

CATCHING A MERMAID

AN AMPHIBIOUS PIECE OF EXTRAVAGANCE

IN ONE ACT

BY

J. STIRLING COYNE, Esq.,

AUTHOR OF

"*Man of Many Friends,*" "*My Wife's Daughter,*" "*Box and Cox,*" "*Married and Settled,*" "*Binks the Bagman,*" "*How to Settle Accounts with your Laundress,*" "*Did you ever send your Wife to Camberwell,*" "*A Duel in the Dark,*" "*Leo the Terrible,*" "*Mrs. Bunbury's Spoons,*" "*The Water Witches,*" "*An Unprotected Female,*" "*The Pas de Fascination,*" "*The Hope of the Family,*" "*Willikins and his Dina,*" "*The Old Chateau,*" "*The Secret Agent,*" &c., &c., &c.

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STRAND,
LONDON.

909621

CATCHING A MERMAID.

*Originally performed at the Royal Olympic Theatre,
Saturday, October 20th, 1855.*

CHARACTERS.

Titus Tuffins (*sole lessee and manager of the*
PANTOPOLOINAXANDRIAN) **MR. F. ROBSON.**
Jim Juniper, (*clown and low comedian,*
with a decidedly tragic tinge - - - **MR. H. COOPER.**
Simon Lilywhite, (*an amateur painter,*
and nephew of his uncle - - - **MR. E. CLIFTON.**
Mr. Foggo, (*an uncle, and, as uncles go,*
a very respectable one - - - **MR. J. H. WHITE**
Polly, (*known to the public as Mademoiselle Angelique, principal danseuse*
and stiltopedic artist - - - **MISS BROMLEY.**
Mrs. Tuffins, (*the original Caffre Woman*
from the Sandwich Islands - - - **MISS STEPHENS.**
Spectators male and female, show folks, &c., &c.

COSTUMES.

TUFFINS.—1st Dress.—A dirty drab paletot, and cap, silk handkerchief round his neck. 2nd Dress.—Fleshing arms, legs, and body, Spanish trunks and braces, small fly, and fillet for the head, buff shoes, black ringlet wig.
JIM JUNIPER.—Clown's dress complete, silk handkerchief round neck, hairy cap, and velveteen shooting jacket over clown's dress, and blucher boots.
SIMON LILYWHITE.—Small black coat, white vest and trousers, black round hat, flaxen wig, shoes and stockings.
FOGGO.—Shepherd's laid coat, waistcoat and trousers, black hat, green spectacles, cane.
COUNTRY PEOPLE.—Various coloured coats, and smock frocks, &c.
MRS. TUFFINS.—1st Dress.—White cotton dress and black cloak, cap. 2nd Dress.—An African dress, with large cloak, long black wig, decorated with golden balls, &c.
POLLY.—1st Dress.—A pink muslin sylpide dress, with polka jacket, and black boots. 2nd Dress.—Blue muslin mermaid.
COUNTRY GIRLS.—Tuck-up gowns, aprons, hats, &c.

SCENE.

THE FAIR GREEN OF THE VILLAGE OF MUTTLE-CUM-TURMITS.

TIME OF ACTION.

From nine o'clock a.m. to one o'clock p.m.—railway time.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION.

Forty-five minutes; with song and dance.

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CATCHING A MERMAID.

SCENE.—*The green of an English village during fair time, booths, &c., on either side of the stage. At back, L., and occupying the stage to L. C., is a large show van, with a platform in front—steps to platform, and curtains to entrance, which may be drawn so as to show the interior. Over the van, the inscription—*

**TUFFINS'S
PANTOPOLONAXANDRIAN.**

and above this, large paintings on cloth, representing an Albino girl, with long white hair—a dwarf, and a giant—a man in a Spanish dress, surrounded by fireworks—also several bills. Various articles of conjuring, &c., &c., lying L. H., at foot of steps to van Big drum, R., of steps.

(On the rising of the curtain, MRS. TUFFINS is discovered washing clothes in an earthen pan on stool, R. C., and POLLY seated on steps of van, L. C., mending an old Spanish jacket.

MRS. T. (R. C.) Polly, dear, if your mending of that jacket be done, I wish you'd lend me a hand to wash these things, or the giantess won't have a petticoat, nor Tuffins a frill and collar to perform in to-day. 'Tisn't pride makes the poor fellow particular about his linen; but you know the public expect that the manager of the principal show in the fair should always appear before them in a clean collar.

POLLY. (l. c., rising.) And the principal *danses* in pink stockings, spangles, and other articles of luxury. What would my celebrated *Pas de Bayadere* be without them? (*pirouettes.*)

MRS. T. It wouldn't be looked at. Then the quantity of splendid brass ornaments, and real glass beads that I wear when I do the Wild Caffre Woman is something startling. Yet, my dear, business never was so bad—three days we've been at the fair of Muttle-cum-turmits, and we've only taken eighteen-pence—

(*TUFFINS* pops his head out through curtains of *van* and hears the latter part of the sentence.)

TUFF. Halfpenny! Eighteen-pence halfpenny, Mrs. Tuffins! (coming on to platform.) Let us do justice to the liberality of the nobility, gentry, and inhabitants of Muttle-cum-turmits. Eighteen-pence halfpenny exactly; out of which magnificent sum, nothing remains, and the balance I reserve for my creditors. (coming down on stage.)

MRS. T. Then we are to have no breakfast again this morning?

TUFF. (c.) My dear Mrs. Tuffins, people who live in the best society in London, seldom breakfast.

MRS. T. But they sometimes dine, Tuffins.

TUFF. So they do—so they do. I admit, without hesitation, that there is a very general prejudice in favour of dining, amongst the intelligent population of these realms. In fact, I feel a very strong predilection that way myself; and in order to gratify all parties, I have sent Jim Juniper, our clown, into the wide, wide, world, with a basket on his arm, directing him not to return without the necessary provisions for a banquet.

