

MAD AS A HATTER.

An original Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

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AUTHOR OF

Braganzio the Brigand.



THOMAS HAILES LACY,

89, STRAND, LONDON.

NOTE.—The proverb "Mad as a Hatter" is said to have had its origin in the early days of Quakerism, when the eccentric broad-brimmed hats of the Friends obtained for them the nick-name of Hatters. Like all Reformers, they were looked upon at first as mad; hence the expression, Mad as a Hatter, became a common one.

MAD AS A HATTER.

First performed at the New Royalty Theatre (under the direction of Mrs. Charles Selby), on Monday, December 7th, 1863.

Characters.

MR. CROTCHETTY FUZZLETON (*an eccentric old Gentleman, with very curious theories on the subject of moral control over mental aberration*).....Mr. W. H. STEPHENS.
MR. CHARLES HAREBRAIN (*his Nephew, the unfortunate victim of the theories above mentioned*)..... Mr. D. JAMES.
DR. AMENS (*the great expounder of the theory of Amentia*)..... Mr. F. HUGHES.
MR. WYE ZED (*F.R.C.S., author of treatise on "Congenital Imbecility"*)Mr. PHELPS.
BOB (*author of "Nothing at all"*,..... Mr. FELIX ROGERS.
FANNY FUZZLETON.....Miss MARIAH LESTER.
MARIA JANE.....Miss LYDIA MAITLAND.

Costumes.—MODERN.

CROTCHETTY FUZZLETON.—A loose dressing gown, pair of slippers down at the heels, and an eccentric rough grey wig.

DR. AMENS.—A complete suit of black, old-fashioned dress coat, grey wig, and a double eye-glass.

MR. WYE ZED.—A fashionable suit of clothes, black frock coat, and black wig.

MAD AS A HATTER.



SCENE.—*A Drawing Room well furnished—at the back a large window opening into a passage with glass roof—door leading to passage—door, R. 1 E. to Fuzzton's study—door, R. 2 E. leading to Fanny's room—fireplace, R.—fender and fire irons—large sofa, R. C.—work table—table, L., covered with large books—books strewed about the floor, piled up in the corner, &c.—easy chairs, &c.*

FANNY discovered seated on sofa, R. C.

FANNY. O dear me! how dreadfully dull this place is? I declare I'm getting quite moped. Not a man to speak to except Bob and he's always grumbling and growling like a mastiff with the toothache. Papa don't count now, he's so eternally wrapped up in those horrid books of his and theories, and all that rubbish; puzzling his brains about all sorts of madmen, 'till he's a perfect lunatic asylum in himself. He's no more use than a bear; not as much, for one might amuse one's self by making a bear dance or stand on the top of a pole, and ask for buns. But, heighho! we never get any amusement here. (*a sound of something heavy falling at door, C.*) Good gracious! what is that? (*more noise—FANNY runs up to door, L., and opens it—BOB appears with a pile of books in his arms, which he keeps dropping one by one*) Why, Bob, what's the matter now?

BOB. (*sulkily*) Ah! you may well ask, miss, what the matter is. Blessed if I would not sooner be an Ingian drumming-dairy than what I is! 'Ere's a nice lot, and there's about twenty more in differing parts of the passage as 'ave dropped on my toes us I cum along, just like a lot of young gillintines.

(*puts books on table, L.—they all tumble off again—BOB begins picking them up*)

FANNY. (*laughing*) Why, Bob, how clumsy you are! Can't you see there's not room there for those books?

BOB. No, miss; and I should like to know where there is room? There's mister a sitting in his study there up to his blessed neck in them; and there's the garrets so chock full of them, there is not room for a mouse to stand on his hind legs there, and the coal cellars is running over with them.

FUZZLE. (*from door, R.*) Bob! Bob!

BOB. Coming, sir! I'm a coming. There now, he says he's a studying the faces of the human mind; blessed if I don't wish he'd study my poor feet a little!

FUZZLE. (*without*) Bob ! Bob !

BOB. Coming, sir ! (*taking up books*)

Enter FUZZLETON in dressing gown and slippers, with hair disordered, &c, R. 1 E.

FUZZLE. Now, Bob, are you ever going to bring those books ? Good morning, my dear. (*to FANNY*)

FANNY. (*running up and kissing him*) O, papa ! I'm so glad to see you. (*rapidly*) Do come out for a ride with me this afternoon, and we'll go and call on the Pennethornes, and come back over the Downs, and it will be so delightful!

FUZZLE. (*trying to pass her to get to the books*) Pooh, pooh! my dear, don't talk to me of going out riding; I'm deep in the subject of Amentia, and I want my new work. (*FANNY pouts, sits on sofa, R., and resumes work*) Come now, Bob. (*turns and sees BOB, who has put the books on the ground, and is sitting on them wiping his brow, L.*) Confound it, you lazy scoundrel, don't sit on Dr. Muddle!

BOB. I ain't a sitting on no doctor—wish I was, 'cos he might be softer—I'm a sitting on a heap of rubbish.

FUZZLE. Rubbish, sir! do you dare to call that rubbish? (*pulling BOB away and taking up some of the books*) You ignorant bumpkin ! why here is the " Treatise on the Correlative Functions of the Cerebellum and Pancreas; or the Effects of Repletion on the Human Brain," twenty-four volumes of erudite research, and you call it rubbish ! (*BOB is occupied in piling up the rest of the books*)

Enter MARIA, with letter, L.

MARIA. Letter for you, sir. (*gives it and exit, L.*)

FUZZLE. Eh, what? a letter? ah! from Dr. Buz, I hope. (*looking at letter*) No, it is not from him ; well, never mind, it will keep. (*putting letter in his pocket*)

FANNY. (*getting up*) O, papa! I declare you've not opened the letter, it may be something important; do let me read it. (*taking it from his pocket*) Why, it's from uncle Henry, I do declare, here is the Norwich post-mark—there, now, do read it. (*FANNY tries to look over his shoulder one side, and BOB on the other*)

FUZZLE. (*reading letter*) Eh ? bless me, what's this ? a real live mad man ! (*rubbing his hands*) Good gracious, this is delightful! I wonder what form his madness takes ? Now I shall have a magnificent opportunity of bringing my moral force to bear upon a disordered intellect. O, this is delightful!

