Poetry, Original and Selected.

THE DAYS THAT WE KEPT CHRISTMAS IN.

[Having seen, in a slight fanciful drawing-room entertainment, written in the Yorkshire dialect, by himself, a few verses on the subject of the annually-recurring festival of the civilised world, and perceiving their capability of expansion, have taken the liberty of slightly altering them and adding others, with the object of rendering the whole more popular; and while claiming no merit, trust I have not injured the original.—I. Gorman.]

Oh ! the days that we kept Christmas in, a long time ago,
Were certainly the jolliest a man might ever know;
We quaffed the foaming nut-brown ale, and sang the merry song,
And were dreamt of breaking up till breaking of the day.
Oh ! those indeed were merry days, for high as well as low,
The days that we kept Christmas in, a long time ago.

The morris-dance and hobby-horse were not forgotten then,
With Robin Hood and Little John, and all their merry men;
The maskers and the mummers all, the minstrels and the waits,
The carols 'neath the holly-boughs, the poor folks at the gates.
Oh ! those indeed were merry days, for high as well as low,
The days that we kept Christmas in, a long time ago.

The silken banners gaily waved in each baronial hall,
The brave sirloin and grim boar's head were borne by yeomen tall ;
The Christmas bowl was handed round till we were all agiow,
And when we kissed the maidens sweet beneath the mistletoe.
Oh ! those indeed were merry days, for high as well as low,
The days that we kept Christmas in, a long time ago.

Though times are strangely altered now, we still will merry be
And keep the good old customs up of England great and free ;
And though no boar's head we may boast, and wassail be too dear,
Our constitution we'll maintain with English beef and beer.
Oh ! those indeed were merry days for high as well as low,
The days that we kept Christmas in, a long time ago.

Then let us show, as in times past, we can for others feel,
And seek out poorer than ourselves and help them to a meal ;
And so the stream of kindness still shall generously flow,
And gladden hearts that sadly pine in sorrow here below.
Oh ! those indeed were merry days, for high as well as low,
The days that we kept Christmas in, a long time ago.

"PARS" FROM *THE SPORTING TIMES.*

HEARD AT CANTERBURY CATTLE SHOW.

Dramatis Personæ.—Two Farmers looking at Sussex cows.

Enter Swell with Fair Damsel.

S. : "Kould you informe me if this is the Aldermeye classe?"

F. : "No, sir ! too much dark about 'em. *Guernseys.*"

S. : "And is that Bull here ? Well, dear, *I wants fare oats,*"

Traveller : "Here, waiter, take this steak away, and give it to the poor. It's as tough as ——."

Waiter (blandly) : "We've never 'ad no complaints, sir."

Traveller : "No—because that wetched old cow had em all !"

A traveller in Ireland was most particular in the directions he gave the hotel boots.

"Mind, I *must* be called at six, for I shall miss the boat."

The boots, however, called not, and the gentleman missed his train and his temper.

"Sure, and if it's a hundred year you're stoppin' here ye shall catch the boat every mornin' !"

"Well, he needn't don't forget to-morrow."

The sportsman retired to rest at one a.m.

Two hours later, in the midst of his first sleep, came a thunderclap that was sufficient to arouse the dead.

"House on fire, or what?"

"I beg yer pardon, yer honer, but was it five or six ye wanted to be called at ?"

Sympathy is valuable when it is adequate to the occasion. A poor tenant went to his landlord on rent day and told him that his wife and all his family had been choked to death. She tried to swallow a turnip, but the obstinate vegetable stuck fast, and the cow died. The interested landlord expressed a desire to hear details and wished to know whether the tenant was sure that it was a turnip that killed her. "Yes," was the reply, "we cut her open and found it fast in her throat." "Well," said the landlord, "I am glad you got your turnip back. Now, how about the rent?"

"*Cherchez la femme!*" say the French when some poor devil of an undergraduate's robs his master's till. "What did he back?" is asked in this country, under similar circumstances.

"I lived for years in this nutshell," said an old staff-major, as he bowed out his somewhat limited quarters, "and yet I do not become a colonel."

"The devil is the father of tobacco," said a moralist to the General. "Yes, Old Nickotine, you know."

It is said in the *Cornhill* of this month that, "were there no Greek, the ability to sing drinking songs, and to play impossible music are very attractive; but when two people settle down to the steady work of loving each other for ever and ever, the kitchen inevitably emphasises itself, and the chances of success are greater with a comely housewife than with an accomplished beauty. Music is everywhere, but everywhere not with the house attractive. The domestic consequences are apt to be fearful when a wife knows so much that

She can sing the songs of the Highlands of Scotes,
And the castes of the Wars of the Roses,
And the reason of things—why the Indians wear rings
In their red, aboriginal noses—

But doesn't know chicken from turkey.