MRS. T. A banquet! Where is it to come from, I should like to know?

TUFF. So should I, Mrs. Tuffins; but we must be patient. I have confidence in Jim's talent. If a stray fowl, or a misguided duck, should fall in his way, I have a busy something here—informs me—I have an internal consciousness, that we shall have a dinner to-day.

POLLY. (l.) And if we don't, we shall have a better appetite for breakfast to-morrow.

TUFF. Polly, that's a sentiment worthy of an artist. I always said you had a feeling for art, from the day chance threw you into my arms.

POLLY. Ah! you have often promised to tell me how you came to adopt me.

TUFF. Have I? Come and sit down, then, and I'll tell you, while we're waiting for Juniper.

(TUFFINS goes up and leans against big drum. POLLY resumes her seat on steps.)

TUFF. About sixteen years ago; I was performing one day to a numerous and aristocratic audience at the fair in this very village. I ate fire—swallowed knives—and drew innumerable yards of ribbon out of my eyes, nose, and mouth, to the great delight of the British public. At last I came to the astounding feat of putting a live rabbit into a hamper, and taking out a sucking pig. The hamper was brought forr'ud, and I addressed the spectators— (*illustrating with the drum for hamper.*) “Now ladies and gentlemen,” said I, “observe there is no deception whatever in this extraordinary delusion, which I have performed for three hundred and ninety-nine successive nights before the Lord Mayor of Paris, and the allied sovereigns of Europe. You see this 'ere hamper is perfectly empty, and entirely vacant,” so saying, I turned it over, and to my great astonishment, out rolled a fine full grown baby.

POLLY. A baby!

TUFF. (*coming down l. c., with POLLY.*) A little responsibility in long clothes :—in fact, it was yourself, Polly, who had been slipped into the hamper while it lay unnoticed outside the show. The audience however applauded the trick, and a shower of coppers rewarded the popular artist.

POLLY. And you discovered no trace of my parents?

MRS. T. (*down r. h.*) Nothing!

TUFF. Nothing but a scrap of paper pinned to your breast, on which the name of “Mary Crake” was written. I say written, apparently before the writer had taken six lessons.

MRS. T. Never mind; we kept you with us, Polly, from that day to this.

TUFF. Brought you up in the profession you adorn!

MRS. T. *I* taught you the graces of the Highland fling—

TUFF. And *I* inculcated in your tender mind a love for high art—upon the stilts.

POLLY. How much I owe you both for your care !

TUFF. Don't name it, Polly. You have been a good girl, and you beat the tambourine better than Tamburini himself, that celebrated soprano, whom I have never had the pleasure of hearing. Hah ! here comes Juniper !

Enter JUNIPER, R. 1 E.

Friend of my soul, what relief do you bring ? Produce the provender, most noble Thane ! Announce the state of the state of the commissariat. (*JUNIPER moves his head mournfully from side to side.*) Speak, perturbed spirit, and don't stand there, wagging your head like an uneasy chimney cowl in a gale of wind. You presented my liberal orders to the butcher—the baker—and the publican ?

JIM. I did.

TUFF. Well, and what did they reply ?

JIM. They all said they knew you—

TUFF. Ah ! there's popularity for you. The name of Titus Tuffins has penetrated to this obscure village of Muttle-cum-turmits. They all know me, and—

JIM. And therefore wouldn't trust you.

TUFF. Slaves ! may their own wittals choke them. However, we have satisfied our conscience—the law of nations and of nature is on our side—and what won't be given, must be taken. A plump barn-door fowl, now, would be consoling.

JIM. So it would, guv'nor ; but the village folk have locked all their poultry up while the fair lasts.

TUFF. Inhuman wretches ! But you have brought something, Jim ?

JIM. I rayther think I have, guv'nor. See here, what I found ! (*draws a rabbit from the breeches pocket of his clown's dress.*)

TUFF. A lovely rabbit !

MRS. T. }
POLLY. } Brayvo ! brayvo !

TUFF. You're sure you *found* it, Jim?

JIM. Oh, yes; I found it—found it hanging at a shop door as I came through the village. Nobody was looking! and—oh, dear! I felt as if I couldn't help myself! and, before I could cry "Stop thief!" I found myself at the other end of the village, with the rabbit in my pocket.

(*showing how he stole and concealed the rabbit.*)

TUFF. Professionally speaking, you are a great artist, Jim! Hand over the spoil, my boy!

JIM. Hand over! What for?

TUFF. For dinner!

JIM. Oh! I don't know about that! If you want a rabbit why don't you go and find one for yourself?

TUFF. Hah! you refuse?

JIM. 'Course I do.

TUFF. For this, thy caitiff life shall pay the forfeit!

(*He seizes a sword, which lies on the ground amongst other articles used by tumblers and showmen.* JUNIPER falls on his knees before TUFFINS.)

JIM. Oh! please don't, Mr. Tuffins! Take the rabbit, and spare my life!

TUFF. I won't! This hungry sword, which I have swallowed daily for six years, thirsts for thy blood! (*offers to run him through.*) Hold! on second thoughts, I'll not decimate you till the performances are over. Arise! (*picks him up a la clown.*) The Pantopoloinaxandrian can't at present spare its principal low comedian! (*aside.*) Give me the animal! and I'll go and cook it for dinner. I've got Soyer's Shilling Cookery in the van. Come, Mrs. Tuffins, my dear!

[*Exit into van, followed by Mrs. TUFFINS. POLLY is following, when JUNIPER beckons her down to front of stage, mysteriously.*]

JIM. (R.) Polly! Come here! I've got something for you. (*pulls an apple out of his pocket.*) There! (*gives her the apple.*)

POLLY. What a beautiful apple!

JIM. I thought it's rosy cheeks were like yours—so I wouldn't eat it! Heigho!

POLLY. What's the matter with you? You do look dreadful.

