only heard it the other day at Margate. There she sat. Radiant as ever. A widow for the second time. Originally widow of William Wiggins, of 145
Margate and Ramsgate, and now widow of Nathaniel Knox, of the Docks, with a heap—a perfect heap—of money. Then my old passion returned. I determined to propose to her. I was about to do so, when on the very morning that I was going to throw myself at her feet, I caught this infernal rheumatism, which laid me on my back. When I recovered she was gone. “Where to?” says I. “Aix!” says they. My spirits mounted. I took a vast amount of pains to get to Aix, and here I am. I had heard of some property in Venice, which belonged to the Coxes some hundreds of years ago, and so I thought I'd join pleasure with business, and take Aix and Penelope Anne on the road. And now *here* she is. If Box had only known it, he'd have been after her. He's a first-rate fellow, is Box, but abominably mercenary and mean. He'd think nothing of proposing to Penelope Anne merely for her money. And *I* think nothing of a man who could do such a thing. So I've written to Box telling him to go to the North, and I'll come and stay with him for the shooting season. A little shooting Box in Scotland. Ha! ha! when I *do* go, it will be with Penelope Anne on my arm, as Mr. and Mrs. Cox. Let me see, when the hour strikes again, it will be time for my third tumbler—here it is—and the promenade. The Doctor says I must be punctual in drinking the water, so I'll put myself straight, and then, so to speak, lay 146
myself out for the capture of Penelope Anne.

VERSES.

(*“Les Pompiers de Nanterre.”*)

I'm so very glad,
Feel so very jolly,
Like a little lad
Who has come home to play.
Now about I'll gad!
Widow melancholy!
She will be delighted
When I my addresses pay.

Tzing la la la! Tzing la la
la!
I'm an artful dodger!
Tzing la la la! Tzing la la
la!
Hey! for Victory!

[*Exit out of room* R.H.

(*Immense applause. The Signor insisting upon joining in the chorus, which he thinks he knows.* MILBURD *sings it again and then makes his exit.*)

Enter WAITER *with portmanteau.* 147

Applause. Then enter BOX *as if from a long journey; he is wrapped up to the eyes, and above them. Questioning among audience, “*Who's that?*” *WAITER *points to room* L.H. BOX *inclines his head. Exit* WAITER. BOX *commences unbuttoning long foreign overcoat with hood. Then takes off hood, then takes off immense wrapper. When free of these he appears dressed in very foreign fashion.*

Re-enter WAITER.

WAITER (*puzzled*).

'Ave you zeen a Herr mit ein long code, . . . long tail?

BOX.

A what? A hare with a long tail?

WAITER.

Ah! ah! (*laughing*). You are him I zee (*pointing to coat*). Dat vas you dere. Zo ist goot.

BOX.

Oh, I see. Yes, that's me, I mean that was me, only now I've come out like the butterfly out of a grub. (*Aside.*) I forgot that this is Germany. (*Aloud.*) Ja.

DON BOXOS.

WAITER.

Ach! der Herr sprech Deutsch?

(*Great applause.*)

BOX.

Yah. (*Aside.*) That's more like a nigger. (*Aloud.*) On second thoughts, nein.

WAITER.

Vill you your name in dese book write? (*Presenting visitors' book.*)

BOX.

I will. (*Writes.*) Don José John de Boxos Cazadores Regalias, Spain.

WAITER.

Dank you, milor!

[*Exit* WAITER C.

BOX.

We know what we are, but we never know what we shall be. I am not quite clear at present, by the way, what I am, let alone what I *shall* be. If anybody three months ago had said to me, “Box, my boy, you are a grandee of Spain” . . . I should have said that he was a . . . in point of fact I shouldn't have believed him. But still I am—that is, partially so—I'm gradually becoming one. At present I'm only half a grandee. Three months ago a friend, my legal adviser, a law stationer's senior clerk, near Chancery Lane, said to me, “Box, my boy, you've got Spanish blood in you.” I said that I had suspected as much from my peculiar and extreme partiality for the vegetable called a Spanish onion, and I was going to a doctor, when my friend and legal adviser said to me, “Box, my boy, I don't mean *that*. I mean that your great grandmother was of Spanish extraction.” I replied that I had heard that they had extracted my great grandmother from that quarter, “I came across some papers,” continued my legal adviser, “which allude to her as Donna Isidora y Caballeros, Carvalhos y Cazadores y Regalias, Salamanca, Spain, who married John Box, trader, of Eliza Lane, St. Margaret's Wharf, Wapping. Date and all correct. Go,” says he—I mean my legal adviser—“go to Spain, and claim your title, your estates, and your money, and I'll stand in with you, and take half the profits.” I was struck by this remarkably handsome offer, and went down to Margate to cultivate a Spanish moustache and think about it. Whenever I want to think about anything deeply, I go down to Margate. Well, one morning as I was examining the progress of my moustache, after shaving my chin and letting out some of the blue blood of the Hidalgos in a most tremendous gash, judge of my astonishment, when, walking on the beach, in among the donkeys and the Ethiopian serenaders, I saw in widow's weeds, as majestic as ever, Penelope Anne! (*Sings*) “I saw her for a moment, but methinks I see her now, with the wreath of—something or other—upon her—something brow”——and then I lost sight of her. But my Spanish blood was up. The

extraction from the sunny South boiled in my veins . . . boiled over, when I learnt, on referring to the visitors' list, that Penelope Anne was the relict of the short-breath'd—I mean short-lived but virtuous—Knox, who had left her his entire fortune. All my long-stifled passion returned—the passion which the existence of a Wiggins, her first, had not quenched, which the ephemeral life of a Knox had not extinguished, a passion which I have felt for her before I knew that the blue ink—I mean the blue blood, of the Hidalgos danced in my veins, and while she was only a sweet village maiden eighteen years old, and known to all as Miss Penelope Anne, of Park 151
Place, Pimlico! I determined to go out and throw myself at her feet, declare my passion, and take nothing for an answer except “Box . . . John . . . I'm yours truly, Penelope!” I couldn't present myself before her with a scrubbing-brush on my upper lip. So that afternoon I sacrificed Mars to Venus—I mean I shaved off my moustache for the sake of Penelope Anne. The next morning . . . . Toothache wasn't the name for what I suffered. Face-ache fails to describe my agonies. Neuralgia doesn't give the faintest idea of my tortures. The left side of my face looked exactly as if I was holding a large dumpling in my mouth, or a gigantic ribston-pippin which I couldn't swallow. Swallow! Not a bit of food passed these lips, except slops, beef-tea, and tea without the beef, for days. At the end of a week I was a shadow. Penelope Anne had gone. Where, no one knew. Somebody said they thought it was the Continent. I bought a map and looked out the Continent, but it wasn't in that. I suppose it was an old edition—there have been so many changes, and they're building everywhere—so I consulted my medical man and my legal adviser. The first said, “Get change of air. Go abroad!” The second said, “Seize the opportunity and go to Spain. And,” he added, “come home by the Continent.” That suited me down to the ground. 152
I should get my title, my lands, and my money, meeting Penelope Anne on the Continent. As I was coming back I should be able to offer her the hand and heart of either Don José John de Boxos y Cazadores y Regalias y Caballeros y Carvalhos of Salamanca, Spain, or of plain John Box, of Barnsbury. So here I am. I haven't got the whole title yet, as the Spanish legal gentleman and I didn't hit it off exactly. . . . If I'd only known what he was talking about, it would have shortened the proceedings. However, as that remark applies to all legal business, I couldn't quarrel with a foreigner on that point. Besides, if you quarrel with a Spaniard, his southern blood can't stand it. He stabs you. He's sorry for it afterwards, but that's his noble nature. So I've adopted half the title, and the rest will be sent on to me if the suit is gained. But up to this moment I've not met Penelope Anne. I've had so much of the wines of Spain, that my medical man wrote and advised me to try the waters of Germany. So here I am. (*Takes up paper*). What's this? *Comic Journal*, um. “We are sorry to announce the death of . . .” um, um. (*reads*) “*Spain on the eve of a crisis.*” . . . There were three while I was there. Nobody took any notice of them. What's this? “Hotel der Schwein and die Pfeife”—that's here—“Mrs. Penelope Anne Knox.” . . . . Don José de Boxos, she's yours. You've only got to propose, and she's yours. Tell her 153
you're a Spanish grandee, and offer her a position as Spanish grand*she*. Don Boxos, you've only got to give yourself a brush up, and she's yours. (*Taking up* Cox's *glass of water which he has left on table*) I wish myself every possible success! To my future happiness! (*drinks.*) Ugh! (*suddenly makes fearfully wry faces. The clock strikes. Re-enter* Cox, R.H.)

