



DOING THE "HANSOM"

A FARCE

IN

ONE ACT

BY

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AUTHOR OF

*The Little Treasure—The Avalanche—Too Much of a Good
Thing— Betty Martin—Our Nurse, Dorothy.*

LONDON.
THOMAS HAILES LACY
WELLINGTON STREET,
STRAND.

DOING THE " HANSOM."

*First Performed at the Royal Lyceum Theatre,
on Monday, Nov. 3rd, 1856.*

CHARACTERS.

DR. BUMBLEPUPPY - - - MR. BARRETT.
MR. FELIX POTTINGER - - MR. TOOLE.
MR. EVERTON - - - MR. HOLSTEN.
BINGO (*Driver of Hansom, No. 1578*) MR. CALHEM.

MRS. BUMBLEPUPPY - - - MRS. MELVILLE.
ARABELLA (*Bumblepuppy's niece*) - MISS MORELL.
SUSAN - ---MISS GOWARD.

COSTUMES.

DOCTOR.—A suit of black, white cravat, gray hair.
EVERTON.—Walkingsuit.
POTTINGER.—A rather eccentric travelling suit.
BINGO.—Cabman's suit, and badge, 1578.
MRS. B. } Fashionable morning dresses.
ARABELLA. }
SUSAN.—Dark merino dress, cap, and apron.

DOING THE "HANSOM."



Door. Folding Doors.

Fireplace; Window.

Door. Door.

R. L.

The Scene represents a comfortably furnished parlour. Doors, R. and L. ; at back, L. C, a folding-door opening into a withdrawing room; a door, R. C.; a fire-place, a.—a large clock stands on the mantel piece. On the same side of the room a pianoforte—a window, L.—an arm-chair and music stool—a watch on the chimney piece.

MRS. BUMBLEPUPPY, ARABELLA, and EVERTON are discovered at breakfast—SUSAN waiting upon them.

MRS. B. Another cup of coffee, Mr. Everton? (*hands his cup.*) How very fortunate it is that we didn't wait breakfast for Mr. Bumblepuppy. I can't think what can have detained him.

ARABEL. It's very rude of uncle to disappoint Mr. Everton in this manner.

EVERTON. Oh, I daresay he has stopped to breakfast with one of his patients. By-the-bye, does he still continue to receive invalids into his own house?

MRS. B. (*hastily.*) No, no; his last indoor patient was a gentleman of unsound mind who nearly frightened us all out of our lives; he was constantly endeavouring to set the house on fire. I assure you I'll never again allow my house to be converted into a private lunatic asylum. Let me prevail upon you to take a little more fowl.

EVERTON. Not a morsel more, my dear madam; I've made a tremendous breakfast. My early journey up from Brighton this morning had given me a voracious appetite. (*they all rise. ARABELLA and SUSAN go off, removing table into room, L.C. EVERTON looks at his watch?*) Eleven o'clock!

I declare, and I'm obliged to leave town again per rail at *one*. I'm afraid I shan't be able to wait for Bumblepuppy, for I've business to transact before starting. How very vexatious! I wished to speak with him on most particular business ; besides, he may have news for me, as I left orders at my lodgings that, in my absence, all letters should be forwarded to him, so that he might open them, and telegraph to me should their contents be of importance. (*looking round.*) As we're alone, my dear Mrs. Bumblepuppy, I may as well tell you in a few words what that business is. Your niece, Arabella, is now nineteen years of age, she's good looking, well educated, and has very comfortable expectations ; there's only one thing wanting to complete her happiness—that is a husband!

MRS. B. (*laughing.*) That being the case, Mr. Everton, have you any very eligible match to propose ?

EVERTON. I have.

MRS. B. Is the gentleman young ?

EVERTON. He is.

MRS. B. Handsome?

EVERTON. I can't exactly answer for his personal attractions—I believe he's by no means amiss ; he bid fair to be remarkably good looking when I last saw him—but as he was then only eighteen months old, and as he is now seven-and-twenty years of age, it's just possible that—

MRS. B. (*laughing.*) That he may have changed a little in the meanwhile.

EVERTON. Not at all unlikely; however, he has just been left a very snug little legacy.

MRS. B. (*seriously.*) Oh, then he's the very husband for our Arabella.

EVERTON. All that remains to be done, therefore, is that I should talk the matter over with Bumblepuppy.

MRS. B. Not so fast, my dear Mr. Everton. I'm sorry to say that my worthy husband has totally different plans with regard to Arabella. He has promised her hand to the son of an old friend of his—to a young fellow whom he does not know, whom he has never even seen, and whom he has accepted solely upon his father's recommendation. By-the-bye, what is your friend's name ?

EVERTON. Felix Pottinger.

MRS. B. Felix Pottinger! a very genteel appellation. Now my husband's hopeful protege rejoices in the name of Ebenezer Cornpepper. Fancy having to address our dear Arabella as Mrs. Cornpepper.

EVERTON. The very idea is disgusting.

(looks at his watch.

MRS. B. But I'm detaining you. I know you must be in a hurry.

EVERTON. *(taking his hat.)* Well, then, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll write to my young friend to come up at once; you, I know, will espouse his cause.

MRS. B. Let him come, by all means. I'll do anything rather than allow Arabella to become Mrs. Cornpepper. Good morning, my dear Mr. Everton!

Exit, door R.

