

THIRD SERIES

THE LORD OF THOULOUSE: A LEGEND OF LANGUEDOC

Veluti in speculum.

*Theatre Royal Cov. Gard.*

Count Raymond rules in Languedoc,  
O'er the champaign fair and wide,  
With town and stronghold many a one,  
Wash'd by the wave of the blue Garonne,  
And from far Auvergne to Rousillon,  
And away to Narbonne,  
And the mouths of the Rhone;  
And his Lyonnois silks and his Narbonne honey,  
Bring in his lordship a great deal of money.

A thousand lances, stout and true,  
Attend Count Raymond's call;  
And Knights and Nobles, of high degree,  
From Guienne, Provence, and Burgundy,  
Before Count Raymond bend the knee,  
And vail to him one and all.

And Isabel of Arragon  
He weds, the Pride of Spain,  
You might not find so rich a prize,  
A Dame so "healthy, wealthy, and wise;"  
So pious withal — with such beautiful eyes —  
So exactly the Venus de Medicis' size —  
In all that wide domain.

Then his cellar is stored  
As well as his board,  
With the choicest of all *La Belle France* can afford;  
Chambertin, Chateau Margaux, La Rose, and Lafitte,  
With Moet's Champagne, "of the Comet year," "neat  
As imported," — "fine sparkling," — and not over sweet;  
While his Chaplain, good man, when call'd in to say Grace,  
Would groan, and put on an elongated face  
At such turtle, such turbot, John Dory, and plaice;  
Not without blushing, pronouncing a benison,  
Worthy old soul! on such *very* fat venison,  
Sighing to think  
Such victuals and drink  
Are precisely the traps by which Satan makes men his own,

And grieving o'er scores  
Of huge barbecued Boars,  
Which he thinks should not darken a Christian man's doors,  
Though 'twas all very well Pagan Poets should rate 'em  
As "*Animal propter convivium natum.*"

He was right, I must say,  
For at this time of day,  
When we're not so precise, whether cleric or lay,  
With respect to our food, as in time so *passé*,  
We still find our Boars, whether grave ones or gay,  
*After* dinner, at least, very much in the way,  
(We spell the word now with an E, not an A;)  
And as honest *Père Jacques* was inclined to spare diet, he  
Gave this advice to all grades of society,  
"Think less of pudding — and think more of piety."

As to his clothes,  
Oh! nobody knows  
What lots the Count had of cloaks, doublets, and hose,  
*Pantoufles*, with bows  
Each as big as a rose,  
And such shirts with lace ruffles, such waistcoats, and those  
Indescribable garments it is not thought right  
To do more than whisper to *oreilles* polite.

Still in spite of his power, and in spite of his riches,  
In spite of his dinners, his dress, and his — which is  
The strangest of all things — in spite of his Wife,  
The Count led a rather hum-drum sort of life.  
He grew tired, in fact, of mere eating and drinking,  
Grew tired of flirting, and ogling, and winking  
At nursery maids  
As they walk'd the Parades,  
The Crescents, the Squares, and the fine Colonnades,  
And the other gay places, which young ladies use  
As their *promenade* through the good town of Thoulouse.

He was tired of hawking, and fishing, and hunting,  
Of billiards, short-whist, chicken-hazard, and punting;  
Of popping at pheasants,  
Quails, woodcocks, and — peasants:  
Of smoking, and joking,  
And soaking, provoking  
Such headaches next day  
As his fine St. Peray,  
Though the best of all Rhone wines can never repay,  
Till weary of war, women, roast-geese, and glory,  
With no great desire to be "famous in story,"

All the day long, This was his song,  
“Oh, dear! what will become of us?  
Oh, dear! what shall we do?  
We shall die of blue devils if some of us  
Can’t hit on something that’s new!”

Meanwhile his sweet Countess, so pious and good,  
Such pomps and such vanities stoutly eschew’d,  
With all fermented liquors and high-seasoned food,  
Deviled kidneys, and sweetbreads, and ducks and green peas;  
Baked sucking-pig, goose, and all viands like these,  
Hash’d calf’s-head included, no longer could please,  
A curry was sure to elicit a breeze,  
So was ale, or a glass of Port wine after cheese,  
Indeed, anything strong,  
As to tippie, was wrong;  
She stuck to “fine Hyson,” “Bohea,” and “Souchong,”  
And similar imports direct from Hong Kong.  
In vain does the family doctor exhort her  
To take with her chop one poor half-pint of porter;  
No! — she alleges  
She’s taken the pledges!  
Determined to aid  
In a gen’ral Crusade  
Against publicans, vintners, and all of that trade,  
And to bring in sherbet, ginger-pop, lemonade,  
*Eau sucrée*, and drinkables mild and home made;  
So she claims her friends’ efforts, and vows to devote all hers  
Solely to found “The Thoulousian Teetotallers.”  
Large sums she employs  
In dressing small boys  
In long duffle jackets, and short corduroys,  
And she boxes their ears when they make too much noise;  
In short, she turns out a complete Lady Bountiful,  
Filling with drugs and brown Holland the county full.

Now just at the time when our story commences,  
It seems that a case  
Past the common took place,  
To entail on her ladyship further expenses,  
In greeting with honour befitting his station  
The Prior of Arles, with a Temperance Legation,  
Despatched by Pope Urban, who seized this occasion  
To aid in diluting that part of the nation,  
An excellent man,  
One who stuck to his can  
Of cold water “without” — and he’d take such a lot of it;  
None of your sips  
That just moisten the lips;

At one single draught he'd toss off a whole pot of it,  
 No such bad thing  
 By the way, if they bring  
 It you iced, as at Verrey's, or fresh from the spring,  
 When the Dog Star compels folks in town to take wing,  
 Though I own even then I should see no great sin in it,  
 Were there three drops of Sir Felix's gin in it.