COX.

Punctual to the moment. (*Seeing glass empty*) Confound it, dash it—who's taken my sulphur wasser? I say who (*sees* Box *who is slowly recovering*)—Have you—(*starts*) Can I believe my eyes?

BOX.

I don't know.

COX.

It *must* be—.

BOX.

If it *must* be, then in that case (*opens his eyes and recognises* Cox). Ah!

COX.

Box!

BOX. 154

Cox!

[*They are about to rush into each other's arms, when they think better of it, and shake hands rather coolly.*

BOX.

How d'ye do?

COX.

How are you?

BOX.

Very well, sir.

COX.

Very well, sir! (*Aside*) I don't like the look of this.

BOX (*aside*).

I don't like the taste of *that*.

COX (*aside*).

What's Box here for?

BOX (*aside*).

Has Cox been trying to poison himself—and poisoned me?

COX (*aside*). 155

He mustn't stay here.

BOX (*aside*).

Cox must go. I don't think I feel as well as I did.

COX.

Ahem!

BOX.

Ahem!

COX.

I beg your pardon, you were going to say—

BOX.

On the contrary, I interrupted you—

COX.

No, you speak first. *Seniores priores.*

BOX.

In that case you have the preference. Why, I'm quite a chicken by the side of you.

COX.

Pooh, sir.

BOX. 156

Well, if you don't like “chicken” I'll say gosling.

COX.

Don't be absurd, sir. At what age were you born?

BOX.

What's that to you? I'm six years younger than you, whatever you are.

COX.

So am I. So you speak first.

BOX.

This is absurd. I'm only a visitor. You're a resident.

COX.

No I'm not. I'm only *ong parsong*.

BOX.

Ong Parsong? Why, you don't mean to say you've become a clergyman? Archbishop Cox, I congratulate you.

(*Our two curates, who are among the audience, see the joke and laugh sweetly.*)

COX. 157

Don't be a fool. Are you stopping here?

BOX.

Well, that depends. Are *you*?

COX.

Well—(*shrugging his shoulders and stretching out his hands*).

BOX.

Ah! (*imitates action*) That's exactly my case.

COX.

It's time for me to go out and take the waters. You've taken mine for me.

BOX.

If you don't feel any better after it than I do—What's the effect of the waters?

COX (*aside*).

I'll frighten him. (*Aloud*) If you're unaccustomed to them—poisonous.

BOX.

Good gracious! The first draught then is—

COX. 158

Fatal. Deadly.

BOX.

Then you don't have much chance of getting accustomed to it. You look very well.

COX.

Yes. I could have taken that glass with impunity. It was my eighteenth tumbler.

BOX.

Then I'm safe. I began with the eighteenth. Aha! I shall smoke a cigar and read the paper.

COX (*aside*).

The paper!

BOX.

Don't stop for me. (*Aside*) I wonder if he's seen the news.

COX (*aside*).

He mustn't know she's here. He's got it. (*Seeing* Box *reading the paper.*) Would you allow me to look at the paper?

BOX.

There's nothing in it.

COX (*coming up to table and putting his hand suddenly down on it*). 159

Sir!

BOX (*taking no notice*).

Come in.

COX.

No, sir, I shall not come in. I'm going to come out, sir, and come out pretty strongly too. (*Suddenly pathetic*) Box, my boy—

BOX (*the same*).

Cox, my boy. (*Turns and allows the smoke of his pipe to come under* Cox's *nose just as* Cox *is attempting to take the paper.*)

COX (*sneezing*).

Excuse my emotion (*sneezes*).

BOX.

It does honour to your head and heart—specially to your head. (*Offers his pocket-handkerchief.*)

COX.

Thank you. I can't forget that we were once brothers.

BOX. 160

We were.

COX.

We had no secrets from each other. At least you had none from me, had you?

BOX.

No, not unless you had any from me.

COX.

Then I will confide in you. I don't mind telling you—

BOX.

I have no objection to inform you—

COX.

That I am—

BOX.

So am I—

COX.

Here—

BOX.

Exactly my case—

COX. 161

To marry—

BOX.

Yes, to espouse—

COX.

Eh?

BOX.

It's the same thing.

COX.

Oh. To marry Penelope Anne.

BOX.

Penelope Anne! So am I!

COX.

You!

BOX.

I.

COX.

Then, Box, I'm sorry for you. You've no chance. Go.

BOX. 162

On the contrary, Cox, as there can't be the smallest possibility of your being accepted, it's for you to retire. *Allez.*

COX.

I shan't allez.

BOX.

No more shall I.

COX.

Mr. Box, since we last met, circumstances have changed. You no longer speak to a gentleman—

BOX.

You needn't explain *that*—

COX.

I say, to a gentleman connected with the Hatting interest. *No*, my family solicitor discovered that my great grandfather had been a Venetian Count, or a Margrave, or a Hargrave, or a something of that sort, and that therefore my proper title was Count Cox The Landgrave.

BOX. 163

The *Landgrave*—you might as well be a tombstone at once.

COX.

I am serious. I have come over to mix pleasure with business, and to offer to Penelope Anne the hand of The Landgrave, or of the Venetian Count. So yield to the aristocracy; and, Printer, withdraw.

BOX.

Excuse me, Cox, but since our parting I have discovered that in my veins flows the blue blood of the Hidal*gos*—

COX.

How many “goes”?

BOX.

Don't be profane—of the Hidalgos of Spain. I have already assumed half the title. The rest will be sent on to me in a few days, and I am here to offer to Penelope Anne the hand and coronet of Don José John de Boxos y Caballeros y Regalias de Salamanca. *Fuego*, as we say in Spain, *Fuego*.

COX. 164

Never, while *I* live, shall *you* marry Penelope Anne.

BOX.

Never, while I marry Penelope Anne, shall you live. I've Spanish blood in my veins. Pistols!

COX.

Swords!

BOX.

When?

COX.

Now. (*Clock strikes*). That's the second glass of water you have made me lose. You are ruining my health.

BOX.

Then let me shoot you at once. By the way, I haven't got a pistol.

COX.

Paltry evasion! There's a shooting gallery here where they let 'em out by the hour.

BOX. 165

How many hours shall we take 'em for?

COX.

Well—we've got to pay in advance.

BOX.

Well, you advance the money and I'll pay.

COX.

