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# SHOULD THIS MEET THE EYE.

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Catalogues Free on Application.

# SHOULD THIS MEET THE EYE.

An original Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

ALFRED MALTBY,

AUTHOR OF

*Borrowed Plumes; I'm not Meself at all; Sea Gulls; Awkward  
: Very; For Better for Worse; House that Jack Built (version  
of); &c., &c.*

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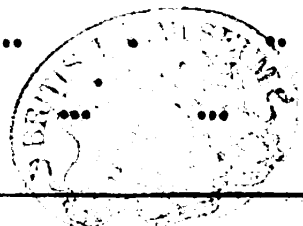
## SHOULD THIS MEET THE EYE.

*First performed at the Theatre Royal, Lyceum, under the management of Mr. H. L. Bateman), on Monday, the 10th of June, 1872.*

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### Characters.

LAMBKIN LOUDER	..	..	W. F. W. IRISH.
LIONEL LONG	...	...	Mr. MARKBY.
SEPTIMUS SKINFLINT	...	...	Mr. COLLETT.
TEDDY	...	...	Mr. L. FREDERICKS.
NABBEM	} (Bailiffs)	...	Mr. HARWOOD.
GRABBEM			Mr. FOTHERINGHAM.
MAUD	...	...	MISS ROSE JAMES.
POLLY	...	...	MISS LA FONTAINE.



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SCENE.—AN INN AT CROYDON.

---

Time—THE PRESENT.

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*Average Time of Performance, 86 minutes.*

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N.B.—The London right of this Piece is vested in H. L. Bateman, Esq. All applications for its performance in the Country must be made to Thomas Mowbray, 35, Keppel Street, Russell Square.

## SHOULD THIS MEET THE EYE.

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SCENE.—*A Coffee Room at the "Chop and Gridiron," near Croydon. Window in flat, L. C., backed by open Landscape; doors R. and L. 2 E.; locks on doors; tables laid for dinner, R. and L. up and down stage; large racing poster on R. flat; keyboard with keys labelled on flat, behind R. table; newspapers on each table; sideboard up against flat R., on which are a number of bottles of sauce of various kinds; over the door R. is a figure 9, over door L. a figure 6.*

*POLLY discovered preparing the tables.*

TEDDY. (*off, L.*) Polly, Polly! Where are you?

*Enter TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

Oh! is it there you are? Hard work's a lazy occupation darlin'.

POLLY. (*over, R.*) Glad you like it, Teddy.

TEDDY. Be aisy. I was spakin' in the abstract.

POLLY. What's that, Teddy?

TEDDY. It's the loop-line of conversation on which all the accidents occur; and it's the longest way round to do the shortest distance. Look at that bill! (*pointing to poster*) What's one cratur's pleasure is another's pain.

POLLY. It's the races you mean, Teddy. I call it cruel, and nothing else.

TEDDY. Get away wid ye; what are ye talkin' about? Sure the bastes enjoy it. And isn't it beautiful to see their delicate legs runnin' away wid their illigant bodies, and the boys on their backs workin' away to keep 'em in the same mind.

POLLY. Yes; and isn't it nice afterwards to see their delicate silken coats and panting sides wailed with lashes and stained with their own blood?

TEDDY. There ye are, talkin' for all the world like Mister O'Callaghan, the pracher, out of his Sunday dictionary. Talkin' of Sunday, darlin, when are we goin' to church on a week day?

POLLY. What's that to you, sir?

TEDDY. A mere thrifle, unless you go wid some other blaggard than meself!

POLLY. Well, I'm sure!

TEDDY. I wish I wor——

SKIN. (*heard without*, L. 1 E.) Waiter! Waiter!

TEDDY. (C.) Whisht, whisht, Polly; here's ould Skinflint—the ould miser.

POLLY. (R.) I wonder what he wants at this time of the day! He doesn't come here now to smoke his pipe.

TEDDY. (L. C.) No; sure he's taken to getting drunk at home; it's much more respectable, and not so dear. Whisht! (*goes C.*)

*Enter SKINFLINT, L. 1 E.*

TEDDY. Fine mornin' to ye, sir.

SKIN. (*pushing TEDDY out of his way and crossing to R. C.*) Ugh!

TEDDY. (L. C.) Is it goin' to the races ye are?

SKIN. (R. C.) No, it isn't. Hate races—hate horses—hate people who keep horses—who go to races. Where is your master?

TEDDY. He's gone——

SKIN. Dead?

TEDDY. To the races, sir.

SKIN. Ugh! calls that attending to his business, eh?

POLLY. (*advancing from table, polishing a glass, to R. of SKINFLINT*) Please, sir, he'll be at home about four; he's churchwarden, and has to attend a meeting at five.

SKIN. (*to POLLY sarcastically*) He's a nice Christian! (*POLLY goes up to R.—to TEDDY*) Have any strangers arrived yet?

TEDDY. (L.) We had a parcel from New Zealand this morning, and——

SKIN. Tut! tut! I mean from London?

TEDDY. There wor five farmers from Cromehurst; a commercial from Carshalton, and a dozen or two swells.

SKIN. Pooh! pooh! Have you noticed a gentleman wearing plaid trowsers, sporting-coat, and a peculiar hat?