JIM. Do I? It's love, then! The little blind god has

shot his cruel *harrow* through my heart. Oh, Polly! Polly! Polly! The thoughts of you has druv "Hot Cod-lings" out of my head.

POLLY. Don't be a fool, Juniper.

JIM. Ah! 'tis easy to say "Don't be a fool!" but when a fool can't help himself, what is he to do? Only say you love me, and we will run away together.

(TUFFIN puts his head out from behind curtains.

TUFF. Jim! run over to the Mammoth Ox, with my compliments, and aks if he can lend me a couple of onions.

JIM. Ay, ay, guv'nor! (aside.) Blow the Mammoth Ox! [Exit R. E. TUFFINS disappears.

POLLY. I wish Juniper wouldn't tease me with his declarations; he knows I don't care for him! yet he won't give over making love to me.

Enter SIMON LILYWHITE, hastily, from R. U. E., to front and runs against the drum.

SIMON. Phew! I beg pardon—I'm a little out of breath! whew! Such a run! I—I—hope I'm doing no injury to this wind instrument.

(sitting against the drum and wiping his forehead.

POLLY. (L.) Not the least. Pray rest yourself—you look very warm.

SIMON. Melting! (aside.) it is she! The lovely being whom I saw dancing yesterday on the platform, and to whom I secretly devoted my heart and fortune during the performance of a broad-sword hornpipe.

POLLY. (aside.) How the young man stares at me! Where have I seen him before? Ah! I remember—in the crowd, yesterday.

SIMON. (coming forward, c.) She's alone. If I dare address her. Hem!—I—hem!—I—hem.

POLLY. (aside.) The poor fellow seems embarrassed. Did you speak, sir?

SIMON. No—that is yes, Miss. I had the pleasure of admiring your splendid performance, yesterday. I was in the front row; and when I looked at you—so—I fancied you smile!

POLLY. Well I might, in a professional point of view; it's a branch of our art. But I certainly did notice you.

SIMON. And don't you remember, when you went round with the tambourine, that it was not copper I dropped into it, but silver?

POLLY. Yes, and I observed to myself—if there ever was a young nobleman in the world, this must be one in disguise.

SIMON. Flattering delusion! I am only the nephew of my uncle.

POLLY. Really!—the nephew of your uncle?

SIMON. Of my rheumatic uncle, Foggs, who came down from London to try to get some news of a lost child, and bring me up to the law. But I don't like the law—though I love you—so I ran away from my uncle and his rheumatism—left them both at the inn, where we've been stopping—and came here to tell you I love you.

POLLY. Oh, my! You should not have told me so suddenly—it takes away one's breath so, you can't think. But what is it you want?

SIMON. I want *you*—and I offer in return, my heart, my hand, and my entire fortune. I have the latter in my pocket; thirteen shillings and ninepence halfpenny, wrapped up in paper.

POLLY. Generous stranger! My heart is touched by the liberality of your proposal; but my papa may object.

SIMON. Your papa! The little man who eats fire, and blows the trumpet like a demon?

POLLY. The same. So you had better go; for if he finds you speaking to me, he will be so savage! (*she tries to push him away.*)

SIMON. No, I will never leave you! I am prepared to die at your feet if your cruel papa frowns upon my suit. (*drops on his knees, seizes POLLY's hand, and kisses it repeatedly.*)

POLLY. There—there—get up!

SIMON. Never! (*struggling to retain POLLY's hand, still on his knees, L. H.*

TUFFINS puts his head out from behind curtains of the van. At the same moment JIM JUNIPER enters R. 1 E. with two onions in his hand, and seeing SIMON on his knees, kissing POLLY's hand, starts back, horror-struck.

TUFF. Where's the pepper, Polly? (*seeing SIMON.*) Hah! a man on his knees to Polly! (*he rushes out, and descending from the platform, comes down L. C.*) **POLLY** gives a slight scream, and retreats half laughing to R. C. **SIMON** remains on his knees, L., **JUNIPER**, R. H.

POLLY. You see—I told you!

TUFF. (*throwing himself into a melo-dramatic attitude.*) Hoary villain!—no—I mean you d—d young rascal—what do you do in this attitude?

SIMON. Pardon, ferocious fire-eater! I love your beauteous daughter.

JIM. (*aside, and moodily.*) He loves her! ha!

TUFF. (*menacing SIMON.*) You love her! Tempter of unsullied innocence—I understand you. You wish to lure this tender dove from the peaceful nest where her young days have been passed in pleasures, and palaces, too numerous to mention.

POLLY. (R. C.) Oh, no, indeed, papa.

SIMON. (L.) No, indeed, papa; my intentions are strictly honourable.

TUFF. (c.) Rise and explain them, then, mysterious stranger.

SIMON. (*rises.*) From the moment I beheld Polly—

TUFF. Stop, young man. In the domestic circle, this fascinating artiste condescends to adopt the humble name of Polly; but to the universe at large, she is known as Mademoiselle Angelique, the Crimean Sylphide from the falls of Niagara.

SIMON. If she was twenty sylphides, I'd marry her in spite of my rheumatic uncle. Oh! pity my distraction, sir, and give me an humble engagement on your platform.

JIM. (*aside R.*) If he does, I'll put pison in his beer.

TUFF. An engagement! What are you fit for? Have you any talent for the fine arts? Are you a professor of natural magic or mystery? Have you ever passed half-an-hour with the spirits on the tight rope? Can you swallow a red hot poker, or sing a comic song in character? Are you an Elastic Brother, or a Peruvian Trampoline? In short, what can you do?

SIMON. Uncle says I can do nothing.

TUFF. Then you've come to the very worst place in the

world to do it. You had better return to your respectable and rheumatic relative, whose arms will be open to receive you. (*goes up c.*)

SIMON. I can't (*whimpering.*) It's no use—I'll follow her over the world—until the last farthing of this thirteen shillings and ninepence halfpenny be spent. (*pulls a piece of newspaper containing money out of his pocket.*)

TUFF. (*up c.*) Thirteen shillings and ninepence half-penny!