EVERTON. Good morning, my dear madam. I think I may congratulate myself upon having made it all right in that quarter.

(as EVERTON is about to go out through door, L., C., the folding doors are violently thrown open, and MR. BUMBLEPUPPY rushes in dragging after him MR. FELIX POTTINGER.

MR. B. (R. C.) Thief! robber! highwayman! I've got you, have I?

POTTIN. (R.—*struggling.*) Let me go, will you! I tell you it's all a mistake.

MR. B. *(perceiving EVERTON.)* Ah, old fellow, is that you? I couldn't get back in time for breakfast. *(to POTTINGER whom he still holds by the collar.)* Ruffian! attempt not to escape me! *(giving his other hand to EVERTON.)* My dear boy, how are you? Excuse my left hand.

EVERTON. (L.) Why what the deuce is the matter? However, I've no time to remain with you, as I must be off by the next train.

MR. B. *(panting for breath.)* Matter! Why I've just captured a burglar—a housebreaker—a—a—highway robber!

POTTIN. I'm nothing of the kind! *(struggling.)* I—I—confound it! you're crumpling my all-rounder.

MR. B. All-rounder! Villain! you'll be provided with

an all-rounder of a tighter description before long. Stir not, Jack Sheppard ! (*to* EVERTON.) My dear fellow, pray send me the first policeman you meet.

POTTIN. Pray do not send anything of the kind. I tell you it's a mistake.

MR. B. On your part, Dick Turpin, you'll find it so. (*to* EVERTON.) Now, pray, do not fail.

EVERTON. By-the-way, Bumblepuppy, have you received any letters for me ?

MR. B. None whatever. For goodness sake, make haste !

EVERTON. I fly, Bumblepuppy. *Exit, door R. C.*

POTTIN. (*aside.*) Bumblepuppy ! what an extraordinary name!

MR. B. (*calling after* EVERTON.) An inspector, if possible, (*shutting the door.*) And now, sir, (*to* POTTINGER.) explain what you were about when I discovered you surreptitiously sneaking in at my back door, and burglariously crawling down my passage ? Answer me, caitiff! (*sarcastically.*) Was it for me you were seeking ?

POTTIN. (L.) You! (*aside.*) A bright idea! (*aloud.*) I—I was inquiring for a gentleman of the name of Bumble—Bumble—Bumblepuppy.

MR. B. Ah, what ?

POTTIN. For a Mr. Bumblepuppy, who resides somewhere in this neighbourhood.

MR. B. (*majestically.*) Bumblepuppy! Why, I'm Bumblepuppy.

POTTIN. (*feigning surprise.*) Bless my soul! how uncommonly fortunate.

MR. B. (*interrupting him*) But what on earth made you come in the back way ?

POTTIN. (*confused.*) You see, being totally unacquainted with the locality, and utterly ignorant of modern metropolitan architecture, I—I really mistook the back for the front—ahem! Besides, having only just arrived from the country—

MR. B. (*scrutinizing him narrowly.*) From the country, say you? (*aside.*) This travelling costume—his innocent air—supposing he should prove to be— (*mysteriously.*) You've come by rail ?

POTTIN. Rather!

MR. B. The Great Western?

POTTIN. Eh? oh, of course—the Great South-west-eastern.

MR. B. (*more cordially.*) Why, I've been down at the terminus, waiting for you.

POTTIN. Have you, though? Now, that was kind of you.

MR. B. (*in a transport of emotion.*) Ebenezer Corn-pepper, come to my arms! Beloved Ebenezer!

POTTIN. Respected Bumblepuppy! (*they embrace—aside.*) Who the deuce does he take me for?

MR. B. Why not call me uncle, at once, since you are so soon to marry my niece?

POTTIN. (*aside.*) The devil I am! (*aloud—pathetically.*) My long looked for uncle. (*they embrace again.*)

MR. B. (*mysteriously.*) Hush! not so loud—my wife must know nothing of your arrival, as yet.

POTTIN. (*mysteriously.*) Oh!

MR. B. For I regret to say, my dear fellow, that Mrs. Bumblepuppy is, by no means well disposed towards you.

POTTIN. How very unfortunate.

MR. B. For this reason, we must conceal from her who you really are. I mustn't call you Ebenezer, for she knows your name.

POTTIN. Oh, she does—does she?

MR. B. (*reflecting.*) I—I'll call you Mr. Middleton.

POTTIN. (*abstractedly.*) Ah, do. (*aside.*) I wonder whether 1578 is still waiting for me outside.

MR. B. (*continuing*) I have it! I'll introduce you as a Professor of the Pianoforte.

POTTIN. (*hastily.*) No, don't do anything of the kind.

MR. B. Romantic idea! You shall win my niece's affections under the disguise of a music-master.

