



MUDBOROUGH ELECTION!

IN ONE ACT.

BY

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(Members of the Dramatic Authors' Society),

AUTHORS OF

*The Area Belle; The Census; A Shilling Day at the Great
Exhibition; The Pretty Horsebreaker; The Colleen Bawn
Settled at Last; A Valentine; The Wooden Spoon Maker;
An April Fool; My Hearts in the Highlands; The
Actors Retreat; Doing Banting; Going to the
Dogs, Upstairs and Downstairs, &c. &c.*

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MUDBOROUGH ELECTION.

*First performed at the Prince of Wales's Theatre,
(under the management of Miss Marie Wilton),
on the 13th day of July, 1865.*

Characters.

GROGGINS (*Landlord of the "Magpie
and Stump"*) Mr. E. DYAS.
POUNCER..... (*an Attorney*).....- Mr. H. W. MONGOMERY.
TIPPER..... (*Chairman of the Buff
Committee*) ~..... Mr. HILL.
FIVER..... (*Chairman of the Blue
Committee*) ...—,..... Mr. BENNETT.
BOB VESKIT (*Waiter at the "Magpie
and Stump"*)..... Mr. HARRY COX.
JENNY.....(*the Waitress*).....Miss BELLA GOODALL.
WIDOW WILDUCK Miss LAVINE.
FREE AND INDEPENDENT ELECTORS OF
MUDBOROUGH...Messrs. JONES, BROWN, ROBINSON, & SMITH

MODERN COSTUMES.

MUDBOROUGH ELECTION.

SCENE.—*Public room in the Magpie and Stump, in the Country Town of Mudborough—table in centre, chairs, &c, and at back a double lift, R. C.—doors, c. and L.*

Enter VESKIT, the waiter, and JENNY, talking, c.

JENNY. Oh, get alone with you, do, Mr. Veskit, and don't be after any of your nonsense.

VESKIT. Nonsense ! why there's nothing else to be after here, but nonsense. I never see such a dull place. Here am I engaged as extra waiter for the election, with no wages only what I can get, and except a little boy that came into the bar to ask the right time, I haven't seen a customer since I've been here.

JENNY. And I was engaged to wait upon the parlour company, and the only customer I've seen was an old gentleman who wanted to look at *Bradshaw's Guide*, with a bottle nose and a blue umbrella.

VESKIT. And what did he take ?

JENNY. Take! why he took about three quarters of an hour a-finding his place.

VESKIT. But didn't he call for anything ?

JENNY. Noa; but he said he would call when he came back.

VESKIT. HOW much have you took since you've been here ?

JENNY. 'Ave took tuppence. And what 'ave you took ?

VESKIT. Well, I've took a bad sixpence and a cold in my head. I never see such a dead and alive place. What's the use of elections, except to do good to the public 'ouses ?

JENNY. Ah! what indeed, Mr. Veskit; we might just as well have vote by ballast at once.

VESKIT. I've dusted the cheers until I've took nearly all the vincer off 'em. I've beeswaxed the tables until they're as sticky as catch-'em-alive-ohs. I've shifted the chimney ornaments from one side to the other. I've even stirred up the ornaments for your fire-stoves with the poker—all to make believe I'm busy. Come now, sit down, like a good girl, and pretend as you're a customer.

JENNY. La, Mr Veskit, what's the use of that ?

VESKIT. DO, now, just to keep my hand in.

(*she sits at table, and VESKIT stands beside her with duster over his arm*)

Pay mum?—Yes, mum.—What 'ave you 'ad mum?—Let me see. Turtle soup eight shilling, *pate de fois gras*-----

JENNY. Lor', Mr. Vesket! what's a patty before grass ?

VESKIT. Lor', don't you know. It's a very *recherche* French dish, my dear, what the aristocracy eats.

JENNY. Yes; but what is it made of?

VESKIT. Well, it's a goose's liver.

JENNY. And they call that patty before grass! Dear heart alive, where I come from they call it giblets.

VESKIT. Yes, but where I come from they call it *pale de foi gras*, and accordingly it fetches more money. Look here, my dear, if you ever go in for cookery, don't you call chops chops, and don't you call carrots carrots, but cut your chops fat near the neck, and call them "cotelettes," cut your carrots into little bits, and call them *a la jardiniere*. You'll find it answer.

JENNY. Well, how much is my patty de what-you-call-it ?