Let me go and read as much of Dr. Muddle as I can before he comes. (*seizes up books and exit R.*)

FANNY. (*picking up letter*) Good gracious ! I declare papa's getting quite silly, trotting off like a perambulating bookshelf. Well, I may as well read the letter now. (*reading letter*) " Dear Fuzzleton,—My mad son——" (good gracious ! why that must be Charlie, whom I have not seen since he was a boy.) " My mad son will be with you to-morrow." (That's to-day.) " For heaven's sake take care of him, and keep him steady; don't let him make an ass of himself with your little Fanny." (Indeed, that's pretty good, the old wretch !) " Above all, don't addle his brains with any of your rubbish, for they are addled enough already. Love and a box on the ear to little Fanny—I suppose she's out of short frocks now." (Out of short frocks, indeed ! when I'm seventeen next birthday.) " Good-bye, no more from yours truly, Henry Harebrain. P.S.—You may keep the boy as long as you like ; take care he don't burn the house down."

BOB. (*who has been peeping over her shoulder all the time*) Ah! that's very likely—there'll be a nice pair of them—him and master—a couple of Beadlemites.

FANNY. (*sharply*) Bob, don't be impertinent—go and attend to your own business, and send Maria Jane to my room.

Exit door, R. 2 E.

BOB. (*as she goes out*) Yes, miss, I'm agoing. I suppose she was angry because I could read—stuck-up creatures, masters and missuses is. Why I've read all the outsides of master's books, and that's a tidy lot of reading for one man. I looked into one, one day, and, my eye ! there was the pictur' of a man with his skin all off, and a lot of crooked blue and red lines over him like the rivers one sees in a map. It called it the archeries ; but I knows better than that! why, archery's a shooting with a bow and arrow, like Miss Fanny does—a man can't be an archery—not he ! (*is going out, L., when he meets MARIA*) Oh! here's Maria.

MARIA. Well, Bob, what are you doing here—grumbling, as usual ?

BOB. Ah, you'd grumble if you was me, leading the life of a circumnavigating library as I does. I say, Maria, who do you think's a coming to stay here now ?

MARIA. I don't know, I'm sure, unless it's one of those palavering doctors what eats so much and talks likes the scientific articles in my *Family Herald*.

BOB. No ; it ain't no doctor—it's a madman !

MARIA. A madman? goodness me! Bob, that *his* hawful !

BOB. Yes—a real live madman! (*chuckling*) Won't he and master enjoy 'emselves ? I hope *he* ain't a going to bring a lot

of fat books with him, else I'm blowed if he won't have to vegetate in the back garden.

MARIA. Oh, Bob ! (*seizing him convulsively by the arm*) Do you think he'll be a dangerous loonatic?

BOB. (*reflecting*) Well, I don't quite know; but I should think it uncommonly likely, that if anything happened to put his dander up, he'd take and tear all your back hair out—ribbons and all.

MARIA. O, Bob! hi declare hi shall faint hif you go on like that! (*leaning against him*)

BOB. (*pushing her off*) Here! I say—get along with you, Maria. A little of that goes a long way, Maria. Why can't you faint in the fender among the cinders and the fire irons—it's nice and snug there !

MARIA. O, Bob, how can you be so cruel? I declare you've quite upset me. (*leans heavier still—he tries to push her off*)

BOB. Upset you—I like that— you've nearly upset me.

MARIA. (*sobbing hysterically*) Oh dear! oh dear! to think—that—you—Bob, should—trample on my buzzom like this. (*buries her head in his breast*)

BOB. I ain't a trampling on your bosom—you're a sticking your hair pins into mine. (*in a soothing tone*) I say; come now, don't go a burrowing in my veskit like a melancholy rabbit—you're a washing all the starch out of my shirt front. (*tries to get her to a chair*)

MARIA. (*sobbing*) Oh! I'm going off.

BOB. I wish you would. Blessed if she ain't a sort of shemale New River.

MARIA. Oh, support me, Bob!

BOB. Shan't do nothing of the sort; I ain't your parish, or the work'us, nor yet your husband, thank goodness! (*gets her to arm chair*)

MARIA. (*throwing herself on his neck in a flood of tears*) Oh, Bob, dear darling Bob, say that blessed word again. (*puts her arms round his neck*)

BOB. (*speaking with difficulty*) I tell you what it is, Maria, if you're a going to tie yourself round my neck like a female bore constructor, I shall have to catch you one on the nob with one of them there books.

MARIA. Oh, mercy me ! he's a going to murder me. Oh, help ! (*goes off into kicking hysterics*)

BOB. (*rushing about room*) Oh law ! Oh law! What's to be done! Bless'd if an eclectic eel ain't a joke to this. (*seizes large feather brush and puts it in the fire, then holds it under MARIA'S nose*) Here, take a smell at this, it's very refreshing. What cussed critters women is. (*fans her with footstool, she begins to come too*)

MARIA. Oh, Bob dear! I'm so weak—a little water.

BOB. (*looking about for water*) There ain't no water, won't a little ink do as well?

FUZZLE. (*without*) Bob, Bob!

BOB. Oh mercy, here's the governor;

MARIA. (*faintly*) Bob, promise you'll never leave me, will you?

BOB. Oh! I'll promise anything if you'll only revive. (*kisses her several times*) There now, do revive.

MARIA *revives rapidly and exits, L., just as*

FUZZLETON *comes in, R. 1 E.*

FUZZLE. Bob, you lazy scoundrel, why can't you come when you're called—you're always grinning and smirking at that girl?

BOB. (*indignantly*) I wasn't a doing nothing of the sort, she was a smirking at me.

FUZZLE. (*stopping him*) Hold your tongue, sir, and listen to me. (*confidentially*) I expect a young nephew of mine to-day, I'm sorry to say he's suffering from an aberration of intellect.

BOB. Which?

FUZZLE. Dementia; non compos mentis—in short, he will require a great deal of attention.

BOB. A non compos mentis in shorts! Wonder what sort of an animal that is?

FUZZLE. Now, Bob, you must watch him for we never know how soon the homicidal mania may develop itself. He might take it into his head to sever your jugular artery, Bob. (*makes gesture suggestive of cutting throat*) So look after him, but humour him, Bob, soothe him, don't thwart him.

BOB. Oh! I'll keep an eye on him, sir, trust me. (*aside*) I wish master would try the hominyside manier on himself. (*bell heard*)

FUZZLE. (*excitedly*) There he is—there he is! Bob, go and let him in. *Exit BOB, C. from L.*

I declare I feel so excited I can hardly contain myself. I have sent for Amens and Wye Zed, and they can examine him at their leisure. They're certain to say he's mad, and then I can offer to take charge of him. Oh! what a delightful future opens before me!—One constant triumph of moral force over the fury of a mind diseased. I hope he's violent—Ah! here he comes—I must be off. *Exit, R. 1 E.*

Enter CHARLES, C. from L., followed by BOB—BOB watches every movement very carefully.

