

THE  
FRENCH EXHIBITION;  
OR, THE  
NOODLES IN PARIS.

*An Original Farce.*

BY  
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AUTHOR OF  
*"A Suit of Tweeds," "Caught by the Cuff," "A Photographic  
Fix," "A Sudden Arrival,"  
&c., &c.*

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## FRENCH EXHIBITION.

*First performed at the Royal Strand Theatre (under the management of Mrs. Swanborough), on Monday, April 1st, 1867.*

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### Characters.

MR. NOODLE (in the Italian Warehouse line) Mr. T. THORNE.  
FORCAT DE BAGNIO (*soi-disant Instructor in French*)..... Mr. L. FREDERICKS.  
MONS. CHARGETROP (*Lodging House Keeper, Paris*)..... Mr. COLLETT.  
MONS. PRENDTOUT ...(*an Interpreter*)..... Mr. EDGE.  
GENDARMES, &c.  
MRS. NOODLE..... Miss JOHNSTONE.  
FIFINE ... (*Servant to Mons. Chargetrop*) ... MISS WEATHERSBY.

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### Scene.—RUE DE NICE, AT PARIS.

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TIME.—OPENING OF THE FRENCH EXHIBITION, PARIS, 1867.

*Time in Representation.—35 Minutes.*

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### Costumes.

NOODLE.—Extravagant Cockney dress, large sleeves, tight trousers, tall hat, Perrot's dress.  
FORCAT DE BAGNIO.—Light trousers, black coat, white hat.  
PRENDTOUT.—Officer of Gendarmes.  
CHARGETROP.—Light trousers, brown coat.  
GENDARMES.—Uniform.  
MRS. NOODLE.—Light dress, looped skirt shewing red petticoat.  
FIFINE.— Light muslin dress.

[Mr. Lacy's Second List.]

## THE FRENCH EXHIBITION.



SCENE.—A well furnished Apartment at Monsieur Chargetrop's Lodging House, Paris; door c. in flat, leading on to landing. On table is a decanter of water and glass ; chairs, &c.

Enter FIFINE, shewing in MR. and MRS. NOODLE, c.

FIFINE. *Par ici, madame. (turns and sees NOODLE going into opposite door) Parbleu ! [drags NOODLE in] You go to put your nose in zie chambre of Mademoiselle Risette—allons donc—(takes him by the shoulder) Poodels!*

MRS. N. Noodle, your conduct is shameful. No wonder you wanted to come to the Exhibition.

NOODLE. But, my dear, I-----

MRS. N. If you can dribble out French enough, perhaps you'll ask that impertinent young woman to have our luggage brought up.

NOODLE. *(aside) Our luggage—I wish I could. I haven't told her what a mess I've made of it. (aloud) Certainly, my dear, (to FIFINE, with a Pimlico accent) Voulez-vous donnez moi (aside) Decidedly six lessons wasn't sufficient, (in peremptory tone) Young woman, bring up the luggage—tout suite.*

FIFINE. Zie luggage of Poodels—var good. *Exit, c.*

MRS. N. And now, Mr. Noodle, don't you think we've made ourselves sufficiently ridiculous for one day. We should have made an excellent caricature for Mr. Leech.

NOODLE. My dear, you may depend the leeches haven't half done with us yet.

MRS. N. And whose fault is it ? didn't I propose Mr. Forcat de Bagnio, our French master, should accompany us—wasn't I progressing rapidly with him ?

NOODLE. *(with sarcasm) You were, (aside) Confound his impudence !*

MRS. N. Yes, and with your habitual meanness, after making use of him to secure these apartments—fourteen. Rue de Nice—you take six lessons in French, lose yourself irrevocably in the irregular verbs, rub your tongue with a French roll, fancy you've caught the accent, and then dismiss that young man to find his way over here alone. Wasn't everybody in the carriage laughing at your French ?

NOODLE. It's the *idiots* in the language I can't get over.

Now you mention it, I did think that shady-looking ruffian in the beard was inclined to be risible.

MRS. N. Inclined to be! why he laughed right in your face.

NOODLE. I'm glad of that; I hate a man that laughs behind one's back.

MRS. N. (*taking off bonnet*) See how my bonnet's crushed, all in consequence of your dragging me to the wrong place for the luggage.

NOODLE. (*aside*) Ah! she doesn't know the luggage is being dragged to the wrong place too!

MRS. N. And then you must insist on leaning against that tarred gate until you smell like a park railing—pouah! take off that coat.

NOODLE. Park railing ! (*aside*) I wish that was the only railing I was likely to meet with! (*taking off coat*) Take off my coat indeed—how do I know Don Luigi di Sospetti's clothes will fit me. The first of April was a very appropriate day for opening the Exhibition.