TEDDY. (*puzzled*) There wor a gentleman called here a few days agone, wearing trowsers——

SKIN. (*crossing to L., pushing TEDDY out of his way*) Block-head! (*TEDDY goes up to POLLY, and threatens SKINFLINT—SKINFLINT, aside, L.*) I know the fellow is in the town, and unless I use very violent exertions the girl will certainly elope with him; she's half mad after him. Let me see—(*produces a pocket book, from which he takes a slip of paper and reads*) "Private Information.—Medium height—eccentric—trifle deaf—luggage marked 'L. L.'" (*aloud, as he puts up his book*) Now

look here, you two! (POLLY and TEDDY advance C.) If any one comes here with his luggage marked "L. L," send round to my house, without delay.

TEDDY. I'm sorry to say, it can't be done, sir. (to POLLY) Can it, darlin'? (aloud) Sure, we're over the tops of our boots in work this blessed day. (turns to POLLY—who nods approvingly)

SKIN. (L.) Ugh! The beastly selfishness of the human races—I mean race! Here. (putting his hand in his pocket, and pulling out some coins, and searching amongst them.)

TEDDY. (aside to POLLY) Oh, Tim, what's he doin'?

SKIN. (having found a coin—giving it to TEDDY, R.) There! Perhaps you can find time now?

TEDDY. (smiling, but without looking at the money) Oh, I'll thry, sir. Thank ye, sir; more power to ye, sir.

SKIN. (going L., stops) And, mind—no bribery!

TEDDY. (following him, L.) Is it me, sir! Surely I'm above it entirely.

SKIN. Of course you are! Ugh! Exit SKINFLINT, L. 1 E.

TEDDY. Oh, Polly, darlin', look here. (opens his hand, sees coin, looks dismayed) What is it?

POLLY. (C. R., looking over his shoulder) Why, it's a four-penny bit! Throw it at him. (goes R.)

TEDDY. (goes to L., raises his arm to do so, pauses) Stay! Sure the mane old skunk would pick it up. I'll be after puttin' it along wid the rest to——

POLLY. (R. of R. table) To do what?

TEDDY. (L. of R. table) Buy the ring, honey!

POLLY. Don't talk nonsense, Teddy: get on with your work.

TEDDY. (placing chair at end of table, and sitting on it, facing, R.) May be you'd be after givin' me an invigoratur?

POLLY. Yes; where will you have it?

TEDDY. (wiping his mouth with sleeve of jacket) Well, in the usual place, just under the tip of my nose, darlin'.

POLLY. (R., stoops her head in front of TEDDY, as if to kiss him, but gives him a sounding box on the ear with her right hand) There you are, then.

TEDDY. (starting up) Och, Murther!

Enter LIONEL LONG, L. 1 E., dressed in plaid trousers, walking coat, over which he wears a sporting drab coat, and carrying a portmanteau with "L. L." on it.

LONG. (as he enters, sees the blow) Hallo! hallo, young lady, that was no mean punishment. (places his portmanteau up against the front of table, L., so that the letters on it can be seen)

POLLY. (R.) Well, he deserved it.



LONG. And he got it too.

TEDDY. (*crossing to L., rubbing his cheek*) It's just as well, sir, to know how hard your wife can hit, and a mighty pleasant hand it is any way. *Exit TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

LONG. (*going to chair R., left out by TEDDY, and sitting*) Very full, eh?

POLLY. (R.) Me, sir?

LONG. No, the place—lots of people for the races—eh?

POLLY. (R.) We've plenty of room, sir.

LONG. (*taking up the paper*) Ah! races are not what they were; too much a matter of business now. Can I have a bed room?

POLLY. Certainly, sir. (*goes up R. to key rack, takes a key from it, passes behind table down to L. of LONG*) Number nine, sir. (*gives him key*) Shall I take your portmanteau in?

LONG. If you please. (*POLLY takes portmanteau and drags it across in front towards door, R.*) By the way, how far is it to the "Floating Camel?"

POLLY. (*now at door, R.*) About five minutes' walk, sir, straight up the High Street.

*Exit into door, R., with the portmanteau.*

LONG. Thank you. (*reads the paper*)

*Re-enter POLLY from door, R., she looks at LONG significantly as she crosses to L.*

POLLY. (*aside, L.*) "L. L." This is the very man old Skinflint wants. I'll run and tell Teddy directly. *Exit, L. 1 E.*

LONG. (*reading from paper*) "If this should meet the eye of L. L.—C. and G., Croydon, at eleven thirty-five. Let nothing prevent you." This column in the "Times" is splendid; but the unfortunate part of it is, everyone sees it as well as the person for whom it is exclusively intended. (*thoughtfully*) Dearest Maud! I scarcely think I am behaving well to her. Heigho! If I were only out of debt—I'm a large debtist. In something less than two years a capital estate will fall into my hands. In the meantime I am pressed for money. Kind and considerate Jews offer to oblige me at sixty-four per cent. I state the case to my *fiancée*, she says, "Take me, and with me my fortune." I say, "Noble, generous girl!" Her guardian says, "Don't you come inside my doors again!" I say, "No; but she will come outside." Guardian swears vengeance, I swear fidelity, she swears devotion, and mysteriously whispers, "Keep your eye on the second column of the 'Times.'" I have kept my eye on the second column of the "Times"—in fact I have kept both eyes on the second column of the "Times." The announcement of her readiness appears.