POTTIN. But, my dear sir—allow me to inform you that—

MR. B. Not a word, not a word. I'll hasten to inform the ladies that Mr. Middleton, Professor of the Pianoforte, is waiting to see them—ha! ha! So flourish away, my boy, (*forcing him to seat himself at pianoforte.*) flourish away!
Exit, R,

POTTIN. (*alone.*) It's all very fine to say "flourish away," but I don't happen to know how to flourish away! Here's a pretty position. (*bangs the instrument violently with his fists, and then jumps up, runs hastily to the window, and peeps cautiously between the curtains.*) Yes, there he is! My tormentor! my friend with my unlucky 1578. I wonder if he knows which house I'm in? I must have had a good thirty shillings' worth by this time. Ill omened adventure! Luckless concatenation of unfortunate events! I was placidly breakfasting yesterday morning, in my native town, Stoke-upon-Nibbleton, when a letter reached me announcing that the small legacy left me by a relative in France was on the point of being liquidated, and informing me that a cousin of mine in London was commissioned to advance me fifty pounds on account. I fly to town, per express—arrived at the station, I jump into a cab, I order him to convey me to the nearest inn; but, however, after nearly an hour's ride, am I driven up to an inn, called the "Red Lion"—a friend, I suppose. After swallowing a hasty dinner, I rush forth to seek the holder of the fifty pounds. Being a perfect stranger to the metropolis, I completely lose my way, I therefore hail a Hansom cab, give the driver my cousin's address, and tell him to drive me there. As ill luck will have it, I am informed that my cousin is at Brighton, and will not return home for some days. Vexed and disappointed, I order the cabman to drive me back to the Red Lion. "Vich Red Lion?" says my driver; "there's above fifty Red Lions in Lunnon." Fifty Red Lions! and I, in my eager haste, had utterly forgotten to notice either the name of the street, or even the neighbourhood in which my Red Lion was situated. "What's to be done?" said I. "Vy, I'll tell you vot's to be done," says 1578; "engage me by the hour, and we'll go the round of the whole of the Red Lions, until we get to the right un." Off we set—it was then 8 o'clock, P.M., and since then we've visited eight-and-thirty Lions, of every shade and size, without discovering the animal I'm in search of. We've been at it all night, for to my horror I found that I had left my purse in my great coat pocket." Here am I, therefore, with nearly thirty shillings' worth of cab-hire on my shoulders, and

not a farthing in my pocket. What a horrible position ! Mazeppa's excursion on the white horse was a comfortable trip compared with mine, for he had nothing to pay for his ride. The cabman was growing suspicious, and was overwhelming me with a torrent of opprobrious epithets, when a brilliant idea suddenly occurred to me. I perceived a back-garden gate standing open. "If," thought I to myself, "I could get through the garden, slip through the back door, glide down the passage, and dart into the street, on the other side of the house, I might make my escape from 1578." On pretence of an enquiry, I alighted from the cab, I had got safely through the back garden, and was just creeping on tiptoe down the passage, when I was pounced upon by the eccentric Bumblepuppy, who, after assaulting me as a thief and a housebreaker, suddenly addresses me as Ebenezer Cornpepper.

Enter SUSAN, R. H. D. in flat.

SUSAN. (R.) Oh, please sir—

POTTIN. (L.) Well! (*alarmed.*) What's the matter now ?

SUSAN. Please, sir, there's an imperent cabman at the door—he insists upon seeing a young man—as he says must be in this house.

POTTIN. The devil he does !

SUSAN. Is it you, sir ?

POTTIN. (*hastily.*) No, no! Of course not—I never ride. (*confused.*) I came here on all fours—I—I mean on foot; tell him I'm not here.

Enter BINGO, door R. C, he wears a loose drab coloured great coat, a pair of wellingtons over his trowsers, and a white hat.

BINGO, (R.) Oh, oh! you ain't here, ain't you? vot a pity you ain't.

POTTIN. (L., *excessively bewildered.*) Who said I wasn't here. (*to SUSAN.*) Young woman, what did you say I wasn't here for ?

BINGO. (*sarcastically.*) Ah ? Vot did you say he wasn't here for ? (*cracks his whip under her nose.*)

SUSAN. Get out you nasty, vulgar, imperent fellow.

(Exit, D. R. C.)

BINGO. So, so, young man, you wanted to give me the slip, did you ?

POTTIN. I—I assure you—I—I am utterly incapable of so mean, so despicable a—

BINGO. Cut it short young man, and hand me over von pound eight and sixpence—lawful fare, including half a bull borrowed money.

POTTIN. One pound, eight and sixpence! why, one can go to Paris and back for five and twenty shillings.

BINGO. (*coming, down L.*) Thirteen hours, at two shillings per hour, six and twenty bob, lent half a crown to the twenty-eight shillings and sixpence! Hand it over young man or I'll have you up before a magistrate.

POTTIN. (*indignantly.*) Have me up before a magistrate?

BINGO. Yes! What right have you to go riding about in a helegant vehicle like mine if so be as how you arn't got the money to pay for it ?

POTTIN. (*aside—reflecting.*) They said he'd gone to Brighton—I have it. (*aloud.*) Drive me to Brighton ?

BINGO. (*contemptuously.*) Brighton ! I won't drive you a step further. Tip us my fare or I'll hand you over to a bobby.

POTTIN. Hush! don't make such a row, and I'll tell you what I'll do with you. This is my uncle's house. He wants me to marry his niece. Keep quiet and I'll pay you out of the marriage portion.

BINGO. Humbug! I can't wait all that time; if the gentleman's your uncle, vy don't you borrow the money on him, and pay me at once ?

POTTIN. (*aside.*) Not a bad idea.

BINGO. I tell you vot it is—I don't vish to be hard upon you, so I'll give you an hour to get the money in, but you must let us have summat on account to whet my whistle, for I'm werry dry.

POTTIN. (*in a melancholy tone.*) My worthy friend, I deeply regret to inform you that in the present state of my finances, the slightest advance is morally impossible.