No. We'll borrow it from the waiter.

BOX.

Yes, and leave it to be paid by our executors out of the estate. Come.

BOTH.

DUETT.

("*Suoni la tromba.*")

Off to the tented field!
Pistols! revolvers they shall be!
Sooner than ever yield
I'll fight for death or victor*e*e!

BOX (*aside*). 166

Yes! he must be my target.
Must the unhappy Cox.

COX (*aside*).

What will they say at Margate
When I have shot poor
Box.

BOTH.

Ah!

[“Off to the tented,” &c. *They repeat the duett and are about to exit, when they stop at the door and return.*

BOX.

Hem! I say, sir.

COX.

Well, sir?

BOX.

I intend to exterminate you.

COX. 167

I mean to blow you to atoms.

BOX.

But if we *don't* exterminate each other it will be rather awkward.

COX.

Yes. I shouldn't like to be wounded. It hurts.

BOX.

Besides, if we both came off without our noses, or with only two eyes between us, we should neither be able to marry Penelope Anne.

COX.

True. I have it.

BOX.

So have I.

COX.

The Lady shall decide.

BOX. 168

Just exactly what I was going to propose.

[*A female voice heard without, singing a jödel.*

⁂ *This is* Mrs. Frimmely. *She sings a Tyrolienne by Offenbach, and in French. Every one delighted. Being encored, she appears at the door, curtseys, retires and sings again, “without.”*]

COX.

'Tis she! What superb notes!

BOX.

It's a rich voice.

COX.

She's a rich widow.

BOTH.

She comes.

[Penelope Anne *appears* C. *in ultra Parisian watering-place toilette. They bring her down between them, each taking a hand.*

BOTH. 169

Penelope Anne!

[*Both kneel* R. *and* L.C.

PENELOPE ANNE.

PENELOPE.

Mr. James Cox. Ah! (*starts*).

BOX.

You've frightened her. You're so ugly.

PENELOPE.

Mr. John Box. Oh! (*faints, and falls into a chair placed* C.)

COX.

You've killed her. You Gorilla.

BOX.

Gorilla—(*they are about to fight, when she screams again*). What shall we do?

COX (*excitedly*).

Cold key—Senna—no, I mean Salts.

BOX (*more excitedly*). 170

Pooh! Cold water . . . . with something in it.

COX.

Where's the sulphur water—throw it—

PENELOPE (*shrieking*).

Ah! (*rising*). How dare you! (*calls*). Husband!

BOX.

She said Husband. Dearest—

[PENELOPE *slaps his face.*

COX.

She means *me*. I knew it. Angel—

[PENELOPE *repeats the slap on* HIS *face.*

BOX.

You *did* say “Husband?” Surely you can't be blind to the fascination of Don Boxos de Regalias Salamanca—

COX.

When you said “Husband” you must have been dreaming of Count Cornelius Cox, Landgrave.

PENELOPE. 171

Gentlemen. Mr. Cox . . . Mr. Box—if the truth must be told—

BOX.

It will be painful for Cox—but tell it, brave woman, tell it.

COX.

It will be harrowing for Box—but out with it, courageous Penelope, out with it.

PENELOPE.

Well—when—I said—“Husband”—I meant . . .

COX.

Me—

PENELOPE.

No—

BOX.

Ha! ha! hooray! Me—

PENELOPE.

No . . . .

BOTH.

Then whom *did* you mean?

PENELOPE. 172

When I said “Husband” I meant—

MAJOR BOUNCER*, suddenly entering.*

BOUNCER.

Me. (*Sings in military style*) “Rataplan! Rataplan!”

(*Immense applause.* “Why *that's* Captain Byrton,” *exclaims the elderly lady, who, up to that moment, has been under the impression that he was playing the waiter*.)

MAJOR-GEN. BOUNCER.

BOTH.

Him! You! Bouncer!

BOUNCER.

Major Bouncer, of the Banbury Light Horse, at your service. We were married this morning.

COX. 173

Stop! Virtuous but misguided Penelope. Bouncer is married already!

ALL.

Ah!

COX.

Behold! and tremble! Read it, Box (*giving newspaper*).

BOX (*reads*).

At the hotel So-and-so—um—Major and Mrs. Bouncer.

[PENELOPE *and* BOUNCER *laugh.*

COX.

They laugh! Horrible depravity.

BOUNCER.

Nonsense! Mrs. Bouncer mentioned there—

BOX.

Is not the Mrs. Bouncer we see here.

BOUNCER.

True. The Mrs. Bouncer *here* is Mrs. Penelope Bouncer, *My* Mrs. Bouncer; but the Mrs. Bouncer there is your old landlady, your Mrs. Bouncer, *now*, the Dowager Lady Bouncer. 174

BOX AND COX.

Good gracious!

BOX.

Has she any money?

COX.

Is she well off?

BOUNCER.

No. I support her entirely.

BOX.

Oh! Then bless you, Bouncer. Persevere. Go on supporting her.

COX.

I congratulate you, Bouncer. You may keep your Dowager to yourself.

PENELOPE.

And if you like to join us at the wedding-breakfast—

BOUNCER. 175

We shall be delighted—

PENELOPE.

Now, as always—

BOUNCER.

To see—

PENELOPE.

Two old friends.

BOUNCER.

Come, join hands. I'm an old soldier.

BOX.

You are.

BOUNCER.

I've stolen a march upon you.

COX.

You have.

BOUNCER.

But forgive and forget.

BOX. 176

I'll forget you with pleasure, but forgive—oh! Penelope Anne!

COX.

Well, I'll forgive you; but don't do it again.

BOUNCER.

I promise.

PENELOPE.

So do I.

BOX.

Do you? Then there's my hand, and when I've got my Castle in Spain you shall come and stop with me. (*Aside*) I'll have old Bouncer up before the Inquisition.

COX.

And when I've got my Palazzo di Coxo at Venice, you shall always find a knife and fork at your service. (*Aside*) I'll take him out for a walk by a canal and upset him.

[*Enter* WAITER *with tray, which he puts down. Everything is placed ready for déjeûner à la fourchette.*

WAITER. 177

Das Frühstuck ist fertische.

(*Applause.*)

ALL.

Eh?

WAITER.

Break-a-fast.

[*They sit.*

BOX.

Permit me—

COX.

And me—

BOX.

To propose—

COX.

The health—

BOTH.

Of the Happy Pair. Major and Mrs. Bouncer. Hip! hip! hip! Hurrah!

BOX (*singing*). 178

It's a way we have in the army.

[*They all join in chorus.*

SOLOS AND CHORUS.

("*Ha, ha!*" "*Les Dames de la Halle.*")

BOX.

I drink the health of Madame Bouncer,
And of the Major Bouncer, too!

SOPRANO ET TENOR.

Too too too too too too too!

BASSI.

Too too too too too too too!

COX.

Of his foes he is a trouncer,
Equal to any Horse Guard Blue.

ALL.

Blue, &c. (*as before*).

BOX.

All our jealousy we smother
From this happy bridal day.

COX.

We'll embrace him like a brother

BOX.

And a sister—if I may!

PENELOPE ANNE.

Ah!

BOX AND COX (*together*).

Viva, Viva Rataplan!
Oh! Rataplan Penelope Anne,
Oh! Rataplan Penelope-ĕlŏpĕ
Anne, Anne, Anne!

CHORUS (*including the* WAITER*, all at table standing up, glasses in hand convivially*).

Viva, viva Rataplan!
Oh! Rataplan Penelope Anne!
Oh! Rataplan Penelope-ĕlŏpĕ
Anne, Anne, Anne!