I am here! (*jumps up*) What's the time? Ten forty-five! Good.

*Enter POLLY, L. 1 E.*

Come here, young lady. Any one been enquiring for me, eh? (*meeting her, L. C.*)

POLLY. (*L., aside*) What shall I say? He seems such a nice gentleman!

LONG. I see they have. Could you tell a fib?

POLLY. (*indignantly*) Certainly not, sir.

LONG. (*placing half-a-crown in her right hand, quietly*) Quite sure you couldn't!

POLLY. (*putting the coin in her left hand, and holding her right hand open for more*) Well—a little one.

LONG. (*giving another half-a-crown*) Let me have the next size larger. Now, if any person comes here enquiring for anyone of my description, say—

POLLY. (*eagerly, jingling money*) I haven't seen any one like you!

LONG. Eh? Thanks, that'll be large enough! Except—mind this—except it's a young lady, and then send her up to the "Floating Camel." You will be here all day, I suppose?

POLLY. (*pointedly*) Me and—Teddy, sir.

LONG. Very well! I'll tip Teddy when I return.

POLLY. (*L.*) Five shillings! He shall have a good fib for his money, and, if needs be, I'll back it up by a little one in.

LONG. And now to change my dress; if I go to be married in these things, the parson will think I have mistaken the church for the race course. *Exit LONG, door R.*

LOUDER. (*off, L.*) Look here, you Irish potato, if you are not very careful with that bag—

*Enter TEDDY, L. 1 E. backwards, swinging a small leather bag in his hand with "L. L." on it, and followed by LAMBKIN*

LOUDER, *in large check trousers, showy vest, velvet jacket, and felt hat; and a small stick in his hand.*

I'll have you up for wilful destruction of property. (*TEDDY going backwards, knocks the bag against the table, L.*) Can't you see where you're driving to? Mind that table. (*TEDDY drops the bag*) Now then, what are you shying it down like a sack of Wallsend for? Look here—if you've broken that bottle of hair oil, I'll have you up for incendiarism, if it costs me one and sixpence a day in prosecution.

TEDDY. I ax pardon, sir—the bag's a beautiful bag, sir! It's a nice mornin', sir!

LOUDER. Eh? What's that you say?

TEDDY. It's a nice mornin', sir.

LOUDER. Oh! You call this a nice morning, do you?

TEDDY. Sure it's a healthy one, any way?

LOUDER. Is it? Now, do you call yourself a healthy specimen? As far as I can make out at present, you are a lively bilious lot down here. I said to the man with the omnibus, says I, "Put me down in the middle of the High Street," and sure he did, literally, by landing me in the middle of the street on my back.

TEDDY. (*laughs*) Mighty careless of him, sir.

LOUDER. Oh, you call that careless, do you? I call it next door to wilful murder, and if I could have got on my legs quick enough, I should have had him up for wilful murder, too.

TEDDY. Want a room, sir?

LOUDER. That's my business. Now, just you give me two minutes of your undivided Irish attention. I've come down here on very important business, and if you want me to stop here, and to see the colour of my money, don't let me hear the sound of your tongue. I never talk myself, and I hate to hear other people.

TEDDY. Sure, I'll never spake a word, sir!

LOUDER. And don't answer me; do you understand me?

TEDDY. I do that, sir.

LOUDER. You call that understanding me, do you? Now then, what room can I have?

TEDDY. Oh, the best in the house! (*goes to rack, takes down key, and gives it to LOUDER, then makes a rush at the bag*)

LOUDER. (C.) Will you leave that bag alone! You've broken that bottle of oil, I'm convinced; I can smell it. I shall have to dip my head in the bag to oil it. Now, look here, mind I have a steak and onions ready in about ten minutes from this time.

TEDDY. (*going*) Oh, I'll see to that, sir.

LOUDER. Hi, hi, hi!

TEDDY. (*returns*) Did ye call, sir?

LOUDER. If any one calls to enquire for "L. L.," I'm here! Especially if it happens to be a lady, and then—hem! I'm very much here.

TEDDY. That will I, sir. (*aside, L.*) "L. L." This, sure, is the very blaggard that's wanted. I'll fetch ould Skinflint.

LOUDER. Now then, are you going?

TEDDY. That I am, sir.