BINGO. (*cracking whip angrily.*) Then blow me if I don't—(*crosses to R.*)

POTTIN. (*L., interrupting him.*) Hush! here comes my

uncle, not a word, or you'll endanger your chance of getting paid. Hide that infernal badge, and button up your coat, first settle your cravat a bit, so.

BINGO. Ah ! the uncle ! mums the word,

Enter BUMBLEPUPPY, R,

MR. B. Dear me, what was that cracking noise ? I made certain you were breaking all the strings in the pianoforte.

POTTIN. Strings ! it certainly was a *cord*. (*aside*.) Ahem !

MR. B. (*perceiving* BINGO.) Hallo ! who's that very peculiar looking individual ?

POTTIN. (*C.—embarrassed*.) What—that gentleman ? To be sure—ah, I forgot you didn't know him. (*aside*.) Who the deuce shall I say he is ? (*aloud*.) Oh, his name's—

BINGO. Samivel Bingo.

POTTIN. (*aside to BUMBLEPUPPY, hastily*.) Bingo—Squire Bingo—a country friend of mine—of Bingo Hall ; a great sporting character—eccentric rather, but not a bad sort of fellow.

MR. B. But, dear me, what does he want with that long whip ?

POTTIN. He's a member of the four-in-hand club ; spends two-thirds of his time on the coach-box—the whip's never out of his hand. (*aside to BINGO*.) Not a word !

BINGO. This here's all werry fine, but I'm precious peckish.

MR. B. (*to POTTINGEB*.) What does your sporting friend say ?

POTTIN. Oh, nothing, nothing—he's merely reminding me that I promised to dine with him. (*aside to BINGO*.) Hold your tongue !

BINGO. (*to POXTINGER*.) I shan't hold my tongue—I wants summat to eat.

MR. B. (*to POTTINGER*.) Dear me, Squire Bingo seems rather short tempered when he's hungry. Hadn't you better have some lunch together here ?

POTTIN. (*eagerly.*) On no account—we couldn't think of troubling you. (*aside to BINGO.*) Say you won't take anything.

BINGO. I'm blessed if I say anything of the sort—the werry idea o' wittals is inwigoratin', so let's have the grub up by all means, old gen'lman!

POTTIN. (*to BUMBLEPUPPY who rings bell.*) Provincial frankness—sporting phraseology! You must excuse him. (*aside.*) What a peculiarly uncomfortable position !

Enter SUSAN, door R. C.

MR. B. Susan, get ready some lunch for this gentleman.

SUSAN. (*surprised.*) For *that* gentleman ?

POTTIN. (*aside to SUSAN.*) Take him down to the kitchen and give it him there. (*aside.*) The moment he turns his back I'll effect my escape. (*crosses to R.*)

BINGO. (*to SUSAN.*) What ha' you got in the house, young 'ooman?

SUSAN. Cold beef, and bread and cheese; (*scornfully.*) that isn't good enough for you, perhaps.

BINGO. Plenty good enough, my love. Show us the way—I'm on to it. (*follows SUSAN to door R. C., then turns suddenly round.*) Stop a bit! (*to POTTINGER.*) I see the dodge—vile I'm a vittlin' down in the kitchen, you'll slope down the back garden. No, no, not a bad plant, but it won't do—I'll have my snack here.

MR. B. What's he say—what's he say ?

BINGO. I was a sayin' that it wouldn't be good manners to leave my dear friend here; (*clapping POTTINGER on the shoulder.*) so I'll just have a bit off my thumb here.

MR. B. (*surprised.*) A bit off his thumb ?

POTTIN. A local expression—a country phrase!

MR. B. Well then, Susan, give the gentleman his lunch in the back room.

BINGO. And mind you leave the door open, (*to POTTINGER.*) for I mean to keep my eye upon you, my downy cove. Now then, young 'ooman, perduce your perwisions; (*aside to POTTINGER.*) and while I'm a havin' my provinder, you can borrow the dibs o' the old un.

(*follows SUSAN into room, L. C, the door of which remains open, and seats himself at table, upon which SUSAN places tray, &c.*)

MR. B. (L.—*to* POTTINGER.) He's rather rough in his manners, isn't he ?

POTTIN. A country gentleman of the old school, (*aside.*) I'd better get rid of the fellow at once. (*aloud.*) Bumblepuppy—I mean, my dear uncle, I've a favour to ask of you.

MR. B. Name it, my dear Ebenezer, name it; you know I shall be but too happy to oblige you.

BINGO. (*at back to* SUSAN.) You ain't got such a thing as a nip o' rum in the house, have you ?

SUSAN. (*to* BINGO.) Rum! Well, I never! he is a free and easy customer.

(*goes for bottle, then places it on table.*)

MR. B. (*to* POTTINGER.) Come, my dear boy—out with it.

POTTIN. Well, then, can you accommodate me with one pound eight and sixpence for a few hours ?

MR. B. To be sure I can. Won't you want more ? Nearly related as we shall soon be, I beg you'll use my purse as if it was your own.

POTTIN. You really are extremely kind.

MR. B. Don't name it, my boy. I'll run and fetch you the money. *Exit, L.*

POTTIN. (*to* BINGO.) I say, you sir, I'll settle that little affair directly.

BINGO. (*with his mouth full.*) No hurry, master—I can wait. I'm fillin' up the time werry agreeably.

POTTIN. (*aside.*) Confound the fellow! he seems to be doing dreadful damage among Bumblepuppy's eatables.