CHARLES. Oh, here we are—all right, old cock! Take my things up to my room, and get me something to eat; I'm dreadfully hungry—half-starved—look sharp! (*BOB has been*

looking round the room, and finally goes to fireplace and takes fire irons—CHARLES turns and sees him)

BOB. (*aside—going out*) I ain't a going to have him playing the devil's tattoo on his own head.

CHARLES. What the devil is he after?

BOB *shoulders fire irons, and exits, C.*

Well that's a queer sort of fish, I must say. I suppose he's afraid I should poke the fire out—(*looking round*) Hum! nice place this : it's so long since I was here, I quite forget it. If I remember right, my cousin Fanny ought to be an uncommonly pretty girl. She'll be quite a fine young woman now. (*sits on couch, R.*) Oh, I suppose this is her work. (*taking up work*) Well I shall make up to her—anyhow, it's something to do. (FUZZLETON *peeps in, R. 1 E., FANNY, R. 2 E., MARIA, L., and BOB L. C., all together*) I wonder how my uncle likes the governor billeting me here in this off-hand manner—it's rather a cool proceeding, certainly. But then the old boy is *so mad*—mad as a hatter. (*expressive gesture from, all*) Well, this place can't be duller than Norwich, that's one blessing. (*rises, and goes to table, L.*) Why what are all these great lumbering books? (*takes up books—reading*) "Gupp on Congenital Imbecility," "Duffer on the Diagnosis of Kleptomania." Humph ! lively collection of works—those ain't Miss Fanny's property, I'll swear—some of uncle's rubbish. (FUZZLETON *coughs—CHARLES turns round—all disappear quickly, closing doors*)

CHARLES. (*standing astonished*) Well, that's an extraordinary proceeding. All the doors can't open and shut of their own accord—I'm certain I saw a female dress here. (*running up to door, L.—opens door, and discovers MARIA, whom he drags in playfully*)

MARIA. (*falling on knees*) Oh ! please, sir, spare my life ; I'm only seventeen, and have a poor mother !

(CHARLES *bursting out laughing and lifting MARIA up, brings her down stage—BOB re-appears, L. C.*)

BOB. Well, I'm blessed if there ain't that young lunatic a hugging of Maria !

CHARLES. You absurd girl! ha ! ha ! ha ! No, I'll let you off with a kiss this time. (*kisses her—BOB utters an exclamation—CHARLES turns round and BOB disappears—CHARLES leaves go of MARIA, she rushes off, L.—still laughing*) Well, of all the extraordinary young women I ever saw in my life, that girl beats all—why she must be mad ! Ha ! ha ! ha ! but she's very nice looking! I'll go and look after her. (*goes up, singing, L. C. runs against BOB who is just running in*) Hollo! now, stupid, where are you going to ?

BOB. (*dancing about in agony*) I wish you'd keep off my corns.

CHARLES. (*laughing*) Poor old cripple! (*trying to get by BOB*) Here, let me pass, do !

BOB. (*keeping him back*) You just stay where you are, my young compasses; none of your little games down here—they won't do.

CHARLES. Oh, that's where the land lies, is it ? So, you're the dragon that guards the fair one, are you ? Come out of my way. (*pushes by him—struggle—CHARLES trips BOB up—FUZZLETON enters R. 2 E., just in time to see BOB go down*)

FUZZLE. Bless me, he's getting violent already ! I must calm him—subdue him by moral force. (*he walks slowly up to CHARLES, fixing him with his eyes after the approved fashion—CHARLES looks abashed, BOB gets up rubbing himself*) How d'y'e do, Charles—having a game of romps with Bob, eh? (*takes hold of his hand and feels his pulse*)

CHARLES. (*embarrassed*) Really, uncle, I beg your pardon ; but the fact of the matter is, we were just chaffing a little.

FUZZLE. (*smiling, and still fixing CHARLES as before, aside*) Very rapid pulse. Ah! precisely so.

CHARLES. (*aside*) What a staring old idiot it is !

BOB. (*coming up behind FUZZLETON—aside*) So, that's what he calls chaffing a little ; to think as I should live to be mauled about by a rampant maniac. (*whispers to FUZZLETON*) You'd better take care, sir, and have him straight weskitated at once—he's as mad as a hatter !

Enter FANNY, R. 2 E.

FANNY. (*timidly*) Oh, papa! (*pretends to see CHARLES for the first time—embarrassed*) Oh! I thought you were alone.

CHARLES. My fair cousin, I presume! Let me claim a cousin's privilege. (*kissing her*)

BOB. (*behind*) There he goes; he's a making up to t'other female now. I suppose this is what they call rations of intellect.

FANNY. For shame, sir ; grown up cousins ought not to kiss. (*aside*) He does not look so very mad when you come close.

CHARLES. Oh, I quite deny that! if you maintain such dreadful theories I shall repeat the offence.

FANNY. (*petulantly*) Indeed, sir, you shall do nothing of the sort. (*sits on sofa and resumes work*)

FUZZLE. (*fixing CHARLES as before*) Well, Charles, I dare say you're hungry, and as you seem already such good friends with Fanny, I will leave you here whilst I order some dinner for you. (*goes up R., and whispers to FANNY as he passes*) Humour him, my dear, don't contradict him. (*retreats towards C. backwards, still fixing CHARLES—aside*) Ah! he's as quiet as a lamb now! What a triumph of moral force !

BOB. Let's try my optics. (*follows him off, trying to imitate him*)

CHARLES. (*pointing to his head*) Tile loose, I think—eh, Fanny?

FANNY. (*still seated—embarrassed*) Oh, yes—yes—precisely so. (*aside*) What does he mean?

CHARLES. Bob, too, seems to come from Queer Street.

FANNY. Oh, no! he came from Shropshire.

CHARLES. (*laughing*) You innocent little creature! (*sitting on chair at table*) Well, Fanny, what are you working at there—a pair of slippers for me, eh?

FANNY. (*coquettishly*) No; nothing of the sort, sir. (*remembering herself*) Oh, I mean, yes of course, if you like it.

CHARLES. (*coming a little nearer to FANNY, who edges away*) Like it! I should think I would. I should value anything your dear fingers had made. (*he tries to get hold of her hand, she draws it away*)

FANNY. (*aside*) He talks sensibly enough; but I suppose that's his cunning. (*aloud*) You are very complimentary, sir.

CHARLES. Come, Fanny, I say don't call me, sir. I can't stand that. Why, have you forgotten the time when we used to run about like two wild goats, and plunder the orchard together.