Well, leaving the lady to follow her pleasure,  
 And finish the pump with the Prior at leisure,  
 Let's go back to Raymond, still bored beyond measure,  
 And harping away  
 On the same dismal lay,  
 "On dear! what will become of us?  
 Oh dear! what can we do?  
 We shall die of blue devils if some of us  
 Can't find out something that's new!"  
 At length in despair of obtaining his ends  
 By his own mother wit, he takes courage, and sends,  
 Like a sensible man as he is, for his friends,  
 Not his Lyndhursts or Eldons, or any such high sirs,  
 But only a few of his "backstairs" advisers;  
 "Come hither," says he,  
 "My gallants so free,  
 My bold Rigmarole, and my brave Rigmaree,  
 And my grave Baron Proser, now listen to me!  
 You three can't but see I'm half dead with *ennui*.  
 What's to be done?  
 I *must* have some fun,  
 And I will too, that's flat — ay, as sure as a gun.  
 So find me out 'something new under the sun,'  
 Or I'll knock your three jobbernowls all into one; —  
 You three  
 Agree!  
 Come, what shall it be?  
 Resolve me — propound in three skips of a flea!"  
 Rigmarole gave a "Ha!" Rigmaree gave a "Hem!"  
 They look'd at Count Raymond — Count Raymond at them,  
 As much as to say, "Have you *nihil ad rem?*"  
 At length Baron Proser  
 Responded, "You know, sir,  
 That question's some time been a regular poser;  
 Dear me! — Let me see, —  
 In the way of a 'spre'e'  
 Something new? — Eh! — No! — Yes! — No! — 'tis really no go, sir."  
 Says the Count, "Rigmarole,  
 You're as jolly a soul,  
 On the whole, as King Cole, with his pipe and his bowl;  
 Come, I'm sure you'll devise something novel and droll." —

In vain — Rigmarole with a look most profound,  
With his hand to his heart and his eye to the ground,  
Shakes his head as if nothing was there to be found.  
“I can only remark,  
That as touching a ‘lark’  
’m as much as your Highness can be, in the dark;  
I can hit on no novelty — none, on my life,  
Unless, peradventure you’d ‘tea’ with your wife!”  
Quoth Raymond, “Enough!  
Nonsense! — humbug! — fudge! — stuff!  
Rigmarole, you’re an ass, — you’re a regular Muff!  
Drink tea with her ladyship? — I? — not a bit of it!  
Call you that fun? — faith I can’t see the wit of it;  
*Mort de ma vie!*  
My dear Rigmaree,  
You’re the man, after all, — come, by way of a fee,  
If you will but be bright, from the simple degree  
Of a knight I’ll create you at once a *Mar-quis!*  
Put your conjuring cap on — consider and see,  
If you can’t beat that stupid old ‘Sumph’ with his ‘tea!’”

“That’s the thing! that will do!  
Ay, marry, that’s new!”  
Cries Rigmaree, rubbing his hands, “that will please —  
My ‘*Conjuring cap*’ — it’s the thing; — it’s ‘the cheese!’  
It was only this morning I picked up the news;  
Please your Highness a *Conjuror’s* come to Thoulouse;  
I’ll defy you to name us  
A man half so famous  
For devildoms, — Sir, it’s the great Nostradamus!  
Cornelius Agrippa ’tis said went to school to him,  
Gyngell’s an ass, and old Faustus a fool to him,  
Talk of Lilly, Albertus, Jack Dee! — pooh! all six  
He’d soon put in a pretty particular fix;  
Why, he’d beat at digesting a sword, or ‘Gun tricks’  
The great Northern Wizard himself all to sticks!  
I should like to see you,  
Try to *sauter le coup*  
With this chap at short whist, or unlimited loo,  
By the Pope you’d soon find it a regular ‘Do:’  
Why, he does as he likes with the cards, — when he’s got ‘em,  
There’s always an Ace or a King at the bottom;  
Then for casting Nativities! — only you look  
At the volume he’s published, — that wonderful book!  
In all France not another, to swear I dare venture, is  
Like, by long chinks, his ‘Prophetical Centuries’ —  
Don’t you remember how, early last summer, he  
Warned the late King ’gainst the Tournament mummery?  
Didn’t his Majesty call it all flummery,

Scorning

The warning,  
And get the next morning  
His poke in the eye from that clumsy Montgomery?  
Why, he'll tell you, before  
You're well inside his door,  
All you're Highness may wish to be up to, and more!"

"Bravo! — capital! — come, let's disguise ourselves — quick!  
— Fortune's sent him on purpose here, just in the nick;  
We'll see if old Hocus will smell out the trick;  
Let's start off at once — Rigmaree, you're a Brick!"  
The moon in gentle radiance shone  
O'er lowly roof and lordly bower,  
O'er holy pile and armed tower,  
And danced upon the blue Garonne:  
Through all that silver'd city fair,  
No sound disturbed the calm, cool air,  
Save the lover's sigh alone!  
Or where, perchance, some slumberer's nose  
Proclaim'd the depth of his repose,  
Provoking from connubial toes  
A hint — or elbow bone;  
It might, with such trifling exceptions, be said,  
That Thoulouse was as still as if Thoulouse were dead,  
And her "oldest inhabitant" buried in lead.

But hark! a sound invades the ear,  
Of horses' hoofs advancing near!  
They gain the bridge — they pass — they're here!  
Side by side  
Two strangers ride,  
For the streets in Thoulouse are sufficiently wide,  
That is I'm assured they are — not having tried.  
— See, now they stop  
Near an odd-looking shop,  
And they knock, and they ring, and they won't be denied.  
At length the command  
Of some unseen hand  
Chains, and bolts, and bars obey,  
And the thick-ribbed oaken door, old and grey,  
In the pale moonlight gives, slowly, way.

They leave their steeds to a page's care,  
Who comes mounted behind on a Flanders mare,  
And they enter the house, that resolute pair,  
With a blundering step but a dare-devil air,  
And ascend a long, darksome, and rickety stair;  
While, armed with a lamp that just helps you to see

How uncommonly dark a place can be,  
The grimmest of lads with the grimmest of grins,  
Says, "Gentlemen, please to take care of your shins!  
Who ventures this road need be firm on his pins!  
Now turn to the left — now turn to the right —  
Now a step — now stoop — now again upright —  
Now turn once again, and directly before ye  
's the door of the great Doctor's Labora-tory."

A word! a blow!  
And in they go!  
No time to prepare, or to get up a show,  
Yet everything there they find quite *comme il faut*:  
Such as queer-looking bottles and jars in a row,  
Retorts, crucibles, such as all Conjurors stow  
In the rooms they inhabit, huge bellows to blow  
The fire burning blue with its sulphur and tow;  
From the roof a huge crocodile hangs rather low,  
With a tail such as that which, we all of us know,  
Mr. Waterton managed to tie in a bow;  
Pickled snakes, potted lizards, in bottles and basins  
Like those at Morel's, or at Fortnum and Mason's,  
All articles found, you're aware without telling,  
In every respectable Conjuror's dwelling.