Deaf people sometimes hit on strange truths. The other day a gentleman missed his address-book, and his gentleman who was so deaf that, as Hood says, he couldn't hear anything, even if an earwig had carried in the news, and who had been used to say of the missus that he was just married. "Has he got it bad?" shouted the listener, who had evidently misunderstood. There was nothing to do but to shake the head negatively, but the pious man continued, "The ways of Providence are very peculiar, ain't they?" This time there was an affirmative shake of the head. At last the deaf old gentleman raised again, "Do you think he will ever recover? Tell him when you see him how sorry I am, will you?" It was afterwards discovered that he thought the new minister had caught a fever, and was making some added accordingly.

"Tell me," exclaims Dr. Mary Walker, "how would Venus have looked if she had been born a pigeon?" Dear Mary, if she had'nt worn anything else she would have looked ridiculous. Especially at an evening party.

An Arkansas man, who had been out of employment some time, bethought himself of a new branch of industry as yet untried. He advertised for a situation to travel with some temperance lecturer as "a fearful example," the only condition being that he was to have enough whisky to make the example a success.

A Quaker Editor tells a story of Americans were telling stories in an hotel coffee-room, when a gentleman from Kentucky remarked, "That reminds me of a fish that I had. He was a gold fish. I reckon it was the most marksable fish anybody ever heard of. We never noticed anything peculiar about it until one bright sunshiny day, when it hopped up on the edge of its globe and began to sing, for all the world like a nightingale or an oriole. We had a canary bird at the time, and we never saw such an astonished critter as that canary was. When he heard the fish a singing, he wilted right down, and seemed to say, 'Well, I'm blessed if that ain't the best I ever heard it did, for a fact.' But the bird was no singer. After he had finished his tune, the gold-fish yanked his head round under his fin and combed himself, like a bird would, and then the canary, that hadn't got over his surprise, seemed to say again, 'Next thing, you'll be telling me you will be learning a pigeon's egg.' Well, that fish used to jump up on the edge of its globe, and sing just as reg'lar as the day 'ud come, sometimes as often as a dozen times a day. When we wanted it to sing for company, all we had to do was to set a sheet of music where it could see it, and out that gal 'ud come and tackle it, whether it was 'Yankee Doodle' or a coon from an Italian opera. I could have got it a situation in the church choir, at a good fat salary"—after a pause—"only for one thing. We never could teach the blamed thing to turn its own music.

"The Mansion House fund for the relief of Irish distress on Monday amounted to £1,000. The list was only opened on Saturday.

SNAPDRAGON:

A FESTIVE FROLIC.

[IN THREE PARTS AND "BLOW OUT."]

BY

CHARLES FARQUHARSON FINDLAY.

FIT THE FIRST.—"THE KIDS."

They have all slept with one eye open.

Such is the artlessness of childhood. Snark, I feel bound to say, is the prime conspirator—"Snark" is the familiarly affectionate term applied by the nursery to Master Richard, Lord Bubsie, but indeed little instigating is required to induce the trio, his junior brother and two sisters, to sensible slumber, and await the advent of that kindly, chimney-climbing old fellow, Santa Claus. The Jabberwock has been full joyous at the chance of peeping out from under the bed-clothes and seeing, by the half-light of the gas, bewildering sorts of sweetmeats, fruits, and small though to him precious gifts so tumbling to his lump-up stocking : the very biggest he could lay his hands on for the purpose. The Boojum—boisterous, blessed wee Boojum with her laughing eyes, cherub-chubby cheeks, and wealth of yellow hair—the Boojum is beside herself with delight at the very thought of the whole prospect ; whilst Bubsie, who is not big enough yet to be included in these "Hunting of the Snark" or "Alice in Wonderland," nicknames which are of Dick's own adaptation, and who assumes a deep understanding of things beyond with sufficient clearness to specially interest herself in Mr. Claus, chuckled and crowed with right good glee among the rest for a while, but lies now in her tiny crib, as sound as a top.

Dick, Ada, Archy, and Etta, these four diminutive members of a large family—the D'Avigdors—will awake (supposing they all get to sleep this night) on Boxing-Day : for it is the honoured custom of their home that on that day Santa Claus shall not go till Christmas itself has waned—that Christmas shall be given over to household feasting and festivity, and the larger gift-making ; but that Boxing-Day be reserved for their own frolicking and the Pantomime.

"I say, Jacky Jabberwock, are you asleep ?" calls the Snark in a loud whisper from his bed, which is in a room off the nursery.

"No, I aren't," answers the Boojum with a shrill, mercy laugh, "Zes ! I've been feepin' all ze time !"

The Jabberwock jumps out on the floor, and sneaking across in his nightgown, and on tiptoe, he joins the Snark.

"Golly, Jabbie, you see Aunt Matilda with all those boxes of chocolate ?"