FIFINE. (*entering c, with a PORTER carrying an old trunk and a large bonnet box, which he deposits, L, c.*) Zie baggage—Ah, parblett! Poodle was drole. You shall take off your skin, (*during this time MRS. NOODLES is arranging her hair at looking glass*)

NOODLE. Take off my skin—now what the devil does she mean! (*looking at luggage*) They ain't a bit like ours, (*to PORTER*) Combien-----

PORTEE. *Trois francs.*

NOODLE. Confound 'em, they all talk French here ! (*holding up three fingers*) Combien ?

PORTER. *Quatre. (holds up four fingers)*

NOODLE. I begin to wish Foroat de Bagnio- was here myself.

*Pays PORTER who exits, c. to L.*

FIFINE. (*leading MRS. NOODLE to room, R.*) Zie chambre for Madame----- (*they both go in room, R.*)

NOODLE. I've lost luggage written on every lineament, I feel I have—and it's all through my confounded bad French, and those infernal idiots in the French language.

FIFINE. (*coming out from R, and leading NOODLE to L.*) Zie chambre for Poodels to skin himself in zie morning—c'est tres propre.

NOODLE. I'm hanged if I think it is ; there's a wonderful familiarity about these French maids. Now for a wash—*au river tout suite. (goes in, L.)*

FIFINE. Poodels was funny dog, cher Poodel—*quel drole, de baggage, (looking at trunk and takes up coat which NOODLE has left on back of chair, smells it)* Pouah! Poodels have Dick Turpentine *heemself, ce brigand la.* I shall send him to vat you call the Polishor. (*takes coat as bell rings. L. to R., MR. and MRS. NOODLE heard shouting*) Fifine ! Fifine!

FIFINE *exits, c, with coat, exclaiming " Oh, les Anglais! les Anglais!"*

NOODLE. (*coming out, L., with very small towel*) How's a fellow to wipe himself with that—'taint a towel, it's a bib! Holloa, there's my wife! (*calls*) Fifine !

MRS. N. (*appearing at door, R., with similar towel—calls*) Fifine! (NOODLE *immediately goes into his room, L.*) I'll defy anybody to accomplish the operation of drying one's self with this d'Oyley. What a fortunate thing it was I brought some towels. Let me see—I put them in the box. (*goes to trunk, L.*) Why, this isn't our luggage—there's a mistake somewhere. Noodle! Noodle !

NOODLE. (*coming out with small towel*) Mariana, my dear, did you ever see such a dismal damp diaper ? (*aside*) I'm in for it!

MRS. N. (*sternly*) Mr. Noodle, are you aware, sir, this isn't our luggage?

NOODLE. Any fool can see that by the label. It's Don Luigi de Sospetti—that name would be a fortune in the Italian warehouse line in connection with pickles.

MRS. N. (*alarmed*) Pickles, indeed! Where's my port-manteau—where's my package ? unless you wish to see Mariana Noodle, the wife of your bosom, go into hysterics, speak ! (*pockets the towel in her excitement—seizing him*) Where's our luggage, sir ?

NOODLE. (*aside*) I'd be grateful if Forcat de Bagnio would drop in. (*aloud*) Be calm, my dear, it will all come right in the end. Whew! (*wipes face with towel, then pockets it—aside*) She'll never pocket this affront!

MRS. N. Where's my new bonnet?

NOODLE. (*aside*) Off her head entirely—I'll make a clean breast of it. (*taking her hand*) Mariana, my dear-----

MRS. N. This will be a lesson for me, Mr. Noodle.

NOODLE. The fact of the matter is, six lessons wasn't enough for me, and I'm afraid I didn't quite make myself understood—what with the irregular verbs—proceedings, I mean—of the railway—and my Parisian accent picked up in Pimlico, it was a pure accent—accident—I mean, I contrived to register our luggage for Nice!

MRS. N. (*alarmed*) Nice! but I told you Paris !

NOODLE. Yes; and I told the porter Rue de Nice, Paris. The confounded idiot, evidently unaccustomed to hear his own language spoken with fluency, must have comprehended me to say Nice, so he gave me a small slip of paper marked number fourteen, and proceeded to apply four similar blisters to the back of your trunk with a paste brush, and said " *Tres bien!*" I understood him immediately—we shook hands and parted.

MRS. N. And our luggage?

NOODLE. That's parted too, I'm afraid, without even-shaking hands.

MRS. N. (*pointing*) But these?