Looking solemn and wise,  
Without turning his eyes,  
Or betraying the slightest degree of surprise,  
In the midst sits the Doctor — his hair is white,  
And his cheek is wan — but his glance is bright,  
And his long black roquelaure, not over-tight,  
Is marked with strange characters much, if not quite,  
Like those on the bottles of green and blue light  
Which you see in a chymist's shop-window at night.  
His figure is tall and erect — rather spare about  
Ribs, — and no wonder — such folks never care about  
Eating or drinking,  
While reading and thinking,  
Don't fatten — his age might be sixty or thereabout.

Raising his eye so grave and so sage,  
From some manuscript work of a bygone age,  
The seer very composedly turns down the page,  
Then shading his sight,  
With his hand from the light,  
Says, "Well, Sirs, what would you at this time of night?  
What brings you abroad these lone chambers to tread,  
When all sober folks are at home and abed?"  
"Trav'lers we,  
In our degree,  
All strange sights we fain would see,  
And hither we come in company;  
We have far to go, and we come from far,  
Through Spain and Portingale, France and Navarre;  
We have heard of your name,  
And your fame, and our aim,  
Great Sir, is to witness, ere yet we depart  
From Thoulouse, — and to-morrow at cock-crow we start —  
Your skill — we would fain crave a touch of your art!"

"Now naye, now naye — no trav'lers ye!  
Nobles ye be  
Of high degree!  
With half an eye that one may easily see, —  
Count Raymond, your servant! —Yours, Lord Rigmaree!  
I must call you so now since you're made a *Mar-quis*;  
Faith, clever boys both, but you can't humbug me!  
No matter for that!  
I see what you'd be at —  
Well — pray no delay,  
For it's late, and ere day  
I myself must be hundreds of miles on my way;  
So tell me at once what you want with me — say!

Shall I call up the dead  
From their mouldering bed? —  
Shall I send you yourselves down to Hades instead? —  
Shall I summon old Harry himself to this spot?”  
— “Ten thousand thanks, No! we had much rather not.  
We really can’t say  
That we’re curious that way;  
But, in brief, if you’ll pardon the trouble we’re giving,  
We’d much rather take a sly peep at the living?  
Rigmaree, what say you, in  
This case, as to viewing  
Our spouses, and just ascertain what they’re doing?”  
“Just what pleases your Highness — I don’t care a *sous* in  
The matter — but don’t let old Nick and his crew in!”  
— “Agreed! — pray proceed then, most sage Nostradamus,  
And show us our *Wives* — I dare swear they won’t shame us!”

A change comes o’er the Wizard’s face,  
And his solemn look by degrees gives place  
To a half grave, half comical, kind of grimace.  
“For good or for ill,  
I work your will!  
Yours be the risk and mine the skill;  
Blame not my art if unpleasant the pill!”

He takes from a shelf, and he pops on his head,  
A square sort of cap, black, and turned up with red,  
And desires not a syllable more may be said;  
He goes on to mutter,  
And stutter, and sputter  
Hard words, such as no men but Wizards dare utter.  
“Dies mies! — Hocus pocus —  
Adsis Demon! non est jokus!  
Hi Cocolorum — don’t provoke us! —  
Adesto!  
Presto!  
Put forth your best toe!”  
And many more words, to repeat which would choke us,—  
Such a sniff then of brimstone! — it did not last long,  
Or they could not have borne it, the smell was so strong.

A mirror is near,  
So large and so clear,  
If you priced such a one in a drawing-room here,  
And was ask’d fifty pounds, you’d not say it was dear;  
But a mist gather’d round at the words of the Seer,  
Till at length, as the gloom  
Was subsiding, a room  
On its broad polish’d surface began to appear,

And the Count and his comrade saw plainly before 'em  
 The room Lady Isabel called her "*Sanctorum*."  
 They start, well they might,  
 With surprise at the sight,  
 Methinks I hear some lady say, "Serve 'em right!"

For on one side the fire Is seated the Prior,  
 At the opposite corner a fat little Friar;  
 By the side of each gentleman, easy and free,  
 Sits a lady, as close as close well may be,  
 She might almost as well have been perch'd on his knee.  
 Dear me! dear me!  
 Why, one's Isabel — she  
 On the opposite side's *La Marquise Rigmaree*! —  
 To judge from the spread  
 On the board, you'd have said  
 That the *partie quarrée* had like aldermen fed,  
 And now from long flasks, with necks covered with lead,  
 They were helping themselves to champagne, white and red  
 Hobbing and nobbing,  
 And nodding and bobbing,  
 With many a sip  
 Both from cup and from lip,  
 And with many a toast followed up by a "Hip! —  
 Hip! — hip! — huzzay!"  
 — The Count, by the way,  
 Though he sees all they're doing, can't hear what they say,  
 Notwithstanding both he And *Mar-quis Rigmaree*  
 Are so vex'd and excited at what they can see,  
 That each utters a sad word beginning with D.

That word once spoke, The silence broke,  
 In an instant the vision is cover'd with smoke!  
 But enough has been seen. "Horse! horse! and away!"  
 They have, neither, the least inclination to stay,  
 E'en to thank Nostradamus, or ask what's to pay. —  
 They rush down the stair,  
 How, they know not, nor care,  
 The next moment the Count is astride on his bay,  
 And my Lord Rigmaree on his mettlesome grey;  
 They dash through the town,  
 Now up, and now down,  
 And the stones rattle under their hoofs as they ride,  
 As if poor Thoulouse were as mad as Cheapside;  
 Through lane, alley, and street,  
 Over all that they meet;  
 The Count leads the way on his courser so fleet,  
 My Lord Rigmaree close pursuing his beat,  
 With the Page in the rear to protect the retreat.