FANNY. (*eagerly*) O, yes! and don't you remember what jolly fun we had one day, when we raced on our two ponies through farmer Stubbs's young wheat?

CHARLES. (*excitedly*) To be sure I do; and he chivied us ever so far, and we took the ditch flying, and he fell head foremost in, and at last crawled out all covered with mud. Ah! those were jolly days indeed. (*putting his arm round her waist*)

FANNY. (*sighing and abstracted*) Ah! they were indeed; then you weren't—O! I don't mean that. (*rises confused*)

CHARLES. (*rising too and following her round table*) What is the meaning of this constraint, Fanny? surely you are not afraid of me?

FANNY. (*gradually retreating to her own room*) O, no! but my father—that is, I----

CHARLES. (*angrily*) Well, hang me if I can understand this! (*pulling up*) I beg your pardon, Fanny.

FANNY. (*aside*) Good gracious! he's getting excited. (*confusedly, getting to the door*) O, not in the least! pray don't apologize—I agree with you; but I think your dinner's ready. (*vanishes abruptly into her room—CHARLES stands stupefied*)

Enter BOB, C., with tray, puts down tray on chair L., and proceeds to throw books off table, L.

BOB. Now then, sir, here's the pap for the hinfant Beadlemite.

CHARLES. (*turning angrily round*) You stupid idiot! what the devil do you want?

BOB. O, don't be getting into your tantrums! it's only a bit of dinner for you—hope it will put you in a better temper.

CHARLES. (*walking up to BOB and seizing him by the collar, and shaking him violently*) Come here, sir. Now answer me the truth. Is there or is there not some confounded conspiracy on the part of the members of this house to treat me as if I was a wild beast?

BOB. (*getting himself free*) Ugh! and so you are—ugh! a regular alligator, shaking a fellow's inside out like that. Get out, or I'll call you a keeper.

CHARLES. If you don't cease your impudence, sir, I'll kick you out of the house. (*aside*) No, on second thoughts I'd better propitiate him, he might be useful. (*aloud*) Here, Bob, (*BOB is standing sulkily at table L.*) you're a capital fellow—here's half a sovereign for you.

BOB. (*his face slowly relaxing into a smile*) Thank ye, sir. Well, I must say you're worth half a dozen of master's sort. (*aside*) I suppose this is what they call the money mania; I wish it was a little more about. (*aloud*) You didn't do anything in this way (*pointing to books*) afore you was-----

CHARLES. No, I never troubled them much—but come, bustle about—I'm dreadfully hungry.

BOB. All right, sir. (*setting things on table L.; stands behind and removes covers—CHARLES sits at table*)

CHARLES. Hallo! what's this? mince veal! well they might have sent me something a little more substantial. (*helps himself liberally and eats rapidly*)

BOB. (*suddenly stopping his hand*) I say, now don't swallow your fork.

CHARLES. Leave my hand alone, sir—do you think I'm an Indian juggler? (*eats rapidly*) I've got a wonderful appetite. (*he is going to cut himself some bread when BOB snatches up the knife*)

BOB. No, by your leave, I'll do that.

CHARLES. I'm sure you're very polite. (*BOB pockets the knife—CHARLES takes another and puts it down by his side—BOB pockets that*) Bless'd if I—I say, Bob, suppose you fetch me something rather more solid—a cold round of beef, or a pork pie.

BOB. Can't do it, sir; master said you was not to have only mince weel, or pudding. (*aside*) Then there's no excuse for his having a knife.

CHARLES. Oh, master be-----(*stopping himself*) Well, never mind then; fetch us some more of anything—I feel as empty as ever. (*BOB matches up the knives and exit, C.*) Well, I've cer-

tainly got into most curious quarters—the maid servant as mad as a March hare—Bob, as impudent as he can stick together—my cousin as frightened of me as if I was a gorilla; and to top all, my uncle half crazy, with reading a lot of books he don't understand, and putting his guests on diet just as if they were babies, or young giraffes. Then he stares at me as if I was the Prince of Wales—oh, he's evidently mad—quite mad—but Fanny, I can't understand her conduct. (*thinking a little*) Confound it! I'll write a note to her, and get Bob to take it. (*sits at table R. and writes—reading*) "Dear Fanny,—why so coy? what have I done to offend you? pray tell me, that I may at once apologize. Do appear and console your desolate cousin, Charley." There, I think that's to the point—short and sweet.

Enter BOB, with, tray, C. from L.

BOB. Here you are, sir—here's another dish of pap; (*aside*) and here's a wooden spoon. He can't do himself much harm with that. (*puts spoon down, and removes forks*)

CHARLES. (*sitting at table, L.*) I say, I hope the old boy will vary the diet sometimes, else I shall have to make a raid on the larder. (*takes up wooden spoon—looking at it with intense disgust*) What the devil's the meaning of that? Take away that beastly thing, and bring me a fork. (*throwing spoon away*)

BOB. (*decidedly*) No, you mustn't have one—it ain't safe. (*aside*) I ain't a-going to have him practising homingsidle manners on me—not if I know it.

CHARLES. (*excitedly*) What do you mean, sir—do you take me for a common thief?

BOB. Well, I don't know but what you might be up to anything. Master says, sometimes it do develop itself by walking off with the plate.

CHARLES. (*angrily*) What develops itself?

BOB. (*grimly*) Oh! your little complaint, sir.

CHARLES. What the deuce does he mean?

BOB. Master calls it by some long name or other. I can't just remember what, but I know it's some relation to homingsidle—it's one of them maniers.

CHARLES. Them what?

BOB. Maniers—maniers, sir; it's all part of the appy rations.

CHARLES. The what?

BOB. (*pointing to his head*) The appy rations, sir.

CHARLES. (*comprehending—bursting into laugh*) Ha! ha! ha! I see it now. (*throws himself on easy chair in roars of laughter*)

BOB. He sees it now. (*laughing grimly*) Ha! ha! ha!

CHARLES. (*still laughing*) Oh! it's too good. Why that old lunatic thinks I'm mad. Ha! ha! ha!

BOB. (*laughing forcedly*) Ha! ha! ha! Oh! that's devilish good. (*aside*) He's only just found that out.

CHARLES. (*looking wildly, and rolling his eyes at BOB*) Here, you, sir, come here instantly, or I'll—I'll bite you. (*ferociously*)

BOB. Oh, I ain't afraid of you. (*coming up to CHARLES*) If you does you'll find me precious tough.

CHARLES. Ah! well, I see it's no use trying to humbug you, Bob ; I want you to help me in something.