VESKIT. *Pate de foi gras*, mum, eighteen shillings, mum, sparkling 'ock tuppence, one pound four, bread one pun ten, cigars one pound twelve, *poulet a la Marengo* one eighteen, tripe and onions two pun two, *saumon a la Tartare*, haunch of venison, boiled mutton and capers, cheese, bottle of old port—say four fifteen.

JENNY. La! is it, though ? well, it's cheap at the money. There, young man, take this five pound note, and keep the change for yourself, (*she gives him a bit of newspaper*)

VESKIT. (*aside*) What a delightful creature she is! and if it wasn't for the dread of that terrible widow Wilduck, whom in a moment of temporary embarrassment I promised to marry, and to whom I owe rent and washing, I would propose to her on the spot, (*to JENNY*) Thank ye, mum ; allow me to receipt the bill, (*kisses her, when enter GROGGINS the landlord, and POUNCER the attorney, c.*—VESKIT and JENNY begin dusting the tables and then exeunt, C.)

GROGGINS. I tell you, Pouncer, my boy, the borough is going to the very deuce ! No opposition—no money being spent—no liquor going; and the respectable electors are all as sober as if the week was one long Sunday morning before the opening of the " houses."

POUNCER. My dear Mr. Groggins, it's always the way when there's no opposition. Will a horse gallop when he walks over the course?—not if he knows it. And so our members, having no one to oppose them, won't spend a penny—not they., No, what's wanted to make them fork out, is an opposition candidate.

GROG. That's it, Pouncer, my boy; but where are we to find an opposition candidate to set the money going and the taps a-flowing ?

POUNC. (*producing printed placard*) What do you say to this ?

GROG, (*reading*) "Jobbins for Mudborough !" Who's Jobbins ?

POUNC. That's a question that will, no doubt, be asked by the electors, and we must be prepared to answer it. At present Jobbins is a phantom, an invention of my own.

GROG. Patented?

POUNC. And duly registered, like the rest of the phantoms. All we want is to alarm the present candidates, and the way to do that is to put up Jobbins. (*hangs up the printed bill*)

GROG. And also hang him out of the window, (*hangs bill out of the window*)

POUNC. There, if that doesn't stir up the town, nothing will! (*shouts outside*, "Hurrah for Jobbins!") The free and independent electors sniff the coming contest, and are eager for the fray and the five pound notes.

GROG. Hark ! I declare they are rushing into the bar for something to drink on the strength of it!

POUNC. Of course they are! only give the British constitution fair play, and its the thirstiest thing out. (*shouts outside*, "Jobbins! Jobbins!")

GROG. They're calling Jobbins—where's our Jobbins; where are we to find a Jobbins?

POUNC. Where are we to find a Jobbins!

Enter VESKIT, C.

Why, here's your Jobbins—a new man in the place, nobody knows him; let's make a Jobbins of him !

VESKIT. (to GROGGINS) Please, sir, there's a gentleman down stairs as asks if you would be so kind as to change a five pound note for him? He says the bank that it's on broke seven years ago, but as business is dull perhaps you wouldn't mind obliging him.

POUNC. Business dull—not at all, it only rests with you to make business as brisk as a bottle of Bass's ale in a booth at the races.

GROG. Will you do it?

VESKIT. DO what ?

GROG. We want you to stand-----

VESKIT. Well, I'm blessed if they aren't a shabby lot. I've taken nothing yet but a bad sixpence, and a cold in my head, and they expect me to stand something out of that.

POUNC. Well, Mr. Veskit!

VESKIT. (*aside*) I may as well spend the bad sixpence with

my employer for the good of the house, (*aloud*) Well, gents, give it a name!

GROG. Well, Jobbins!

VESKIT. Jobbins! I never heard of that liquor before, but I suppose it's the country name for Old Tom, or something of that sort. How will you have it, hot or cold, with or without?

POUNC. (*taking him up the stage and whispering to him*) One moment and I will explain.

GROG, (*aside*) What a head-piece Pouncer has got; nobody knows Veskit, and if we rig him out with a white hat and an eye-glass he'll look the Member of Parliament to the life.

VESKIT. (*coming down with POUNCER*) Oh! you want me to pretend to be somebody else. They couldn't have me up for forgery, could they?

POUNC. As your legal adviser, I can assure you they could not.

VESKIT. But what if they were to bring it in bigamy?

POUNC. Couldn't do it.

GROG. Impossible.

VESKIT. Couldn't they swear an *alibi* against me?

POUNC. Certainly not.

VESKIT. Sure?

POUNC. Quite sure.