"And Turkish delight, and crackers, and Russian sardines, mum !—and these little pistols—Oh nony !—d'ye think It is time to get up yet, Snarkie ?"

"Well, hardly. "What never ? Well—"

"*Hardly ever*," chimes in Jabberwock, with the wise look, for both have had to *learn* much.

"No, but I say, I heard things chinking ; half-crowns and things. I shall buy a horse !" magnificently resolves the Snark.

"Me buy a fo'in masseen !" comes a voice across the large room. "Fo'in masseen like Aunt Matty's and me fo costeons for 'melia and 'eginald." Amelia and Reginald are the magnificent appellations of two old jenny-dolls to whom the Boojum claims maternity, and who certainly require something to cover their now stumpy nakedness.

"Ah, but you not got so much as half-a-cown, Beojie, 'cause why, you only a little girlie, but Papa he got to buy me some half-cowns because we've growed up and we boys."

"For why zoo say zat to me, Jabbie ?" sobs sensitive Boojum now, "zoo not a nice bludha to me."

"Never mind, Boojie dear," consolingly urges the Snark, who always protects Ada, "I saw Uncle Tom put some beauty nice china dolls into your stocking, and Mama popped down dresses and ribbons and furnishings for your nice dolls' house."

Exit Ada's tears. With playful sparkling eyes, on mischief intent, she climbs, night-gowned, over the green railings of her crib and drops on to the carpet. Archy, Dick's friend, who is a figure to steals over to where, by the mantel-piece, hang the knitten receptacles of Santa Claus' munificence. Out of a tender regard for the convenience of that busy old gentleman, these stockings are, in fact, within arm's reach of the chimney. Dick remembers that Dick has done duty for Ada in suspending hers, and that the four gaping hose are all at one height, the Boojum finds herself on the horns of a dilemma. She must either be able to climb or call for the Snark. She slinks slyly to where both boys lie, and mutely exhibits her broad-grinning little face and very "toozy" head close to theirs. It is enough. They are not to be outdone by a girl. In a trice the whole trio are tip-toeing the high fender. Fartively the Snark, mounted on a chair, raises the gas-light slightly, and descended with the burdened stockings one by one. I don't write approval of these midnight pranks—I merely state facts. Boys will be boys ; and girls—girls, for the matter of that.

"*Whisht !*" solicits Dick, handing the Jabberwock, as best he can, that very warm pickle his pedal-covering affords, and which is something infinitely more interesting to Jacky than his own leg, and hung round about with mysterious boxes too big " for insertion "—as the newspaper editors say. But the Snark need have no anxiety on the score of secrecy, for the parental will of them lies by her bed sleeping the sleep of the just, in such a way as to suggest that that highly repectable body of people find respiration not altogether suitable as a silent process.

"'For the Snark was a Boojum you see," quotes Dick, lifting down to Ada her burden, in the centre of which the stocking can scarce be seen. "Now for my own : we'll leave Bubsie's up—eh ?"

"*Zes !*" says the Boojum, "Tum on now, Snarkie."

On the carpet, around the fire-place, in the still watches of the night, and with the illuminating aid of half a gas-burner, these three squat. The witches of "Macbeth" are not more weird. The scene has a more mixed mess. Loud whispers of ecstacy and intense appreciation are all that can be heard. Each is separately occupied at turning out, as fast as eager fingers can, the contents of their delicious stocking. It was too bad of brothers Edwin and Algy to have insisted that each article should be elaborately wound round with several piles of newspaper—by way of adding to the excitement of getting at the gifts and increasing the idea of their bulk !

A miniature stable and horses, with cart and figures of men complete, stand by the side of Dick, who, with the rest, is on what some Scotch children expressively call "all fours," Sandford and Merton, Holiday House, and other story books of like character lie littered between him and Archy. On Jabberwock's other side a host of warriors is already upturned, the *hors de combat* regiments dominate. If they had been fighting and been worsted at Waterloo or Ulundi. An admixture of less belligerent implements of nursery pastime are scattered beside them. The Boojum's boxes of tiny things and wooden dinner-service and furniture are by this time mingled as to their contents in such a way as to give one the idea of a rather badly-managed flitting ; minute bottles of china are lying about exposed to the night air in a manner unnatural, not to say very shameless, manner, and ready-made dresses are getting mixed up with toffee-drops and raisins so distressingly that either the contents or the sweetmeats are in parlous dread of being damaged.

Rapidly around this trio of liliputian midnight marauders, clothed in white from chin to heel, there is accumulating an apparently inextricable confusion of *confetti*-ers, fruits, fancy trifles, toys, and all the hundred and one devices of kindness that go to make the visits of Santa Claus so welcome. "From Uncle Tom to Dear Dick" is on many cards to delve deeper, and this refers to the long-promised imitation of Aldridge's horse repository.