BOB. I don't mind accommodating you, if you wants your legs tied.

CHARLES. No, no, nothing of the sort.

BOB. Or if you'd like to be stunned for five minutes or so, when you're extra rampagious.

CHARLES. Now don't put me in a rage. Listen to me, Bob, I've thought of a capital trick to play on my uncle. (*BOB is going to interrupt him*)

CHARLES. You needn't be afraid, it's only a joke.

BOB. O! well, I don't mind a joke ; but none of your homingsidles on the governor, 'cos though he's as cracked as an old chiny pot, yet I respects him.

CHARLES. O, don't be afraid; you help me and I'll give you a sovereign.

BOB. I say, sir, I hope it's some plot agin' them horrid books. (*turning to the books*) How I should enjoy tanning your old hides for you; I should like to make a blessed large bonfire of you all on the lawn, with master obliged to look on all the time. I'd dance round your burning carcasses like a red Ingyan, I would. Lord, how you would smell!

CHARLES. There, never mind, Bob ; I'll see you in a minute and settle all about it. (*taking letters from table*) Here, give this letter to your young mistress instantly, and here's five shillings for you.

BOB. I don't mind taking your five shillings, but I ain't going to carry billy dows to a woman—that ain't my business ; you'd better ask t'other female.

CHARLES. What, Maria? She's so afraid of me, she won't come near me.

BOB. (*contemptuously*) O, she'll come fast enough, don't you fret yourself. Bless you, as long as you kisses her, that's all *she* wants.

CHARLES. Well, I shall be delighted to accommodate her. Send her here, Bob. *Exit BOB, C. to L.*

CHARLES. (*alone*) Well, this is capital! I shall have some fun now, if I can only keep my temper. That Bob is the only really sensible person in the house (if he wasn't so impudent); it's no use trying to frighten him. Ah! here comes the maid.

Enter MARIA, door C. from L., timidly.

MARIA. Please, sir, Bob said you wanted to speak to me.

CHARLES. (*affectionately*) Yes, my dear; I want you to take this note to your pretty mistress. It's only right I should send it by such a pretty messenger!

MARIA. (*curtseys*) To think of calling him a loonatic ! Why he's as sensible as a Lord Chancellor.

CHARLES. (*giving her the note*) There's the note, and there's the reward. (*seizes her round the waist and kisses her*)

MARIA. (*pretending to struggle*) Oh, sir! you really mustn't ; it's very naughty.

CHARLES. (*kissing her still*) But Bob says you like it.

MARIA. (*escaping from him—angrily*) Bob, indeed; what does he know about it? (*he tries to kiss her again, and in so doing gets his arms round her neck*)

Enter FUZZLETON, R. 1 E.

FUZZLE. (*aside*) Ha ! there he is—going to strangle Maria ! Charles, Charles! I must fix him with my eye.

MARIA. (*starting*) Good gracious—there's master !

CHARLES. The devil! *Exit hastily, C. to L.*

FUZZLE. Good gracious! he's off! Never saw the homing-side manier more strongly developed.

Enter BOB, C. from L.

BOB. Two gentlemen a axing for you down stairs. They looks like a couple of undertakers, or a pair of blackbeetles out on a day's pleasuring

FUZZLE. The doctors, no doubt. Show them up.

Enter DR. AMENS and WYE ZED, C. from L.

BOB. Here they is.

Enter DOCTOR AMENS, WYE ZED, and FUZZLETON, C. from L.

FUZZLE. (*looking round for CHARLES—to DR. A.*) Ah! my dear doctor! my nephew is not here now, doctor; but I have no doubt he will be in soon, and then I will leave you with him—you must be prepared for a good deal of cunning and concealment, you know. (*laughing*) Ha ! ha ! he doesn't seem so very mad ; but I think when you see him that you'll both say it's a capital case—capital case. (*rubbing his hands with delight*)

DR. A. (*pompously*) Ah! I have no doubt, from your description, Mr. Fuzzleton, that this is a sad case of amentia.

WYE ZED. (*mincingly*) I incline to congenital imbecility—you'll excuse me, Dr. Amens.

DR. A. (*bowing causticly*) Oh ! certainly. (*aside*) Ignorant visionary!

WYE ZED. (*aside*) Presumptuous theorist !

FUZZLE. (*who has been looking from one to the other, and is very fidgetty and flurried*) You can examine him at your ease, you know—perhaps if I introduce you simply as two friends of mine, he will be more open with you. Eh! don't you think so?

DR. A. O, most certainly !

WYE ZED. It will be far better.

FUZZLE. I say, doctor; he's rather violent sometimes— you must take care! (*facetiously*) He knocked my servant over, and half strangled the maid; (*consequentially*) but I fixed him with my eye, and he was soon quite subdued. You can send for me if he gets very bad.

DR. A. (*smiling sarcastically*) O, you need not alarm yourself, Mr. Fuzzleton, on *our* accounts ; we are used to that sort of thing.

Enter CHARLES, C. from L.

Here he comes, I presume ?

FUZZLE. (*aside to DOCTORS*) Yes! 'tis he! (*aloud to CHARLES*) Nephew, allow me to introduce to you two learned friends of mine—(*introducing*) Mr. Charles Harebrain! (*mumbles the other names—mutual bows; to CHARLES*) Two very learned men, I assure you. (CHARLES, L.)

DR. A. (*to FUZZLETON, up R.—aside*) Great frontal depression, always so in amentia.

WYE ZED. (*same business*) Mouth betokens great imbecility, evidently congenital.

FUZZLE. (*to both—aside*) I am glad you think so—I'll leave you with him. (*aloud to CHARLES*) Charles, I must go away for a little while—just entertain these two gentleman, will you ? you'll find them very pleasant—very pleasant. *Exit, R. 1 E.*

(DR. AMENS and WYE ZED watch CHARLES, and shake their heads)

CHARLES. (*aside*) Very pleasant, I've no doubt. Two of the old boys— co-lunatics I suspect. (*aloud*) Well, gentlemen, won't you sit down ?

DR. A. } Thank you, sir.

WYE ZED. }
(*all sit—CHARLES, C., in easy chair—WYE ZED. L., and DR. AMENS, R.—pause—DR. AMENS and WYE ZED look at each other, and watch CHARLES—business*)

CHARLES. Nice place this, is it not ?

DR. A. Very.

WYE ZED. Excessively. (*pause—business*)

CHARLES. Fine weather for the crops.

DR. A. Remarkably so.