VESKIT. Then I'm your man. Jobbins for Mudborough, or any other borough. Here you are!

GROG. Then just clap this white hat on your head, and stick this glass in your eye.

POUNC. And put on these Piccadilly weepers.

VESKIT. And does that make me fit for a Member of Parliament?

GROG. Of course it does, (*they dress him up with white hat, eye-glass and false whiskers*)

POUNC. There you are, an M.P. every inch of you.

VESKIT. But what am I to do?

POUNC. Promise everything.

VESKIT. And perform nothing, which I take it is the whole duty of a Member of Parliament.

GROG. Exactly.

VESKIT. But, look here, what's to be my politics. I don't know whether I am a Whig or a Tory.

POUNC. Oh, that's no consequence.

GROG. Not the slightest.

VESKIT. Then it's much the same thing I suppose; so if they ask me, I'll say whichever you please, my pretty dears—you pay your money and you take your choice, (*cries outside of* " Jobbins, Jobbins !")

VESKIT. The free and independent electors are eager for a sight of me. Naturally enough. They don't get such a candidate every day.

GROG. Come, Pouncer, my boy, let's go and bring the free and independents in to view the man of their choice.

POUNC. (to VESKIT) Don't be afraid of promises, mind.

VESKIT. Let me alone for that.

GROG. Come along, Pouncer. Jobbins for Mudborough!

POUNC. Jobbins for ever !

GROG. Hurrah! *Exeunt POUNCER and GROGGINS, L.*

VESKIT. Oh, certainly Jobbins for Mudborough ! Well, 'pon my word, I've dropped into a pretty thing. I suppose they'll stand something for it. It's worth a crown to walk about under this white castor, with a pane of glass in my eye. (*business with eye glass*) Confound the thing ! I shall never be able to make it stick in without some putty. But what will be the end of all this, if they find out that I am not Jobbins? They will job me into the horsepond. Ah, here comes Jenny! 'pon my word, she's a very nice girl. Having nothing else to do, I proposed to her a few minutes ago, and she accepted me; but if she knew that I was going into Parliament she mightn't think so much of me—particularly if she were to find out that I'm already compromised with a remarkably fine, but fiery widow of the name of Wilduck, to whom I owe six weeks' rent and washing.

Enter JENNY, C.

JENNY, (*not recognizing VESKIT*) Oh, here's a customer at last. I wonder if he's going to order Anything, or has only come in to look at *Bradshaw's Guide*, and steal a clay pipe when nobody's looking, (*to him*) What will you please to take, sir ?

VESKIT. (*aside*) She doesn't know me! then I must be like a Member of Parliament, (*to her*) What will I take, young woman? why, I will take a *pate de fois gras*—& *cotelette a la jardiniere*—a *poulet a la Marengo*—a bottle of sparkling Hock and the change out of that five pound note, (*turning, and kissing her*)

JENNY. Lawks me ! if it ain't Mr. Veskit dressed up for all the world like Guy Fawkes !

VESKIT. That shows, my dear, that you don't know your history, or you would never mistake a Member of Parliament for Guy Fawkes.

JENNY. A Member of Parliament, Mr. Veskit ?

VESKIT. Veskit! no such thing, Jenny; my name is----- (*voices outside shouting " Jobbins, Jobbins!"*)

VESKIT. Exactly, as the *vox populi* correctly and enthusiastically observes, my name is Jobbins, and my principles the Constitution and no surrender!

JENNY. Oh, Mr. Veskit! I wish you wouldn't be a political character. It's a very bad sign when people have principles and wear false whiskers, (*voices outside, "Hurrah for Jobbins!"*)

VESKIT. Stand aside, my dear; here come my constituents—the free and independent electors of Mudborough. Here! don't hold on by the tail of my coat when I am addressing the electors: it ain't etiquette.

Enter GROGGINS and POUNCER, introducing ELECTORS., C.

GROG. Free and independent electors of Mudborough, I have the honour to introduce to you the illustrious Jobbins. Illustrious Jobbins, I have the honour to introduce to you the free and independent electors of Mudborough.

POUNC. And I take the liberty of adding—Jobbins for ever!

ELECTORS. Hurrah! Jobbins for ever!

JOBBINS. (*mounting a chair and screwing his glass in his eye*) Electors of Mudborough, I thank you for the honour you have done me. This is the happiest moment of my life. Hem! If you—ah! do me the honour to return me to Parliament, I—ah—will endeavour to give satisfaction to the customers—I mean electors. My principles are no secret: I have long been known as a-----

CUSTOMER IN BOX. Waiter!