"I Yoicks !" ejaculates the Jabberwock at the sight of the soldiers, "we can play at the Zulus now, Snarkie. Bodie be Thornford and we must her home ; I be Sir Danet Woosely and you Jetsoutheway, so you run off and I catches you, and you're tooken prisoner—eh ?

Dick doesn't seem to see it, but the Boojum is quite agreeable to being sent home from such savages. Her horror of them almost equals that of the ex-Lord Mayor of London.

"Stikes me I do whole lot of chairs and things," soliloquises Ada, rummaging diligently amongst her parcels. "Oh, Snarkie, dusat 'ook here ! It's a titchen 'ange," she explains, holding up a tiny stove with cooking utensils, "and it hung about it." "Zes, it's a titchen 'ange," is the satisfied conclusion she comes to, as she turns to something else.

"Do for me to cook one of your babies !" suggests the cannibal Jabberwock, with whom teasing is a second nature.

"Ah, zen Snarkie took your doose for zoo, but zoo Snarkie ?" appeals the Boojum, who relies on Dick to resent such treasonable hints as he has named.

"Let's have a regular Christmas dinner, Dick," Snark who is just approaching the objectionable age when small boys are always ready to eat and can eat anything with impunity. "Here, we'll sort out all we've got."

The "eh ?" is a drawling essential to all Dick's and Jacky's interrogations.

"Not I. I look for the money first."

"Zes ! And I find my mouth too."

"Well, come on ; I forgot."

Breathless suspense. Vigorous uncoiling of large bundles of torn newspapers.

"Now you got there, Snarkie ?" inquires the Jabberwock in tones of tearfully concentrated interest, and with eyes dilated to their utmost.

"Half-a-sovereign !" answers Dick in applied admiration, holding up a golden coin to the light.

"No !"

"Zes !"

"O !"

"O ! O ! O ! !"

But on closer examination the bright coin proves only to be a new farthing that brother Edwin has mischievously got with many others at a lunch-bar whose Hebes generally have large quantities of new money to circulate for the Mint. Dire disappointment. Fresh delving of hands into the stockings and among the bundles already turned out. Poor wee Boojum pulls a shilling and a new penny from the very toe of her stocking. Truth to say, she is more pleased with the sparkling penny than the shilling. The Jabberwock, with his keen commercial scents for coin, is like a beagle on an otter hunt. The Snark is satisfied there are half-crowns about (having seen them in the hand of Uncle Tom watched through the open hinges of the door by his bedside), and so he calmly determined in his search.

From a ball of paper Jabbie holds, something falls with a muffled ring on to the floor. Its last covering is soon undone. It is a sovereign. Jacky is joy gone mad. Dick looks downcast. Ada helps him to search again amid his hotch-potch surroundings. A delighted cry escapes her as she holds out to Dick in her little dumpling hand the coveted five-shilling piece !

"See, Snarkie, dear, at 'oors !" and there is an accompanying chorus of congratulation that is powerless to wake the nurse in the corner, but rouses a nest of mice immediately close by her. For there is a movement in the cot occupied by Dick, and a nose and a pair of eyes soon protrude themselves, and a baby-voice is heard,

"Help, Bubsie ; Bubsie tum too ?"

"Which it ?" queries the ring-leading Dick, who rather than have her lie and cry, gives Etta the help she calls for to let her join the rest. Bubsie stumps business-like towards the indescribable embarrassment of riches and seats herself by the Boojum. But not alone is the Boojum has one constant companion—her kitten. She does everything but sleep with it, and this self-denying exception is made because, as she herself explains, "P'haps it sleep on Bubsie."

In fact, Bubsie is haunted with the terror of overlaying her pet. But she takes it to bed with her and when wearied with playing and caressing, she will actually kiss its cold nose, and with a "Night, night, Kitty," gently push it down into her crib, to have it beside her again the first thing in the morning. The appointments of Bubsie's stocking are soon unparcelled, because Bubsie is too young yet to be interested in a doll, soft all over, and the sawdust contents of which are early destined to be practically investigated, a couple of cloth picture-books, brilliantly embellished, and a number of infantile etceteras, constitute Bubsie's portion.

So now the quartet devote themselves to this feast of theirs and to arrange out their belongings. No to-morrow, or the next day ! No visits of doctors and dosses and anxious mamas. The present stolen happiness and its surroundings them. Snark does not for an instant reflect that these repeated pieces of Russian toffy he is devouring necessitate an inward application of Epps's called castor. Jabbie's conclusion is that he may be confined to b his Turkish delights turned into English lamentations. Boojum blesses herself in the consumption of unlimited chocolate, and Bubsie stuffs anything and everything she can get into her mouth, and, another moment, neither stopping to consider that copious spoonfuls of soothing syrup may be required before either can expect to awake "as bright as a button."

