



PETROL PETER
By
ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS
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PETROL PETER

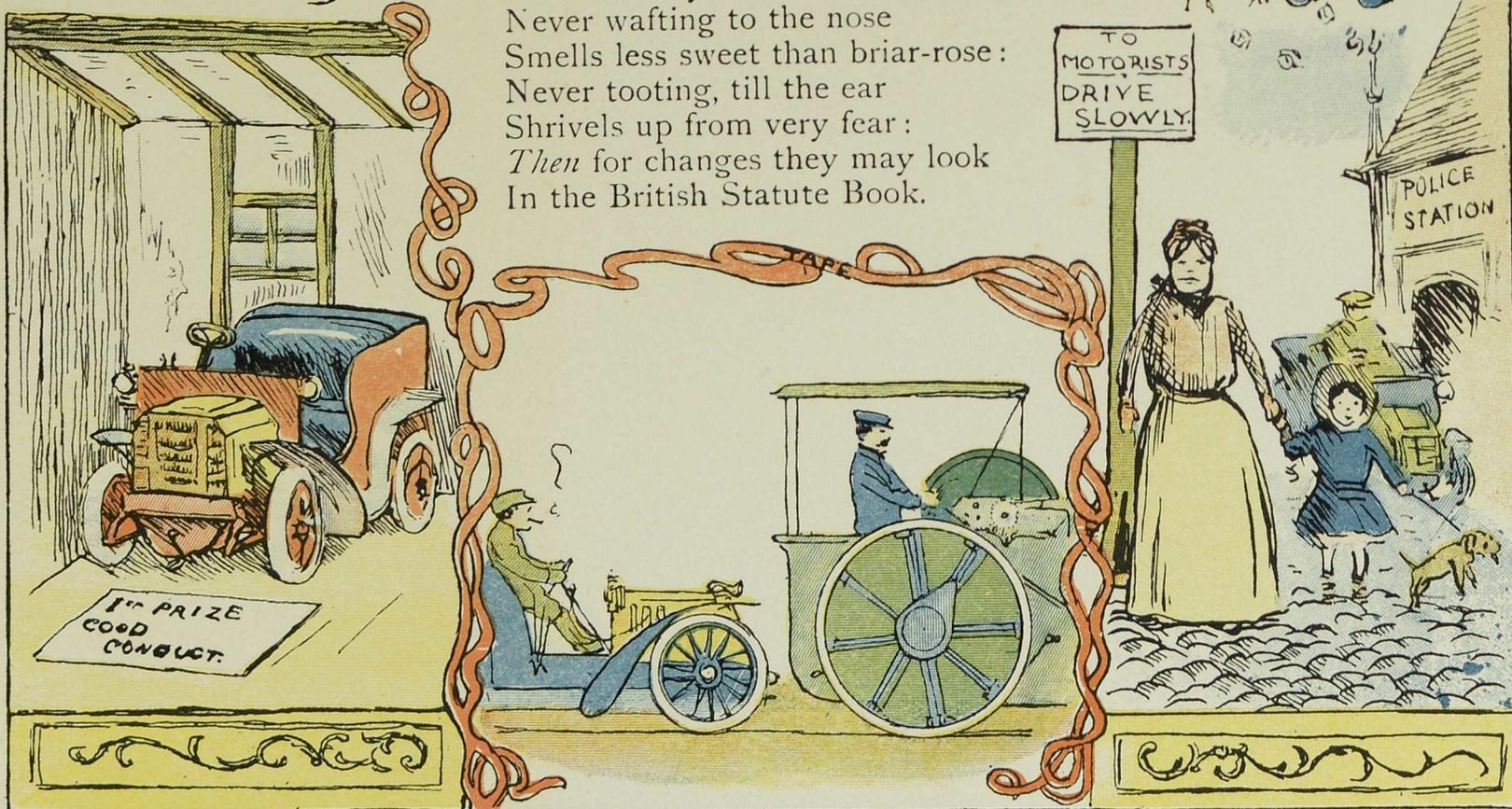
OR

PRETTY + STORIES

AND

FUNNY PICTURES.

When the motors have been good :—
 Crawling, as of course they should :
 Never daring to exceed
 Traction-engine's slowest speed :
 Never raising speck of dust
 From the dry macadam's crust :
 Never wafting to the nose
 Smells less sweet than briar-rose :
 Never tooting, till the ear
 Shrivels up from very fear :
Then for changes they may look
 In the British Statute Book.