NOODLE. Oh, precisely—those are Don Luigi di Sospetti's, as nigh as I can go to the Italian pronunciation. Well, I must tell you I discovered the error after the train had started for Nice—it was rather late—not the train, the discovery! Decision's a part of my individuality, I acted with a promptitude you wouldn't expect to find in the Italian warehouse line—I had still blister number fourteen in my hand!

MRS. N. I wish it had been on your tongue!

NOODLE. When the impossibility of going to the Exhibition without clothes struck me—it doesn't strike everybody in the nineteenth century, mind—I rushed into the waiting room—seized a porter in a semi-state of stupidity and cigarettes—thrust blister number fourteen into his hand—it drew—before lie had time to recover I overwhelmed him with Pimlico French, and drove him within the verge of insanity—he at once handed me those, (*pointing to trunk*) I confess it's a seedy-looking lot; but the bonnet-box, my dear, decided the question—besides the absurdity of coming here without luggage. (MRS. NOODLE *screams, and appears as if faint*) Here Mariana! (*fans her with small towel*) I've done it now—I say, come round, it's all square—Mariana, my dear! (*calls*) Fifine! Fifine!

MRS. N. (*suddenly*) No sir! rather than that impertinent young woman should come I'll recover. Oh, Noodle, well may you call this the French Exhibition—I'd go into hysterics if that young woman wasn't in the next room, (*aside*) It's lucky I wrote to Mr. Forcat de Bagnio to call on us here. (*aloud*) How am I to go out with my only bonnet crushed like that.

NOODLE. Isn't there Don Luigi di Sospetti's?

MRS. N. And you with that coat all tarred! (*goes to bonnet box*)

NOODLE. Why isn't there Don Luigi's—we're making a fine thing out of that young man! You'll have the advantage of the latest Italian fashions.

MRS. N. (*who has opened bonnet box*) Oh, I shall go off!

NOODLE. (*calling*) Fifine! Fifine! *toute suite!* Fifine!

MRS. N. Monster! (*recovers immediately*)

NOODLE. (*aside*) That's the most wonderful reviver! (*aloud*) Mariana, my dear, what's the matter?

MRS. N. (*taking out an Aunt Sally kind of bonnet*) Matter Look at that, sir!

NOODLE. (*contemplating it*) Aunt Sally! You may depend hat was for Nice, too. (*crosses to R.*)

MRS. N. I'll leave for Pimlico this very minute, sir, and not be made a laughing-stock of!

NOODLE. Pimlico! Come, I like that, when our purse is on the road to Piedmont. I shall pledge Don Luigi's wardrobe to-morrow if our traps don't turn up.

MRS. N. You don't mean to say you've put our money in the trunks!

NOODLE. But I do—everything except seventeen francs.

MRS. N. Oh! (*shews signs of fainting*)

NOODLE. (*calling*) Fif—(MRS. NOODLE *recovers*) My dear, it's no use putting yourself in a passion. I've telegraphed to stop 'em on the road, and we shall have them back to-morrow. In the meantime I'll pick out one of Don Luigi's coats, be off to the consulate, and make assurance doubly sure, (*unties trunk*) I regret this temporary *discord-ance*. Confound that *rope*. Well, these foreigners are rum fellows—if we were in England I should think Don Luigi was in the thimble-rig line, and minding his p's and q's. (*still unfastening cord—opens trunk*) Mariana, my dear, come and assist me; his wardrobe must be at the bottom, for there ain't any at the top. (*takes out billiard cue*) I knew he was minding his cue. My dear, here's something in the wardrobe line—in fact it's the only garment I see. (*takes out rouge et noir table cover, which is folded the reverse way, to hide figures*) Why, no wonder his trunk was heavy, he's travelling in ballast—they're bricks, (*shews one*) This is an Italian paletot, I presume? Here goes as soon as I can find the sleeve, (*unrolls cloth*) Police! murder! What the devil's this? (*puts it on*)

MRS. N. Oh, why did we ever leave Pimlico? (*sits down and buries her face in her hands*)

NOODLE. I can't go out this figure—these figures I may say. Here's a game—a game—stop, now I come to think of it, it's one of the rouge et noir things I've seen at the races. I begin to think it belongs to a swindler—the bricks—the mortar—it's a d—d fabrication—murder! (*sees MRS. NOODLE*) Mariana, my dear, cheer up.

MRS. N. But we've everything at *stake*.

NOODLE. There she goes again, with a pleasing allusion to this little *game*. I'm getting red in the face, I feel I am—it must be the rouge. I wish Forcat de Bagnio was here, (*aside*) What a fool I was to be jealous of my wife. I can't go about like an animated gambling *table*—I feel my *legs* sinking under me. (*sits on bonnet box, crushing it in*)

MRS. N. Oh, Noodle, why did we ever leave Pimlico?