SIMON. Which I meant to settle on the lovely Polly.

TUFF. (*coming down c.*) The parent's tender heart relents—the manager is but a man. Noble stranger, hand over the ochre! (*SIMON gives him the paper of money.*) Hem! let me see. We want a pictorial artist who can play the trombone.

MRS. TUFFINS enters from van, and comes down R. C.

SIMON. But I can neither paint or play.

TUFF. So much the better; your style will be the more original. From this moment you are enrolled a member of "Tuffins's Celebrated Pantopoloinaxandrian Troupe." (*taking him by the hand.*) Mrs. Tuffins, this is Signor Alphonso Scamperini.

SIMON. I beg your pardon—my name is—

TUFF. Signor Alphonso Scamperini; a young and rising artist, who will in future devote his enormous talent to the pourtrayal of the wonders of nature and art combined in the Pantopoloinaxandrian.

Mrs. T. I'm sure I'm delighted, signor. (*making a profound curtsey.*)

POLLY. (R.) And I'm so happy.

TUFF. (*introducing JIM from R. corner.*) Herr Juniper, the unrivalled Classical Clown, and Grecian Grotesque of the establishment.

JIM. (*crosses to SIMON, and throws himself into attitude of clown.*) How are you? How's your mother? There's a fly on your nose! (*giving SIMON a pantomimic slap, and re-crossing behind to R. H.* SIMON staggers back, rubbing his cheek.)

TUFF. Ha! ha! ha! you musn't mind it, signor, it's

only Jim's fun! (*half as de to SIMON.*) The wittiest dog in the world—when he's sober.

JIM. (*aside R. H.*) I'll teach him to make love to Polly!

TUFF. By-the-bye, we must drink the signor's health in a flowing bowl. Jim! fetch the flowing bowl—I mean, fetch a pot of half-and-half from the adjacent public-house, (*taking money out of the paper.*) and pay for it! (*gives money to JUNIPER, and puts the remainder in his pocket.* JUNIPER exits scowling.) He then spreads out the piece of newspaper in which the money has been wrapped.) I see, my young friend, you have invested your small capital in "The Times," (*showing the piece of newspaper.*) Got a share, it appears, in that widely circulated journal. Let's see what it says. I'm fond of a scrap of news—when I can pick it up cheap. (*reads.*) Um! "Profitable Investment!—Money to Lend!—A Fortune for five shillings!" Where? where?—"Apply to A. B."—address wanting. Hah! what's here? (*reads.*) "CAPTURE OF A MERMAID.—A private letter, from a correspondent in the Orkney Islands, states, that some fishermen caught last week a real mermaid, who was surprised, while combing out her back hair upon a rock. The existence of this apoc—roc—coph—apochryphal creature—" There's a word for the outside of the show!—"this apochryphal creature can therefore be no longer questioned." Hah! a mermaid! Hah!—I have it! Here! here! a brilliant idea! a sublime Yankee notion! Immense attraction! The eighth wonder of the world! The real live mermaid at Tuffins's Pantopoloinaxandrian! Prodigious success!—crowded houses!—blaze of triumph! Dinner every day, and two dinners on Sunday. Hooray! (*dances in a state of great excitement.*) hooray!

MRS. T. (*restraining him.*) Titus! Titus! don't go on in that way. What's the matter? Hah! the poor man has lost his head.

TUFF. Mrs. Tuffins, there's more in that head than meets the eye. But I'll be calm, and unfold myself. I'll have a mermaid.

MRS. T. You'll have a mermaid?

TUFF. I'll have a mermaid!

MRS. T. No, Tuffins, not while I live, you shan't!

TUFF. Partner of my life, have confidence in your Tuffins ! The mermaid I contemplate will make our fortune.—I mean, to exhibit her—the creature will be an enormous attraction.

POLLY. (R.) But you haven't got one, Papa. You must first *catch* your mermaid.

TUFF. I've thought of that, Polly, and have hit on a rare plan to save the trouble of catching one. *You* shall be the mermaid.

POLLY. (*crossing to R. C.*) Me, Papa ? Oh, impossible !

SIMON. Quite impossible, papa ! (L. H.)

TUFF. Silence, young man ! There's no difficulty at all. Polly will only have to slip herself into the tail of the dragon that we had made for our Christmas show of St. George and the Dragon, and sit with her marine extremity in a tub of salt water—as mermaids usually do—and the affair is done.

POLLY. But Papa, I can never—

TUFF. Our fate is in your hands, Polly ! You'll make a lovely mermaid, and the signor shall paint one for our exhibition.

SIMON. I don't know what a mermaid's like.

TUFF. Then paint a fancy mermaid—the public won't know the difference.

Enter JUNIPER, with a pot of beer, R. L. E.

Ah, here's the half and half. Hand me the goblet, Jim ;—(*takes it and drinks.*) and Jim, take down the portrait of the Circassian lady (*aside to SIMON.*) who ran away last week, after her pink eyes had been blackened by—ahem ! Never mind—women will be jealous ! I drink to your good health, signor ! (*drinks and hands pot to SIMON, from whom it passes to MRS. TIFFINS, who goes into van with it.*) Jim has gone up, and taken down the picture, and now brings it forward, R. C.) Ah, lovely victim of female jealousy ! a moment let me gaze upon those heavenly features ! There, I fear it isn't right !—I've got a wife—propriety forbids—take her away. Remove Altisidora ! (*JIM goes into show with picture.*) and let me have a mermaid in her place. (*to Si-*

MON.) You'll find the paints and brushes in the van. Mind you work like fury. [*Exit SIMON into van.*] You Polly, prepare for your new character. (*POLLY goes into van.*) And Jim, you go and practice balancing. (*going onto platform.*) You are getting so clumsy that you can't hold a cart-wheel on your nose for five minutes without letting it drop on somebody's corns. (*goes into van.*) **JUNIPER** goes up R. H., *balancing a chair on his chin.*

Enter FOGGO R. U. E. and comes forward, as if looking for somebody.