Where the bridge spans the river, so wide and so deep,  
Their headlong career o'er the causeway they keep,  
Upsetting the Watchman, two dogs, and a Sweep,  
All the town population that was not asleep.  
They at length reach the castle, just outside the town,  
Where — in peace it was usual with Knights of renown —  
The portcullis was up, and the drawbridge was down.  
They dash by the sentinels — "*France et Thoulouse!*"  
Ev'ry soldier ( — they then wore cock'd hats and long *queues*,  
Appendages banish'd from modern reviews),  
His arquebus lower'd, and bow'd to his shoes;  
While Count Raymond pushed on to his lady's *boudoir* — he  
Had made up his mind to make one at her *soiré*.  
He rush'd to that door,  
Where ever before  
He had rapped with his knuckles, and "tirled at the pin,"  
Till he heard the soft sound of his Lady's "Come in!"  
But now, with a kick from his iron-heel'd boot,  
Which, applied to a brick wall, at once had gone through't,  
He dash'd open the lock;  
It gave way at the shock!  
(—Dear ladies, don't think, in recording the fact,  
That your bard's for one moment defending the act,  
No — it is not a gentleman's — none but a low body  
*Now* — could perform it) — and there he saw — NOBODY!!  
Nobody? — No!!  
Oh, ho! — Oh, ho!  
There was not a table — there was not a chair  
Of all that Count Raymond had ever seen there  
(They'd maroon-leather bottoms well stuff'd with horse-hair),  
That was out of its place! —  
There was not a trace  
Of a party — there was not a dish or a plate —  
No sign of a tablecloth — nothing to prate  
Of a supper, *symposium*, or sitting up late;  
There was not a spark of fire left in the grate,  
It had all been poked out, and remained in that state.  
If there was not a fire,  
Still less was there Friar,  
*Marquise*, or long glasses, or Countess, or Prior,  
And the Count, who rush'd in open mouth'd, was struck dumb,  
And could only ejaculate, "Well, this *is* rum!"

He rang for the maids — had them into the room,  
With the butler, the footman, the coachman, the groom.  
He examined them all very strictly — but no!  
Notwithstanding he cross- and re-question'd them so,  
'Twas in vain — it was clearly a case of "No Go!"  
"Their Lady," they said,

“Had gone early to bed,  
 Having rather complain’d of a cold in her head —  
 The stout little Friar, as round as an apple,  
 Had pass’d the whole night in a vigil in chapel,  
 While the Prior himself, as he’d usually done,  
 Had rung in the morning, at half-after one,  
 For his jug of cold water and twopenny bun,  
 And been visible, since they were brought him, to none.  
 But,” the servants averr’d,  
 “From the sounds that were heard  
 To proceed now and then from the father’s *sacellum*,  
 They thought he was purging  
 His sins with a scourging,  
 And making good use of his knotted *flagellum*.”  
 For Madame Rigmaree,  
 They all testified, she  
 Had gone up to her bed-chamber soon after tea,  
 And they really supposed that there still she must be,  
 Which her spouse, the *Mar-quis*,  
 Found at once to agree  
 With the rest of their tale, when he ran up to see.

Alack for Count Raymond! he could not conceive  
 How the case really stood, or know *what* to believe;  
 Nor could Rigmaree settle to laugh or to grieve.  
 There was clearly a hoax,  
 But which of the folks  
 Had managed to make them the butt of their jokes,  
 Wife or Wizard, they both knew no more than Jack Nokes;  
 That glass of the Wizard’s  
 Stuck much in their gizzards,  
 His cap, and his queer cloak all X’s and Izzards;  
 Then they found, when they came to examine again,  
 Some slight falling off in the stock of champagne,  
 Small, but more than the butler could fairly explain.  
 However, since nothing could make the truth known,  
 Why, — they thought it was best to let matters alone.  
 The Count in the garden  
 Begg’d Isabel’s pardon  
 Next morning for waking her up in a fright,  
 By the racket he’d kicked up at that time of night;  
 And gave her his word he had ne’er misbehaved so,  
 Had he not come home as tipsy as David’s sow.  
 Still, to give no occasion for family snarls,  
 The Friar was pack’d back to his convent at Arles,  
 While as for the Prior,  
 At Raymond’s desire,  
 The Pope raised his rev’rence a step or two higher,  
 And made him a Bishop *in partibus* — where

His see was I cannot exactly declare,  
Or describe his cathedral, not having been there,  
But I dare say you'll all be prepared for the news,  
When I say 'twas a good many miles from Thoulouse,  
Where the prelate, in order to set a good precedent,  
Was enjoined, as a *sine quâ non*, to be resident.  
You will fancy with me,  
That Count Raymond was free,  
For the rest of his life, from his former *ennui*;  
Still it somehow occur'd that as often as he  
Chanced to look in the face of my Lord Rigmaree,  
There was something or other — a trifling degree  
Of constraint — or embarrassment — easy to see,  
And which seem'd to be shared by the noble *Mar-quis*,  
While the ladies — the queerest of all things by half in  
My tale, never met from that hour without laughing!

MORAL

Good gentlemen all, who are subjects of Hymen,  
Don't make new acquaintances rashly, but try men,  
Avoid above all things your cunning (that's sly) men!  
Don't go out o' nights  
To see conjuring sleights,  
But shun all such people, delusion whose trade is;  
Be wise! — stay at home and take tea with the ladies.

If you *chance* to be out,  
At a "regular bout,"  
And get too much of "Abbot's Pale Ale" or "Brown Stout,"  
Don't be cross when you come home at night to your spouse,  
Nor be noisy, nor kick up a dust in the house!

Be careful yourself, and admonish your sons,  
To beware of all folks who love twopenny buns!  
And don't introduce to your wife or your daughter  
A sleek, meek, weak gent — who subsists on cold water!

\* \* \* \* \*

The main incident recorded in the following *excerpta* from our family papers has but too solid a foundation. The portrait of Roger Ingoldsby is not among those in the gallery, but I have some recollection of having seen, when a boy, a picture answering the description here given of him, much injured, and lying without a frame in one of the attics.