NOODLE. Why the deuce did we ever come to Paris? Stop, my dear, cheer up—I have it. (*calls*) Fifine! (MRS. NOODLE *starts up*) Don't be alarmed, my dear, I only want my coat—never mind the tar. I'll go and see the consul at once—ta ta! (*calls*) Fifine!

*Enter FIFINE, C. from L.*

FIFINE. (*seeing NOODLE, who still has the rouge et noir cover on*) Ah, Poodel! ho ! ho ! ha ! ha ! (*laughing*) Poodels was funny dog—ho! (*comes close and feels the cover*)

NOODLE. Confound her! I say, keep off—Mrs. Noodle is looking—none of your gambols here. Oh, of course—no wonder she wants to play, it's the cloth—come off! (*tears it off*) Young woman, where's my coat ? *savez l'altro*—Mariana, my dear, what's the French for coat ?

MRS. N. Habit!

NOODLE. Yes, habit.

FIFINE. (*imitating his bad accent*) *Je comprends, habit!* ha! ha!

NOODLE. She's laughing and a very nasty habit it is.

FIFINE. *Oui, oui*, nasty var much—Poodels, shall Dick Turpentine *heemself!* Pouah ! Poodel's coat was come off.

NOODLE. Hang her! she talks to me like a dog. Where is it I say ?

FIFINE. *Parbleu!* I send him to *die Polisher*.

NOODLE. Sent it to the polisher?

FIFINE. *Mais oui*—he shall walk *heemself* back, *vat* you call *demain*—ah, to-morrow, (*bell rings violently and voices heard calling*) *Fifine!* *Fifine!*

FIFINE. (*rushing off, c. to L.*) *Mademoiselle Risetete.*

NOODLE. (*bewildered*) Sent to the polisher—*valk heemself* back to-morrow! I—I am going mad!

MES. N. Oh, Noodle, we're lost—what shall we do ?

NOODLE. Why, my dear, we'd better go to bed and pray for a total eclipse of the sun. I can't go out with a roulette cover over me. I'm getting black in the face; it must be the *noir*—dash it! (*takes up cover*) Holloa, what's this ? (*reads in corner of cloth*) *Forcat de Bagnio!* Surely he can't be connected with this blackguard, Don Luigi !

MRS. N. *Forcat de Bagnio!* (*aside*) I wish I had never written to him. (*aloud*) It certainly looks suspicious.

NOODLE. Looks suspicious—it looks diabolical. I always thought that young man was no better than he ought to be. I didn't half like his manners towards you.

MRS. N. But, my dear, I—besides he's the nephew of Victor Emanuel.

NOODLE. Nonsense, what the deuce did we know about him?

MRS. N. Nothing! That's just it.

NOODLE. And yet you wanted me to ask him to accompany us, and me to pay for his board and lodging. Why I'd break every bone in his skin if I thought he had anything to do with this—stop, didn't he select these quarters for us—perhaps he's in league with the landlord. What's the meaning of that ominous notice hanging up in the window ? Here they *spike*

the English. I'll go and see the landlord at once. Here Chargetrop—razor strop, where are you? *Exit, C. to L.*

MRS. N. I'm afraid I've acted very imprudently in writing to Mr. Bagnio, if Tom knew of it he'd strangle him; but after all I can't see what connection he can have with those suspicious things. Oh, dear, why did we ever leave Pimlico!

*Enter FORCAT DE BAGNIO, c. from L.*

FORCAT. *(in broken English)* Ah, *ma chere* Madame Noodle, *je suis enchante* to see you on *zis* side of *de* Channel.

MRS. N. *(alarmed)* Go, Mr. Bagnio, I beseech you, go!

FORCAT. But I have only just *arrive*!

MRS. N. Don't let Mr. Noodle see you, I pray—I pray! I won't be responsible for his actions—he's a desperate man when his Italian warehouse blood is up from being in the trade so long—he's got all the Italian vendetta! I know I did wrong to send you that note—forget it!

FORMAT. *Nezare* forget a note, madam, for five pounds—*nevare*! I vil take one now, *avec beaucoup de plaisir*—I have receive none.

MRS. N. *(aside)* Thank goodness, then it must have been lost in the post, *(aloud)* You must not remain here.

FORCAT. *Pourquoi*, madame, you must explain this sudden change of manner to your preceptor: we who were getting on so well with the verb *aimer*, to love, in *zie* present tense.

MRS. N. It's all past now; and I feel bound to tell you my husband connects you with those, *(pointing to trunk)*

FORCAT. *(aside, in pure English)* Ah, that trunk! Luigi di Sospetti!