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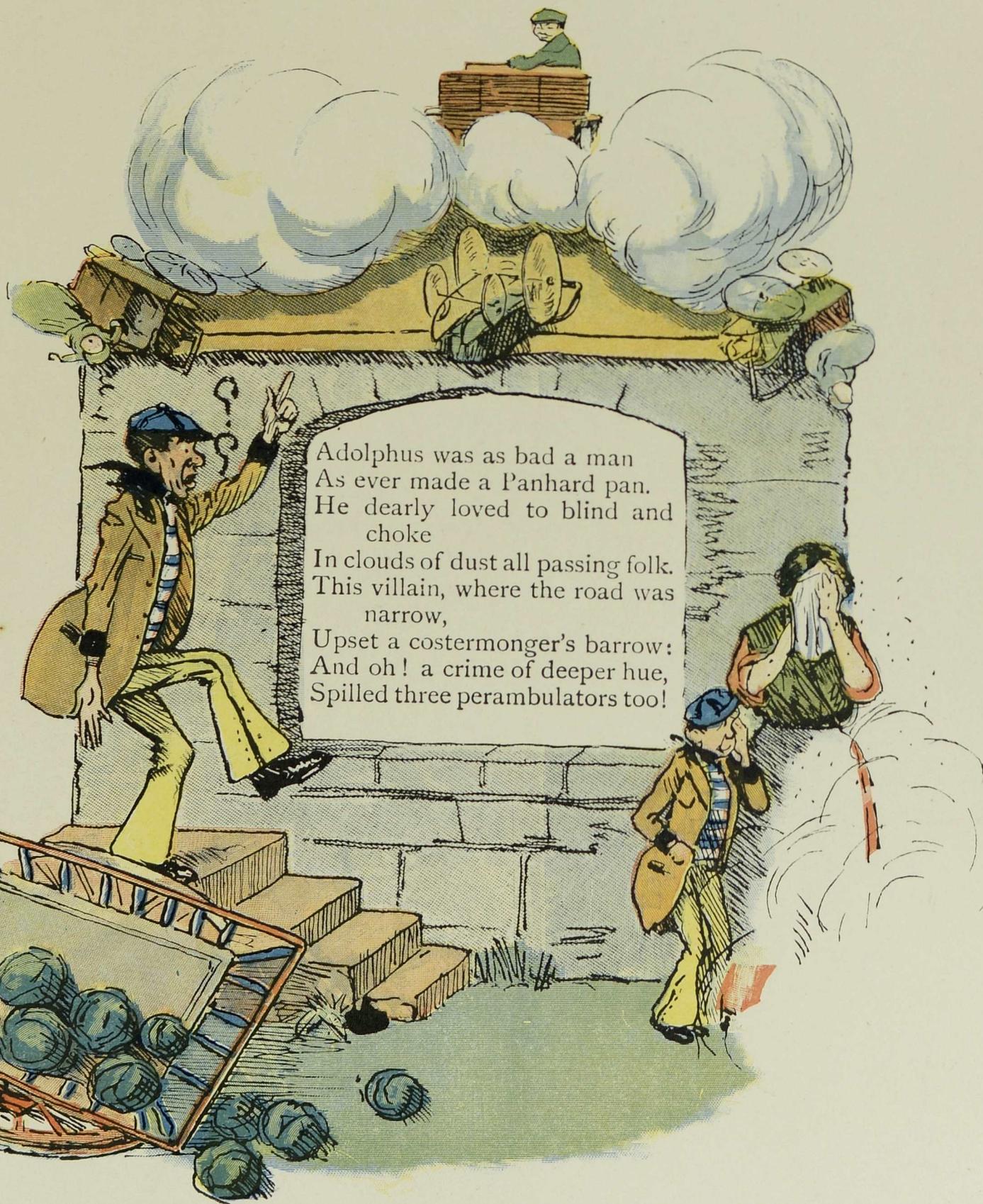
1. PETROL PETER.



Petrol Peter here you see,
What a spectacle is he!
Look! his hands are never clean,—
'Tis a year since they have been:
And the oil has patched his clo'es
From his collar to his toes:
Any job is nicer far
Than to currycomb a car.