*Exit, L. 1 E.*

LOUDER. (C.) It isn't very often I leave the Goswell Road, but when I do leave the Goswell Road I generally contrive to let people know it. I've spent the best portion of my life in the Goswell Road, amongst candles, soap and starch, and never had such a thing occur to me before. Just as I was

taking in the oil for the night, old Brisket the butcher, runs across, and says he, "Lambkin, my loved one, your fortune's made." "Brisket, my bloated," answered I, "don't be a hass!" "Well, chuck your heye over that," says he, giving me the "Times," and there sure enough was the follering—"If this should meet the eye of L. L.—C. and G., Croydon, eleven thirty-five. Let nothing prevent you.—M." Now, it's a marvellous thing, but the very last time Brisket and I went to the Grecian The-ayter, I met a young and lovely female, who told me she lived at Croydon, her name was Maud, and that she had something in her own right—in fact, as far as I could make out generally, she had several somethings in her own right. Seeing it was the races, said I. "Lambkin, my youth, take a gentle trot down, and combine business with pleasure," so here I am. And now, what's the time? Ten fifty-five. But that blessed C. and G. puzzled me awful; it was a long time before I could make out what it meant, till the man with the bus said it must be the Chop and Gridiron Hotel, Croydon. I think I'll just put some of that oil on—I opened a fresh barrel on purpose—and titivate myself up a bit, for I flatter myself, that when that oil is properly distributed over these flowing locks, there's nothing in the female line can stand unmoved before me. Let me see, (*looks at key*) what's the number—number nine. Now, I hate nines, nines is always unlucky—I like sevens and threes.

*Goes over to and enters door, R., after a short pause a row heard within.*

LONG. (*within, R.*) What do you want in my room? Get out! how dare you?

LOUDER. (*appearing at door, R.*) Pooh! pooh! sir, you've got my room!

(LOUDER and LONG, now appear in altercation at threshold of door, R., with their keys in their hands)

LONG. There's my number. (*shows label of key*)

LOUDER. And there's mine. (*shows his number upside down—they both make an attempt to enter door, but stick on the threshold*)

LONG. (*after a struggle, pushing LOUDER from door*) I call this most ungentlemanly behaviour.

LOUDER. (C.) P'raps you'd be kind enough to give up my room, sir?

LONG. Certainly not, sir.

LOUDER. Very well, then. } (*together*)

LONG. Very well, then.

(*they rush to door, R., and stick as before—they struggle to C. and LONG throws LOUDER off, L.*)

LOUDER. (C.) Will you permit me to look at your number?

LONG. (R. C.) Possibly you'll allow me to look at yours?

LOUDER. Give me yours first.

LONG. You hand me over yours.

LOUDER. Suppose we hand them over at the same time.

LONG. Agreed!

*(they each hold out their keys suspiciously towards each other, and grab at them, drawing the keys back again—this ad lib.—at last they seize the keys and exchange)*

LONG. Here, let me see them both together.

LOUDER. Let's change back first. *(repeat business of exchanging keys)*

LONG. Now, sir. *(showing his label)* Number nine!

LOUDER. There, sir. *(exhibiting his upside down)* Number nine!

LONG. Why, hang it, you've got yours upside down!

LOUDER. *(reversing his label)* Eh? Why, I declare, so I have! Then here goes for my own room! I prefer my room to your company. *Exit, door L.*

LONG. Well, that's a nice gentlemanly fellow! *(goes R., pulls bell rope—bell rings)* Gets number six, turns it upside down, and makes nine of it!

*Enter POLLY, L. 1 E.*

Oh, no one called yet, I suppose?

POLLY. No one, sir.

LONG. *(who has divested himself of his overcoat when in his room)* Very good! Now I'm going up to the "Floating Camel," and shall return in a few minutes. Have a quiet steak ready for me at eleven fifteen. Do you hear?

POLLY. Very well, sir.

LONG. *(aside)* And now to arrange everything for the elopement. *Exit, R. 1 E.*

POLLY. *(going over, R.)* He's a gentleman, every inch of him! I'll just go and straighten his room up a bit. *Exit, door, C.*

LOUDER *pops his head from the door of his room, L., without his coat, and a towel round his neck, &c., as though dressing.*

LOUDER. *(looking round for the bell)* Now where is that bell? I'm blessed if they haven't been and gone and put it on the other side! When that bell was put up, the man evidently had his eye on me! *(getting gradually to C.)* I hope "M." won't come up and see me like this, or she'll take me for a roasted chesnut swaddled up in napkins! *(going R.—stops)* They're burning my steak! I can smell it! I hate a steak that's burnt up to cinders, and tastes like a scorched top boot. *(goes over to R., and hastily pulls the bell rope—bell rings)* I hope the chambermaid won't come up and see—I'm blest if she isn't! *(runs up behind table, R., and hides)*



*Enter TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

TEDDY. Did you ring, sir? (*looking round*) Why, where the devil is he! Oh, in his room, of course. (*goes to door, L., and peeps in*) Are you out, sir?

LOUDER. (*starts up, and knocks on table with his hair brush*) Hi! Come out! I know your little game.

TEDDY. Oh, sir! Sure there's a beautiful angel in a pink bonnet floatin' up the stairs.

LOUDER. (*coming forward, C.*) I'll bet a sov' its "M.," and I haven't used a drop of that oil yet.

TEDDY. Sir, you wouldn't see her that way?

LOUDER. It doesn't matter how I see *her*, it's how she sees *me*.

TEDDY. All right, sir. (*going, L.*)

LOUDER. Here, where are you going?

TEDDY. Sure, I'm going to show the dark-eyed darlin' in here, sir. (*going*)

LOUDER. (*crossing to L.*) Stay! just wait till I have disguised myself in a little of this oil.