MRS. N. He seems agitated. What's that cloth with the figures?

FORCAT. Oh, madame, it is that I teach de leetle boys the multiplication table with, *(aside)* This place isn't safe! How came Luigi's trunk here, and the Government hot upon our track for the last gambling transaction, and Luigi's letter in my pocket—I must get rid of it! *(aloud)* Madame, I insist-----

MRS. N. I hear my husband coming up stairs—in here—make haste! *(points to her room)* Mr. Forest! Mr. Bagnio! quick! I—I am going mad! *(drags him over, R.)*

FORCAT. *(drawing knife)* I must know, madame, or tremble *pour les consequence*! *Enters room, R.*

MRS. N. Thank goodness Noodle hasn't seen him!

*Enter NOODLE, carrying overcoat, c.*

NOODLE. Mariana, my dear, I've made a discovery—here's a prize! *(shows coat)* Old Chargetrop ain't a bad sort! I explained our position as well as I could, and he said he'd put it down in the *beel*. At once he placed his wardrobe at my

disposal—it's rather short in the sleeve, and rather long in the waist; but the long and short of it is, beggars mustn't be choosers. I'll be off without delay about our luggage, and I mean to mention the suspicious circumstance about that blackguard Forcat de Bagnio. (MRS. NOODLE *starts*) What the deuce is the matter with the woman ? (*puts coat on R. chair*)

MRS. N. Oh, nothing.

NOODLE. But I say there is, and you're hiding it from me—you're ill; I'll go into your room and see if I can't find something stimulating—a little steel.

MRS. N. (*aside*) A little steel; and he carries a stiletto! (*stopping him—aloud*) No, not for the world.

NOODLE. No, for you.

MRS. N. I'm better, dear, it's only a spasm—I've quite stopped it now. (*stops him*)

NOODLE. I tell you what it is, Mariana, the more I think of that infernal scoundrel, De Bagnio, the more grateful I am we've got rid of him. I wouldn't have him in this house for a trifle.

MRS. N. My dear, there's no time to lose—remember our position is ridiculous, (*with a forced laugh*) Ha, ha !

NOODLE. Yes, so it is, very ridiculous, ha, ha ! (*going to his dressing room, L.*) My dear, you ain't afraid of being left alone ? (*goes in and shuts door, L.*)

MRS. N. No. (*aside*) I'm afraid of not being left alone. I've a good mind to confess; all this deception is dreadful; I'm sorry I've had a hand in it.

NOODLE. (*coming out with an absurdly small basin*) I can't get my hands in it—it's a large tea cup. I'll just borrow your basin, (*going towards her room*)

MRS. N. (*alarmed, stops him*) Don't trouble yourself, my dear, I'll bring it you myself, (*runs in, R., and comes out with a basin smaller than Noodle's—he contemplates it*)

NOODLE. That's a coffee cup.

MRS. N. What a time you are. You'll never start if I don't assist you. (*pushes him into room, L., and follows him in*)

*Re-enter FORCAT DE BAGNIO, R.*

FORCAT. Confound it! it strikes me I've got into remarkably hot quarters. There are gendarmes approaching the house, and I'm afraid the French of William Wiggins, of Whitechapel, alias Forcat de Bagnio, will not have the same effect upon them as it does on Mrs. Noodle. Should they suspect and find this letter of Luigi's upon my person, it strikes me that my operations at the French Exhibition will be somewhat circumscribed. What's to be done ? This letter must be got rid of under any circumstances. Ah! (*seeing coat on chair*) This coat—Noodle's coat—the very thing, (*puts letter into coat*)

*pocket*) As self-preservation is the first law of nature, and some one must suffer, why let Noodle be the man—in the meantime I'll try and effect my escape.

*Exit, c. to L.*

*Re-enter* MRS. NOODLE, L.

MRS. N. There's no time to be lost—he must go at once. (*goes to door, R.*) Mr. Bagnio! Mr. Forcat! (*looks in*) No one—he's gone—escaped! Oh, what a relief!

NOODLE. (*coming out of room, L.*) I give it up, Mariana, I must wash the other hand to-morrow, the water won't run to it—old Chargetrop tells me he shall put it down in the *heel* if this reckless expenditure of water goes on. Here, Mariana, my dear, just help me on with this garment, will you? (FIFINE *crosses at the back, from L. to R., with several fancy ball dresses*)

MRS. N. (*holding coat*) What's that impertinent young woman always going in there with different dresses for? (MRS. NOODLE *closes the doors, c.*)

NOODLE. My dear, there's a masquerade ball to-night, and the young lady who does us the honour to live opposite is a singer at the Casino, so I suppose she's going; the old boy told me they have in fifty dresses to look at—and as for Fifine, that impertinent young woman I mean, she'll never think about anything else till the ball's over—she wants to go herself.