#### THE WEDDING-DAY, OR THE BUCCANEER'S CURSE: A FAMILY LEGEND

It has a jocund sound,  
That gleeful Marriage chime,  
As from the old and ivied tower,  
It peals, at the early Matin hour,  
Its merry, merry round;  
And the Spring is in its prime,  
And the Song-bird, on the spray,  
Trills from his throat, in varied note,  
An emulative lay —  
It has a joyous sound!!  
And the Vicar is there with his wig and his book,  
And the Clerk with his grave, *quasi*-sanctified look,  
And there stand the Village maids all with their posies,  
Their lilies, and daffy-down-dillies, and roses,  
Dight in white,  
A comely sight,  
Fringing the path to the left and the right;  
— From our nursery days we all of us know  
Ne'er doth "Our Ladye's garden grow"  
So fair for a "Grand Horticultural Show"  
As when border'd with "pretty maids all on a row."  
And the urchins are there, escap'd from the rule  
Of that "Limbo of Infants," the National School,  
Whooping, and bawling,  
And squalling, and calling,  
And crawling, and creeping,  
And jumping, and leaping,  
Bo-peeping 'midst "many a mouldering heap" in  
Whose bosom their own "rude forefathers" are sleeping;  
— Young rascals! — instead of lamenting and weeping,  
Laughing and gay, *A gorge deployée* —  
Only now and then pausing — and checking their play,  
To "wonder what 'tis makes the gentlefolks stay,"  
Ah, well-a-day! Little deem they,  
Poor ignorant dears! the bells, ringing away,  
Are anything else  
Than mere parish bells,  
Or that each of them, should we go into its history,  
Is but a "Symbol" of some deeper mystery —  
That the clappers and ropes

Are mere practical tropes  
Of “trumpets” and “tongues,” and of “preachers,” and popes,  
Unless Clement the fourth’s worthy Chaplin, *Durand*, err,  
See the “*Rationale*” of that goosey-gander.

Gently! gently, Miss Muse!  
Mind your P’s and your Q’s!  
Don’t be malapert — laugh, Miss, but never abuse!  
Calling names, whether done to attack or to back a schism,  
Is, Miss, believe me, a great piece of Jack-ass-ism,  
And as, on the whole,  
You’re a good-natured soul,  
You must never enact such a pitiful *rôle*.  
No, no, Miss, pull up, and go back to your boys  
In the churchyard, who’re making this hubbub and noise —  
But hush! there’s an end to their romping and mumming,  
For voices are heard — here’s the company coming!

And see! — the avenue gates unfold,  
And forth they pace, that bridal train,  
The grave, the gay, the young, the old,  
They cross the green and grassy lane,  
Bridesman, Bridesmaid, Bridegroom, Bride,  
Two by two, and side by side,  
Uncles, and aunts, friends tried and prov’d,  
And cousins, a great many times removed.  
A fairer or a gentler She,  
A lovelier Maid, in her degree,  
Man’s eye might never hope to see,  
Than darling, bonnie Maud Ingoldsby,  
The flow’r of that goodly company;  
While whispering low, with bated voice,  
Close by her side, her heart’s dear choice,  
Walks Fredville’s hope, young Valentine Boys.  
— But where, oh where, —  
Is Ingoldsby’s heir?  
Little Jack Ingoldsby? — where, oh where?  
Why, he’s here, — and he’s there,  
And he’s every where —  
He’s there, and he’s here;  
In the front — in the rear, —  
Now this side, now that side, — now far, and now near —  
The Puck of the party, the darling “pet” boy,  
Full of mischief, and fun, and good humour and joy;  
With his laughing blue eye, and his cheek like a rose,  
And his long curly locks, and his little snub nose;  
In his tunic, and trousers, and cap — there he goes!  
Now pinching the bridesmen, — now teasing his sister,  
And telling the bridesmaids how “Valentine kiss’d her;”

The torment, the plague, the delight of them all,  
 See he's into the churchyard! — he's over the wall —  
 Gambolling, frolicking, capering away,  
 He's the first in the church, be the second who may!

\* \* \* \* \*

'Tis o'er; — the holy rite is done,  
 The rite that “incorporates two in one,”  
 — And now for the feasting, and frolic, and fun!  
 Spare we to tell of the smiling and sighing,  
 The shaking of hands, the embracing, and crying,  
 The “toot — toot — toot”  
 Of the tabour and flute,  
 Of the white wigg'd Vicar's prolonged salute,  
 Or of how the blithe “College *Youths*” — rather old stagers,  
 Accustom'd, for years, to pull bell ropes for wagers —  
 Rang, faster than ever, their “triple-bob-MAJORS;”  
 (So loud as to charm ye,  
 At once and alarm ye;  
 — “Symbolic,” of course, of that rank in the army.)

Spare we to tell of the fees and the dues  
 To the “little old woman that open'd the pews,”  
 Of the largesse bestow'd on the Sexton and Clerk,  
 Of the four-year-old sheep roasted whole in the park,  
 Of the laughing and joking,  
 The quaffing and smoking,  
 And chaffing, and broaching — that is to say, poking  
 A hole in a mighty magnificent tub  
 Of what men, in our hemisphere, term “Humming Bub,”  
 But which Gods, — who, it seems, use a different lingo  
 From Mortals, — are wont to denominate “Stingo.”

Spare we to tell of the Horse-collar grinning;  
 The Cheese! the reward of the ugly one winning;  
 Of the young ladies racing for Dutch body-linen, —  
 — The soapy-tailed Sow, — a rich prize when you've caught her, —  
 Of little boys bobbing for pippins in water;  
 The smacks and the whacks,  
 And the jumpers in sacks,  
 These down on their noses and those on their backs; —  
 Nor skills it to speak of those darling old ditties,  
 Sung rarely in hamlets now — never in cities,  
 The “*King and the Miller*,” the “*Bold Robin Hood*,”  
 “*Chevy Chase*,” “*Gilderoy*,” and the “*Babes in the Wood!*”  
 — You'll say that my taste  
 Is sadly misplaced,  
 But I can't help confessing these simple old tunes

The “*Auld Robin Grays*,” and the “*Aileen Aroons*,”  
The “*Gramachree Mollys*,” and “*Sweet Bonny Doons*,”  
Are dearer to me,  
In a tenfold degree,  
Than a fine *fantasia* from over the sea;  
And, for sweetness, compared with a Beethoven fugue, are  
As “best-refined loaf” to the coarsest “brown sugar;”†  
— Alack, for the Bard’s want of science! to which he owes  
All this misliking of foreign *capricios*! —  
Not that he’d say  
One word, by the way,  
To disparage our new Idol, Monsieur Duprez —  
But he grudges, he owns, his departed half guinea,  
Each Saturday night when, devoured by chagrin, he  
Sits listening to singers whose names end in *ini*.