VESKIT. Coming, sir, (*jumps from the chair, and is brought back by GROGGINS and POUNCER. The same business at every call of "Waiter!"*) I mean I have long been known as a faithful servant of the public.

ELECTORS. Hear! hear!

VESKIT. And, gentlemen, during my long career, as a servant of the public, I have endeavoured, most faithfully and most promptly, to serve the public. I am proud to say I have never turned a deaf ear to the call of—

CUSTOMER, (*impatiently*) Waiter!

VESKIT. Coming directly, sir. (to ELECTORS) I beg pardon, gentlemen; my anxiety to do my duty agitates me. I—ah—feel at this proud and delirious moment—which, as I have already observed, is the happiest moment of my life—I feel as if under the influence of-----

CUSTOMER. A glass of brandy and water.

VESKIT. In a half a minute, sir. (to ELECTORS) Gentlemen, excuse me. What I mean is, that I go in for the constitution. There's nothing like a good constitution. If you have a good constitution you have a good appetite, and if you have a good appetite you can eat.

GROG. And drink.

VESKIT. As Mr. Groggins correctly observes—and drink—therefore I shall always vote for a good constitution, which is a thing as conduces to a good appetite and universal eating

and drinking throughout the land. Gentlemen, allow me to conclude in the words of the great Metropolis—"Pall Mall, cry Mary'bone fear it."

ELECTORS. Hurrah ! Jobbins for Mudborough! Jobbins for ever, *{they raise VESKIT on their shoulders, and carry him in triumph from the room, L. door}*

POUNC. Capital, capital; it's succeeding admirably;

GROG. It's all very well to say succeeding; but Jobbins has taken them off to liquor at my bar, and I don't see who's going to pay for it !

POUNC. At such a crisis of the borough's destiny you surely wouldn't be particular on that p'int.

GROG. P'int!—they'll have quarts, gallons, and stick it up, notwithstanding that I have had wrote up over the bar in gold letters as large as life—"You are requested not to ask for credit, as a refusal often often offends."

Enter TIPPER, agent of the Buff Party, c.

TIPPER. Mr. Groggins, my dear Mr. Groggins, I perceive that a new and unexpected candidate is in the field. Who is Mr. Jobbins ?

GROG. Who ? Why, *the* Jobbins.

POUNC. Of course, the great Jobbins.

TIPPER. Then we must bestir ourselves, and spend money.

GROG. It's the best thing you can do. Mr. Jobbins is a tremendous fellow, and don't care what he spends.

TIPPER. In that case we must go to work in earnest—take committee rooms, and throw open the publics. What do you say, Mr. Groggins, to letting the Buffs have this room for their committee ?

GROG. Well, you see, I've half promised to let Jobbins' committee have it—they've offered me six pounds a week.

TIPPER. Jobbins! Rather than he should have it the Buff Committee will give you ten.

Enter FIVER, C, agent of the Blue Committee.

FIVER. Fifteen on behalf of the Blue Committee !

TIPPER. I spoke first.

FIVER. But I spoke more to the purpose.

TIPPER. I'll mate it fifteen.

GROG. Any advance on fifteen? Going—gone. It's your's Mr. Tipper.

FIVER. Confound it—the best situation in the town. What am I to do?

GROG. Don't be down-hearted, Mr. Fiver; you'll find me perfectly impartial. You shall have the downstairs room at the same money.

FIVER. Very good, I'll have it; the ground-floor belongs to the Blues.

TIPPER. Yes ; and the first floor belongs to the Buffs, so that we are just above you, as we always mean to be.

FIVER. Puppy.

TIPPER. Humbug.

FIVER. I'll fetch a bill that will astonish you.

TIPPER. And I'll fetch a poster that will annihilate you.

Exeunt TIPPER and FIVER, quarrelling, followed by GROGGINS and POUNCER, C.

Enter VESKIT, slightly elevated.

VESKIT. Hurrah! Capital thing this setting up for a member of Parliament; lots to drink and nothing to pay. Jolly fellows these electors; they swear they'll all plump for me, though what plumping means I haven't the slightest idea. And then they declare that they'll put me at the top of the poll. I hope they ain't going to shew me about the town like a Polar bear. My eyes, if I should get into Parliament in earnest, and have the making of my own laws! The first thing I'll do will be to make a law to do away with widows. It's positively horrible to think of the number of widows as is rampaging about the world, snapping at the heels of good-looking young fellows like myself, who can't pay their rent and washing. When widows go mad for a fellow they're worse than the dogs. I'll introduce a bill to have them all muzzled. Then every public-house shall be obliged to keep at least three waiters, with a pot-boy to do all the dirty work for them; and it shall be unlawful for every gent to offer a waiter less than a bob, or to expect any change out of half a sovereign.