MRS. N. I've never been at a masked ball, Tom.

NOODLE. Haven't you, well you shall—that is when we get our trunks back! (*kisses her*) There! (*turning round*) 'Tain't much of a fit, is it?

MRS. N. Well, never mind, Tom, you look well in anything.

NOODLE. Do I? even in a roulette cover—I say, my dear, I was an idiot to be jealous about that blackguard Bagnio—I knew you never thought anything about the ruffian.

MRS. N. Never, Tom! (*kisses him—loud knock heard*)

NOODLE. Hollo! what's that! come in.

*Enter* M. PRENDTOUT, C. *from L., an* INTERPRETER *and two* GENDARMES *in full uniform.*

NOODLE. Perhaps the Emperor's sent to know if he can do anything for us.

PREND. Excuse me. (*they all bow obsequiously*) I'm the interpreter to the gendarmerie!

NOODLE. Oh, won't the captain and colonel take a seat? (*the GENDARMES bow—NOODLE does the same extravagantly, and the GENDARMES proceed to search trunk—aside*) What the devil are they about with my trunk!

PREND. (*taking out book and pencil*) Your name is-----

NOODLE. Noodle.

PREND. Christian name?

NOODLE. Thomas. Connected with the Italian-----

PREND. (*stopping him*) I must caution you, there is no occasion to criminate yourself.

NOODLE. Criminate myself! (*excitedly*)

PREND. Madame is your wife, I believe ?

NOODLE. She is. Mariana, my dear.

PREND. That's the name! (*calling*) Gendarme, (*one of the GENDARMES crosses to NOODLE and searches his pockets*) It is my painful duty to arrest you on suspicion of having connived with one Forcat de Bagnio, Luigi di Sospetti, and others, to defraud by illegal gambling—and the law further makes you responsible for the act of your wife.

MRS. N. (*alarmed*) My act ?

NOODLE. My wife's act! You're mad—rabid—stark mad, sir.

PREND. (*continuing*) In corresponding with the said Format.

NOODLE. The most she ever wrote for the rascal was a French exercise.

PREND. (*writing*) Prisoner acknowledges acquaintance with the accused.

NOODLE. I don't ! I deny everybody and everything !

PREND. (*shewing MRS. NOODLE'S letter*) Including your wife's letter—stopped yesterday through the post ?

NOODLE. (*taking it*) Her writing !

MRS. N. (*passionately*) Tom, forgive me—forgive me !

NOODLE. Mariana, I'm going mad! will anybody explain anything ?

PREND. (*shewing roulette cover which the GENDARME brings over*) This further proof of your nefarious practice.

NOODLE. I tell you it ain't mine.

CHARGETROP *rushes in c.from L.*

CHARGE. Oh, villain Poodels, you shall ruin my *maison*; I shall charge it in the *beel*—person suspecte—infecte—detect—hen-pecked!

NOODLE. (*bewildered*) Go it, peck away, make it a bushel while you're about it.

PREND. (*having read letter taken by GENDARME from NOODLE'S pocket*) This letter, found in your coat pocket, from Luigi di Sospetti, the principal conspirator, completes the evidence.

NOODLE. Letter found in my coat pocket—stop! it's *his* coat, (*pointing to CHARGETROP*)

CHARGE. (*denying it vehemently*) *Nevare ! nevare !* Poodels ! (*aside*) It vas mine. By gar, I shall charge dis in de beel.

PREND. This miserable subterfuge won't serve you. Gendarmes, arrest him. (*they arrest him*)

MRS. N. (*seizing him*) Oh, Thomas, Thomas! how could you deceive me in this manner ?

NOODLE. Mariana, I decline to speak. I decline to do anything except go mad. It's an infernal plot—the wife of my bosom gone against me—I—I—I'm faint, (*takes out small towel to wipe his face*—MRS. NOODLE weeping, *takes out the towel she has accidentally secreted*)

CHARGE. Villain Poodel! *voleurs*—zie towels of mine—*voleurs*! (*seizes the bibs and speaks aside to GENDARMES*)

NOODLE. Now they'll swear we meant to steal those dismal d'Oyleys. Take me before the Lord Mayor—lead me to the Bastile. I shall become a raving maniac. Mariana, my dear, I forgive you—farewell—lead on.

MRS. N. Then your devoted wife will follow you to an early grave. I'll never leave you.