But enough of the rustics — let’s leave them pursuing  
Their out-of-door gambols, and just take a view in  
The inside the Hall, and see what *they* are doing;  
And first there’s the Squire,  
The hale, hearty Sire  
Of the Bride, — with his coat-tails subducted and higher,  
A thought, than they’re commonly wont to aspire;  
His back and his buckskins exposed to the fire; —  
— Bright, bright are his buttons, — and bright is the hue  
Of his squarely-cut coat of fine Saxony blue;  
And bright the shalloon of his little quilled *queue*;  
— White, white as “Young England’s,” the dimity vest  
Which descends like an *avalanche* o’er his broad breast,  
Till its further progression is put in arrest  
By the portly projection that springs from his chest,  
Overhanging the garment — that can’t be exprest;  
— White, white are his locks, — which, had Nature fair play,  
Had appeared a clear brown, slightly sprinkled with grey;  
But they’re white as the peaks of Plinlimmon to-day,  
Or Ben Nevis, his pate is *si bien poudré!*  
Bright, bright are the boots that envelope his heels,  
— Bright, bright is the gold chain suspending his seals,  
And still brighter yet may the gazer descry  
The Tear-drop that spangles the fond Father’s eye  
As it lights on the Bride —  
His belov’d One — the pride  
And delight of his heart, — sever’d now from his side; —  
But brighter than all,  
Arresting its fall,  
Is the smile, that rebukes it for spangling at all,

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† *Ad Amicum, Servientem ad legem* —  
This rhyme, if, when scann’d by your critical ear, it  
Is not *quite* legitimate, comes pretty near it. — T. I.

— A clear case, in short, of what old Poets tell, as  
Blind Homer for instance, εν δαχρυσι γελας.

Then, there are the Bride and the Bridegroom, withdrawn  
To the deep Gothic window that looks on the lawn,  
Ensnconced on a squab of maroon-coloured leather,  
And talking — and *thinking*, no doubt — of the weather.

But here comes the party — Room! room for the guests!  
In their Pompadour coats, and laced ruffles, and vests,  
— First, Sir Charles Grandison, Baronet, and his Son,  
Charles, — the Mamma does not venture to “show” —  
— Miss Byron, you know, She was call’d long ago —  
For that Lady, ’twas *said*, had been playing the d—l,  
Last season, in town, with her old beau, Squire Greville,  
Which very much shock’d, and chagrin’d, as may well be  
Supposed, “Doctor Bartlett,” and “Good Uncle Selby.”  
— Sir Charles, of course, could not give Greville his gruel, in  
Order to prove his abhorrence of duelling,  
Nor try for, deterr’d by the serious expense, a  
Complete separation *a thoro et mensâ*,  
So he “kept a calm sough,” and, when asked to a party,  
A dance, or a dinner, or tea and *ecarté*,  
He went with his son, and said, looking demurely,  
He’d “left her at home, as she found herself poorly.”

Two Foreigners near,  
“Of distinction,” appear;  
A pair more illustrious you ne’er heard of, or saw,  
Count Ferdinand Fathom, — Count Thaddeus of Warsaw,  
All cover’d with glitt’ring *bijouterie* and hair — Poles,  
Whom Lord Dudley Stuart calls “Patriot,” — Hook “Bare Poles;”  
Such rings, and such brooches, such studs, and such pins.  
’Twere hard to say which  
Were more gorgeous and rich,  
Or more truly Mosaic, their chains or their chins!  
Next Sir Roger de Coverley, — Mr. Will Ramble,  
With Dame Lismahago, (*née* Tabitha Bramble), —  
Mr. Random and Spouse, — Mrs. Pamela Booby,  
(Whose nose was acquiring a tinge of the ruby,  
And “people *did say*” — but no matter for that, ...  
Folks were not then enlighten’d by good Father Mat.) —  
— Three friends from “the Colonies” near them were seen,  
The great Massachusetts man, General Muff Green, —  
Mr. Jonathan W. Doubikins, — men  
“Influential *some*” — and their “smart” Uncle Ben; —  
Rev. Abraham Adams (preferr’d to a stall), —  
— Mr. Jones and his Lady, from Allworthy Hall;  
— Our friend Tom, by the way,

Had turn'd out rather gay  
For a married man — certainly “people *did say*,”  
He was shrewdly suspected of using his wife ill,  
And being as sly as his half-brother Blifil. —  
(Miss Seagrim, 'tis well known, was now in high feather,  
And “people *did say*” they'd been seen out together, —  
A fact, the “Boy Jones,” who, in our days, with malice  
Aforethought, so often got into the Palace,  
Would seem to confirm, as, 'tis whispered he owns, he's  
The son of a natural son of Tom Jones's.)  
Lady Bellaston, (*mem.* she had not been invited!)  
Sir Peregrine Pickle, now recently knighted, —  
All joyous, all happy, all looking delighted!  
— It would bore you to death should I pause to describe,  
Or enumerate, half of the elegant tribe  
Who filled the back ground,  
And among whom were found  
The *elite* of the old County families round,  
Such as Honeywood, Oxenden, Knatchbull, and Norton,  
Matthew Robinson<sup>†</sup>, too, with his beard from Monk's Horton,  
The Faggs, and Finch-Hattons, Tokes, Derings, and Deedses,  
And Fairfax, (who then called the castle of Leeds his;)  
Esquires, Knights, and Lords,  
In bag-wigs and swords;  
And the troops, and the groups  
Of fine Ladies in hoops;  
The *pompoons*, the *toupées*, and the diamonds and feathers,  
The flowered-silk *sacques*  
Which they wore on their backs, —  
— How? — *sacques* and *pompoons*, with the Squire's boots and leathers? —

Stay! stay! — I suspect,  
Here's a trifling neglect  
On your part, Madame Muse — though you're commonly accurate  
As to costume, as brown Quaker, or black Curate,  
For once, I confess,  
Here you're out as to dress; —  
You've been fairly caught napping, which gives me distress,  
For I can't but acknowledge it is not the thing,  
Sir Roger de Coverley's laced suit to bring  
Into contact with square-cut coats, — such as George Byng,  
And poor dear Sir Francis appeared in, last spring. —  
So, having for once been compelled to acknowledge, I  
've made a small hole in our mutual chronology,  
Canter on, Miss, without further apology, —  
Only don't make

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<sup>†</sup> A worthy and eccentric country gentleman, afterwards the second Lord Rokeby, being cousin (“a great many times removed”) and successor in the barony to Richard, Archbishop of Armagh, who first bore that title. — His beard was truly patriarchal. — Mr. Muntz's — pooh! —

Such another mistake,  
Or you'll get in a scrape, of which I shall partake; —  
Enough! — you are sorry for what you have done,  
So dry your eyes, Miss, blow your nose, and go on!