WYE ZED. Very much so. (*pause*)

CHARLES. You don't smoke ? (*business with cigars*)

BOTH. (*bowing*) No, thank you. (*pause*)

DR. A. (*clearing his throat abruptly*) Will you allow me to ask you a few questions, Mr. Harebrain?

WYE ZED. Yes—will you allow us to address a few enquiries to you. (*both move their chairs closer to CHARLES*)

CHARLES. (*looking bewildered from one to the other*) I say, bar sells you know—none of that. If my father's uncle was your mother's son, what relation is she to John?

DR. A. Certainly not.

CHARLES. Because I hate puzzles, you know, and riddles, and all that sort of thing.

DR. A. (*aside*) Incoherent, as I suspected. (*aloud*) You need not be alarmed, we shall not dally with the muses,—eh, Mr. Wye Zed?

WYE ZED. Very far from it. (*aside*) Imbecile! highly imbecile!

CHARLES. I'm sure it's very kind of you—go a-head.

DR. A. (*pompously*) What is your opinion about the Alexandra question, sir?*

CHARLES. (*still bewildered—aside*) Two newspaper fellows, I suppose! (*aloud*) There can't be any question about her at all; she's the prettiest princess in Europe, and the nation ought to be proud of her.

DR. A. (*drily*) Precisely so. Henry the Eighth was a great man, sir!

CHARLES. (*aside*) What the deuce is he driving at? (*aloud*) Oh! yes—enormous! wonder what he weighed—he must have ridden sixteen stone.

DR. A. (*aside*) Ah! very incoherent.

WYE ZED. (*aside*) Imbecile in the highest degree! (*looking at each other and shaking their heads*)

DR. A. No, I agree with you. Could you explain to me the action of a locomotive engine?

CHARLES. (*aside*) He must be writing an encyclopedia. No; I'm sorry to say I can't oblige you; but I daresay the stoker will, if you ask him. (*gets restless—aside*) Harmless old lunatic!

DR. A. Thank you, I will.

WYE ZED. (*cutting in to DR. AMENS*) By your leave, doctor. (*DR. AMENS bows—to CHARLES*) Have you ever observed anything peculiar in your father, Mr. Harebrain?

CHARLES. (*aside*) He's getting impertinent; but I suppose I must keep my temper. Nothing particular; only when I ask him to shell out, he generally shuts up.

* This question may be altered, of course, so as to be made to turn on some leading topic of the day.

WYE ZED. (*aside—nodding his head*) Ah ! mental reserve—frequent symptom. (*aloud*) Pardon me, sir, but did any of your family— (*hesitating*) ever—put an end to their own existence ?

CHARLES. (*angrily*) No; you----- (*checking himself*) A great many of them have tied themselves up and not found out their mistake till too late. (*aside*) There ! he may take his change out of that.

WYE ZED. Ah ! hung themselves, under a temporary delusion! (*insinuatingly*) None of them ever—were—eh?—a little wrong in their heads ?

CHARLES. (*with great readiness*) Yes; my uncle's as mad a hatter ! (*aside*) I can't stand this catechism much longer. (*sits back in chair, and pretends to go to sleep*)

DR. A. (*to WYE ZED, behind the chair*) I will now examine the moral feature of his mind.

WYE ZED. (*ditto*) Ah! certainly! pray do so, doctor. (*folds his arms, and sits back with a self-satisfied air*)

DR. A. Now, Mr. Harebrain. (*CHARLES starts and opens his eyes*) I want your opinion on one more subject. If a man did you some great injury—we'll say run away with your wife—

CHARLES. (*impatiently*) I haven't got a wife.

DR. A. No ; but suppose you had one, in such a case, what would you do ?

CHARLES. Do ? Why, I'd have the fellow up before the Divorce Court, like a shot, and get damages out of him.

DR. A. (*baffled*) Yes; but suppose the injury were of such a nature as to preclude all means of legal redress, (*markedly*) how would you revenge yourself? (*aside*) Now we shall see his evil passions excited.

CHARLES. (*rising and pacing up and down the room excitedly*) Revenge myself! (*grinding his teeth*) I'd slay him !—I'd crush him!—I'd spiflicate him !—I'd tear him to pieces! (*with a climax of ferocity*) I'd lock him up in a room alone with nothing but a " Bradshaw's Guide" by way of company, and not let him out till he knew the whole of it by heart. (*aside*) There now, that ought to frighten them. (*throwing himself on sofa, R.*)

DR. A. (*nodding his head sagaciously*) That will do, that will do—decided case of amentia.

WYE ZED. Allow me. I'm afraid you must think me very impertinent, Mr. Harebrain, but would you be so kind as to repeat the first proposition of Euclid ? (*sits back and smiles blandly at CHARLES*)

CHARLES. (*rising and really furious*) That's too bad ! No, I'll be hanged if I do! and I tell you what it is, you two blessed old lunatics, if you don't be off I'll have you both locked up—I will, as sure as my name's Charles!

(*advancing angrily—DR. A. and WYE ZED seize their chairs*)

and retreat gradually to door C., which is open, defending themselves with their chairs —CHARLES follows them, and as they are going out seizes hold of two of the big books from table, L. and hurls them at the DOCTORS, who vanish rapidly—during this scene FUZZLETON looks in at door R., and watches them with expression of delight, rubbing his hands complacently—several chairs are knocked over in the melee)

CHARLES. (*coming down excited*) I'll leave the house ! I won't stand it, I'm hanged if I do—I might just as well be in Bedlam at once. What the devil do the police mean by letting the lunatics run loose all about the country? I'll write to the *Times*—it shall be brought before Parliament, I'm blessed if it shan't ! I'll have that old madman Fuzzleton locked up, and run away with Fanny, that's what I'll do. (*paces up and down—FUZZLETON follows him, trying to calm him*)

Enter FANNY, R. 2 E.

FANNY. (*seeing chairs all about*) Good gracious! what is the matter ? (*CHARLES keeps pacing up and down—FANNY screams as she sees him, and is about to run off when she sees her father, she rushes to him, gets behind him*)

FUZZLE. (*fixing CHARLES, and walking to him slowly and majestically*) Now, sir, be calm—be calm. (*aside to FANNY*) Watch how he quails before my gaze.

CHARLES. (*restraining himself*) I'll tell you what it is, uncle, I'm generally a very quietly disposed young man; but, by heaven, if I have any more of your nonsense I shall be obliged to pitch you out of the window.

FUZZLE. (*eyeing him, but retreating slowly—smiling feebly*) Now don't—pray don't. Charles! you'd better not. (*aside*) I wish that keeper would come. (*CHARLES advances towards him*)

FANNY. Oh, Charles, spare his grey head ! (*throwing herself before her father*)

FUZZLE. (*dodging his head about from behind her*) Don't mind me, Fanny; let me fix him with my eye.