Re-enter BUMBLEPUPPY, L., *with money in his hands.*

MR. B. Here you are, my dear boy—here you are! Now, I wager you'll appropriate the money to the purchase of some little present for my niece.

POTTIN. No, I assure you; the fact is, it's for my friend yonder—he asked me to lend it him just now.

MR. B. Oh, it's for him, is it ? Then you don't have it, for, between you and me, I don't like that fellow at all.

POTTIN. (*eagerly.*) But, really, I beg—

MR. B. (*putting the money in his own pocket.*) No, no, my dear boy—not a bit of it !

POTTIN. (*aside.*) Now, confound it! was there ever anything so provoking! I'm as far from the mark as ever.

MR. B. Ah, here comes my wife and niece, Remember, you're Mr. Middleton—so mind your p's and q's.

POTTIN. (*aside—dejectedly.*) How shall I ever get out of this horrible dilemma!

Enter MRS. BUMBLEPUPPY and ARABELLA, R.—SUSAN *goes off, L.C., closing the folding doors.*

MR. B. (*aside to POTTINGER.*) Put your gloves on.

POTTIN. I haven't got any.

MR. B. Just run your hand through your hair.

POTTIN. (*vacantly.*) I haven't got any—I—I mean I—I don't know what I mean. (*arranges his hair.*)

MR. B. That's it—now then. (*introducing.*) Ladies, allow me to present to you, my friend, Mr. Middleton, Professor of the Pianoforte.

POTTIN. (*aside to BUMBLEPUPPY.*) Mind what you're about.

MR. B. (*aside to POTTINGER.*) I'll manage it all for you. (*aloud.*) A rival of Liszt and Thalberg.

ARABEL. I shall be delighted I am sure to cultivate his acquaintance. (*to POTTINGER.*) I've just had a very difficult pianoforte duet sent me, which I should so much like to try over with you.

POTTIN. (*aside.*) Oh, dear, oh, dear! (*aloud.*) I should have been delighted, I'm sure. But the day before yesterday I—I unluckily slipped on a piece of orange peel, and sprained my left wrist. (*aside to BUMBLEPUPPY.*) I tell you I know no more of the piano, than I do of the Welsh harp.

MR. B. (*aside to POTTINGER.*) But your father told me: in his letter that you were an excellent musician.

POTTIN. (*aside to BUMBLEPUPPY.*) Ahem! I do a little occasionally, on the ophicleide.

MR. B. Charming instrument Bella, my dear, he is also a proficient on the ophicleide.

ARABEL. Indeed!

MRS. B. But I presume, Mr. Bumblepuppy, you don't intend to have your niece taught the ophicleide ?

(cracking of a whip heard in room at back.)

MRS. B. Dear me, what noise is that ?

The folding doors, L. C, are thrown open and SUSAN rushes in, pursued by BINGO.

SUSAN. Help! help!

MRS. B. What is the meaning of this disturbance ?

BINGO. *(drunk.)* Why, you see, marm—*(hiccup.)*—this here young woman obstinately refuses to get me another glass o' rum, and I assure you—'pon honour I ain't had more than seven.

MRS. B. *(disdainfully.)* Who is the fellow ?

MR. B. *(rather timidly.)* A friend of Mr. Middleton's, my dear.

POTTIN. *(hastily making signs to BUMBLEPUPPY.)* Who has come to consult Dr. Bumblepuppy about the state of his health. You see, he's a little nervous at present, but he'll be better presently.

BINGO. *(aside to POTTINGER, catching hold of him by the coat tail.)* Hallo, young man, not so fast, 'spose you pay your fare fust, eh ?

POTTIN. You must wait a little longer, my uncle has sent out for change.

BINGO. *(to POTTINGER.)* Werry good! I don't mind waitin' a little longer, but my poor 'os down stairs is hungry, and I tell you wot it is, if within the space o' five minutes you don't fork out the needful to get him a feed o' hay. *(very drunk.)* Vy, blow me if I don't give you in charge. *Exit reeling, R. C.*

POTTIN. *(aside ruefully.)* A feed of hay in five minutes, where the deuce am I to get it? *(meditating.)* Ah! I wonder what this sofa's stuffed with ! I'll lay odds there's hay inside. *(seats himself on sofa, and commences ripping up a seam with his penknife.)*

MR. B. *(aside.)* As the ophicleide will by no means suit Arabella; to prevent Mrs. B's suspicions, I must introduce him as a master of something. 'Gad! I remember his father said he was a very good French scholar.

(*aloud.*) Arabella, dear, besides being a music master, Mr. Middleton is a very proficient French scholar.

POTTIN. Horsehair, by all that's unlucky. (*pulls out a handful of horsehair.*) I never thought upholsterers were so conscientious.

MR. B. And as I know you are most anxious to improve yourself in that language, you may as well have your first lesson at once.

ARABEL. I shall be delighted.

POTTIN. (*aside to BUMBLEPUPPY.*) I know no more of French than Bengalee.

MR. B. Nonsense, Ebenezer, your father said—

(*sound of carriage heard.*)

POTTIN. (*starting.*) Hark! what welcome sounds are those? (*rushing to window.*) What, gone? I'm free—I'm free—I'm delivered of 1578—Huzza! Liberty! liberty! liberty! (*sings.*) La, la, la! *Exit, dancing, R. C.*

MRS. B. Why, the young man must have lost his senses.