"O ! mocsie !" suddenly exclaims the Boojum in wonderment, holding up her forefinger to enjoin them to listen.

Sure enough the soft strains—ever coming nearer, now loud beneath the windows, anon dying away in the distance—of stringed instruments was heard.

"The waits !" says the Snark. Then he, in whispered tones, follows with the words the air that these night musicians are sweetly playing.

"O, I loved a little maiden, Bella Brandon,
And now she's gone away from me."

For Dick had had Dickens read to him.

At dusat 'ike angels' mocsie !" reverently criticises Ada with a very solemn face.

"Blind men's music you mean," comments the Snark, with a superior air of authority.

Blind men or angels or what not, it is the knell of all joyful rollicking entertainment. Or perhaps it is the Jabberwock's foolishly pink paper percussion caps on his little toy pistol that attracts parental attention to their doings.

For in a lull of this prattling, Boojum's sharp ears detect footsteps in an ominous voice, clinging to Dick the while, she says eagerly, "Oh, Feeves tummin' ! Twick, twick !" Tuddle dose !" which is the Boojum's rendering of the apprehension that burglars are at hand, and that too much speed can not be made to protect each other by excessive fondling.

Among children, as elders, every one for himself is not an unknown doctrine, and on this occasion she is scuttling off to their respective beds indice Ada to follow suit, and Bubsie by her little glory is left Bubsie to face the "Feeves" by herself.

Mamma is the "fee[illegible]."

Astonishment reigns on her face, but being a wise mama, she has a quiet laugh to herself, and resolves to say nothing to anyone, not even the nurse, till the morning. She looks at the Snark and the Jabberwock and the Boojum, who by this time are in their several beds, and, of course, sound asleep ! She lifts the chilled Bubsie to take her downstairs to herself, and Bubsie rewards her with kisses that are both sticky and damp.

FIT THE SECOND.—"YOUNG BRITON."

Noon on Boxing-Day in Piccadilly.

A knot of "Crutch and Toothpicks"—gay young sparks who can go their paces, and to whom nothing is half so graceful as the matutinal B. and S.—are assembled in Gus Wycombe's chambers at the Albany. Like the sporting-men's clubs in that residental Arcadia, Gus's rooms are somewhat lavishly appointed. The taste of the *ensemble* is indisputable—from the antique carven furniture down to the silver tree-rack of seltzer bottles in active circulation, there is not a flaw. True, Gus sports a few of his theatrical favourites, feminine and otherwise, over the mantel-shelf ; but these form mere fringes of the setting, and in no way mar the harmony of the whole *scenic*. On the mantelpiece itself, in scattered profusion, are the cards of hunting appointments—and a few dans. In an elder dressing gown lounges luxuriously back in his morocco morning chair, the "gilded" occupant of the chambers, and his dog, a setter called *Blind*. The amber liquid he is about to quaff from the tall tumbler just handed to him by Algy D'Avigdor—a sort of friendly familiar to Gus—may possibly restore him to his wonted liveliness.

"Dooeid shame they put Bdd Ancour in such a small part at the Galaxy," piteously complains a downy faced youth, who, having put himself outside his "pick-me-up," now nervously nibbles his toast.

"Eh, Eddie, old man, an awfully awful shame I think it is. Poor Bébé !" sympathetically rejoins Vernon Thwaites, languidly toying with his tawny, and enviably ordered, moustache.

"What's that you fellows say ?" interrogates Gus Wycombe, upon whose susceptible system the effervescent dilution has pronounced actively to play.

"Why, I thought you'd heard of it, Gus," responded the first speaker, Edwin D'Avigdor. "Old Fantsull has only cast Bébé Avansour for first page-boy in the Pantomime, although she has the chief role in the farce."

"About as much as Bébé could undertake," I should say, suggests Gus, with sceptical cynicism that gains no endorsement from his more boyish hearers.

"What house do you go to to-night ?" asks Edwin by way of slightly changing the subject.

"I've two stalls at the Galaxy," answers Wycombe ; "Will you have one of 'em ?"

"Thanks, I could ! Beastly bore ! Governor has a family party on to-night, and Algy and I will both need to turn up. What's the row, that reminds me"—

"Well, don't bother, Ted. I shall be able to tell you how your sweet Bébé gets on with her magnificent part, and——"

"And you'll be able to tell us, too, though perhaps you won't tell us, how *la grande Hélène* pulls through hers !"

And which reference to Gus's weakness there is an all-round smile not particularly relishable to himself.

Mind my writing a note or two here ?" inquires Edwin, pulling off his exquisitely-finished gloves. "Forgot to do them at home, and they're imperative."