CHARLES. My dear Fanny, don't alarm yourself; I won't hurt your father. (*going up to FUZZLETON—pulls FANNY gently to one side, she leans half fainting against table, R.*) Now, sir, I wish to have a few minutes' conversation alone with your daughter; you'd better let me see you out. (*pushes him quietly out backwards through door, R.—FUZZLETON trying to look dignified*)

FUZZLE. (*as he is pushed out*) Charles! Charles! look at my eye.

CHARLES. Oh ! bother your eye. (*FUZZLETON vanishes through the door backwards—CHARLES turns the key—then turns to FANNY*) Now, Fanny dear, don't be silly—sit down. (*leads*

her to sofa, R.—she sits, looking very frightened) Now, my dear Fanny, don't look at me as if I were a grizzly bear, or a painted cannibal. Who are these two idiots that I've just kicked out ?

FANNY. Why those were two----- (*embarrassed*)

CHARLES. Two of your lovers, eh ?

FANNY. (*indignantly*) Nothing of the sort; they were two mad doctors!

CHARLES. Ah! I thought they were cracked.

FANNY. Quite the reverse; they were come to see if you were mad!

CHARLES. Confound their impudence. Come, dear, you need not be afraid of me ; let's be friends. (*puts his arm round her waist*)

FANNY. But ain't you really mad, Charles? (*looking up at him*)

CHARLES. What a question to ask! Do you think nobody but a lunatic would fall in love with you ?

FANNY. (*indignantly*) No, sir, quite the reverse; but your father wrote calling you his mad son, and talking about your burning the house down.

CHARLES. Ah! Fanny, it's plain enough you don't know my worthy papa. That's his way—he always abuses me like a pickpocket; as for my setting the house on fire, he has prophesied that every day of his life, just because I read in bed. Come, Fanny, are you convinced of my sanity yet ?

FANNY. (*archly*) Well, you certainly look quiet enough now; but if you were a sensible person you'd-----

CHARLES. Kiss my pretty cousin, eh ? (*kissing her*) Is that what you were going to say ?

FANNY. No, sir, nothing of the sort; I was going to say-----

CHARLES. (*interrupting her*) Never mind what it was, dear, I dare say it was something very cutting; but listen to me, I've something very important to ask you. I want— (*tenderly*)

FANNY. (*demurely*) A strait waistcoat, eh ?

CHARLES. No ; you impudent little puss ! I want to ask you if your hand is disengaged, as it was three years ago?

FANNY. (*looking down*) O, it's quite disengaged.

CHARLES. Then let me secure it at once—let me be something nearer to you than a cousin. Come and try my papa for yourself; do, that's a dear !

FANNY. O, Charles, you're so sudden !

CHARLES. Not a bit of it.

FANNY. You must ask papa's consent. He'll never give it.

CHARLES. O, won't he though ! I've got such a splendid trick I'm going to play on my uncle, in return for all he's played me. (*stopping FANNY, who is going to remonstrate*) It's only a joke. You must help me!

FANNY. What is it? Oh! do tell me all about it!

CHARLES. I can't tell you now, dear; but you'll soon know all about it. He's tried to prove me mad; I'll just see how he likes it himself.

FANNY. But mind you must not hurt him. *Exit FANNY, R. 2 E.*

CHARLES. No, dear. There, good-bye! *(goes up to door, R. 1 E., and lets FUZZLETON in, who appears with a bason, a towel, and a razor)*

FUZZLE. *(aside)* I must shave his head; it will cool him.

CHARLES. *(aside)* What the deuce has the old boy got the razor for? does he want to cut my throat? *(aloud)* Hum! uncle, *(FUZZLETON is fidgeting unth the razor)* hadn't you better drop that?

FUZZLE. *(aside)* He suspects me! I must catch him in an unguarded moment! *(aloud—persuasively)* Charles, won't you sit down?

Enter MARIA, hurriedly, C. from L.

MARIA. *(to FUZZLETON)* O, please, sir, there's such a strange gentleman waiting below. *(laughs aside, and makes signs to CHARLES)* Says he comes from Colney 'Atch, sir.

FUZZLE. O, shew him up—shew him up! *(aside)* The keeper no doubt. Fortunate circumstance, he can hold his head, while I shave him. *Exit MARIA, C. from L.*

(FUZZLETON straps the razor—CHARLES regards him with a disturbed expression of countenance)

CHARLES. I believe the old boy is really mad after all.

Enter BOB, C. from L., disguised as the keeper of a lunatic asylum—FUZZLETON puts the razor on table, R.

CHARLES. Ah, here's Bob—thank goodness! *(winks at BOB—BOB returns the wink—looking at BOB)* Dear me, uncle, this is a very extraordinary person!—what can he want?

FUZZLE. O, it's all right, my dear Charles; he's only a—a kind—of—fancy harness maker! *(chuckles—goes up to BOB and makes signs, pointing at CHARLES)* There's the young man! You don't feel nervous, I hope?

BOB. Not by no manner of means, my old gentleman. Go ahead!

FUZZLE. *(to BOB.)* I'll fix him with my eye, then you can seize him when he is calm.

BOB. O never mind the fixings—I've got them all right!

(FUZZLETON goes to take chair, L.)

CHARLES. *(to BOB)* You'd better nobble the governor while he's sitting down.

BOB. All right! mum's the word. Here's the tackle! *(shewing straps)*

FUZZLE. Charles will you take a seat? (*fixing him*—CHARLES sits, L.—FUZZLETON *makes signs to* BOB, CHARLES *does the same*—FUZZLETON, *majestically*) Charles, you have been very violent—very violent; but I hope you are calmer now.

(*removes his chair slowly towards* CHARLES, *making signs to* BOB *all the time*, CHARLES *also making signs*—BOB *answers both with rather extravagant gestures*. As FUZZLETON *gets nearer to* CHARLES, BOB *creeps behind him*—CHARLES *sits back in his chair, half asleep*)

FUZZLE. Now then! he is under the spell! (*stretches forth his hands mesmerically*) Seize him ! (BOB *puts the straps round* FUZZLETON, *and fastens him down in his chair*)

FUZZLE. (*struggling*) Here, you stupid fool; you've made a mistake—you've got the wrong man !

BOB. All right, my beauty ; it's no use struggling—I've got you at last! What a time it is since we had our hi on you! (*he fastens him up tighter during this speech*)

FUZZLE. (*trying to expostulate*) Mr. Keeper, what the devil is the meaning of this? I'm not the madman! there, sir—there (*pointing to* CHARLES) is the wretched victim of amentia.