FOGGO. Where can the rogue have got to? He has stolen from the inn while I was making inquiries for my poor lost one. Only let me catch the dog! I hear he has been sneaking after some of these show-girls. A graceless, good-for-nothing young rascal!

TUFF. (*re-appearing on platform.*) This old gentleman looks like an illustrious stranger; perhaps a generous patron of the arts. I'll try him. (*coming forward, L. C.*) Hem! I have the honour, sir, of wishing you good morning. Happy to see so distinguished a foreigner at the Fair of Muttle-cum-turmits. Here, sir, you will find all that charm the eye, enlarge the understanding—and assist the digestion of the intelligent and intellectual traveller.

FOGGO. (R.) Oh, ah, I see! You are one of those diverting vagab— I mean one of those agreeable gentlemen who—a—a—

TUFF. Entertain the public, sir, without regard to pecuniary consideration. My name is Tuffins, sir—Titus Tuffins, sir—sole lessee and exclusive manager of the Imperial Pantopoloinaxandrian.

FOGGO. The Pantopol—eh? Very remarkable word! What does it mean?

TUFF. It means, sir, Walk up—Pay your Money—and Inquire within! We expect to make a very great hit today, sir, with a new and peculiar exhibition—a real live Mermaid, sir!

FOGGO. A mermaid! Dear me! I never saw a mermaid!

(*country people begin to assemble, entering from U. E. R. H. and down to front.*

TUFF. Nor nobody else, sir—that's the novelty of the thing. The public must have novelty—they hunger for novelty—and turn up their noses at their old favourite dishes. Would you believe it, sir, and I don't mind telling you in confidence, that the Learned Pig, which the whole world used to run after, has been latterly so neglected that we were obliged to convert him into Pickled Pork. And there's the Norfolk Giant come down so low, that he has serious thoughts of appearing as the Swiss Dwarf—only dwarfs don't draw any more than giants.—Now, sir, a Mermaid is something new.

FOGGO. So it is, so it is!

TUFF. Proud of your approbation, sir! By the bye, may I have the honour of announcing the first exhibition of my Mermaid by particular desire, and under the immediate patronage of—I haven't the pleasure of knowing your name, sir.

FOGGO. It don't matter, I can't stop now, I'm going to London almost directly.

TUFF. Going to London, sir?

FOGGO. Yes, yes, I must go, particular business calls me. Another time I shall be happy to give you my support and countenance.

TUFF. Sir, I shall be proud and honoured by your support—when I get it, but for your countenance—ahem! I should by no means wish to rob you of so interesting a frontispiece

FOGGO. Bah! (*crossing to L. TUFFINS intercepts him.*)

TUFF. Must you go, sir—are you turning your back upon this lovely scene—quitting this pleasant and salubrious locality before the Fair is over. Are you aware of the sacrifice you are about to make, sir? Do you know all the delights of a country Fair? (*the country people now come down.*)

FOGGO. Well, I can't say I do.

TUFF. I thought not, sir. Then, if you'll allow me—and with the permission of the intelligent British public here assembled, I will give you a vocal and phosphoric description of them.

(*the country people gather round to listen, and at intervals applaud the song.*) Song. TUFFINS.

SONG.—THE COUNTRY FAIR.*

“ Yes, I own 'tis my delight,
 To see the laughter and the fright,
 In such a motley, merry sight,
 As a Country Fair.

Full of riot, fun and noise,
 Little girls, and ragged boys,
 The very flow'r of rural joys,
 In fun beyond compare.

Some are playing single stick,
 Boys in roundabouts so thick,
 Maidens swinging till they're sick,
 At a Country Fair.

Wooden toys and lollipops,
 Ribbon, lace, and shilling hops,
 Peg and whip, and humming tops,
 At a Country Fair,” &c.

(At end of song he goes on to platform. Gong is beat behind scene—and all the country people disperse.)

TUFF. *(on platform.)* There's the Waxworks and Mammoth Ox just a going to begin—*(comes down.)* Let me say, sir, that you'll honour our performance with your presence?

FOGGO. *(R. crosses to L.)* I'm sorry I can't. I have business to attend to—*(aside.)* Let me see what hour the last train starts for London this evening—*(takes a pocket-book from his breast pocket, which he opens.)* I've put it down here—run—run—20 past 8. Let me only lay hands upon him—*(in returning the book to his pocket, he drops it on the ground.)* [Exit FOGGO, without perceiving his loss.

TUFF. He has dropped his pocket book! *(calls in a whisper.)* Sir, you've dropped your pocket book! *(picks it*

*The song of “The Country Fair” with the Monopolologue as given by the late Mr. Mathews, will be found printed at the end of this Farce.

up.) If it be full of bank notes, I wonder what I shall do? (examines the contents, and in doing so, a paper falls on the ground.) Nothing but old papers and letters. Psha! I can afford to be honest, and restore them to the owner. (puts the pocket-book in pocket of his paletot; he then perceives and picks up paper.) Hah! here's a paper has fallen out! What is it? (glances at it.) "Certificate of Baptism of Mary, daughter of Robert and Mary Crake." Ha! Mary!—Polly! Mary Crake!—the child in the hamper! the mermaid! my—the name—and, yes, the date agrees with her age! Why, bless me! Polly may turn out to be the daughter of somebody!—the heroine, perhaps, of a thrilling drama in real life!

SIMON enters from the van with a hideous picture of a mermaid. He has a large paint brush in his hand.

SIMON. Here she is, governor!