Enter JENNY, crying, L.

JENNY. Oh, Veskit, do speak to me; oh, do, Mr. Veskit.

VESKIT. Jobbins, if you please, young person!

JENNY. Jobbins, nonsense! I thought Jobbins were a gentleman!

VESKIT. Well, I see no reason why you should alter that opinion.

JENNY. You're only having a lark with me, I know.

VESKIT. Young woman, persons in my present exalted position in life don't indulge in what you call larks with their inferiors.

JENNY. Oh, Mr. Veskit, is that the way you speak of me—me, as you have promised to make your wedded wife? I'm ashamed of you, Mr. Veskit!

VESKIT. Jobbins, I tell you, Jobbins!

JENNY. It's false, you were never Jobbins before!

VESKIT. NO matter, I'm Jobbins, and as the electors say, "Jobbins for ever!"

JENNY. I see how it is—you are going to cry off the bargain. I was sure of it the moment I saw them whiskers. What can you expect but deception from a man as goes about with false hair?

VESKIT. Well, if it is false hair I don't hang it down my back like a horse's tail, as you women do.

JENNY. Veskit, you are a wretch!

VESKIT. Don't call me by that name, don't. Look here, as you know I don't want any bother about it, perhaps I shouldn't be elected, in that case I'll be a man to my word and marry you—*(aside)* unless the widow Wilduck should interpose as a just cause and impediment.

JENNY, *(crying)* Oh! oh! and to think that I might have staid in my own village and married the farrier as stands six foot two in his stockings.

VESKIT. Should, however, the *vox populi* call me to the House of Commons-----

JENNY. Correction!

VESKIT. Commons!

JENNY. I say Correction!

VESKIT. And I say Commons I *(voices outside, "Jobbins! Jobbins!")* There, listen to the *vox populi!* don't detain me from my duties! You're a nice one, you are, to prevent a man getting on in life, *(voices, "Jobbins! Jobbins!")* My country calls—I come! *(pushes her aside and goes to window, R.)*

JENNY. I'll give master warning at once, and I'll go home to my own village, and I'll marry the farrier, who would make two of him. *Exit, crying, L.*

VESKIT. *(at window)* Gentlemen-----

VOICES, *(outside)* Hurrah!

VESKIT. Free and independent electors of Mudborough-----

VOICES. Hurrah!

VESKIT. Gentlemen, I repeat, this is the proudest moment of my life. May the wing of friendship never moult a feather! May the pilot who weathers the storm always nail his colours to the mast! *(cheers)* Gentlemen, you want a man to go into Parliament for you. Here you are, gents, here's the man for you. So now's your time; give your orders, gents; the waiter's in the room, *(cheers)* Gentlemen, I have no fear of success—in fact, I fear nothing and nobody----- *(WIDOW WILDUCK screams outside in the crowd)* The Widow Wilduck, by all that's horrible! She has recognized me in spite of my whiskers, and is coming in search of me. How shall I escape her fangs? *(runs to door)* Too late! she's coming up the stairs. Hah! this lift-up-and-down, by which in humbler and calmer

moments I have transmitted the plain joint, and the flowry potatoe; the very thing! This will drop me into the room below, in which I can conceal myself until the widow retires. (*gets into lift*) Below! (*lift sinks with him, the other side of the lift coming up*)

Enter WIDOW WILDUCK, C.

WIDOW. Not here ! It was at this window I saw him, and he can't have left the house. So, so, Mr. Veskit! a change of name, and a false beard ! You're putting up for Parliament, are you ? I'll Parliament you, if I get hold of you! I'm not going to be done out of a husband that's good-looking enough to walk out with on Sunday, and able-bodied enough to turn the mangle all the rest of the week. I'll search the house until I find him. No, Mr. Veskit, get into Parliament you may; but get out of marrying me you don't.

Enter TIPPER, C.

TIPPER. Confound that printer! I thought he never would have got that poster ready, (*seeing WIDOW*) I beg your pardon, madam, may I enquire what you want in this room?

WIDOW. I want my Veskit.

TIPPER. YOU have made a slight mistake, ma'am; this is not the pawnbroker's. I must trouble you to retire.

WIDOW. Oh, you needn't be so bounceable!