Tableau.—BOUNCER *on chair, with dish-cover and carving-knife.* WAITER *at side, waving napkin.* PENELOPE *between* COX *and* BOX *in centre.*

Curtain descends.

"AUTHOR! AUTHOR!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE, CONVERSATION COMMENCES.

" OUR wife played charmingly, Mr. Frimmely."

Mr. Frimmely smiles, and tries to look as if the merit of her acting was due entirely to his instruction.

Madame Regniati. I don't suppose you chose her dress for her.

Mr. Orby Frimmely (*still as if he* HAD *done so, but allowed her the credit of it*). No, no; Mrs. Frimmely has a great taste for theatricals.

Miss Adelaide Cherton (*to Miss Medford*). Oh, I am sure we ought to be so much obliged to you for playing.

Miss Ada. Oh, it was so good. I really wonder how you could manage to accompany them as you did.

Miss Medford (*quite unaffectedly*). I am so glad I was able to do it, as I've only been accustomed to play to my brother's singing, that is when he doesn't do it himself. 182

The Signor (*delighted*). Oh, my Jo! I 'ave not laugh so much for a long time.

Milburd (*who has put on evening dress and joined us, is evidently immensely pleased*). No! (*Diffidently.*) It seemed to go very well.

Mrs. Frampton (*a middle-aged lady, coming up to him*). I really *must* congratulate you, Mr. Milburd. I'm a great play-goer, and I haven't seen anything at any one of the London theatres equal to it. You really ought to produce it in Town.

Milburd (*foreseeing an extinguisher over Shakespeare*). Do you think it good enough?

Mrs. Frampton. Good enough!—why—I was only saying to my daughter—(Julia—Mr. Milburd (*introduction*))—wasn't I, Julia?

Julia (*rather stupidly, but still exhibiting caution*). What, mamma?

Mrs. Frampton. Why about Mr. Milburd's capital little farce.

Julia (*easily taking up her cue*). Oh, yes! (*ecstatically.*) I was *so* delighted—and where *did* you get that wonderful dress? 183

Milburd (*carelessly*). Oh, I got it at the costumier's. I had it for another part some time ago.

Jovial Stout Gentleman (*refreshing himself, and seeing Captain Byrton*). Hallo! Old Bouncer. By Jove! Capital, sir! Capital!

Byrton (*much pleased*). Did you know me when I came on?

Jovial Stout Person. Know you? Ha! ha! (*Skilfully evading the question, and pretending to quote.*) "Rataplan, Ratalan!"—eh? Ha! ha!

[*They drink.*

Mrs. Orby Frimmely appears, gentlemen and ladies crowd about her.

"Oh, charming! Such an admirable costume. You really must let me have a sketch of it."

Mr. Muntson (*an Elderly Beau, with a literary-club reputation*). My dear Mrs. Frimmely, I've been saying to your husband, that the stage has positively suffered a loss in your not being . . . as they say . . . on the boards.

Mrs. Orby Frimmely (*thinks that* his *opinion, at all events, is worth having, and says*) I'm so glad you liked it.

Mr. Muntson (*sees that he has created a most favourable impression and continues*). It was delightful. All the vivacity of the French stage—of course you know the French stage well?—(*Mrs. Frimmely nods. She has seen Schneider in "La Grande Duchesse," and takes in a French illustrated paper*)—You have—you know the expression—*vous avez du chic*. (*Mrs.* 184

Frimmely makes a little curtsey. Elderly Mr. Muntson thinks that Mr. Frimmely is quite out of the race now that he has stept in. He goes on.) We have no actresses now—and if you went on to the stage it would simply be a triumph.

Mrs. Frimmely (*gradually becoming convinced as to what* her *vocation in life certainly ought to be*). But this little part I played to-night . . . it is nothing . . . You can't judge from that.

Muntson. I can, perfectly. I have seen—let me see—I recollect Mrs. Humby and . . .

[*Here he begins to be tedious. Mrs. Frimmely wants to talk about herself, not about other people. She welcomes Boodels.*

Boodels. We have to thank you—most sincerely—for the great treat you've given us.

Mr. Muntson. I've just been saying that it reminded me—

[*Begins an anecdote.*

Medford (*in a corner with Myself; he gives me his private opinion*). The piece would never have gone down without the music. 185

Myself (*rather pooh-poohing it all*). No . . . of course not.

Having neither acted nor appeared in any way, except as representative host to do the honours, which, I find, did themselves easily, I am a little bitter. Nobody knew exactly who I was, nor seemed to take any interest in me at all, except old Mrs. Frampton, who thought I was a waiter, and asked me to order her carriage punctually.

Medford. Milburd is *so* obstinate. You know at first he wouldn't introduce those tunes.

Myself. (*Who want to go and talk to Ada Cherton.*) Wouldn't he?

Medford. No. (*With the air of a genuine critic.*) Milburd couldn't touch Cox. Not his line at all. Between ourselves, Chilvern was best as the Waiter.

Myself (*decidedly*). Oh, a long way. (*This is because he was an unimportant character comparatively. With very little to do, that little he did as if it wasn't in a play at all, but merely a bit of fun with the audience.*)

Cazell (*who is enthusiastic about theatricals after his performance of Don Boxos,—comes up to Medford*). I say! I tell you what we ought to do. We ought to get up a good big piece for all of us. (*He sees himself in some particular character.*) 186

Medford. Yes (*reflectively*), we might easily do—let me see—there's the *Game of Speculation*.

Myself. Ah, yes! I remember. Charles Mathews played in it (*I add as a hit at Medford*) admirably; and (*to crush him with a final blow*) inimitably!

Medford (*tolerantly*). Yes . . . Charley (*he never met this excellent comedian, of course; but this is Medford all over*) has got some good "business" in the piece . . . but (*diffidently*) I think I make some points which would rather astonish him. For instance, when, &c. &c.

[*Here Medford begins telling us how he is far in advance of every professional actor. Luckily the Signor comes up, and changes the conversation. After a few minutes, Medford shows the Signor his conjuring-trick of the shilling in the glass.*

The Signor (*entering the drawing-room*). O! my Jo! (*Everyone turns expecting to hear some startling intelligence. Quite unaware of the excitement he has caused, the Signor continues in his usual high key—appealing to everyone.*) O! have you seen de leet-tel shillings, and (*smiling all over his face*) ze glass; eet ees so clev-ver (*without a pause*), I nev-ver 187

see so clev-ver ting-in my-life!

Madame (*severely*). What *are* you talking about, Mr. Regniati?

The Signor. O, my dear, eet ess Mees-ter-Med-for; he ees so clev-ver! he put ze shillings in ze glass, an' zen he go avays.

Milburd. Do it, Medford.

Medford (*his chance at last—modestly*). Oh, it's nothing. I dare say most of you have seen it. I'll do it, with pleasure. Will anybody lend me a shilling?

The Signor (*delighted, exclaiming to everyone*). O, eet ees so clev-ver! Dat leet-tel Medfor', he ees so clev-ver!

(*Dat leet-tel Med-for' is half a head, at least, taller than the Signor.*)

Medford (*refusing a coin from Boodels*). No. I must ask the ladies. Will any lady here, lend me a shilling?

Enter our Butler.

Our Butler. Sir Thomas Bobyns's carriage.

Lady Bobyns (*to Boodels. She ought to address* me*, as president, but she doesn't*). We really must be going; we've got ten miles to drive, you know; enjoyed themselves *so* much, &c., &c. 188

LADY BOBYNS.