"Not at all. You'll find all you want in the escritoire there ; stamped paper to the right, unstamped paper to the left," said Gus, without a movement. And while Edwin D'Avigdor turns aside to do his correspondence the conversation among the others is general and animated—referring principally, however, to the reigning belles of the Galaxy stage, to recent luck at baccarat and écarté, and to the immediate proceedings of the previous evening.

Edwin had three notes to write, and he scribbles vigorously. The first is to his intended fiancée, Angelina Espedair, and runs thus :—

Mine !

To be away from you is banishment indeed—"tis torture more than mortal can bear"—to every moment my ruling dream. Else I must despond, then, for ultimately present to you as my betrothed evening is at this vision in my mind's eye. I am in spirit with you always. Angelina, dear one, should my old lady or the governor object to the arrangement, I might be composed and do not commit yourself to hysterics—because you know, Dolly, you *are* hysterical !—and all will yet be well. Ever yet to be bound in the eternal bond of love. With kisses, thine, EDWIN.

Messrs. Moses & Isaacs.

Gentlemen,—Referring to your circular, I shall be happy to hear from you on what terms you can negociate a little loan for me, say, of six ponies", with the personal security of self and friends. As the matter is slightly pressing meantime, I shall be obliged by your replying in course of post.—Yours faithfully,

EDWIN A. C. D'AVIGDOR.

The third note is to the "guv'nor," whom Edwin always addresses, when the subject is pecuniary, in writing and at his club,—the Senior Symposium.

My dear Sir,—In accordance with your request that I should furnish you with some statement of my finances and liabilities, in view of my probable engagement and marriage to Miss Espedair, I have to express my regret that, owing to the delay in getting in my Lord Lyon's account for Law and in respect of my "coaches'" fees, I find myself in circumstances of some little temporary difficulty—in fact, I am sorry to say, overdrawn at my bankers to the 31st inst. is entirely compromised, and my banking account is already overdrawn.

Under these circumstances and as it is highly desirable I should in a befitting way maintain a position worthy of a suitor for Miss Espedair's hand, I trust that you, sir, will be willing to the worthy way in which my money is expended, may make some thoughtful provision of an annual kind for the increasing exposures of my legal studies, and the demands made upon me socially as your eldest son and heir.

Trusting that of your expressed wish, it is my intention this evening, with her parents' consent, to propose to Miss Espedair's hand, and I trust that I may satisfactorily receive your letter by your complete satisfaction.—I am, my dear sir, your affectionate son,

EDWIN A. C. D'AVIGDOR.

Thus the youth's epistolary exercises are glibly dashed off.

As to his love breathings towards the well-dowered Angelina, these are perhaps proper, and only what should be under the circumstances. The second portion of his amatory *billet* would seem, however, to bear the construction that the young lady in question is not upon the most confidential tessy with her Edwin. Indeed, there would appear to be quite an incoherently unconventional understanding between them.

As Edwin's communication to the eminent firm of usurous Semites, Messrs. Moses and Isaacs, might, it is true, admit of commentary in the way of more elegant elucidation, but this familiarity from the hand of a touch from a contempt as from the knowledge that several of his bon commandes are on convenient relationships of the most obligatory character with Messrs. Moses and Isaacs, who get their "shinty per shent" with a regularity consistent with the receipt of more stringent agency than that of purely free-will on the part of the young bloods who borrow.

The filial statement of his finances—a very general one—preferred to the author of his being, no less than to the little-mentioned *communiqué*, is suggestive of the awkward collapse that often follows on a spell of festivities, but often ripen into reminders, of great or less urgency, even from the most obsequious of one's tradesmen. Besides, the "governor" who is artificled to a London solicitor, and whose countenance pallor can only be attributable to close and extensive reading in the Law—with the most fashionable of "coaches" to assist—is expected to inhale Blackstone, *sans* the outlay of precious metal. Hence Edwin's catering for the gratification of the paternal vanity by the timely jerking in of an allusion to position and kinship, as well as his dutiful deference to the paternal will in the very trivial matter of selecting a wife, exhibit no little degree of shrewd commercial qualities no less than the acquired sense of what he owes to him who throws him on so pleasant a world.

It is all very well to hit *mot argneux* than the wit and the "How do you do" of fresh hands with "Ah, and T.'s" should so distract and flurry poor Edwin, who is rushed for time, as to cause him to carefully address Messrs. Moses and Isaac's letter to Angelina's father, and his letter to Messrs. Moses and Isaacs, and Angelina's letter to the old gentleman, at the Symposium !

But somehow, through a trifling nervousness, the envelopes get mixed and Edwin's interests therefore are slightly endangered—or not.

"Now then, Gus, you'll excuse me toddling off, won't you ? I've an engagement in the Strand, these letters to post, one or two things to do, and I shan't see you till later on ?"

"Oh hang the letters !" denunciates Charley Pendlebury, a lively little specimen of both of coppers, whose most effective weapon is the "cue," and who is in his "set" is the executant of unequalled brakes. "Here, Gus's man will take 'em for you."