TIPPER. GO, ma'am, go! I'm busy. The three golden balls are higher up, and you'll find a convenient private entrance round the corner. Now go !

WIDOW. Oh, I'm a going!

Exit, c.

TIPPER. SO, SO, I've got the start of Fiver, I think. By all accounts this Jobbins is a dangerous opponent. However, I've got here a list of all the voters whom I can depend upon, and the price at which they are to be had. It's a list that I have taken years to get up. Wouldn't Fiver give a trifle to get hold of it. (*lays book on the shelf of the lift*) Now then to eclipse and obliterate Jobbins's posters, (*unfolds a large buff poster, "Yellowboy for Mudborough," with which he proceeds to cover Jobbins's bills—the lift works, TIPPER'S book goes down, and VESKIT comes up on the other side*) What's that ? (*turns round and sees VESKIT who has another book in his hand*) Where's my book gone ? and you, sir, who the deuce are you ?—where the devil did you come from, eh ? (*collars him*)

VESKIT. NOW then, let go, can't you! It really appears to me that the entire population of this borough, natives and settlers, male and female, are bent on chevyng me. Now I don't like being chivied, and what's more, I won't be chivied—no, not for the softest seat in Parliament that ever was stuffed with fi'pun notes.

TIPPER. But how did it happen that you-----

VESKIT. Well, it happened this way. I went down the shoot intending to take a short cut out of this house, but when I gets into the room below-----

TIPPER. The room below! why, that's the Blue Committee's.

VESKIT. I found the door locked, and there was no escape that way. The committee had gone to the bar to liquor, leaving all their books and papers, and as I was interested in the election, I thought I would just take a peep to see how the opposition party was getting on; and I found this book, which contains full particulars of who's to be bribed, and what their price is.

TIPPER. YOU don't say so! Give me the book.

VESKIT. Give it to you ! What for?

TIPPER. For any sum you like to ask—only let me have it.

VESKIT. Well, but I say, you know-----

TIPPER. My dear sir, there's no time to stand on ceremony—give me the book, I tell you. *(seizes it, they struggle, and VESKIT sinks into a chair exhausted)*

VESKIT. This is contesting an election and no mistake.

TIPPER. SO the scoundrel, Fiver, means to try bribery, does he ? However, I've now got his whole scheme in my possession. By-the-bye, where's my book? Sir, I laid a book down here a minute ago.

VESKIT. Did you ? then it went down the shoot as I came up.

TIPPER. Confound it. Then that fellow Fiver will get hold of it, and I'll be bound he is mean enough to take advantage of it.

VESKIT. Fiver! I suppose that's the fellow that was so nearly catching me down below. I had only just time to mount the lift as he made a grab at my coat-tails.

Enter FIVER, with Tipper's book—he collars VESKIT, C.

FIVER. SO you sneak, I've caught you. What do you mean by breaking into a gentleman's private room, and stealing his memoranda. Give me my book.

TIPPER. And you give me mine.

FIVER. SO, it's your doing, is it, you petty larceny Buff!

TIPPER. What do you mean by that, you miserable Blue ?

VESKIT. That's right—go it, gents—fight it out between you. I'll do the looking on: it's easier. And if you ever catch me meddling with electioneering again, I'll give you leave to put me up for Colney Hatch.

TIPPER. After this exposure, sir, I presume you will withdraw your candidate.

FIVER. Certainly not.

TIPPER. Very well, sir; if we cut each other's throats in this way they'll elect Jobbins.

VESKIT. Eh—what's that ? By Jove! they're going to make a Member of Parliament of me in earnest.

FIVER. Stay, sir: suppose we amalgamate against him.

TIPPER. Never.

VESKIT. (*aside*) I see a chance, (*aloud*) Stay, gents—if so be as Mr. Jobbins could be induced to resign, what amount might you be disposed to stand ?

FIVER. DO you think it possible ? My dear sir, if Jobbins will retire in favour of the Blues, he may name his own terms.

TIPPER. We know which side has the longest purse. Get Jobbins to resign in favour of the Buffs, and a blank cheque is at your service.

VESKIT. Done ; with both, gents—a bargain—I agree.

TIPPER. You ! Who the deuce are you ?

FIVER. Yes ; who the devil are you? Speak.

VESKIT. I—I'm Jobbins.

FIVER. YOU Jobbins!—my dear sir, a word with you. (*pulls him R.*)

TIPPER. No, you don't; I spoke first. Mr. Jobbins, allow me. (*pulls him L.*)

FIVER. Let go, I tell you.