TUFF. Ho!—the mermaid! Hold her back till I look at her! Humph!—ha! a little more of the *Camera obskewero* might have improved her; and if she was a shade greener, she would look more natural. But altogether, the effect is startling. I'll exhibit her instantly to the admiration of surrounding nations. (*he takes the picture, and proceeds to hang it on R. C., of van, in place of the Circassian Lady which JIM has removed.*)

JUNIPER re-enters, R. U. E., balancing chair on his chin.

JIM. (*putting down chair, jumping over, and sitting on back rail, R.*) I wish everybody in the world was dead! There's nothing in it, worth living for, since Polly's proved false! Hah! there's the fellow that has cut me out. I say, Mister Signor What's-your-name, I want a word in private with you.

SIMON. What is it? (L. H.)

JIM. It seems to me, there ain't room for two great creatures, like you and me, on the same platform. One of us must muzzle.

SIMON. I've no objection, provided it be you.

JIM. Oh! 'tis quite the other way; you will have to move off.

SIMON. Me?

JIM. Yes. You've made yourself *particularly* disagreeable to me, by your attentions to Mademoiselle Angelique. I don't like it, signor.

SIMON. I do, though.

JIM. Werry good! But when one gentleman has previous claims on a young lady's 'art, the other gentleman must consekevently perwide himself elsewhere's.

SIMON. Thank you; but I'm provided very well where I am.

JIM. But you'll give the lady up?

SIMON. Not in the least.

JIM. (R.) You won't? Then take that! (*aims a blow at Simon with the chair, which he avoids.*)

SIMON. (L.) And you take that! (*thrusts the paint brush into Juniper's face, and daubs it with colour.*)

(Both grapple, and in doing so they change sides, Simon R., and Jim L. Tuffins rushes down platform, snatches up sword, and comes between so as to separate them.

TUFF. Hold! I charge you! What's the bother now?

SIMON. (R.) 'Twas he!

JIM. (L.) 'Twas he!

TUFF. (C.) Enough. (*to Juniper.*) There's paint upon your face, go wash it off; and if you must beat something, let it be the drum. (*going up C.*) Tuffins expects that every man will do his duty!

SIMON. (*aside.*) Oh! pretty, pretty Polly. I know my duty, and I'll do it. [Exit Simon into van.]

JIM. (*aside, and gloomily.*) I'll have my turn for this. (*crosses to R., goes up stage, and during the following, is seen to busy himself by peeping through the side of the van.*)

(Country people re-enter R. U. E., and stand round the van, R. H.)

TUFF. (*on platform, beats gong.*) Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasing duty to announce to you that the performances this morning will be under the immediate patronage of his Serene Highness, the Grand Duke of Saxe Sossenger, who has travelled here three thousand and forty nine miles in disguise, to witness the first appearance of the real live mermaid—alive! alive! from the straits of

Madagascar, taken by the Submarine Electric Telegraph, and brought to this village this very morning by the Parcels Delivery Company, whom I shall have the honour and pleasure of introducing to you in the course of the performance. I shall also have the honour of supplying the music for a grand *Pas d'Assassination*, by the Wild Caffre woman of the Sandwich Islands, who is here present. Here, Kikosco-cum-fliberty-bosko-bum, come forward and show yourself; let the public see that there is no deception.

(leads MRS. TUFFINS from interior of the van, dressed as a Caffre woman, down the steps, and round the stage.)

Salute the respectable public, madam. Look at her hair, it's so precious black, that charcoal makes a white mark on it.

JIM. (peeping into van, at back.) Ha! he's there!—making love to Polly! I can stand it no longer. (to fair folks) Ladies and gentlemen, you shall next behold the wonderful Mermaid, that—

TUFF. (R.) Stop! stop!—no! What are you about? The Mermaid isn't dressed yet.

JIM. Oh, yes, she is! Look there.

(he suddenly draws back the curtain of the van, and discovers POLLY seated, partly dressed to represent a Mermaid. The lower part of her body is concealed by a voluminous fish's tail—her long hair hangs about her shoulders; she has a coral wreath on her head, and she holds a hand mirror and comb. On the curtain being withdrawn, SIMON is discovered on his knees kissing her hand. A large tub stands beside her. At the same moment

FOGGO re-enters, L. 1 E., as if in search of his pocket-book.

TUFF. (L.) Oh, Lord! I'm ruined. Here's a pretty discovery. The Signor making love to the Mermaid.

(SIMON jumps up, POLLY rises and curtseys profoundly to the spectators, who applaud enthusiastically.)

FOGGO. (L.) Hey! it's that desperate young rascal, my nephew! Come down here, you dog, till I break your bones.

TUFF. (*aside, R. H.*) It's all U P with the Pantopoloianaxandrian!

(*Goes up to steps, SIMON taking POLLY's hand, comes down from the platform.*)

FOGGO. (L.) So, you shameless reprobate ; you were going to disgrace your family by marrying—a—a—a—fish-woman. Oh ! rascal. (*lifting his stick, then wincing as if in pain.*) Oh !

SIMON. (L. c.) She's no Mermaid. She never was at sea in her life.

FOGGO. Then she's an impostor ; and if you don't instantly come with me, I'll call for the police.

TUFF. (*coming down c.*) The police ! Hah ! The pocket-book may appease him. (*crosses to FOGGO.*) Respectable and rheumatic stranger ; you have lost a pocket-book ?

(*the country people during this leave the stage, R. U. E.*
FOGGO. I have.

TUFF. And in it, amongst other papers, a certificate of the baptism of Mary Crake ?

FOGGO. Yes—yes ; of my darling child !

TUFF. Yours ? Why I understood the name of Simon's uncle was Foggo.

FOGGO. Right ! I took the name of Foggo under the will of a distant relative, who left me an estate ; but my proper name is Robert Crake.

POLLY (*up stage, c.*) Heavens !

FOGGO. When a young man, I married a beautiful girl in humble life ; but, owing to the prejudices of my family, I was compelled to keep my marriage concealed, and to sail for the West Indies, leaving behind me my wife and infant daughter.