"Jolly good thing out Gus Wycombe, as that functionary is heard shuffling towards the room in response to his bell.

"Yis, sir."

"Just post these, will you ?"

"Yis, sir. Anythink more, sir ?"

"No, I think not."

"Thank 'ee, sir."

"Ah, Norton, just dispense these liquids, will you, to our fresh arrivals ?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Oh, don't bother," volunteers the sprightly Algy D'Avigdor, "Since I've begun I may as well finish. A uniform poison, I suppose, for you fellows ?"

"Well, only 'something divided' for me," answers Hubert Everett—a tall man who holds a captaincy in the Guards, and who, singular to say, takes a good deal more care of himself than do his "Crutches" of themselves. "William and I will have a 'split.'"

William is a firmly-knit though slim novitiate of the order (popularly known as "Billy") who has rapidly acquired an amateur prestige as a boxer, and who, in the St. James's Hall display most successfully "put up his dukes."

"Which Mister Halgernon, he do be a most benergetic young gent," expresses Norton benignly, while admiring appreciation as he interestedly surveys the uncorking process of Algy, who has just fired off a piece of chaff at Gus's body-servant, "He do open these bottles momentuously, as I might say, as if he were a like to the manner born, so to speak, as I were myself."

"Norton, I think I shall lunch here to-day—say for four of us—what can you let us have ?" This, of course, from Gus Wycombe.

"Anythink you fancy, sir. A little clear turtle, with turbot and piquant sauce to follow ; mayonnaise of lobster and pigeon-pie ; hot roast beef ; fruits and wines *only reggon* as I might say, sir !"

"Oh, that doesn't matter," responded Jemmy, whose ideas of wedding morality, I regret to say, were somewhat lax.

"Then you don't think that will lessen his attentions ?"

"Not a bit," deliberately lays down the Jumps, crediting Edwin with being a very advanced young man of the world.

"We'll see. I can't have it, you know Jemmy. I'm not going to let Lord Addlepate slip for any puling boy whose father's in the City and whose purse won't run to a brougham."

There are peculiar confidences between Mr. James Jumps and Miss Bebe Avancour.

"What a good boy he is, really !" blushingly simpers the bespangled page as Edwin returns in triumph with his floral offering, "I do believe he deserves a kiss for that." And, there being nobody near, he got it.

Edwin is aflame with his passion. He sees no simulation in Bebe's affectionate fondling of him. He marks no alteration in her mien. She yields as readily to the kiss of his invitations for a nice little dinner at Richmond.

"Well, if I must go now," he by and bye says, "at anyrate I shall see you from the front this evening, or, at least, arrive behind just in time for us to get to our places."

"Yes, do, dear. But first get my message from Mr. Jumps. 'Bye, 'bye, Ted, love." More osculation. The hot-headed swain tears himself away.

"Oh, dear boy—he is one : yes, 'ere it is. No, I 'aven't time to do another now, dear boy, thank 'ee. Shall see you in the evening, I suppose, dear boy ?" And Edwin having got his note, hails a hansom and drives back to the Macklin Club.

As I believe in exact description, this precisely is what Mr. E. A. C. D'Avigdor was. He was a hand physically scrawny and orthographically more than uncertain).

Galaxy Theatre
Christmass

My dear Mr Davingdor,

I must wish you many appy returns of the day and a merry christmass—which are abbreviations are very flatterin' to me but i 'ave thot i would be doin' rong if i was knott to tell you wat you maynot peraps Be aware of which is that i am knott a single young Person as you may suppose but ham married and the Mothur of a Infant. After this, if you Please, Mr Davingdor or Edwin darling that i may Receave your address as Before i shall Knott complane but i hope in Any case too see you shortly as i remain your friends and i may i say my Admirers but i thot i would be doin' rong If i knott done this To let's u no,

I am,

ures Respectively

BEBE A.

The changing colour of Edwin as he reads this very average epistle of a superfluous stage hanger on, who is engaged for her limbs and her face, and not for her talents, is undefinable. The hue on the shell of an ordinary duck's egg is the nearest approximate I can make. *Pauvre Edwin !* His is an every day Love Story : he is only difficult to put up with. And how does he behave now ? He stops at once and takes, at the nearest place available, a neat liqueur brandy and then—he has another. Then he dismisses his cabman with a shilling which is good, and the cabman hardly bear the same description. He walks along the Strand a bit, and he has another liqueur brandy. Now he begins to feel as bold as a lion. But he will tell nobody. He will not go near the Galaxy again. He has been befooled to the top of his bent. He will never more set eyes on the perfidious Bebe.

Angelina !