TIPPER. I shall never leave go.

FIVER. NO more shall I. (*pulls him about*)

VESKIT. Here, hold on gents. If you've got anything to offer, speak up ; you needn't pull me in half, because that's a way of splitting the difference that I object to. I am quite willing to treat with either or both of you; and I think I should prefer treating with both. (*JOBBINS holds out his hand for money, to TIPPER*)

TIPPER. What! a candidate for Parliament, and take a bribe!

VESKIT. Lor', did you never hear of that before? How innocent you must be. Tip up.

TIPPER, (*handing him a bank note*) There! mind you retire in favour of the Buffs.

VESKIT. (*to FIVER*) Please remember the waiter, sir—I mean the opposition candidate.

FIVER. (*giving him bank note*) There ! and mind you retire in favour of the Blues.

TIPPER. NO ; you promised me first—in favour of the Buffs.

FIVER. NO—the Blues.

VESKIT. Gentlemen—gentlemen-----

WIDOW, (*aside*) I know he's in the house, and find him I will.

VESKIT. That voice—the devil or the widow, which is precisely the same thing. I beg your pardon, gents, my constituents are calling for me. (*aside*) Oh, why did the late Wilduck die, and make his wife a widow. *Exit hurriedly, C.*

FIVER. But Mr. Jobbins, Mr. Jobbins----- *Exit after him.*

TIPPER. Hi!—stop thief!

Exit, running against the WIDOW, who enters.

WIDOW. NOW then, stoopid, where are you a shoving to ? The rudeness of the people here is downright horrid. What can have become of my Veskit? This is his room, I know; and if I only wait, I shall catch him. Can I hide anywhere till he comes in ? What's this ? It looks like an empty cupboard. I'll hide here, *(gets into lift, which, immediately descends)* Ah!—help!—murder!—it's a sinking with me. *{disappears}*

Enter VESKIT, out of breath—his coat torn—falls into a chair.

VESKIT. Oh, dear,—where shall I run—what shall I do? I don't know which is the worst, those election agents, who want to corrupt me with filthy lucre, or that widow, who wants to marry me. What do I hear ? a footstep ! 'Tis she! Eh, no, it's only Jenny.

Enter JENNY.

JENNY. Yes, it be only Jenny—only Jenny. Oh, Mr. Veskit, you are a false cruel man !

VESKIT. I'm not, Jenny—I ain't, indeed. Oh, if you only knew how I've been chivied, you wouldn't go on a-worriting at me.

JENNY. I see what it is, you love another.

VESKIT. *(aside)* I hope she hasn't seen the widow! *(to her)* No, I assure you, Jenny, I love nobody but you; and, as a public character, let me add, my country.

JENNY. Oh, why don't you say at once that I am in the way—that you want to get rid of me ?

VESKIT. *(aside)* She certainly *is* in the way just now, and I *do* want to get rid of her, for what with my country calling on one side, and the widow Wilduck rampaging after me on the other I'm likely to become a martyr in the cause of love and liberty. *(looking anxiously round)*

JENNY. NOW come, do ye speak to me kindly, and say you will always love me and never leave me.

VESKIT. *(aside)* I feel remarkably like that gentleman in the Colleen Bawn, who had one sweetheart more than he knew what to do with.

JENNY, *(crying)* You want to break my heart, I know you do; and after all you promised me this morning before you took up with politics.

VESKIT. Don't cry, Jenny, dear, don't cry.

JENNY. Yes; do ye call me Jenny, it does me good like.

VESKIT. *(aside)* A diabolical idea! It won't hurt her, and it will give me a few minutes' start to dispose of the widow.

JENNY. NOW, tell me what it's all about.

VESKIT. I will, Jenny ; come here ; give us a kiss. There, come this way, what I am going to tell you now is a secret. *(aside)* By Jove! there's the widow's step on the stairs, there is not a moment to be lost—further this way, Jenny ! There! *(he embraces her, draws her towards the lift and suddenly pushes her in—JENNY screams, the lift works, and she disappears)* Saved ! Saved ! I breathe again ! *(the WIDOW is suddenly shot up the other lift, counterbalanced by JENNY)* Ah, the devil!

WIDOW. What do I see, my Veskit—my own dear Veskit! *(jumps out of lift and embraces him)* You thought I was lost, but now we'll never part again.