BOB. (*shaking his head very solemnly at* CHARLES) Ah! that's the way they always goes on.

CHARLES. Yes, it's very sad—very sad indeed.

BOB. (*sentimentally*) Ah! it's an awful calamity.

FUZZLE. (*in a high state of indignation*) You—you unmitigated scoundrel! do you mean to say you think *I'm* mad ?

BOB. Ah! there he goes. Bless me if ever I saw such a violent old compasses. (*solemnly to* CHARLES) It's a very bad case of abrasion—is it not, sir?

CHARLES. Oh, fearful! a most melancholy case.

FUZZLE. Poor unfortunate young lunatic—I pity you—you can't help it.

CHARLES. Dear me! this is very painful!

BOB. Oh! he's a vituperative old beadle, that he is.

FUZZLE. Here, Bob ! Fanny ! Maria ! Cook! Police ! somebody come and deliver me from these raging madmen here. (FUZZLE *struggles*)

Enter FANNY, R. 2 E.

FUZZLE. (*gesticulating frantically*) Here, Fanny, come here, release your injured parent; tell this brutal ruffian that I'm not mad.

FANNY. (*sobbing*) Oh! it really is too distressing ! I always feared he was—he has been so strange lately.

BOB. (*sentimentally*) Is not it affecting now to see the tear a-trembling in beauty's eyebrow, and all because of a tozzle-headed old Beadlemiter ?

FUZZLE. (*who is quite taken aback, trying to stifle his indignation*) What do you mean, girl ? Do you have the impudence to call your father a lunatic—you ungrateful little-----

FANNY. (*running to CHARLES*) Oh! Charles, protect me! (*turning to BOB*) Oh, sir ! can you do nothing to calm him ?

BOB. Well, miss, when they're extra wivacious down home, we generally tickles the soles of their feet with a quill pen ; it hacts like a compoging draught.

FUZZLE. (*indignantly*) You barbarous ruffian, you—you ought to try moral force in cases of dementia.

BOB. Just 'ark at him a swearing and a cussing like a wexed Tom cat. He is a rampaging old party. (*to CHARLES*) I think we better shave his head, sir.

CHARLES. Well, it certainly might offer a temporary relief. (*goes up to table where razor and basin are*)

FUZZLE. (*struggling more violently*) If I could only once fix them with my eye—they'll murder me—I know they will.

(*BOB and CHARLES are going to shave his head, just then DR. AMENS and WYE ZED enter cautiously, C. from L.*)

DR. A. (*to WYE ZED*) This is a singular situation !

CHARLES. (*turning round and seeing them*) Ah ! here are my friends the catechists. Bob, stop a minute.

BOB. Mayn't I just have one go at his mop ?

CHARLES. No, no! (*going up to DR. A. and WYE ZED who are standing at back of stage—BOB holds FUZZLETON down in his chair, so that he can't see them*)

CHARLES. (*shaking hands with DR. A. and WYE ZED*) My dear sir, I'm so glad to see you, you have arrived at a most fortunate period; pray forgive my rudeness to you just now.

DR. A. O, certainly !

WYE ZED. With pleasure.

CHARLES. I did not know then that I had the pleasure of conversing with two such brilliant luminaries of medical science.

DR. A. Dear me ! what an agreeable young man.

WYE ZED. A highly intelligent youth. (*both bow—FUZZLETON is trying to get round to them, having recognized their voices—BOB and FANNY restrain him*)

FUZZLE. Dr. Amens and Wye Zed, you observe this; I can't see you, but you can see me. (*during this speech BOB keeps pulling the straps, and jerks FUZZLETON up and down like a puppet*) You observe that my whole family has gone insane. This malignant ruffian, falsely calling himself a keeper, assaulting----- (*here FUZZLETON suddenly collapses, his wind being taken by the tightness of the straps*)

CHARLES. You perceive, gentlemen, what a sad state he is in.

BOB. You observe the way in which he wituperates me, what is a very guardian angel to him. (*DR. A. and WYE ZED come*

down and stand by FUZZLETON'S chair, C.—FUZZLETON is trying to fix BOB with his eye—BOB is staring at him in an absurd manner)

DR. A. (*looking through double eye glass*) Dear me, he looks very wild, the pupil of his eye is unnaturally dilated. A most satisfactory case of amentia—I always thought he was so.

WYE ZED. (*inspecting him from the other side*) I can see from his hair that he is imbecile—I always inclined to that belief from the first.

DR. A. We will just feel his pulse !

BOB. There, out with your pulse !

(*both DOCTORS try to get hold of one wrist each—FUZZLETON struggles most violently—gets up with the chair strapped on to his back, rushes at DOCTOR A., knocking WYE ZED over on his way, DOCTOR A. takes to flight, C., FUZZLETON pursues, BOB after him, holding on to the chair legs*)

FUZZLE. I'll pay you out, you infernal old humbugs! you empty-headed jackass—you're mad yourself; you know you are.

(*DOCTOR A. and WYE ZED escape, C. CHARLES falls on sofa, laughing—FANNY screams, and rushes after her father—FUZZLETON falls over footstool, dragging BOB with him. In the melee BOB'S wig comes off, and shews his real hair ; he gets up, and with FANNY'S help pull up FUZZLETON—BOB begins to undo the straps.*)

FANNY. O, papa, dear, you're not hurt, I hope ! O, Charles, you naughty boy ! (*turning round and seeing BOB*) Why, good gracious, it is Bob after all! I knew it was!

FUZZLE. (*getting up very stiffly*) Bob! is it that impudent rascal ! This is some trick ! (*turns and sees CHARLES laughing*) Ah! that poor mad boy! it's one of his vagaries—ugh! (*rubbing his back*)

CHARLES. My dear uncle, I beg a thousand pardons for this little trick I played you. I only wanted to show you in what sort of men you reposed confidence, and that if you once begin to adapt facts to theories, you may prove all the world mad.

FUZZLE. (*aside*) Oh, how cunning he is—how well he disguises it! These two impostors never darken my doors again! henceforth I will be my own doctor—and yours too, Charles.

BOB. I think I'd better be off; the governor may cut up rough.

FUZZLE. (*turning round and seeing him*) Hulloo, sir! stop here ! I don't know what punishment is bad enough for you!

BOB. It wasn't so much my fault, sir, as that there young compasses.

FUZZLE. Hold your tongue, sir! I'll discharge you instantly unless you-----

Enter MARIA, C. from L.

MARIA. Please, sir-----