They tell him he is looking rather "dickey" when he gets back to the Club—the Macklin—which has so misled him into such effusive extravagances of fancy and affection. He smokes a strong cigar, but somehow that does not seem to agree with him, and he far from enjoys his lunch with Gus Wycombe, his brother Algy, and Vernon Thwaites at the Albany. He is *triste*—distraught —and it is ruled that his liver is out of order. Not all the exquisite varieties of Gus's *cuisine* can tempt him to eat. With one bite and a half of what he is pleased to call his mind " he hankers after his ruined partiality for Bebe, with the other.

ANGELINA !

FIT THE THIRD.—"OLD CHUMS."

"Depend upon it, Sir Joseph, the hardening system is the best. I never believed in your goody, goody coddling of young men. Let them see the world, say I, and gain a sturdy independence that comes of a knowledge of the world. There, take my boys, Edwin and Algernon. He's had pretty much his own way, has Edwin, and in a lesser degree Algernon—yet look at them ! Steady as time, proof against the temptations of the town, and destined for the Bar. Algy, formally delivered himself of which, Mr. D'Avigdor, successful stockbroker, crosses his legs and lies back, inwardly thanking God he has such examples to point to as positive assurances that he is right in his style of training up a family as he thinks he should go.

"I have always been disposed to think so," rejoins Sir Joseph Hemsley, an iron-grey baronet of a philanthropic and genial turn, "that some blending of the two styleash, the hardening and the coddling processes, would be the best. A medium between home and outside influences—with proper upbringingah for a boy. As for girlsah, mine are stay-at-home birds entirelyah, and on my word I believe they're better soah !"

"Begad," strikes in an elderly sporting laird, who has a great trick of prefacing his speeches with the ornamentation just set down. "I wish I could get mine to stay at home at all. It's here, there, and everywhere with them. Here's the season, and as soon as we get back to the cold country it's everything jaunting about. But I suppose they must get husbands somehow," bitterly adds he with a sort of philosophic satisfiedness at the energy of their endeavours.

"Ah ! you don't know what it is to have a son, then !" sympathetically interrogates Mr. D'Avigdor, throwing his favourite though friendly taunt at Major Molineux.

"Don't I, by," says the Major, "and if I had, I'm afraid he might quarrel with his old father."

"Such things do happen," reflects D'Avigdor, "but I am happy to say not in my instance."

"I congratulate you, D'Avigdor," shouts a voice from the sofa. "Now this time you'll have had to pay all my Tom's debts and cut him off besides." Mr. Sheldon giving forth this announcement with a festive jauntiness consistent with the fact that it is impossible to say whether it is genuine or forced. Probably it is a mixture of these breaks that form an invitation for the speaker either to proceed himself, or let the subject be for ever closed. The subject is closed. People will not want to hear of Mr. Tom's family skeletons produced on Boxing Day. Mr. Sheldon turns to the lighter and, in his own mind, much pleasanter theme of relating, with many an appreciate chuckle, to these "old chums" of his, how the younger scion of his old house pushes had the spirit, enterprise and precocity to stock a business in the household in respect of the Santa Claus traditions, and how they were discovered redhanded by "my wife"—winding up the characteristically enthusiastic narrative by a dig in the ribs and the ejaculation "Little ruffians !"

"You know I don't at all regret these tricks," he afterwards volunteers, "provided no harm be done to health or life. For the boys, I like the pluck of the thing, and even the baby-girl is high-spirited."

"But of course you'll inflict punishment ?" inquires Sir Joseph.

"That matter I leave to the other side of the house," responds the voice of D'Avigdor. "I confine myself to my elder boys."

"Ah ! quite so."

These commonplaces are interrupted by the entrance of a buttons with a note addressed to Mr. D'Avigdor, senior, which, on a glance he can see to be only Edwin's, and as the gong has sounded for the afternoon's refection the letter is put away, unopened, into a breast pocket, for future consideration.

The Senior Symposium—where these highly interesting and edifying proceedings take place—is a small and exclusive proprietary club in street leading from Pall Mall. No one who has not turned his thirty-five or ever allowed to enter its hallowed portals either as a visitor or a guest, and I should be afraid to put down the aggregate ages of the two hundred or so members who belong to it. Here are to be found antique relics of the military and naval professions, ancient squires, and a few, only a very few, of the more opulent of the commerce. Of all these, there are not the rich, as may well be believed, a sprinkling of legislators, and one—but one—hereditary peer. He has a passable fancy for being odd, this Earl of Rexter, and he is an odd man of the club, for why thus does he so far separate himself from the society of his own order ? Perhaps some explanation is to be found in the circumstance that the bulk of the members of the Symposium are old public schoolfellows, and that the recollection of Rugby is what

Continued on the next Page.

NOTE.—For the benefit of our non-sporting readers, we may explain that a "carf" and betting parlance a "pony" means £25.—EDITOR.

Image © THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.