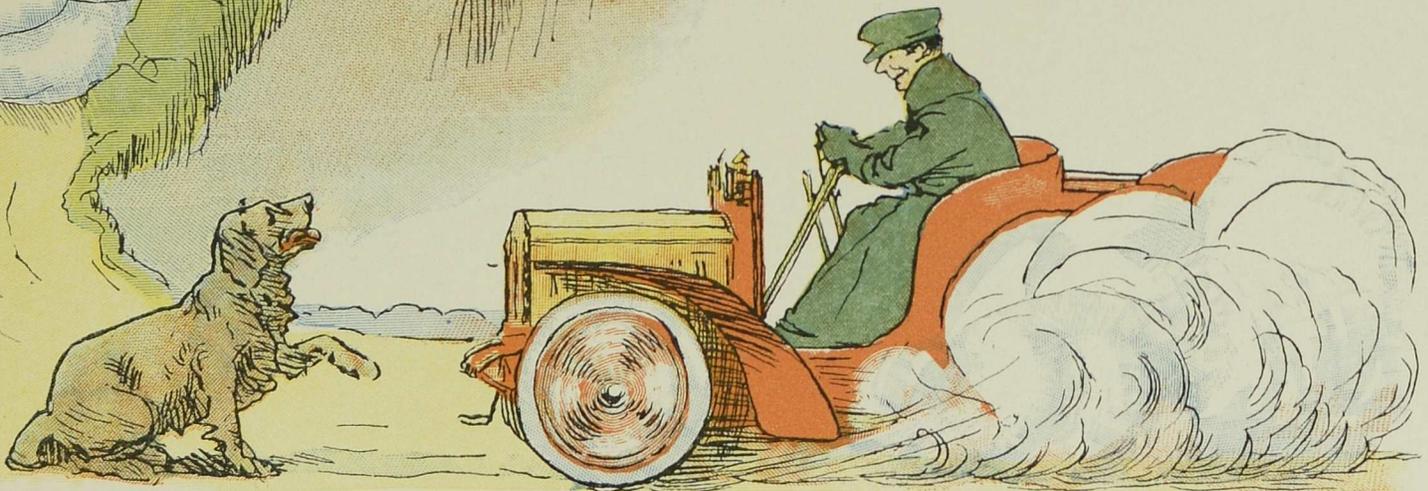
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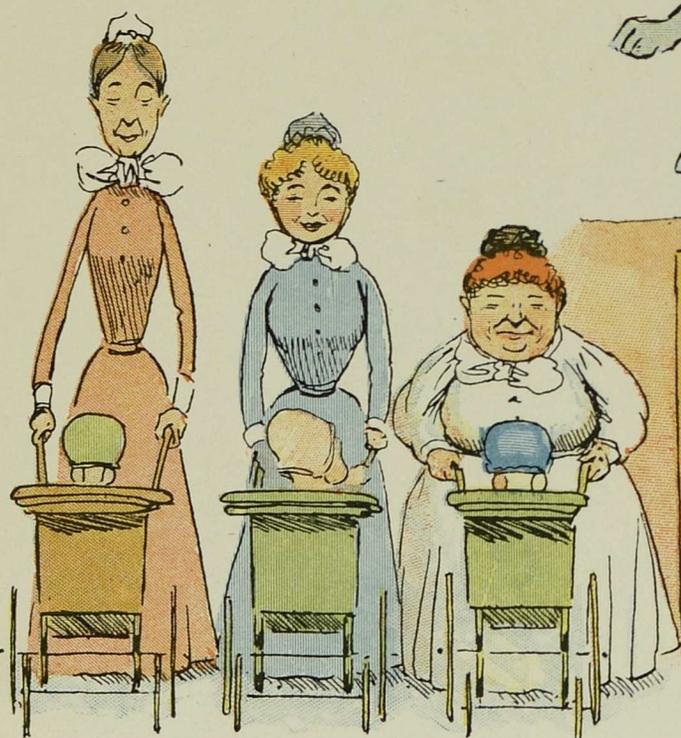
2. THE STORY OF CRUEL ADOLPHUS.





Adolphus saw a dog one day
Right in the middle of the way:
It kept its place, and showed no fear
Although the motor-car was near.
With "Yoicks!" he gave the car its head,
And thought the dog as good as dead.
But lo! it swelled to monstrous size,
And fixed him with its demon eyes!
Too late! his speed he could not check!
Bang! Smash!—his Panhard was a wreck!