Well — the party are met, all radiant and gay,  
And how ev'ry person is dress'd — we won't say;  
Suffice it, they all come glad homage to pay  
To our dear “bonnie Maud,” on her own wedding-day,  
To dance at her bridal, and help “throw the stocking,”  
— A practice that's now discontinued as shocking.

There's a breakfast, they know —  
There always is so  
On occasions like these, wheresoever you go.  
Of course there are “lots” of beef, potted and hung,  
Prawns, lobsters, cold fowl, and cold ham, and cold tongue,  
Hot tea, and hot coffee, hot rolls, and hot toast,  
Cold pigeon-pie (rook?), and cold boil'd and cold roast,  
Scotch marmalade, jellies, cold creams, colder ices —  
*Blancmange*, which young Ladies say, so very nice is, —  
Rock-melons in thick, Pines in much thinner slices, —  
Char, potted with clarified butter and spices,  
Renewing an appetite long past its crisis —  
Refined barley-sugar, in various devices,  
Such as bridges, and baskets, and temples, and grottoes —  
And nasty French lucifer snappers with mottoes.  
— In short, all those gimcracks together were met  
Which people of fashion tell Gunter to get  
When they give a *grand déjeûner à la fourchette* —  
(A phrase which, though French, in our language still lingers,  
Intending a breakfast with forks and not fingers.)  
And see! what a mountainous bridecake! — a thing  
By itself — with small pieces to pass through the ring!

Now as to the wines! — “Ay, the Wine?” cries the Squire,  
Letting fall both his coat-tails, — which nearly take fire, —  
Rubbing his hands,  
He calls out, as he stands,  
To the serving-men waiting “his Honour's” commands,  
“The wine! — to be sure — here you, Harry — Bob — Dick —  
The wine, don't you hear? — bring us lights — come, be quick! —  
And a crow-bar to knock down the mortar and brick —  
Say what they may, 'Fore George, we'll make way  
Into old Roger Ingoldsby's cellar to-day;  
And let loose his captives, imprison'd so long,  
His flasks, and his casks, that he bricked up so strong!” —  
— “Oh dear! oh dear! Squire Ingoldsby, bethink you what you do!”

Exclaims old Mrs. Botherby†, — she is in *such* a stew! —  
“Oh dear! oh dear! what do I hear? — full oft you’ve heard me tell  
Of the curse ‘Wild Roger’ left upon whoe’er should break his cell!”

“Full five-and-twenty years are gone since Roger went away,  
As I bethink me, too, it was upon this very day!  
And I was then a comely dame, and you, a springald gay,  
Were up and down to London town, at opera, ball, and play;  
Your locks were nut-brown then, Squire — you grow a little grey! —

“Wild Roger,’ so we call’d him then, your Grandsire’s youngest son,  
He was in truth  
A wayward youth,  
We fear’d him, every one.  
In ev’ry thing he had his will, he would be stayed by none,  
And when he did a naughty thing, he laugh’d and call’d it fun!  
— One day his father chid him sore — I know not what he’d done,  
But he scorn’d reproof;  
And from this roof  
Away that night he run!

“Seven years were gone and over — ‘Wild Roger’ came again,  
He spoke of forays and of frays upon the Spanish Main;  
And he had store of gold galore, and silks, and satins fine,  
And flasks and casks of Malvoisie, and precious Gascon wine!  
Rich booties he had brought, he said, across the western wave,  
And came, in penitence and shame, now of his Sire to crave  
Forgiveness and a welcome home — his Sire was in his grave!

“Your Father was a kindly man — he played a brother’s part,  
He press’d his brother to his breast — he had a kindly heart,  
Fain would he have him tarry here, their common hearth to share,  
But Roger was the same man still, — he scorn’d his brother’s pray’r!  
He call’d his crew, — away he flew, and on those foreign shores  
Got kill’d in some outlandish place — they call it the Eyesores‡;  
But ere he went,  
And quitted Kent,  
— I well recall the day, —  
His flasks and casks of Gascon wine he safely ‘stow’d away;’  
Within the cellar’s deepest nook, he safely stow’d them all,  
And Mason Jones brought bricks and stones, and they built up the wall.

“Oh! then it was a fearful thing to hear ‘Wild Roger’s’ ban!  
Good gracious me! I never heard the like from mortal man;  
‘Here’s that,’ quoth he, ‘shall serve me well when I return at last,

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† Great grandmamma, by the father’s side, to the excellent lady of the same name who yet  
“keeps the keys” at Tappington.

‡ Azores? — Mrs. Botherby’s orthography, like that of her distinguished contemporary Baron  
Duberly, was “a little loose.”

A batter'd hulk, to quaff and laugh at toils and dangers past;  
Accurst be he, whoe'er he be, lays hand on gear of mine,  
Till I come back again from sea, to broach my Gascon wine!  
And more he said, which filled with dread all those who listen'd there;  
In sooth my very blood ran cold, it lifted up my hair  
With very fear, to stand and hear 'Wild Roger' curse and swear!!  
He saw my fright, as well he might, but still he made his game,  
He called me 'Mother Bounce-about,' my Gracious, what a name!  
Nay more, 'an old' — some 'boat-woman,' — I may not say for shame! —  
Then, gentle Master, pause awhile, give heed to what I tell,  
Nor break, on such a day as this, 'Wild Roger's' secret cell!"

"Pooh! pooh!" quoth the Squire,  
As he mov'd from the fire,  
And bade the old Housekeeper quickly retire,  
"Pooh! — never tell me! Nonsense — fiddle-de-dee!  
What? — wait Uncle Roger's return back from sea? —  
Why he may, as you say,  
Have been somewhat too gay,  
And, no doubt, was a broth of a boy in his way;  
But what's that to us, now, at this time of day?  
What if some quarrel  
With Dering or Darrell —  
— I hardly know which, but I think it was Dering, —



Sent him back in a huff to his old privateering,  
Or what his unfriends chose to call Buccaneering,  
It's twenty years since, as we very well know,  
He was knock'd on the head in a skirmish, and so  
Why rake up 'auld warld' tales of deeds long ago? —  
— Foul befall him who would touch the deposit  
Of living man, whether in cellar or closet!  
But since, as I've said,  
Knock'd on the head,  
Uncle Roger has now been some twenty years dead.  
As for his wine,  
I'm his heir, and it's mine!  
And I'd long ago work'd it well, but that I tarried  
For this very day —  
And I'm sure you'll all say  
I was right — when my own darling Maud should get married!  
So lights and a crow-bar! — the only thing lies  
On my conscience, at all, with respect to this prize,  
Is some little compunction anent the Excise —  
Come — you, Master Jack,  
Be the first, and bring back  
Whate'er comes to hand — Claret, Burgundy, Sack —  
Head the party, and mind that you're back in a crack!"