TEDDY. All right, sir. (*going*)

LOUDER. I say, Irishman, you just tell that cook if she burns that steak I'll stop it out of her character.

TEDDY. Character! Sure you'd get more out of her wages.

LOUDER. I get more out of you than I bargained for—get out—oh! just you show "M." into the smoke room, and ask her to have a pipe while I do the ile trick will you.

TEDDY. Sure you wouldn't ax a lady into a smoke room?

LOUDER. Why not, I've been in a smoke room lots o' times.

TEDDY. (*looking off*) Oh! she's coming up, sir.

*Exit LOUDER, quickly, door, L.*

This way, madam—this way.

*Enter MAUD, L. 1 E.*

MAUD. Have you any one here with luggage marked "L. L.?"

TEDDY. (*C.*) Sure, miss, he's in his room, number six, this blessed minute.

MAUD. Will you say "M" is here.

TEDDY. What's the name, m'm?

MAUD. "M."

TEDDY. Hem! right you are. (*goes to door, L., MAUD crosses to R., takes out a letter and reads*) Sir!

LOUDER. (*within, L.*) Hallo!

TEDDY. Here's Hem.

LOUDER. Oh! I say, Paddy, I've got a what-you-may-call-it off my thingamy, just ask "M" if she carries a needle, will you.

TEDDY. Oh! is it a needle you want? All right! I'll see to that myself for ye. (*going L.—stops*) Hem! (*MAUD starts and turns towards him—winking*) He'll be wid you in a minute, mum. *Exit TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

MAUD. It is very evident that I am totally unfit for excitement of any sort. Never mind, to-day over, poor Lionel will be at rest; besides, a woman about to marry ought to make any sacrifice in her power; it's very certain she won't after. (*goes up and sits on chair in front of table, R., her back towards L., reading her letter*)

*Enter LOUDER, door L.—his coat on.*

LOUDER. (*aside*) There she is! But she doesn't look like the girl I met at the Grecian The-ayter. The girl I met at the Grecian The-ayter had a golden chignon, this one has a black one. Never mind, perhaps she's changed her colour, girls do that sort of thing sometimes. (*puts himself in attitude*) Hem! (*pause*) Hem! (*pause—striking table loudly with his stick*) Ahem!

MAUD. (*starting up—sees LOUDER—alarmed*) Ha! a trap!

LOUDER. (*standing in attitude*) Well, she is a spicy-looking girl! (*in an affected drawl*) You knew I should come!

MAUD. (R.) You, sir!

LOUDER. Ya-as! Ain't you "M.?"

MAUD. There is some mistake here, I am afraid.

LOUDER. Mistake! Not a bit of it! Do you call me a mistake? (*displaying himself*) There's no mistake about me, I can tell you. Of course! I know all about it—I understand these little things!

MAUD. You know all about it?

LOUDER. Rather! and so do you, you sly one; you are a sly one—you are, and no mistake!

MAUD. (*imploringly*) If you are acting under his instructions, take me to him directly.

LOUDER. Take you to him? Well, that's a good one! Lovely "M.!" Waste not another moment, but fly to him—fly into his arms! (*stands C.—his arms extended in entreaty*) Come on, if you are coming! Hang it all! I can't stand all day, looking like a railway signal in a fog!

MAUD. (R.) But you are not "L. L."

LOUDER. Oh! I'm much obliged to you, "M.," but I've been "L. L.," ever since I cut my second teeth: and a precious job it was I can tell you. My gums swelled up that much. They had to feed me through a speaking trumpet. But I'll fetch you one of my collars to look at. (*going towards door, L.*)

MAUD. (*enraged*) Sir! you're an impostor!

LOUDER. (*stopping*) Oh! come, I like that.

MAUD. "L. L." is my affianced husband.

LOUDER. (*taken aback*) Then what the brimstone is the use of bringing me all the way from the Goswell Road for? But come, you're only having a lark! (*advances, R.*)

MAUD. (*rushing to R., seizes the bell rope with her right hand, and stands in attitude, her left arm extended threateningly*) Not another step, or I ring!

LOUDER. (*looking at her admiringly*) Aint she splendid! just like Mrs. Macbeth, in a pink bonnet, and a Dolly Varden. (*or describe dress worn by MAUD*) Now that's just what I like, it leads a fellow on a—(*rushes at MAUD, who pulls the bell-rope—bell rings*)

MAUD. Hold, sir! (*as she rings*)

LOUDER. (*stopping*) Well, but look here! Dash it all! you've brought me all the way down here—it's cost me one and sevenpence already. Just give us a kiss.

MAUD. (*advances a pace or two to R. C.*) I will prove to you, sir, that I am not to be insulted.

*Enter POLLY, door R., she drops down R. behind MAUD to her side—MAUD goes hastily to POLLY and whispers.*

LOUDER. (*retreats, C., as POLLY enters*) But I don't want to insult you. I want to fondle you, and pet you, and make much of you—I—

MAUD. (*aside to POLLY, R.*) I came here to meet a person who would be known by—

POLLY. (*whispering to her*) "L. L.," Miss?

MAUD. The same.

POLLY. He's not been gone long, Miss. He left word for you to meet him at the "Floating Camel." If you go by that door (*points off, R. 1 E.*) it will take you a pleasant walk through the garden, right up to the back of the Camel, Miss.