General disturbance in consequence of Lady Bobyns being an uncommonly fine woman, and not to be moved without a considerable amount of rustle.

The party now leaving, consists of Sir Thomas Bobyns, Lady Bobyns, and Miss Bobyns. Milburd and Cazell are most assiduous in their attentions to Miss Bobyns, in order that she may be '*quite warm*' before she starts. 189

MISS BOBYNS.

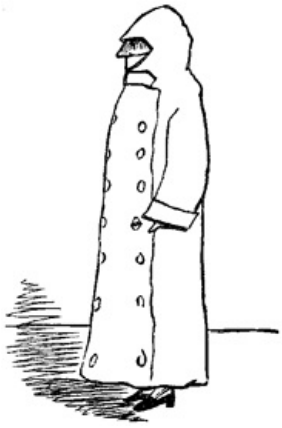
There is also a considerable amount of delay, in the hall, consequent upon the ceremony of packing up Sir Thomas for his long journey—a melancholy phrase—and Lady Bobyns' great fear lest her husband should take cold.

Sir Thomas looks something between the diver at the Polytechnic in his armour, an Esquimaux, an old Watchman, and a monk.

Here is the result.

They have gone. But other carriages are waiting at the door, and there is a general move. As the last person departs, we see Medford standing at a table in the drawing-room, with a tumbler and a shilling. 190

MEDFORD'S SONG AND SENTIMENT.



SIR THOMAS.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHILVERN'S BALLAD—THE MORAL.

CHILVERN has got a Ballad which Medford sets to music. It is illustrated by tableaux vivants, performed by Miss Adelaide Cherton, Cazell, and Milburd.

CORPORAL TIM AND FAIR MOLLY.

“Farewell,” cries Corporal Tim.
“Farewell,” said Molly, to him;
“You're going,” says she,
“I'm going,” says he,
“To fight in Tartary Crim.”
(*Sadly.*) “To fight in Tartary Crim!”

“I see,” sobs Corporal Tim,
“You're eyes with weeping are dim.”
“No, no,” says she,
“Don't stop for me,
But go to Tartary Crim.”
(*More sadly.*) “Oh! go to Tartary Crim!”

“One word,” says Corporal Tim;
“I have a young friend called Jim,
He'll act to you,
Like a brother would do,
While I'm in Tartary Crim.”
(*Most sadly.*) “While you're in Tartary Crim.”

“The ship is off!” cried Tim.

He raised his hat by the brim;
He waved it about,
While she sobbed out,
"He's off to Tartary Crim."
(*Frantically.*) "He's off to Tartary Crim."

Now this young man called Jim,
Was strong and not too slim;
He was a tar,
On a man-of-war,
Arrived from Tartary Crim.
(*Cheerfully.*) Arrived from Tartary Crim.

Now this young man called Jim,
He took a holiday whim;

Says he, to Molly,
"Oh, let's be jolly,
While *he's* in Tartary Crim."
(*Jovially.*) "While he's in Tartary Crim."

One day, said Jovial Jim,
"I've got some news of Tim;
His ship, three-decked,
Was smashed and wrecked,
On leaving Tartary Crim."
(*Dubiously.*) "On leaving Tartary Crim."

"He's drowned! poor Corporal
Tim!"
Then Molly sang a hymn.
"Now, Jim," says she,
"You'll marry me,
And bother Tartary Crim."
(*Decidedly.*) "And bother Tartary Crim."

One night at home with Jim,
Appeared a figure grim.
Cries she, "'Tis T——!"

"It is," says he;
"I've come from Tartary Crim."
(*Spectrally.*) "I've come from Tartary Crim."

"You didn't think," says Tim,
"That corporals could swim
But ghosts know how
To swim—I'm now—
(*Spectrally.*) My ghost!—from Tartary Crim."

And then they saw that Tim
Had fins on every limb;
His feet went squish—
Cries Jim, "I wish
I was in Tartary Crim."
(*Excitedly.*) "Away to Tartary Crim!"

He took a jump, did Jim,
Right on to a vessel's rim;
She made a tack,
And he never came back,
To her or Tartary Crim.
(*With certainty.*) To her or Tartary Crim.

The ghost of Corporal Tim
Took Molly away with him,
And plunged in the sea,
And there they be,
Two ghosts in Tartary Crim.

MORAL (*sung by the ghost of* MOLLY).

"Oh, when you hear that Tim
Is drowned, don't marry Jim,
Or else, like me,
You'll have to be
A ghost in Tartary Crim."

CHAPTER XXV.

IN AND OUT.—BEFORE THE FIRE.—MEDITATIONS.—SURPRISES.—HAPPY THOUGHTS.—AWAKENINGS.—SLUMBERS.—BELL-PULLS.—BOOTS.—VALET. DIFFICULTIES.—MRS. REGNIATI.—WHAT'S ON THE TAPIS?—MATCH-MAKING.—CUPID.

CAPTAIN BYRTON is out hunting. The Signor and Milburd are out shooting. Mrs. Frimmely is out walking with Medford and Cazell. Miss Adelaide Cherton and her sister are in the garden with Chilvern and Boodels. Miss Medford is trying some new music. Madame is seated by the drawing-room fire, engaged upon some mysterious wool-work, which may eventuate in a cigar-case, slippers, a banner fire-screen, or a pair of fancy-pattern'd braces for the Signor. Jenkyns Soames is supposed to be in his room writing something on “Numbers,” but whether in refutation of Dr. Colenso's later Pentateuchical views, or in support of his earlier Arithmetical treatises, nobody has inquired, and nobody, particularly, cares. 199

I am engaged very busily in thinking. It occurs to me that I will join Miss Medford in the morning-room. There are some days when one finds it very difficult to immediately follow thoughts with action. On such occasions time doesn't fly, but slides noiselessly down an inclined plane, and one is in a state of perpetual surprise.

Surprise the first.—You wake and are surprised to find it so early.

Happy Thought.—Go to sleep again.

You turn round, snuggle down, and snooze. A mere snooze until they call you. It being their duty to call you, let 'em do it manfully, and you'll do yours.

Second Surprise.—To awake again. Later than you had expected. Must get up.

Happy Thought.—No use getting up, though, until you've been properly called, and the hot water's there. Besides, you'll be the only one down. Employ the time, until the servant comes, in *thinking*. Think what you'll do to-day. Think what you'll do first. Put things in order in your mind, then when you get up you'll only have to do them one after the other, and there you are—or there you will be. Excellent plan, this. These arrangements being satisfactorily made mentally, you suddenly find yourself very warm, and then very wakeful, so much so that it is a 200

Third Surprise—on looking at your watch again—to find that it's an hour since you last consulted it. Odd. You *must* have been to sleep again. Very odd. And “it's too bad of them;” (of course) they've never called you.

Happy Thought.—Ring the bell for some one to come and call me.

If the bell is by the bed, this is simple. If it isn't, certain arrangements are as necessary as if you were going to make a journey. Inquiries, as it were, concerning the route from the bed to the bell-pull have to be made. This ascertained, and the exact line you have to travel being now clear before you, it is evident that you cannot be so venturesome as to attempt the excursion without your slippers and dressing-gown.

Here commence manœuvres to obtain both articles, while incurring the smallest possible danger of catching the slightest possible cold, or chill.