MR. B. Bless my soul, what can be the matter with Ebenezer now. *Exit after him, R. C.*

MRS. B. The thing's clear—the young man's a lunatic—another of those gentlemen of unsound mind whom Mr. Bumblepuppy thinks proper to board and lodge in the bosom of his family.

ARABEL. Is it possible?

MRS. B. Beyond a doubt! Mr. Bumblepuppy has not had the courage to tell us of it, because he knows how entirely I have set my face against his receiving any more insane people into the house, so this time he has had recourse to a mean subterfuge.

ARABEL. Well, now really, when we think how strangely he introduced this Mr. Middleton, first as a professor of the pianoforte, then as a proficient in the ophecleide, and afterwards as a teacher of French—

MRS. B. And now this fit of delirious excitement.

ARABEL. For my part I declare I'll have nothing to do with the young man. I'll shut myself up in my own room and never leave it while he remains in the house.

Exit R. H.

MRS. B. I'll lose no time in coming to an understanding with Mr. B. on the subject.

Enter SUSAN, R. C.

SUSAN. Please mum, I want to know what I'm to get for dinner.

MRS. B. (*peevishly.*) Dear dear! I'm so confused with all the goings on that I can't attend to household matters at all. There are ten shillings—buy what you like—I'm sure I don't care. *Exit L. H.*

SUSAN. (*aloud.*) Whatever I please—then I'll have salt fish and egg sauce. Master can't abide it, but I doats on it.

Enter POTTINGER, R. C., who rushes in, in a violent state of excitement and throws himself into an easy chair.

POTTIN. (*gasping.*) A chair—a sofa—hartshorn—smelling salts—chloroform!

SUSAN. (*alarmed.*) Why, what's the matter, sir?

POTTIN. (*nearly crying.*) The wretched famished quadruped had run after a hay cart just passing, but 1578 soon brought him back again.

SUSAN. (*aside.*) The poor gentleman's ill. (*aloud.*) Shall I run for master, sir.

POTTIN. (*not heeding her.*) Bitter disappointment! no sooner had I reached the street door than I was again worried for hay! hay indeed! where the devil am I to get hay? (*to SUSAN, in a stern tragic tone.*) Girl, approach!
(*seizing her by the arm.*)

SUSAN. Adone, sir—you're a'hurtin' of me.

(*drops the silver which she held in her hand.*)

POTTIN. (*eagerly.*) Hollo! what's that?

SUSAN. It's the ten shillings as missus gave me to get whatever I pleased with.

POTTIN. To get whatever you pleased with—then go instantly and get me some hay.

SUSAN. Hay!

POTTIN. (*tragically.*) Hay, girl! or seek another situation.

SUSAN. (*expostulatingly.*) But, please sir—

POTTIN. (*sternly.*) Do as I tell you, girl.

Enter BUMBLEPUPPY, R. D.

MR. B. (*as he enters.*) Of course, Susan, do as this gentleman tells you.

SUSAN. (*going, aside.*) Well, I never! Ten shillings-worth of hay! I'd much sooner have spent the money in fish and egg sauce. *Exit, R. C.*

MR. B. (*looking round*) Hallo! who's been ripping up my furniture?

POTTIN. (*confused*). You see, I—I was, looking for my pocket-handkerchief.

MR. B. What, inside my sofa? Really, my dear fellow, this is too bad of you. What a fidgetty fellow you are. But, let me see—a letter, with the Paris post-mark, has just been forwarded here, for Mr. Everton; it's marked "very immediate," so I must carry out his injunctions, and read it; most likely I shall have to send a telegraph. (*opening letter.*) Why, I declare it contains a fifty-pound note.

POTTIN. (*in a melancholy tone—aside.*) Fifty pounds! The very sum I was to have received.

MR. B. (*puts back note in his pocket*) Why, I declare, the letter's in French. I must get you to translate it for me.

POTTIN. (*moodily.*) I tell you I don't know French.

MR. B. Why I thought you did? your father said so.

POTTIN. (*glancing at letter.*) I had a quarter fourteen years ago—Hallo! what's this I see? (*takes letter out of Bumblepuppy's hand.*)

MR. B. (*retreating in alarm.*) What's the matter now?

POTTIN. That signature—Dubois—Boulevard de la Madeline. My cousin's name, Nicholas Everton, and here my own Christian and surname. (*violently.*) That fifty pound note is mine—mine I tell you.

MR. B. (*stupified with surprise.*) Yours?

POTTIN. Yes, mine, look here, and here. (*pointing to letter.*)

MR. B. But I don't understand French.

POTTIN. Nor I either, but that's nothing to do with it. Names are names, in all languages. "Monsieur Dubois, Boulevard de la Madeline, Paris, forwards the fifty pounds to Nicholas Everton, to be handed to Felix Pottinger." The thing's as plain as the nose upon your face.

MR. B. Can't See what you've got to do with the affair.

POTTIN. You don't see it. (*reads.*) "Mon cher monsieur, (*inventing.*) Ici on parle Francais, allez vous en comment vous portez vous.—Dubois, Boulevard de la

Madeline," which literally translated signifies—" So stump up old gentleman."

MR. B. Stump up, you! Why you're Ebenezer Cornpepper.

POTTIN. Not a bit of it. I never was Ebenezer Cornpepper—I'm Felix Pottinger, of Stump upon Middleton, the legatee in question.