MAUD. Thank-you. (*crosses to R., turns and addresses LOUDER, in an angry tone*) If you remain here, sir, another half-hour, you may depend upon being punished as you deserve.

*Exit MAUD indignantly, door, R. 1 E.—as LOUDER crosses to R., POLLY goes L.*

LOUDER. (*following MAUD to the door, R.*) Well, good morning! Of course I shall wait. (*turns towards C.*) She's a nice party for a Caffre's wife. (*seeing POLLY*) I say you—what's-your-name, just tell that Irishman to bring me my steak, will you?

POLLY. (*as she bounces off*) Well, I'm sure!

*Exit POLLY, L. 1 E.*

LOUDER. I must say this isn't a very encouraging beginning (*sits at L. table, facing R.*) However, I'll just put away that

steak where the flies can't get it; and then, if the races aren't over, I'll toddle down to the course.

*Enter TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

TEDDY. Did you want me, sir?

LOUDER. (*starts up to him*) Now then, where's that steak and onions?

TEDDY. Bedad, sir, they're swearin' away at one another on the top of the gridiron, for all the world like two Kilkenny cats.

LOUDER. Then just put a stop to their bad language, and bring them in here. (*goes back to table*)

TEDDY. That will I. (*aside*) And some one else wid 'em.

*Exit TEDDY, L. 1 E., shaking his fist at LOUDER as he goes out.*

LOUDER. I'll just show these people how to put away a steak in the least possible time. (*sharpens knife, &c.*)

*Enter SKINFLINT, L. 1 E., followed by NABBEM and GRABBEM (two bailiffs).*

SKIN. (*aside, up L., rubbing his hands*) Just in time—that's your man. I think he's a little deaf. Let me see—plaid trowsers, luggage marked "L. L."—all right!

LOUDER. (*knocking with knife on the table*) Waiter—waiter!

SKIN. (*aside to BAILIFFS*) Let's all fall on him together. I'll sit on his head while you handcuff him. No! on second thoughts, I'll go outside and hold the door fast until you have secured him. (*crosses in front to L.*) Besides—(*aside*) It's not such hard work, and less dangerous.

LOUDER. (*laughing to himself*) Ha, ha, ha! that girl is about the rummiestys I ever did hear of.

SKINFLINT *shakes his fist at LOUDER—urges the BAILIFFS to proceed in their duty, and sneaks off, L. 1 E.*—NABBEM *up L., a little behind LOUDER, taps him on the shoulder*

LOUDER. (*without looking round*) Come in.

NABBEM. (*quietly*) You're wanted.

LOUDER. (*turns slowly round, and stares at them from head to foot*) Er——

NABBEM. I arrest you at the suit of Skinflint.

LOUDER. (*laughingly turns away, and proceeds with sharpening his knife*) Get out! I never had any of old Skinflint's suits. I don't know him.

NABBEM. (*stooping over his shoulder—very quietly*) You are Mr. ——?

LOUDER. (*quickly, without turning*) Louder



NABBEM. (*a little louder*) What is your name?

LOUDER. (*same tone*) Louder!

NABBEM. (*shouting in his ear*) What is your name?

LOUDER. (*putting down his knife*) Louder!! (*looks at them both—they exchange glances—LOUDER, then in despair, bawls very loud in NABBEM'S ear*) Louder! Louder!! Louder!!!

(*goes angrily and in despair to R. corner—the RAILIFFS follow him closely, a little behind him, as if to prevent his escape, as he turns they keep out of his sight, and follow him in the same manner back to L.—NABBEM on his R.—GRABBEM, L.*)

NABBEM. (*aside to GRABBEM, as they cross to R.*) He's as deaf as a quart pot.

LOUDER. (*as he gets to L., faces audience, turns R., encounters NABBEM, in surprise he starts back, and knocks against GRABBEM, L., he then surveys them both*) Now look here; I don't know precisely who you are, and what's more I don't precisely care; but if you particularly wish me to destroy that amiable and classic look on both your physiognomies, you'll continue to annoy me for about two seconds longer.

NABBEM. (*determinedly seizing him by the collar*) No larks, then, come on! (*GRABBEM seizes him, L.*)

LOUDER. (*struggling between them*) Now then! Do you know what you're a doing of?

NABBEM. Rather! Come on. (*loudly and using great violence*) No violence! Come on! (*they drag LOUDER off, L. 1 E., struggling desperately and vociferating very loudly at his ill-treatment*)

*Enter LONG, hurriedly, R. 1 E*

LONG. That's all settled! Nothing like being married quietly in the country, after all! Polite parson—courteous clerk—obsequious pew-opener—ceremony, no tears—tableau, no fireworks—cab, no crowd—and all the rest of it. Delight of a few—discontent of an old guardian—quiet steak, another cab, and then to Brighton. (*sits at table, R.*)

*Enter LOUDER, his dress and hair in disorder, L. 1 E.*

LOUDER. (*speaking as he enters—looking off, L.*) Set of infuriated confounded asses! Of course, directly those fools got me outside, some drivelling old idiot said—"Bless me! it's the wrong man!" Very satisfactory for me! Never mind! if I don't make him pay for it I'm—only look at me! (*turns his back, showing his coat slit up the back*) I say, only look at me!