CHARGE. Poodels, my habit, zie coat of my—(*seizes coat by tail*) By gar, Poodels—Poodels, I shall pull your tails out. (*the tail of the coat gives way and CHARGETROP falls*)

NOODLE. Never mind the tails. Stay, one more embrace, Mariana, before we part for ever. Lead on—take me to the Gendarmerie.

MRS. N. Oh, Thomas, Thomas.

NOODLE. Here, take this, Mariana, (*cuts with penknife a lock of his hair and gives*) Now, take me to the Gelatine. I shall be firm on the scaffold and die innocent. *Honi soit qui mal ye pense*.

*Exit, c. to L., MRS. NOODLE following, in Aunt Sally bonnet.*

CHARGE. *Les Anglais, les Anglais, sacre* Poodel. I shall charge him in zie *beel*. I shall blow to him de nose, and tap to him de claret, and wipe to him de eye—*les voleurs*. I will go to zie Prefect of Police to lodge de accusation against Poodel. (*going off, L. c.*)

*Enter FORCAT DE BAGNIO, c. from L., and knocks against him—they mutually bow and apologise—CHARGETROP exits, c. to L.*

FORCAT. Confound it ! those cursed gendarmes are still guarding the doors; and that fool Noodle, too, to talk of denouncing me to the Consul. No—no—I think these letters will put a stop to his heroics. One, two, three ! (*placing them on table*) If on reading them he doesn't sink into his boots, why, may I never see Dover cliffs again. *Exit, c. to L.*

*Enter FIFINE, c. from R., with Pierrot's dress.*

FIFINE. (*looking after FORMAT*) Ah ! ha! dat vas Poodel's friend I think ; but vas no goot—I shall charge him in zie *beel* (*sees letters*) Poodels have de correspondence, but I tink Mrs. Poodels was lead Poodels in zie string, vat you call it! Mrs. Poodels was veer zie pantaloons, (*looks R. and L.*) Ah, zey shall go out, *tant mieux*—Monsieur Chargetrop give me die permission to go to de bal masque. *Cher Alphonse*—thus

vas the dress to him! (*shews Pierrots dress*) *Pour danser comma ca!* (*places dress on chair, R., and commences dancing*)

*Enter NOODLE, C, in great haste.*

FIFINE. (*sees him—stops, exclaiming*) Ah, *voila les Poodels!*  
*Runs off, L.*

NOODLE. It would have been all right only for Mariana. The gentleman who does duty as sitting magistrate at once saw I'd been the victim of circumstances and swindlers, and knew enough English to comprehend an Italian warehouse wasn't a magazine for manufacturing Mazzini's, so he set us at liberty, when my wife with her unlimited volubility, and her limited vocabulary, contrived to say something awful against the Tooleries, or the Louvre, or the Exhibition, or somebody or something very high up, and they insist on detaining her for rebellion, until our consul appeals and answers for her appearance. I can't answer for mine, I know, with this coat on. To make a long tale short, I promised her to see the British representative at once, and denounce Bagnio de Forcat. Holloa! somebody's been here—letters! (*takes number one*) "Thomas Noodel!" that's me. (*opens it and reads*) "Signor Noodel, reveal but a word to the police about Forcat de Bagnio and you're a dead man!" Pah! this is a joke—an infernal serious joke! Noodle, be a man! (*reads*) "Signed, Geronimo Criminale." Here's his mark, (*looking closer*) No, it's three daggers! I'm a victim—I'm as good as dead! I—I feel faint—I think I hear somebody moving, (*looks under table, alarmed*) I shall hand myself over to the police. Let's see number two. (*reads*) "Signor, let your wife breathe a word about Forcat de Bagnio, and she is a dead man too!—Signed, Carlo Codardo," and six daggers! Pah! I don't feel half so alarmed at that threat. Here goes for number three, (*reads*) "Let either you or your wife breathe but a sentence against Forcat de Bagnio, and you are both dead men! signed Borgia," and nine daggers! Oh, I'm quite daggered—staggered I mean. Oh, this house isn't safe—the landlord is in league, (*staggers to chair and drinks from decanter*) Borgia too! Lucrezia Borgia's brother no doubt. Ah! poison! (*spits water out of his mouth and calls*) Fifine! Fifine! I'll disguise myself—it's getting dark. Fifine!

Fifine!

*Enter FIFINE, L.*

FIFINE. Poodels, I want to *spike* you.

NOODLE. (*jumping up*) There she goes—murder! (*aside*) I'll bribe her. (*gives her money, mysteriously*) Where are they—Codardo—Diavolo—Borgia?

FIFINE. (*bewildered*) By gar, Poodels, have take the *eau de vie*.