Away go the clan,  
With cup and with can,  
Little Jack Ingoldsby leading the van;  
Little reck they of the Buccaneer's ban:  
Hope whispers, "Perchance we'll fall in with strong beer too here!"  
Blest thought! which sets them all grinning from ear to ear!

Through cellar one, through cellars two,  
Through cellars three they past!  
And their way they took  
To the farthest nook  
Of cellar four — the last! —  
Blithe and gay, they batter away,  
On this wedding-day of Maud's,  
With all their might, to bring to light  
"Wild Roger's" "Custom-house frauds!"  
And though stone and brick  
Be never so thick,  
When stoutly assailed, they are no bar  
To the powerful charm  
Of a Yeoman's arm  
When wielding a decentish crow-bar!  
Down comes brick, and down comes stone,  
One by one —  
The job's half done! —

“Where is he? — now come — where’s Master John?” —  
 — There’s a breach in the wall three feet by two,  
 And little Jack Ingoldsby soon pops through!  
 Hark! — what sound’s that? — a sob? — a sigh? —  
 The choking gasp of a stifled cry? —  
 “— What can it be? —  
 Let’s see! — let’s see! —  
 It *can’t* be little Jack Ingoldsby?  
 The candle —quick!” —  
 Through stone and through brick  
 They poke in the light on a long split stick;  
 But ere he who holds it can wave it about,  
 He gasps, and he sneezes — the LIGHT GOES OUT!

Yet were there those, in after days,  
 Who said that pale light’s flickering blaze,  
 For a moment, gleam’d on a dark Form there,  
 Seem’d as bodied of foul black air! —  
 — In Mariner’s dress, — with cutlass braced  
 By buckle and broad black belt, to its waist, —  
 — On a cock’d-hat, laced  
 With gold, and placed  
 With a *degagée*, devil-may-care, kind of taste,  
 O’er a *balafre* brow by a scar defaced! —  
 That Form, they said, so foul and so black,  
 Grinn’d as it pointed at poor little Jack. —  
 — I know not, I, how the truth may be,  
 But the pent-up vapour, at length set free,  
 Set them all sneezing,  
 And coughing, and wheezing,  
 As, working its way  
 To the regions of day,  
 It, at last, let a purer and healthier breeze in!

Of their senses bereft,  
 To the right and the left,  
 Those varlets so lately courageous and stout,  
 There they lay kicking and sprawling about,  
 Like Billingsgate fresh fish, unconscious of ice,  
 Or those which, the newspapers give us advice,  
 Mr. Taylor, of Lombard-street, sells at half-price;  
 — Nearer the door, some half dozen, or more!  
 Scramble away  
 To the *rez de chaussee*,  
 (As our Frenchified friend always calls his ground-floor,)  
 And they call, and they bawl, and they bellow and roar  
 For lights, vinegar, brandy, and fifty things more.  
 At length, after no little clamour and din,  
 The foul air let out, and the fresh air let in,

They drag one and all Up into the hall,  
Where a medical Quaker, the great Dr. Lettsom,  
Who's one of the party, "bleeds, physicks, and sweats 'em."  
All? — all — save One —  
— "But He! — my Son? —  
Merciful Heaven! — where — WHERE IS JOHN?"

Within that cell, so dark and deep,  
Lies One, as in a tranquil sleep,  
A sight to make the sternest weep! —  
— That little heart is pulseless now,  
And cold that fair and open brow,  
And closed that eye that beam'd with joy  
And hope — "Oh, God! — my Boy! — my Boy!"

Enough! — I may not, — dare not, — show  
The wretched Father's frantic woe,  
The Mother's tearless, speechless — No!  
I may not such a theme essay —  
Too bitter thoughts crowd in and stay  
My pen — sad memory will have way!  
Enough! — at once I close the lay,  
Of fair Maud's fatal Wedding-day!

It has a mournful sound,  
That single, solemn Bell!  
As to the hills and woods around  
It flings its deep-toned knell;  
That measured toll! — alone — apart,  
It strikes upon the human heart!  
— It has a mournful sound! —

#### MORAL

Come, come, Mrs. Muse, we can't part in this way,  
Or you'll leave me as dull as ditch-water all day.  
Try and squeeze out a Moral or two from your lay!  
And let us part cheerful, at least, if not gay!

First and foremost then, Gentlefolks, learn from my song,  
Not to lock up your wine, or malt-liquor, too long!  
Though Port should have age,  
Yet I don't think it sage  
To entomb it, as some of your *connoisseurs* do,  
Till it's losing in flavour, and body, and hue;  
— I question if keeping it does it much good  
After ten years in bottle and three in the wood.

If any young man, though a snubb'd younger brother,

When told of his faults by his father and mother,  
Runs restive, and goes off to sea in a huff,  
Depend on't, my friends, that young man is a Muff!

Next — ill-gotten gains  
Are not worth the pains! —  
They prosper with no one! — so whether cheroots,  
Or Havanna cigars, — or French gloves, or French boots, —  
Whatever you want, pay the duty! nor when you  
Buy any such articles, cheat the revenue!

And “now to conclude,” —  
For it's high time I should, —  
When you *do* rejoice, mind, — whatsoever you do,  
That the hearts of the lowly rejoice with you too! —  
Don't grudge them their jigs,  
And their frolics and “rigs,”  
And don't interfere with their soapy-tail'd pigs;  
Nor “because thou art virtuous,” rail, and exhale  
An *anathema*, breathing of vengeance and wail,  
Upon every complexion less pale than sea-kail!  
Nor dismiss the poor man to his pump and his pail,  
With “Drink *there!* — we'll have henceforth no more cakes and ale!!”

\* \* \* \* \*