VESKIT. *(breaking away)* Excuse me, ma'am, but public business of the most pressing importance----- *(going)*

WIDOW. Not if I know it; I'll not lose sight of you again, I've had trouble enough to get hold of you, not to mention being sent up and down a spout like a bundle of clothes at the pawnbroker's.

VESKIT. How the late lamented Wilduck could have stood it all the years he did, I can't understand.

WIDOW. *(fondly)* But no—you wouldn't wish to desert your fond Maria ; you won't leave her again, will you ? Come, then, if you *will* have it—just one loving embrace, *(embraces him)*

VESKIT. I feel just like a rabbit in the arms of a boa constrictor.

Enter JENNY, speaking.

JENNY. What do you mean by treating me in such a shameful manner?

(seeing WIDOW embracing VESKIT) Eh ? what! Didn't I say you loved another? Oh you wicked, cruel, heartless, base deceiver!

VESKIT. Jenny, dearest Jenny; strike, but hear-----

JENNY. Don't dearest Jenny me !

WIDOW. Who is this forward and familiar person ?

JENNY. I'm no more a person than you are, mum: though how he can stand by and see me insulted by an individual like you-----

VESKIT. Don't, Jenny, don't excite her—she's dreadful when she's up.

WIDOW. Who do you call an indiwiddle ?

JENNY. Ugh! and he disguising his wickedness under these sham whiskers ! *(pulls whiskers off)*

VESKIT. But I assure you ladies both, circumstances-----

WIDOW. And crowning his villainy with this white hat, which I daresay he hasn't paid for. *(knocks off his hat)*

JENNY. HOW dare you touch his hat!

WIDOW. And how dare you meddle with his whiskers!

VESKIT. NO ; but really, Jenny, Mrs. Wilduck-----

WIDOW. I'll Jenny her!

JENNY. Wilduck, eh ? Oh, that's your game, is it ?

VESKIT. If you would only be calm, ladies-----

JENNY. Calm! Didn't you assure me this morning, that I was the only woman you ever loved ? *(pulling him round)*

VESKIT. I did; and I'll hold to it.

WIDOW, *(pulling him round)* You did ? although you had already offered me marriage in discharge of your debt for board, lodging and washing.

VESKIT. True, I admit it. My poverty and not my will consented.

WIDOW. Monster!

JENNY. Base deceiver! } *(they pull him about)*

Enter GROGGINS, POUNCER, TIPPER, and FIVER, C.

POUNC. Holloa! what's all this?

GROG. It's playing the very deuce with the borough. Nobody knows who's to pay for anything.

FIVER. I only want to come to terms with the opposition.

TIPPER. Which you don't do, Mr. Fiver, as long as the Buffs have a balance at their bankers. All I want to know is where's Jobbins ?

VESKIT, *(pointing to white hat and whiskers on the floor)* There, gents, lies the most important part of him; here stands the humble remainder.

TIPPER. The waiter!

VESKIT. At your service, sir.

FIVER. Then give me back the five pound note you obtained from me on false pretences.

TIPPER. And give me back the ten pound note you obtained from me.

VESKIT. Shan't! what I get I sticks to.

WIDOW. Then pay me my four pounds seventeen and nine pence.

VESKIT. There you are—a five pound note, earned in the service of my country ; you may keep the change, *(gives WIDOW note)*

FIVER, *(making a match at it)* That's mine!

WIDOW. Oh, you wicked man, would you rob a poor widow ?

TIPPER. Sir, you obtained that ten pound note from me on false pretences.

VESKIT. Not at all; I said Jobbins would resign, and Jobbins has resigned.

JENNY. Not me, I hope?

VESKIT. Certainly not; having healed the widow's broken

heart with a five pound note, henceforward I am yours without impediment, *(embraces her)*

FIVER. SO the redoubtable candidate, our opponent, has collapsed? *(jeering GROGGINS and POUNCER, who are ashamed of themselves)*

VESKIT. Nothing of the sort. Though I drop the Jobbins, and leave you to walk over the course, there is a constituency here, *(indicating Audience)* whose votes and interest I shall always do my utmost to secure. Ladies and Gentlemen—the purpose of a play is to punish vice and reward virtue. There, in the form of four evil doers, *(pointing to GROGGINS, POUNCER, TIPPER and FIVER)* stands vice. Here, *(pointing to himself)* stands Virtue! *(slapping his waistcoat)* If I have your suffrages I shall only be too happy again and again to contest the "Mudborough Election."

GROG. POUNC. WIDOW WILDUCK. VESKIT. JENNY FIVER. TIPPER.
R. L.

Curtain.