MR. B. (*drawing back.*) You're nothing of the kind, sir, and since you're not Ebenezer Cornpepper, I'll tell you what you are—you're a barefaced swindler.

POTTIN. This is a mere evasion of the question, yield up that fifty pounds to its lawful owners

MR. B. (*in a towering passion.*) Never! now mark me, sir! I first find you feloniously sneaking down my passage, you then attempt to chouse me out of twenty-eight shillings and sixpence for some villanous accomplice whom you endeavour to pass off upon me, as a country gentleman, a landed proprietor, and a member of the four in hand club. And now you attempt to rob me of a fifty pound note.

POTTIN. (*exasperated—bawling.*) But when I tell you that the money has been forwarded to Everton on purpose for me—

MR. B. Get out of my house, sir!

POTTIN. Never! Till you have given me my fifty pounds (*suddenly, and rushing at BUMBLEPUPPY, whom he seizes by the collar.*) My money I say.

MR. B. (*calling.*) Help! Mrs. Bumblepuppy! help!

Enter MRS. BUMBLEPUPPY, L.

(*disengaging himself from Pottinger's grasp.*) Mrs. B., just keep your eye on this unblushing delinquent while I run for assistance. (*rushes, off, R. C., and slams the door in Pottinger's face.*)

POTTIN. (*in great excitement.*) The hoary old sinner has bolted with my money. (*shaking door,*) Thief! robber! my fifty pound.

MRS. B. (*aside.*) Here's a dreadful situation. How very wrong of Mr. B. to leave me alone with this raving lunatic.

POTTIN. Madam, allow me to inform you that your husband is an old shuffler—an antiquated impostor.

MRS. B. (*trembling.*) My good, sir, how can you say so?

POTTIN. He has in his possession a fifty pound note which was forwarded here for me and he refuses to give it up. Read that, and judge for yourself. (*pointing to letter.*) Dubois, Everton, Pottinger.

MRS. B. (*aside.*) Stark, staring mad. Oh dear, I am so frightened.

POTTIN. I tell you madam, I want the money, I can't do without it; here am I a stranger in the metropolis with one pound eight shillings and sixpence worth of cab hire on my shoulders, and a starving horse on my conscience.

MRS. B. (*aside.*) How incoherently he talks. A con-confirmed maniac evidently.

POTTIN. You must know where your husband keeps his money. Hand me over fifty pounds instantly, or I'll not answer for the consequences.

MRS. B. (*aside.*) He's getting worse and worse! (*aloud.*) I assure you, sir, it is utterly out of my power.

POTTIN. (*sarcastically.*) Oh, indeed! you pretend to tell me you haven't such a paltry sum in the house as fifty pounds. Very good, madam, then I'll seize for the amount. This furniture's mine. (*taking up arm chair and music stool*)

Enter BINGO, D.R.C.

POTTIN. Oh, you're there are you.

BINGO. Vere's that 'ere feed o' hay? Come, I'm not a going to stand any more gammon, pay us my vun pun eight and six, and let me be off.

POTTIN. You hear him, madam! you hear the un-availing entreaties of this ill used creditor? Once more, madam, will you pay me my fifty pounds?

MRS. B. Have I not told you, sir, that it is utterly out of my power.

POTTIN. Then justice must take its course. I levy a distraint and act as my own broker. (*taking a large clock off chimney piece and giving it to BINGO.*) 1578, here's your fare.

MRS. B. (*alarmed.*) Bless my soul!

BINGO. (*astonished.*) Vy, That am I to do with this here?

DOING THE HANSOM. 21

POTTIN. Whatever you please—sell it, pawn it, pledge it, spout it, and deduct one pound eight and sixpence from the proceeds.

BINGO. Come, that's summat like business. (*aside.*) I'm all right this time.

Exit with clock under his arm, R. D. in F,

MRS. B. Gracious goodness, sir, you surely will not allow—

POTTIN. (*sternly.*) Seek not madam, to influence an instrument of the law while in the execution of his functions! Ah! a watch. (*takes a watch off chimney piece.*)

MRS. B. My husband's watch!

POTTIN. Your husband's? so much the better. Let me see how shall I make up fifty pounds worth? (*attempts to lift up the pianoforte.*) Too heavy! where do you keep your plate?

MRS. B. (*trembling.*) Plate! We—we—hav—e—n't—got any.

POTTIN. Not got any plate, what a wretchedly organized establishment. Lets see what the next room contains. *Exit into room, L. H.*

MRS. B. (*calling after him.*) Sir, that's my bed-room; what's he about? he's rummaging in all my drawers.

Re-enter POTTINGER, L. door, with shawl, bonnet, &c.

POTTIN. This is all I can find.

MRS. B. Gracious goodness—my new cashmere shawl, that cost ten pounds.

POTTIN. Ten pounds, madam! I require fifty pounds. *Exit into room, R. H.*

MRS. B. (*screaming.*) He's gone into Arabella's room. (*calling.*) Help! Susan! (*rings bell.*)

Re-enter POTTINGER, R. door, with a silk dress, followed by ARABELLA, who is endeavouring to take it away from him.

ARABEL. Sir, you'll tear it; take care—it's bran new.

POTTIN. So much the better—it will fetch more.

ARABEL. (*putting on one side.*) Give me my dress, sir.

MRS. B. (*pulling on the other side.*) Give me my shawl, sir!