## SHOULD THIS MEET THE EYE.

*Enter POLLY with a steak in dish, with tin cover; LOUDER seizes it, she struggles, and at last he takes it from her, and goes with it to his place at L. table.*

No, you don't! I've waited for this long enough! (*takes off cover*) And a beastly little one it is too.

POLLY. (*R. of L. table*) That's not your steak!

LOUDER. Now, don't you come here abusing your master's customers; but go and fetch me a pot of half-and-half.

POLLY. (*going, L.*) They left a cage door open at the Zoo, I should say. (*at him*) Beast! *Exit POLLY, L. 1 E.*

LONG. Now then for my steak. (*going to his seat, L. of R. table, sees LOUDER eating*) I say, sir, that's my steak!

LOUDER. (*his mouth full*) That's quite a matter of opinion.

LONG. I say, sir, that's my steak.

LOUDER. Well, I shall have done with it in about two minutes.

LONG. (*aside*) Upon my life, this is a cool hand. (*aloud*) I don't know, sir, whether you distinctly understood what I said, but——

LOUDER. There's very little of it, and it's deuced tough,

LONG. (*bring his hand down smartly on the table*) Sir, do you hear what I say?

LOUDER. Don't stand there making that noise, with your mouth all on the water. If you want something to do, just run and see after that beer for me. A pot of half and half—make haste.

LONG. Oh! this is a downright insult. Sir, I demand your name.

LOUDER. (*still eating*) Louder!

LONG. (*leans over him*) I say—I demand your name.

LOUDER. (*as before*) Louder!

LONG. (*shouting*) What's your infernal name?

LOUDER. (*puts down his knife and fork, rises, and shouts in LONG's ear*) Louder! You thick-headed idiot! (*LONG jumps away and goes R., his hand on his ear*) Louder! don't I keep on saying, Louder!

LONG. (*R.*) Really! that's the deafest man I ever met.

LOUDER. (*pushing away his plate*) There, you can have it now; I've done with it. I'll just get my hat and walk off; I've had enough of this. *Exit LOUDER, door, L.*

LONG. Hang me! If he wasn't deaf, I'd kick him.

*Enter TEDDY, L. 1 E., with steak on plate and cover; LONG rushes at him and seizes it; TEDDY struggles.*

TEDDY. This isn't for you, sir; but for the other blaggard——

LONG. (*forcing it from him, and kicking him*) Oh, get out!  
(*takes steak to his own table*)

TEDDY. Och! Murther!

*Exit TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

LONG. This isn't mine, but I must have something, I can't go to Brighton on an empty stomach. My wife will be here directly, and—By the way, I must not eat these onions, she won't like that. Where's the sauce? (*rises and goes to side-board up R., and begins smelling the various bottles*)

*Re-enter LOUDER door L., he sniffs about.*

LOUDER. Hallo! there's my steak and onions! I can smell 'em!

LONG. (*up R.*) Where is that sauce, I wonder?

LOUDER. (*goes to table R., takes away the steak to his own table*) Not if I know it; the other only gave me an appetite. (*begins to eat*)

LONG. Where is that sauce? Oh! here it is. (*returns with sauce to his seat*)

LOUDER. Ah, this is something like a steak!

LONG. Hallo! why—eh? hang it! Where is my steak gone? This is too bad. (*rises, as if to go L., sees LOUDER eating*) Why—that ruffian has collared my steak! (*goes opposite to LOUDER*) Sir—I—I—I—I—

LOUDER. What on earth are you making those faces for?

LONG. How dare you take such a liberty? I have a dented good mind to throw you out of that window, you impertinent cad!

LOUDER. (*pointing at him with his knife*) Look here, Mr. Thingamy, you don't seem to be aware of it; but upon my soul you're a confounded nuisance, bothering a fellow in this manner. What on earth do you want?

LONG. My steak.

LOUDER. (*rises*) Because if you want anything in this way, (*squaring up, and dancing about in a fighting attitude*) I flatter myself Goswell Road can give it you.

LONG. Oh, he's so deaf there's no arguing with him.

(*LONG seizes the steak with a fork, as if to take it away;*

LOUDER *rushes to table, and sticks another fork in steak; they struggle with it to C.*)

LONG. Number nine, give way.

LOUDER. Number six, I'll see you hanged first.

LONG. Then take the inevitable consequences. (*they struggle till the steak is torn in half, each retaining a piece on their forks—LONG throwing his half on the table, wiping his hand with a napkin*) Sir, you're a low ruffian! I'll have you turned out of the house.

LOUDER. Very well, then.

LONG. I'll complain to the landlord. You are not fit for decent society! You are no gentleman!

LOUDER. Very well, then.

LONG. Here, landlord, boots, waiter, chambermaid!

*Exit, shouting, door, R. 1 E.*

LOUDER. Very well, then. Well, of all the beastly places in this beastly universe, I should think this is the most beastliest! I'll complain to the landlord too. I won't submit to. I'll—damme! Hi! Waiter, landlord, boots, chambermaid.