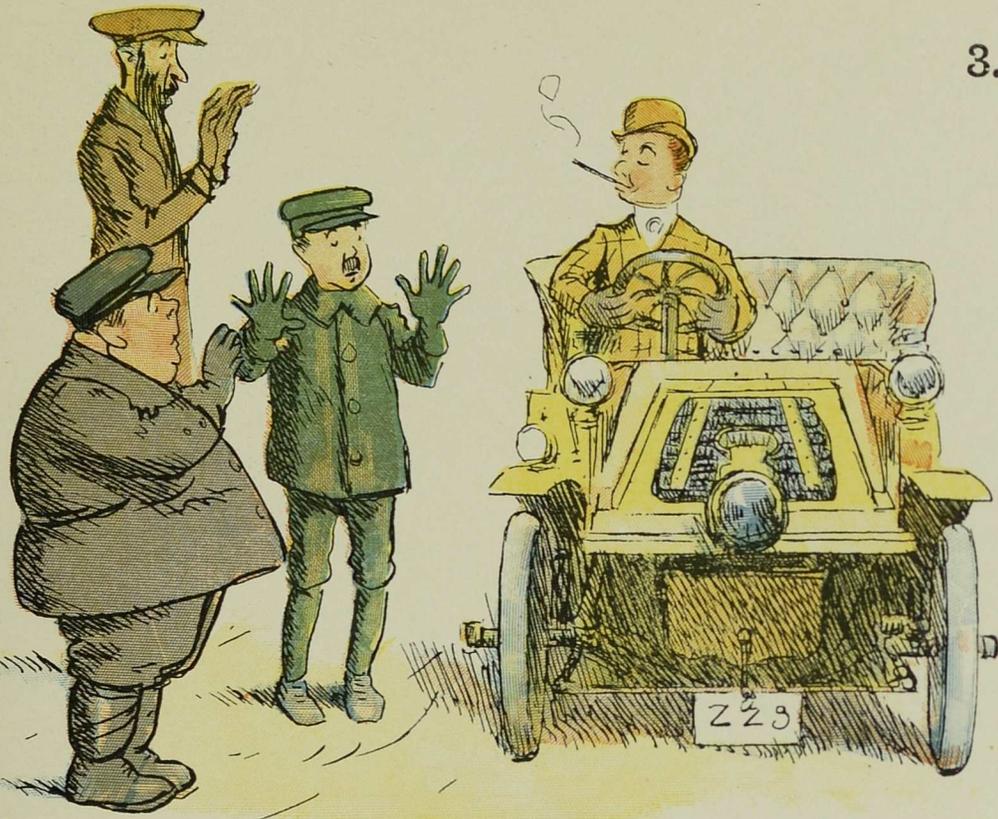


Here lies Adolphus in the dock,
 He's quite prostrated by the shock:
 The grim Avenger comes to mock,
 And offers him a cold collation
 Of humble-pie and embrocation.



The coster now may cost at ease;
 No whirling motor-car he sees:
 The highway-dog can safely rest;
 Or nursemaids trundle, three abreast.
 In vain the doctor's longest bill:—
 A Demon dogs Adolphus still.

3. THE STORY OF HEADLONG HENRY.



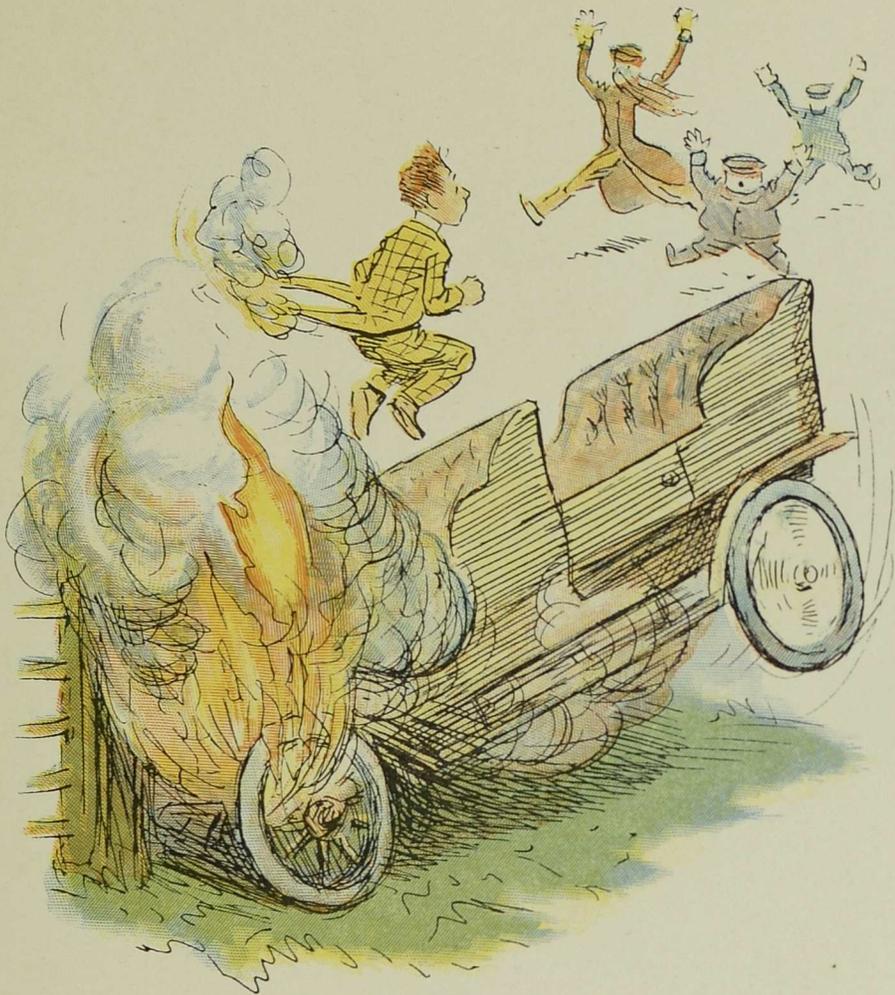
These lurid lines narrate in brief
How Headlong Henry came to grief.
One day a motor brought from Town
His friends, Smith, Robinson and Brown.
Now, Henry, on a car antique,
Had once played chauffeur for a week,
And thought he knew a lot about it,—
His cronies were inclined to doubt it.
Their feet had hardly touched the ground,
When in jumped Henry with a bound,
And said: "By your good leave I'll show
How *I* can make a motor go."