POTTIN. (*hugging the articles tightly in his arms.*) They're mine, I tell you—all mine.

MRS. B. (*to ARABELLA.*) Dear, dear ! this is what your uncle exposes us to by bringing maniacs into the house.

POTTIN. (*laying shawl on floor and making a bundle of various articles.*) I'm off with these to the nearest slop-shop.

Enter BUMBLE PUPPY, door R. C.

MR. B. (*indignantly.*) I've only been able to find one policeman. and he was off duty.

MRS. B. Ah, here's my husband at last.

POTTIN. (*running towards him.*) Venerable impostor, give me up my fifty-pound note.

MR. B. Never!

POTTIN. Rogue!

MR. B. Swindler!

POTTIN. Rascal!

MR. B. Robber ! (*they seize each other by the collar.*)

MRS. B. They're going to fight — there'll be murder done.

Enter EVERTON, door R. C.

ARABEL. (*rushing to him.*) Oh, Mr. Everton, separate them—separate them!

POTTIN. Everton !—What, my cousin Everton!

MR. B. (*sneeringly.*) Your cousin ! Pitiful subterfuge ! Everton will soon unmask you.

POTTIN. (*to EVERTON.*) I'm Felix Pottinger, of Stump-upon-Nibbleton.

MRS. B. (*confused.*) Felix Pottinger! (*converses aside with ARABELLA.*)

EVERTON. Felix Pottinger! That's my cousin's name, certainly.

MR. B. (*aside to EVERTON.*) Don't believe him—he's one of the swell mob. Just ask him for some account of himself.

POTTIN. (*aside to EVERTON.*) Keep your eye on him—he's a supernatural old sharper. Just ask him for that bank-note.

EVERTON. What bank-note ?

POTTIN. A bank-note for fifty pounds forwarded to you for transmission to me. Just run your eye over that.

(*giving the letter which he took from BUMBLEPUPPY.*)

EVERTON. (*examining letter.*) Well, yes—I am herein commissioned to pay to Mr. Felix Pottinger, of Stump-upon-Nibbleton, the sum of fifty pounds on account of legacy left him. But you were only eighteen months old when I last saw you—how the deuce am I to know whether you're yourself?

POTTIN. (*producing another letter.*) Here's my letter of advice requesting me to call on you.

EVERTON. Ah, this places the matter beyond a doubt. My dear Felix, (*shaking him by the hand.*) how have you been the last five-and-twenty years?

POTTIN. As well as can be expected under circumstances.

MR. B. (*confused.*) Hum—ha—dear me; so the note really was for you, after all. How very extraordinary!

(*gives him the fifty-pound note.*)

POTTIN. Exchange is no robbery—(*giving him his watch.*) Here's your chronometer.

ARABEL. Then he isn't a maniac!—Oh dear, I'm so glad.

MRS. B. My dear, the whole affair is a complete mystery to me.

POTTIN. Don't draw too largely on your imaginations, ladies. I'll explain everything on some future occasion,

EVERTON. Mrs. Bumblepuppy, this is the gentleman, of whom I spoke to you this morning; and, therefore, doctor, allow me, with your permission, and without further preface, to request the hand of your niece for my cousin. Mr. Felix Pottinger.

MR. B. Impossible.

EVERTON. Impossible? Why Mrs. B. has already given her consent to—

MR. B. (*magniloquently.*) My niece's hand is already promised to Mr. Ebenezer Cornpepper.

ARABEL. Uncle, I declare I'll never marry any one with such an ugly name as Cornpepper.

POTTIN. (*kissing her hand.*) Bravo — that's right! Upon my life she's an uncommon nice girl.

MR. B. Well, well—we'll talk the matter over after dinner. (*to POTTINGER.*) You'll stop and dine with us?

EVERTON. Of course he will. Dear me, how glad I am that I missed the train.

Enter BINGO, D. R. C.

BINGO. (*to* POTTINGER.) Here you are, sir—they lent two pounds on the clock. It's nearly another hour now, so if I give you the half sovereign, we shall be almost square.

POTTIN. Keep the half sovereign for yourself, and hand the ticket over to Mr. Bumblepuppy.

MR. B. Bless my soul! what's this? a pawnbroker's ticket! "Elegant French clock—two pounds." What's the meaning of all this?

Enter SUSAN, *door* R. C., *with an immense bundle of hay under each arm.*

SUSAN. (*to* POTTINGER.) Here you are, sir—the rest is down stairs.

MR. B. (*astounded.*) What new mystery is this?

SUSAN. Please, sir, it's the hay as that gen'lman said I was to buy with the ten shillings as missus gave me for the dinner. You said I was to—

MR. B. (*astounded.*) I said so?

POTTIN. My dear doctor, don't get in a passion—I'll explain everything after dinner. Susan, present those two bundles of provender, as a testimonial, to my friend with the whip yonder. I say, No. 1578, your nocturnal drive hasn't turned out such a bad spec after all. Call for me to-morrow morning, and we'll resume our expedition in search of my Red Lion; and, I say, for the future never be too hard upon an unfortunate fare, and do not set a man down as dishonest merely because he has no money in his pocket. (*to* AUDIENCE.) Appearances were dreadfully against me, but yet I think you'll all now admit I'm incapable of cheating a cab driver, although I have a very fair notion of "Doing the 'Handsome'"—(Hansom.)

CURTAIN.