*Exit, L. 1 E.*

*Enter LONG, excitedly, R. 1 E.*

LONG. I can't find the landlord anywhere. Like policemen, they're never to be found when a row's going on! I shan't bother about it any more. I'll go and find my wife, and be off at once—she is downstairs, and—

*Enter MAUD, R. 1 E.*

Oh! here you are. I was coming for you, my dear—

MAUD. Let us hasten from this place at once, my dear Lionel, while the chance is open—

LONG. I was about to propose the same thing, my love. We'll go at once.

MAUD. The luggage is in the cab at the corner of the street.

LONG. I will just give orders that my portmanteau may be forwarded by the next train, and—

*(loud noise without, L., as of a mob of people—voices heard—*

*"That's him!" "Pay the man the money!" "Give it him!" "He's a welcher!" &c., &c.—voice off, L., after the mob subsides, "Chuck it over him!"—loud laughter and noise—"Serve him right; the welcher!"*)

MAUD. *(going to window)* What noise is that? Come, Lionel, let us go at once.

LONG. Only a row among the betting men. Come along.

*(going off, R. 1 E.)*

*Enter SKINFLINT, hurriedly, L. 1 E.*

SKIN. Stop! stop! stop! Very clever, arn't you!—very sagacious! I've been baulked twice to-day, but I think I have the right man now! So you're the young gentleman that girl's been snivelling after so long?

LONG. (R.) I have that honour, sir, and you—if I understand rightly—are the drivelling old gentleman who is bent upon ruining her happiness.

SKIN. (L.) Pah! I daresay you imagine that's rather clever; but no more humbug. Come, girl—go home!

MAUD. (C.) I—I—cannot now.



SKIN. Oh! Cannot! We will see. Come, go home, or I must make you! (*advances, as if to seize her*)

LONG. (*passing her in front to his R.*) Pardon me, sir! *walking up to SKINFLINT, who backs towards L.* I allow no one to dictate to my wife.

SKIN. (*amazed*) Your—wife?

LONG. Precisely. (*going back to MAUD, and placing her arm in his arm*)

SKIN. (*choking with rage*) Then I forbid either of you to darken my threshold again.

LONG. We will not; but we may enlighten it as we return from Brighton.

SKIN. Ugh! (*loud laughter, L. 1 E.*)

*Enter LOUDER, L. 1 E., smothered in whitewash, clothes in rags, and followed by POLLY, TEDDY, and four or five BETTING MEN, laughing at him—LOUDER knocks up against SKINFLINT as he enters—SKINFLINT retreats to R.*

LOUDER. (C.) Yes. Very funny, isn't it? Hor, hor, hor, hor! You are all deuced waggish down here, arn't you? First of all, I'm arrested for a debt I did not owe, and my clothes are torn off my back, because I expostulated; now I have been nearly drowned in whitewash and half murdered by some ruffians who mistook me for a welcher; and if it had not been for some old lunatic, I should have been entirely made away with, only he discovered that I was the wrong man. Hang it! I'll write to the "Times!" I'll carry it into the House of Lords!

OMNES. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

LONG. Why, it's the man with the appetite.

MAUD. (R. C.) The fellow who insulted me.

SKIN. (*up R.*) What! you've been dropping in for it again, eh?

LOUDER. (*imitating him*) Yes, I've been dropping in for it again, you demented old last years beanstalk—but I'll make you pay for it.

MAUD. (R. C.) What's the matter?

LOUDER. (*after looking at her*) Nothing, oh nothing—and she says "What's the matter." Well, I should say it wouldn't much matter what matters, after this matter—matters—mat—but I'm afraid I am wandering. It's all through that beastly "Should this meet the eye!"

LONG. I understand, my dear sir. If I can offer you any compensation I—What name may I have the pleasure of—

LOUDER. Eh?

LONG. What is your name?

LOUDER. Louder.

LONG. What is your name?

LOUDER. Louder.

MAUD. (*raising her voice*) What—is—your—name?

LOUDER. Louder.

OMNES. (*shouting*) What's your name?

LOUDER. (*shouting*) Louder! Louder!! Louder!!! you deaf and dumb idiots! If you can't hear, can you read? (*shows an envelope with his address on it*) Lambkin Louder, Esquire, Oil Merchant, Goswell Road, E.C.

(OMNES *appear surprised and satisfied*)

LONG. My dear sir, I beg to apologise—

LOUDER. But that won't pay for my clothes!

SKIN. (*advancing R.*) In your distress I find my satisfaction.

TEDDY. (L.) For damages, bedad, I'd bring an action!

POLLY (L. C.) And very likely lose it.

LONG. (R. C.)

True, Miss, for

Those right by justice oft are wrong by law!

MAUD. (R. C.) I'm sorry, though, to see you thus ill-used.

LOUDER. (C.) To some good end perhaps I've been abused!

My day is spoilt—my clothes, and dinner too!

For compensation—(*addressing the audience*) I must look to you.

To bear my fate, each night I'll gladly try,

If,—with approbation THIS SHOULD MEET THE EYE!

BETTING MEN (*at back*).

SKINFLINT. MAUD. LONG. LOUDER. TEDDY. POLLY.  
R. L.

Curtain.