TUFF. (c.) Interesting narrative ! Proceed, sir.

FOGGO. On my return to England, several years after, I learnt that my dear Mary was dead, and the only information I could obtain respecting our child was, that she was brought by the woman in whose care she had been placed, to this village, where all further trace of her was lost.

TUFF. Open your arms, then, and clasp your accomplished offspring to your bosom. There she stands, waiting for the paternal embrace. Alive ! alive ! (*puts*

POLLY across to FOGGO, who embraces her.) How I came to adopt her shall be related to you after the performance. Suffice, that I brought her up from tender infancy in the principles of strict morality and the tight-rope, and taught her continually to walk on the stilts in the paths of virtuous propriety.

POLLY. (*embracing FOGGO, l. h.*) Father!

SIMON. (*throwing himself into FOGGO's arms, on his r.*) Uncle!

TUFF. (c.) Beat the gong, Jim. (JUNIPER gives one blow on the gong at back.) Ladies and gentlemen, the affecting family group, you behold, has been several months in preparation. (*placing FOGGO, SIMON, and POLLY in a group, l.*) Come forr'urd, Mrs. Tuffins, and stand on one leg! (*SIMON and POLLY are kneeling to FOGGO, who stretches his arms over them.*) Here you see the respectable parent, with the green specs, humanely bestowing his lovely daughter upon the gay young lover; and here you behold the happy couple, kneeling, as in duty bound, on their bended knees—asking of the old gentleman's blessing—which, as it cost him nothing, he gives in a werry generous and handsome manrer. Here—(*pointing to JUNIPER, r.*) here, you likewise see the unsuccessful rival; and—here—the—hollo! (*turning round.*) the Mammoth Ox, and Wax Work has got all the people. (*goes up and ascends platform—beating gong. Country people re-enter, and crowd round.*) Ladies and gentlemen, I will now throw off the paletot of private life, and assume the costume of the Andalusian Bull Fighter of the Sierra Morena—I don't know where it is—who will have the honour of executing one of the popular dances of his native country. (*throws off his paletot, and appears in Spanish trunks, &c.* TUFFINS dances a mock Cachuca, accom'anying himself with the bones. At the end he throws himself into an attitude. The country peop e applaud, and appear delighted.

TABLEAU.

COUNTRY PEOPLE.

JIM. MRS. TUFFINS. SIMON FOGGO. POLLY

R.

TUFFINS.

L.

CURTAIN.

THE COUNTRY FAIR.*

“ Yes, I own ‘tis my delight,
To see the laughter and the fright,
In such a motley, merry sight,
At a Country Fair,” &c., as in page 16.

SPOKEN. Here we are! all going to the fair in Mr. Creepey's cart—Here we are! four-and-twenty of us at sixpence a piece. I say that's a good deal of money though, arn't it? Yes, How much is it? 4 times 5—no; 7 times 6—no, that won't do; I say how much is four-and-twenty at sixpence a-piece? I don't know: ask Mr. Doleful. Mr. Doleful, Mr. Doleful, how much is four-and twenty at sixpence each? I don't know, I was always dull in that line—but my son, Tommy, he can tell. Tommy, how much is twenty-four at sixpence each?—Thirteen and fourpence. Ah, he is always right. Now then, here we go! and here we are! and Mrs. Piebrow in the same *vehicle* being riding *hopposite* the whole time, and I never saw you before, I declare! Billy, what is French for *hopposite*? *Wis a wee*. Oh, here we are in the thick of the fair! Look at the people, and the shows, and the music! Oh, I do so like it ma! Walk up, walk up, ladies and gentlemen, this is the only booth in the fair where you will see a grand farcical, tragical, comical play, and a Pantomime for the small charge of only sixpence, entitled and called the Amiable Assassin, or the Bloody Nose—to conclude with Harlequin Dogsmeat-man and Love in an Iceberg, or the Magic barrow! the whole warranted to be acted in the short space of twenty-three minutes and a half, by any stop watch in the world. Ladies and gentilhomme, if you sall walk up here, you sall see the greatest vondrer as never vas; dere is no deception here; here is de wonderful pheasant woman from Timbuctoo; de price of to enter is threepence for the full grown man, and only half a child; Ladies and gentilhomme as sall sit in de seat of the front must a sittee down, not to hinder those behind of from to see; dere is no deception here, ladies

* The Monologuette of the foregoing song has been altered and adapted to the present time in the song which Mr. Robson sings at the Olympic.

and gentilhomme ; she is all over feathers—dis is one of her quills—she moulted last night.

Yes, I own 'tis my delight,
To see the laughter and the fright,
In such a motley, merry sight,
As a Country Fair.

Those in fairs who take delight,
In shows and seeing every sight,
Dancing, singing, and a fight,

At a Country Fair :

Boys by mama's treacle fed,
With cakes and spicy gi. gerbread,
On everybody's toes they tread,

All at a Country Fair !

Monkeys mounting camel's backs,
For prizes there men jump in sacks,
And others drinking quarts of max,
And think that that's your sort.

Corks are drawing, glasses jingle,
Trumpets, drums together mingle,
Till your heads completely tingle,
Which quite completes the sport.