Then after a series of gymnastic efforts, during which you have nearly begun your day out of bed on your head, you are successful. It is then requisite to pause and take breath. This cessation of energy affords an opportunity for the servant to appear with your hot water, without your inconveniencing yourself any further. 201

However he doesn't come, and so you get out. Here the freshening breeze which blows over the threshold, under the door, and across the carpet, causes you, for one second, to hesitate, and then foreseeing that the longer you stop out, *en deshabille*, the worse it would be, you take precautions for the future, inspired by a

Happy Thought.—“Cover the bed up carefully, so that it will be warm when I come back again.” Aha! Then to the bell-pull.

Fourth Surprise.—Odd. You had never noticed before, that this, which you thought was the bell-rope, is nothing of the sort; being a cord attached to the old-fashioned catch on the door, and originally hung within reach of the bed, which was of course in exactly the opposite position to where it is now. Where *is* the bell? You cannot see the rope anywhere. Bother.

Happy Thought.—To trace the wire running round the room at the top.

You *do* trace it. It goes out at a hole and disappears. Trace it back again. It goes all round, and as there is no sign of a bell-rope, this article must be behind the bed. 202

It is. Struggle with heavy bedstead. Dust. There at last is the bell-rope. You pull it. You pull it again. You hear it ring. This is satisfactory.

Happy Thought.—Get into bed again. Do so. Warm. Arrange mentally for reprimanding the servant severely. Such a waste of time. Here you have been awake since, goodness knows when, and no hot water, no clothes, nothing! And you may add, you put 'em outside the door so carefully last night, *on purpose* that they shouldn't be forgotten.

Knock at door. “Come in.” Door shaken.

Fifth Surprise.—Why doesn't he come in?——Door shaken again. Angrily, “Come in!”

Answer from outside, like the voice in a ventriloquist's entertainment, “I can't come in, sir; the door's locked.”

Yourself (in bed).—“No, it isn't. Push it.”

Answer from without, as before, “No, sir, you've let down the latch. If you pull the string, I can come in.”

Nuisance. Out of bed again. Pull up latch-string. Into bed again. Less warm now.

Yourself (*or myself, severely, from bed*).—“You didn't call me this morning. And where are my things?” 203

Valet.—“They've been standing houtside, sir, this 'our and a 'arf. I knocked twice, sir, but the latch was down, and so I couldn't get in. 'Ot water, sir, 's cold as hice. Better bring you some fresh.”

[*Exit.*

There's still an entr'acte between his bringing the hot water and my getting up.

Happy Thought.—Well, I dare say it's all the better for me that I've overslept myself a little this morning. If Nature sleeps, depend upon it Nature knows what she's about.

* * * * *

This is in fact how it has happened that all the others, except the three mentioned, are out of doors. They've breakfasted hours ago. I haven't.

Madame Regniati puts down her work, looks towards the window, through which we can see the garden-party, and then refers to me inquisitively. Presently she asks mysteriously,

“Do you see anything going on here?”

I can't help returning with, “Here, Madame Regniati! where?” 204

“Oh,” she replies, in her short way, “*you* see it, I know you do. Even Mr. Regniati has noticed it to me. For my part,” she adds, rubbing her nose with the tip of a long knitting-pin, “I think it's a case.”

I begin to understand.

“Miss Adelaide——” I venture.

“Yes. And with whom, eh?” she asks, with her head a little on one side, and her thin lips compressed, as if she had got the information on the tip of her tongue, and was preventing its escape by sheer force.

“Well,” I begin, thinking to myself it's very odd I haven't noticed it, “well, I should say”—really, I shouldn't say anything. 205

Madame nods at me. “Come,” she says; “I know you've got penetration. You're an observer of character. You're a thinker. My nephew has told me you're writing a philosophical work. Now, I want you to lend me your sagacity, and confirm my suspicions.”

Happy Thought.—Look sagacious. Smile in deprecation of too much sagacity. I feel that, being right as far as mentioning Miss Adelaide goes, my next guess will probably be wrong. Risk it.

I say, “Miss Adelaide and Cazell, eh?” (They are walking together.)

Madame shakes her head. I have gone down in her estimation, evidently.

Happy Thought.—To assume my own penetration. Say to Madame, “Ah, well, you'll see”—meaning, you'll find I'm right and you're wrong.

“No, no,” she replies. “Mr. Cazell and Miss Bella, Mr. Chilvern and Miss Adelaide.”

“H'm,” I say, dubiously. Madame Regniati, classical, lover of high art as she is, is, when occasion offers, is simply a match-maker. I believe it's a feminine instinct.

“They've both got money,” she adds. She has summed it all up, and arranged it. 206

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CHAPTER XXVI.

AT DINNER.—WEIGHT.—WATCHING.—JOKES.—PROTEST.—AWKWARD SITUATION.—AN ANNOUNCEMENT.—INQUIRY.—ARRIVAL.—PRACTICAL JOKES.

HIS weighs on my mind. I can't help looking from one to the other—from Chilvern to Miss Adelaide, from Miss Bella to Cazell.

T Milburd is more attentive to the latter than Chilvern, who seems to me to be making up to Miss Medford, if to anyone; while Byrton sits next to Miss Bella at dinner, and monopolizes her entirely. 208

Sly things *are* passing; I notice *that*. As President, I have to sit at the head of the table, and can't join in any of the fun. They have got a joke among them that I can't make out. The joke flies about, like an invisible shuttlecock, between Cazell, Miss Adelaide, Chilvern, Miss Bella, and Byrton.

Jenkyns Soames sits on my right, and *will* talk arithmetic and science to me.

The Medfords and the Frimmelys make another joke-party as it were, and I cannot understand what's going on.

Happy Thought.—Look as if I did. Smile, nod, say “I know.” Milburd asks, almost rudely, “*Do* you? What is it?” As I don't, I merely smile again, and say “Yes” to Jenkyns Soames, who is giving me his reasons for supposing, by calculation, that vegetables have had a pre-adamite existence, and that even a turnip may have a glorious future before it, when man has disappeared from the face of the earth.

[I shall protest against my term of office being protracted beyond the five weeks, after Christmas, that I undertook to stop here. Three have expired. I begin to hate Jenkyns Soames.] 209

A servant brings in a card for Mr. Milburd.

Baron
Booteljak.

“By Jove!” exclaims Milburd, “I *am* so glad. That's capital.”

Everyone puzzled.

The Signor (*after reading the card*).—“O! eet ees a fonny name. I nev-ver 'ear soch an-name-bef-fore. Deeek! eet ees your non-sense.”

Milburd returns. He has shown the new guest to his room. He will join us directly. He explains that sending in his card “Baron Booteljak” is “his fun.” “Such an amusing chap,” says Milburd; “he has cards of all sorts of names, printed to leave on his friends, and puzzle 'em. He tells me that he's brought down a box of practical jokes with him, all labelled, numbered, and ready for use.”

This intelligence is not received with that warmth which Milburd evidently had thought it would have elicited. 210

Further discussion is stopped by the entrance of

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JIMMY LAYDER.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FIFTH WEEK—DIFFICULTIES—HINTS—BOODELS' SECRET—ARRIVAL OF JIMMY LAYDER—A CHANGE—PRACTICAL JOKES—PLAYING THE FOOL—DRESSING UP—MORE JOKES—CHEMICAL LECTURE—EXPERIMENTS—RESULTS—OPEN WINDOWS—COLDS—DEPARTURES—SMALL BY DEGREES—BEAUTIFULLY LESS—THE SHILLING AND THE TUMBLER—BOODELS' LAST—TWO'S COMPANY—CONCLUSION.

OTE. Fifth week of our being here.