NOODLE. Generous girl, *comprenez—savez—toute suite—eau de vie*. I owe you de life. Let me be gone --quick—*saves l'altro habit*—this one. (*takes up masquerade dress, and gives her more money*) I'll go to the consul at once.

FIFINE. I tink I *savez* Poodels vas go to bal masque. Mudder Poodel have untie de string. Suppose she *saves* Poodles, she vas pull your wool *comme ca*. (*pulls his hair*)

NOODLE. (*yelling*) Let go! (*aside*) I'd better humour her. (*aloud*) *Yes—oui—toute suite—make haste !* (*he puts on masquerade dress—aside*) Those murderers will never recognise Thomas Noodle in this rig. Mr. Percival was shot in the lobby of the House of Commons. Don't fire! Lord, I thought I heard somebody—stop ! Gustavus the Third was killed at a masked ball—ah! masked ball! that's suggestive of a bullet at once! (*to FIFINE*) *Cab-fiacre—toute suite !*

FIFINE. You vas take me to bal masque.

NOODLE. (*surprised*) Eh? what would Mrs. Noodle say! Stop—capital—certainly—it will make the disguise more complete, besides don't I owe her my life, *eau de vie*.

FIFINE. You have vat you call zie domino.

NOODLE. No ; I hate the game !

FIFINE. (*shewing him domino*) This vas domino.

NOODLE. Of course ! (*takes up Pierrot's dress—puts it on*)

FIFINE. (*clapping her hands*) *Magnifique !* Poodles, you danser—*comme ca !*

(*drags him round room, dancing—they dance up to door, c, as MRS. NOODLE appears—FIFINE immediately leaves NOODLE and goes off, L.*)

NOODLE. (*who can't see very well for the domino he has over his dress*) *Fifine*, I declare it's quite exciting! (*takes his wife round the waist, and about to dance with her*)

MRS. N. (*in stern manner*) Mr. Noodle !

NOODLE. (*dropping on knees*) Don't fire! (*tears off mask*) My wife, Mariana, escaped from the Bastile—I'm in for it!

MRS. N. Mr. Noodle!

NOODLE. (*alarmed*) I say, don't call me by my name in that reckless manner, they're all outside—Codardi, Diavolo, Borgia—eighteen daggers in all, and every Italian iron in the fire.

MRS. N. This subterfuge won't do, Mr. Noodle.

NOODLE. But it will do—it will do for all of us if you insist on calling me Noodle—read that! (*puts first letter in her hand*) That's number one.

MRS. N. (*reading*) " Signor Tomaso Noodle, breathe but a word against Forcat de Bagnio and you're a dead man.—Signed, Carlo Criminate." It doesn't alarm me in the least.

NOODLE. Eh? (*surprised*) Read that, number two. (*giving letter*) Hush ! hush!

MRS. N. (*reads*) " Let your wife breathe but a word and she's a dead man, too."

NOODLE. Yes, my dear, that's the threat that alarmed me; the moment I knew your life was in danger I put on these garments----

MRS. N. To dance with that impertinent young woman!

NOODLE. No; to go to the consul at the sacrifice of my life!

MRS. N. Then it was at your instigation he came to the prefect to announce Mr. Bagnio was captured, and confessed all—how generous!

NOODLE. Certainly! (*aside*) I may as well get the credit of it. (*aloud*) Captured! confessed!

MRS. N. Yes, that he put that letter in your pocket, and fabricated those epistles.

NOODLE. Fabricated! then there's no Carlo, Codardo, and Company—no Borgia, no—stop how the devil did he get the letter in my pocket?

MRS. N. (*turning away*) Dear Tom, I'm afraid that must remain a mystery—take off that ridiculous dress.

NOODLE. I say, Mariana, your bonnet isn't quite the thing.

MRS. N. (*taking it off*) Gracious, why I have been out in this Aunt Sally!

NOODLE. Well, now it's agreed, Mariana, it's agreed that what's done in Pari----

MRS. N. Never goes to Pimlico.

*Enter FIFINE with telegram, and CHARGETROP, c.from L.*

FIFINE. Poodels for you.

NOODLE. (*opens telegram*) Hurrah! trunk stopped and returned—it's all right my dear—hurrah!

CHARGE. Poodels, I was wrong, but I shall charge him in zie beel.

NOODLE. It strikes me they put down everything in the bill here in the most *franc* manner. Ladies and Gentlemen, may we add your approbation to it; for although we've a natural objection to be *charged* by our enemies, the lodging-house keepers, we've none whatever to a *volley* from our friends, who, we trust, are prepared to give a warm reception to "The Noodles at the French Exhibition."

**Curtain.**