SPOKEN. Walk up, walk up, and see the great Shropshire giant—he is nine feet high ; ladies and gentlemen, he is of such extraordinary dimensions, that he can place his left leg in Lankeyshire, and his right leg in Shropshire ; he grows three inches every year, and it is supposed by the Royal Feelersoffecal and Zufferodgeical Society, that he never will reach his full growth. I repeat it, without repetition, he is nine feet high. I say, Jack, how can that be, the whole caravan ain't nine feet high ? Why he don't stand upright, he lies all along. Oh, he lies, does he ; well, he ain't the only one in the caravan as do lie. Here is the wonderful Miss Biffin without legs or arms, considered to be the wonder of the world, as cuts out watch-papers, and paints miniatures, said to be speaking like-nesses, and writes and plays, and does it all with her mouth ; she is supposed to be a perfect loosus nat-tur-a-bus. She dresses her own hair, and cleans her own teeth,

and does it all with her own mouth. Pho, pho ! how can she do that ? She does, I tell you ; she couldn't do it without a mouth, could she ? I don't believe it ! I tell you I see her do it myself ; I'll tell you how she does it—she has the tooth-brush fastened up tight before her, and she wiggle waggles herself, backwards and forwards, in this way. Hot gingerbread nuts ! hot spice gingerbread nuts ! sugar and brandy—all sugar and brandy ! if one warms you for a week, what will a pound do ? Oh, mamma, may I see the peep shows ? Oh, I should like to see them, ma, it's only a penny. Now my little masters and mistresses, this is the most wonderful wonder of all wonders the world ever wondered at—look to the left and you'll see, through the glasses, the misrepresentation of the wonderful combat between the English bull-dogs and the Scotch lion, Wallace, for eight hundred guineas aside ; stand aside you little ragged rascals without any money, and let those little dears come up what is going to pay—now, my little dears, look straight forwards, blow your noses, and don't breathe upon the glasses—look to the left, and you see Mr. Wombwell, the proprietor of the lion, a encouraging of him—look to the right and you see the proprietors of the dogs a encouraging of them—look through the middle hole, and you see the lion a nibbling one of the dogs, and holding one under his foot, while he is whisking out the eyes of another with his tail. Which is the lion, and which is the dogs, Mr. Showman ? Whichever you please my little dears, you pays your money, and has a right to your choice. The like was never seen ; here you have the view of this most extraordinary combat, while 8000 spectators are looking on in the most facetious manner, the whole forming one grand and *malignant* sight, for the small charge of one penny.

For I own it's my delight, &c.

ENCORE TO FIRST VERSE.

SPOKEN. Walk up, walk up, and see the wonderful Anarabaracabaradaliana, the great Physician from Bengal in the Vest Hingus : he possesses the most unparalleled inestimable and never to be matched medicines, and can cure anything incident to humanity, from a corn up to a

consumption ; we have a long list of cures performed by his Eliptical, Asiatical, Panticurical Nervous Cordial, but will only read you 3, out of 3000, the whole of which it would be tedious to read to you—this is one : “ Sir, I was cut in half in a saw pit—cured with one bottle.” “ Sir, I was jammed to death in a linseed oil mill—cured with two bottles.” Now comes the most wonderful of all—“ Sir, venturing too near the powder mills at Feversham, I was by a sudden explosion, blown into a million of atoms ; by this unpleasant accident, I was rendered unfit for my business (a Banker’s clerk) but hearing of your grand Eliptical, Asiatical, Panticurical Nervous Cordial I was persuaded to make essay thereof, the first bottle united my strayed particles, the second animated my shattered frame, the third affected a radical cure, the fourth sent me home to Lombard street, to count sovereigns, carry out bills of acceptance, and recount the wonderful effect of your grand Eliptical, Asiatical, Panticurical Nervous Cordial, that cures all diseases incident to humanity.”—Twenty four ballads for a halfpenny, 4 and 20 for a halfpenny consisting of the following “ Within a mile of Edinburgh—Drops of Brandy—Cast thine eyes my love around—The old Comodore—’Gin a body meet a body—With London now is out of town, Sung by me and my partner, Strike up, Poll, and Tip them the curl, London now is, &c. (sings first verse of London now is out, &c.

For I own, &c.

ENCORE TO SECOND VERSE.

Walk up, walk up, here is the Emperor of all Conjurors, and Prince Regent of Houximepoksimehocopococo he shall take a red hot poker and thrust it into a barrel of gunpowder, and it shall not go off, he will then load a blunderbuss with some of the dental powder as would not explode, charged with 12 leaden bullets which he will fire full in the face of any of the spectators as pleases without their being ever the worser ; he will take the footman of any lady or gentleman, and hang him up to the ceiling of the room, where he will let him hang till he is requested by the company to take him down ; he will bor-

now 5 or 6 shillings from any of the company, which he will never return to them, and all for his own private use and emolument, without any other motive whatever. Now, my little dears, you have seen that, and the next shall be something else—now you have the representation of the taking of Hallgiers, by Lord Sir Isaac Pellhoo, Esquire, who was made Knight of Bath and Bristol for this very performance; look to the right, my little dears, and you'll see the treacherons Turks, a loading of their guns, and the poor Christian slaves a sarving out the red hot balls with their naked hands—there you see the Turkey interpreter, Salami, entreating for to go below, to save his long beard which he is afraid will be shot off by the cannon balls—look a little further you'll see a Mussulman blown up in the air into a million of anatomies; now my little dears look to the left and you'll see in the middle of the ocean the mast of a three-decker man of war with three British seamen clinging to it, for to save their lives and to keep up the Allegory of Britannia rules the Waves—Ten a penny sausages, ten a penny sassages. Bless me, they smell very nice, and look very nice, don't they?—Yes I never eat any, but I should like. What are they made of, Mr. Doleful? I don't know, I have often meant to taste them myself, but never had the resolution to try one of 'em, there's a sort of prejudice, I've heard some people say they're made of—but I never mention it unless I'm certain, tho' it's a curious coincidence—I lost my Dog Pincher on this very spot last night. Ladies and gentlemen—Walk up and see the most surprising performance in the whole fair, by the three brothers Hali, Muley, and Hassan, from the Carribbee Islands of which I am a native myself.—Hali will take a lighted torch, in his hand and jump down the throat of his brother Muley, who will in his turn, take another lighted torch and jump down the throat of his brother Hassan, and tho' Hassan, the elder, is encumbered with the weight of his two brothers Hali and Muley, he will take another torch, throw a flip flap, and jump down his own throat, leaving the Spectators completely in the dark.

For I own it's my delight, &c.