Very happy generally, Miss Medford remarkably nice. Misses Adelaide and Bella are always out with Cazell, Milburd and Chilvern. We've given Jenkyns Soames several hints to go. He won't.

If I wasn't President—I should like to—but Byrton's always out with Miss Medford. I wonder that a girl with brains, as she evidently has, can be taken by a fellow, who really seems to think of nothing but riding, driving, and—

"*Her*," says Boodels, to whom I utter secretly my complaint. I admit the truth of this. Boodels informs me that he's going to be married. I congratulate him. When? When his house is done up. Do I know the lady? Yes. Anyone here?—Ah, he won't say, and begs me to consider this communication strictly confidential. 212

Jimmy Layder is becoming a nuisance. He is perpetually practically joking. Once and away it's very good fun—when he performs on somebody else, not me. He comes down-stairs quietly (this is one of his favourite tricks—so stupid, too!) and slaps you on the back suddenly, immediately afterwards begging your pardon, and explaining that he mistook you for somebody else.

Then the second day he was here, he changed all the boots. The third day I could not find a single thing in its place when I went to dress in a hurry. On my complaining to him, he pretends to be the Clown in the Pantomime (whom he emulates in everything—and really, most dangerously, with a genuine hot poker—so childish, and worse), and putting his hand on his heart he declares "on his honour he didn't do it." I know, that, when I turn, he sets them all (Miss Medford, too) laughing by making some grotesque face, and, if I face about suddenly, he is staring at nothing on the ceiling, or pretending to catch a fly. He puts oranges in boots, spoons and corkscrews in people's pockets—generally mine—and has an irritating trick of calling out "Hi!" and beckoning; then, when you come, he asks you what you want? 213

Happy Thought.—To speak to him quietly, alone. He listens. He owns that his exuberance of animal spirits often leads him away. [Happy Thought.—Wish they'd take him away altogether.] He says he thinks it's owing to the bracing air; adding, that I take a joke so well, he is sure I shan't be angry. I tell him that I don't speak *on my own account*, but for the sake of others. He promises he will be quiet and serious.

At night he keeps his word by coming down dressed like the proverbial methodist Mawworm. An enormous white tie, doubled. His hair combed sadly straight. A high black waistcoat, his trousers shortened, white stockings and shoes.

They encourage him by laughing. He addresses everyone as "My Christian Brother," or "Sister," and informs them that the Head of the Establishment has requested him to be serious.

He insists upon a serious evening, and tells us that Mr. Jenkyns Soames has consented to give a Chemical Lecture "with," he adds impressively, "experiments."

It appears that Layder and Milburd have undertaken to assist the Professor. 214

After dinner, Layder announces that he has an entertainment to commence with. He takes me on one side. We go into the library, which he has prepared as a sort of dressing-room.

Happy Thought.—Humour him, and then he'll play practical jokes on somebody else—not me.

He says, “Look here, you and I will dress up, and be the lecturer's servants.” Very harmless and funny, seeing that the dresses (which he has brought with him) are a mantle spangled, two or three pairs of tights and Cavalier boots, and a cocked hat. He says he's got a charade, and Milburd will dress up too, and we'll have it before the Lecture.

He offers to do my face for me; and does it at once with burnt cork, red and white.

Then he goes to dress.

I am alone. It is a good idea enlisting under, as it were, his banner, then he won't annoy *me*. The fire's out here, and changing my dress at this time has made me cold.

Meditations by myself when in a costume something between a naval officer, a Spanish grandee, and Richard the Third.—What *can* be the fun of dressing up? It is so much more comfortable in your own things. And a charade's a bore. At least, it bores the audience, I'm sure. And if there are people acting who say all sorts of nonsense, and do anything, there's no art in it. . . Nine o'clock. I wish he'd brought a longer candle, and would be quicker in dressing. He's gone to his own room, perhaps, to dress, or is arranging the performance. . . . . It's a melancholy thing to be in these clothes. I wonder if they were made for some great actor, or whether they were once the real thing? No, that's impossible. . . . . I wish Miss Medford was going to take a part—perhaps she is. . . . unless that's her touch on the piano. The overture probably. . . . . It's so cold in here, I must walk about. . . . . The candle is burning down. 215

Happy Thought.—Ring and ask for another candle, and for Mr. Layder.

Maid servant enters . . . gives a shriek and a start, and then—poor girl! . . . . faints.

There is no water at hand. . . .

I don't like to touch her.

I've got an idea that people in that state bite, scratch, and kick, if touched.

Happy Thought.—Let ill alone.

I ring violently.

Enter Butler. Fortunately Madame Regniati's maid passes, with salts. The girl recovers consciousness. She revives and says I frightened her. I ask the butler to look for Mr. Layder. 216

Butler thinks they're all in the theatre-room hearing some lecture. 10 o'clock.

I wait a quarter of an hour.

It's too bad. I'll take these stupid things off.

Enter Boodels. “Hallo!” he cries. “What on earth are you got up like this for?”

I say, testily, “I don't know.”

Boodels continues. “Miss Cherton's maid 's been complaining, and says you've been playing tricks on her. Come! *Do* take off those things.”

Do! I don't want pressing. I have been for an hour and a half dressed up here, with my face painted like a Red Indian, and as cold as ice.

Layder enters. “Oh, my dear fellow, a thousand pardons. I quite forgot you were here; and we suddenly—I mean the ladies, suddenly altered the programme and wanted me to sing and do some nonsense, so I could not refuse.”

Happy Thought.—(I'll vote against his invitation being renewed after this week). Say nothing.

I find that Jenkyns Soames, induced to put on a sort of Conjuror's dress, has been waiting to deliver his lecture the same time that I have; he is equally cold, but not cross, as he anticipates being a means of instruction to the party. 217

Milburd and Layder have arranged the Professor's glass bottles, glass jars, retorts, and all the other articles requisite for a Chemical Lecture.

He informs us, that, owing to his friend Mr. Layder's kindness, and to the accident of his having brought with him a few chemicals, he (the Professor) will be enabled to give us an amusing and instructive discourse.

“With experiments,” adds Layder gravely, from his seat.

Happy Thought.—Get as far away from the lecturer as possible. Near the door.

The ladies being nervous, are re-assured by Milburd and Layder, who say (in answer to Madame Regniati,) that, “there is to be no firing,” and further, that “there is no experiment on the table which can *hurt the audience*.” This latter observation is added *sotto voce*, and is evidently not intended for the Professor's ears. 218

Jenkyns Soames commences he says with Hydrogen. (*Hear! hear!* from Milburd and Layder.)

“Hydrogen,” he goes on, “is a most powerful refractor.”

“O my Jo!” exclaims the Signor in the front row, which he evidently thinks is too near. “It vill go off, and 'urt some-bod-dy.”

The Professor informs him, that Hydrogen mixed with Atmospheric air, in the proportion of two to five, will explode; but he does not mean to exhibit this peculiarity of Hydrogen. He shows us how the lime-light is obtained, and requests that the room may be darkened. Milburd and Layder, turn down the gas, and remove the candles.

This is done too suddenly for the Professor, who has some trouble in finding the right materials in the dark.

At last he has them. “I will now,” he says, “show you the lime-light. A light of such steadiness and intensity, that it appears to us quite blinding in its power.”

The immediate result is a fizz, a spark, and then we are in total darkness once more. The Professor tries again, another fizz, no spark. 219

Madame Regniati begs that the lights may be restored, and asks him to try something else.

Apologising for the lime-light (I see Milburd and Layder exchanging winks).

The Professor passes on to Oxygen.

He shows us a jar of Oxygen. Experiments with an incandescent piece of wood. (*Applause.*)

Another with phosphorus, and another with charcoal. (*Great applause, and nothing having happened, we feel ourselves in comparative safety. Madame observes, that she doesn't like anybody playing with fire.*)

His next theme is “Inexplosive Gases.”

Professor.—I will now proceed to mix two colourless bodies which, explosive in themselves, neutralize each other's qualities on combination. You will observe that the same process is used in pouring one gas out of one jar into another, as in pouring water, and it is equally harmless. Here, for instance, is an empty jar, and here is a glass jar full of water. I wish to pour the water from the glass jar into the earthen one. (*Hear, hear!* from Milburd.) I proceed to do so, and can assure you that the experiment with the gases, is not more harmless and simple than this, with the water.

He pours the water out of the glass jar into the earthenware one. In one second follows a series of sharp reports from inside the jar, which seems suddenly to have become filled with highly combustible crackers. The Professor drops the jar as if he had burnt his fingers, and the cracking and popping go on inside. Ladies rise frightened. Layder suddenly addresses them: 220

“There's no sort of danger,” he says; “the jar won't burst. I dropped an explosive pellet into it some time ago, and it hasn't been taken out, that's all. The explosive pellets,” he adds, modestly, “are my own invention, and chemically prepared, only to burn in water.”

The cracking has ceased. Layder goes out, ostensibly to see if he can procure another jar.

In his absence the ladies observe that the ‘cracking thing,’ whatever it was, has left a nasty smell in the room.

The Professor, with a smile, thinks that he can obviate this unpleasantness. He has come across a fluid among the chemicals labelled “*Parfum du Paradis.*” The direction upon it is simply, “*Pour it out into a saucer, and everyone will be delighted at the refreshing and delicious odour which will instantaneously pervade even the largest apartment.*”

The Professor, after uncorking and putting his nose to it, pronounces his opinion that the liquid is inodorous, and must have been kept too long in bottle. 221

“However,” says he, “I will follow the direction.”

Forthwith he pours it out.

The next minute we are all cramming our handkerchiefs to our faces, and making for the door.

“Open the windows!” cries Medford, in a fit of coughing.

“O my”—cough—“Jo!” exclaims the Signor. “I shall be,”—cough and sneeze, “so ill,”—cough, “eet ees in my nose.”

As for the Professor, being just over the horrible compound, he has nearly fainted.

* * * * *

The room is cleared.

“BUST UP.” 222

Servants sent to open windows. Sneezing, coughing, and a suffocating, nauseating sensation, experienced

by everyone except Layder, who now enters the drawing-room with a jar.

Happy Thought.—To speak with an air of authority as President, and tell him that it is really too bad of him to carry such a liquid about. He exculpates himself by saying that the Professor didn't know how to use it, and that he oughtn't to have taken the things out of his Practical Joke Box.

"His *what* box?" we ask.

"My practical joke box," he replies, quite calmly. "I've got a box full of practical jokes in chemicals. They're very amusing," he adds, "if used properly."

The horrid smell is gradually spreading itself throughout the lower part of the house. It is stealing into the drawing-room, it is getting into the morning-room, into the hall, into the passages.

"You can't get rid of it," Layder informs us, "for two or three days. But it's first-rate for killing all insects."

There is, we find, only one room in the house which the nuisance has not reached. The smoking-room. Here we all congregate. Everybody glum. Windows all over the place open.

* * * * *

Next morning. 223

Happy Thought.—Layder gone. Early.

He leaves us a note bequeathing us his box of Practical Jokes, and a paper of 'directions for use,' with 'hints for further practical jokes, being jottings for a manual with a practical joke for every day in the year.'

In consequence of the draughts last night, everyone has caught violent colds.

The Chertons won't leave their room. Madame Regniati doesn't come down until dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Frimmely pretend to have received a telegram, and say they must go to-morrow. Miss Medford accompanies them; her brother stays.

The Signor suddenly remembers that he must proceed to his leet-tel shoot-box at Bodge-bee.

Jenkyns Soames writes me a letter from his bedroom, commencing "Sir," and, considering himself insulted, leaves without saying good-bye to anybody.

* * * * *

Committee meeting. Complaints. Examination of accounts. Row in consequence. Amount divided into shares. Chilvern says he's sorry he's left his cheque-book in town.

Happy Thought.—Write it on a piece of paper or telegraph for it.

Chilvern genially says he's going up to town to-morrow, and will get it then. 224
Will I pay for him now?

Cazell says to me, "I tell you what you ought to do as President. You ought to draw one cheque for the whole expenses, and we'll pay you back. That's the most simple way of doing it."

Put to the vote and the plan carried, with a minority of one (myself).

* * * * *

The party gradually broken up. This evening Adelaide Cherton and Madame appear with apologies for leaving us soon after dinner. The smell not nearly evaporated. Byrton and Milburd are gone to join the Signor for some sport. Medford offers to show us his trick with a shilling, and Milburd, being asked to sing, refuses. Boodels (who is melancholy, and in love), asks

Medford to play a tune, but Medford says he'd rather not, because nobody will attend to his trick with a shilling, whereupon Chilvern sits down to what he calls “try something” on the piano. What he *does* try is our temper. Gradually we leave the room and meet to smoke.

* * * * *

Next Morning. Violent cold.

Happy Thought.—Stay in bed.

When I come down-stairs at one o'clock, I notice the desolate appearance of the Hall. Hats, coats, rugs, sticks and whips, all gone. Nothing lying about. Letters on table—“Sorry you are not up—spent a very pleasant time, &c.,” from Madame and the Chertons, with whom have also departed Chilvern and Cazell. 225

The only three in the house are Boodels, Medford, and myself.

I say, genially, “Well, a little quiet will be pleasant.”

Boodels replies, “Yes,” and adds that he's going off this afternoon. I press him to stay. He won't, because, as he tells me privately, that fellow Medford is so confoundedly insulting. They've had a row.

Boodels *will* go. He promises to write to me about his going to be married. At present I'm not to mention it. He takes the butler and cook with him. He says he's very sorry but he'll want them at home now.

The housemaid and charwoman officiate.

No other servants in the house.

Medford and I dine alone.

Somebody's taken the keys away by mistake, and we have to break into the cellar to get out the wine. Very little left.

As host or president, I must stop and attend to Medford who is our guest. 226

After dinner he says, “You heard me talking to Cazell about the shilling and the glass.” I did. I know what's coming, “It's a capital trick,” he goes on; “I'll show it you. Look here.” He shows it me. I am not at all interested. He offers to teach it me. Declined with thanks. He then explains it to me.

Happy Thought.—Having done all this once, he'll never try it again with me.

Getting comfortable in the smoking-room. We commence talking over all our friends. The difficulty appears to consist in finding any good qualities in them. Medford depreciates everybody, specially if they can do anything in music or theatricals. Getting more comfortable and confidential, I tell Medford that Boodels is going to be married, but doesn't want anyone to know it just yet. Medford says, “Pooh! Boodels is an ass.” Subject dropped.

Last Morning.—Charwoman and housemaid hearing that I am going away with Medford, say they can't live alone in this big place. They'd be frightened.

Happy Thought.—Opportunity to get rid of them. Do it. Send for old woman and her husband to keep house while we're all away. Intend to return in the spring, if the others agree, if not we shall sell or let 227

HAPPY THOUGHT.—
RIGHT THROUGH
THE BOOK.

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