They answered, "Nay, my boy:
It does not do to toy
With cars like her:
We'd much prefer,—
We'd *very much* prefer to see you
On someone else's car as Jehu."

But Henry would not be denied:
He moved a lever by his side,
And pressed, with light fantastic toe,
A second lever down below.
The motor gave a sudden spring
And went ahead like anything.

The syndicate began
To chide the foolish man:
"For goodness' sake
Clap on the brake!":
"Hi, steady there!—don't go so quick!"
"Retard the spark, you lunatic!"





And see! oh! what a dreadful fate!
The helmsman's course was far from straight.
The motor-car soon charged a post,
And flaring petrol ruled the roast!

Then Brown and Co. began to shout,
"Get out, my boy! Get out! Get out!
Make haste! Make haste! Skip, Henry, skip!
Or you'll be frizzled to a chip":
So Henry, with his tails alight,
Did imitate a comet's flight.

This picture makes it plain as plain
The motor couldn't mote again,
Since nothing but some twisted scrap
Survived to mark the sad mishap.
The owners thought it was no joke
A thousand pounds should end in smoke.

This made them cry, without ado,
"We'll send the little bill to *you*;
You cooked her goose, and *you* shall raise
A brand-new Phoenix from the blaze."
Poor Henry heard, and dropped a tear:
His cheap display had cost him dear.



4. THE STORY OF THE MAGISTRATE AND THE MOTORISTS.



One day, as erst uncounted times,
The chimney artist, Mister Grimes,
Monopolised, with dusky load,
The central portion of the road.
The sun was hot : he closed his peepers,
And slumbered like the Seven Sleepers.
Then Charles, on nimble racer borne,
Ran up behind, and blew his horn :
And Selwyn's trumpet also spoke
A brazen warning to the moke :
And hasty Talbot tried and tried
To brush the cart and brooms aside.
So they raised harmonies galore ;
He only nodded as before,
Unconscious that he blocked the track.
They longed to give each ass a whack !



A Magistrate, who lived close by,
Looked on with prejudicial eye.
He had a fine-book, large and blue,
In which big totals daily grew.
Cried he, "I warn you that you must
Not give the chimney-sweep your dust:
No motorist can claim the right
To change a man from black to white."
But ah! they did not care a cent;
They couldn't see the argument—
And kept on braying Toot! Toot! Toot!
To galvanize the man of soot.



For such Contempt of Court, just look,
His Worship brings the three to book.
The trio all seem much alarmed ;
They dare not fight,—they're under-armed.

They make no bones ; no word they speak ;
What use to bicker with a Beak ?
Into the tome their names go down :
He fines them till they've not a "brown" :
Their cars are forfeit to the Crown.





See, here,—unkindest cut of all—
A bag, like them, has had a fall :
The Magistrate enjoys the fun ;
They ask that justice shall be done.
“Come, drop on *him*; he’s dropped his sack,
And changed *us* all from white to black.”
“You’re out of Court,” he answers back :
“When chauffeurs raise a dust, they rue it :
But sweeps—why ! it’s their trade to do it !”

5. THE STORY OF THE STRANGE SUITOR.

This is the man who's like the bears :
This is the rig he often wears :
In coat, gloves, gaiters,—furry all,—
He leaves his car to pay a call.



When motoring, he likes to screen
His eyes from dust with goggles green.

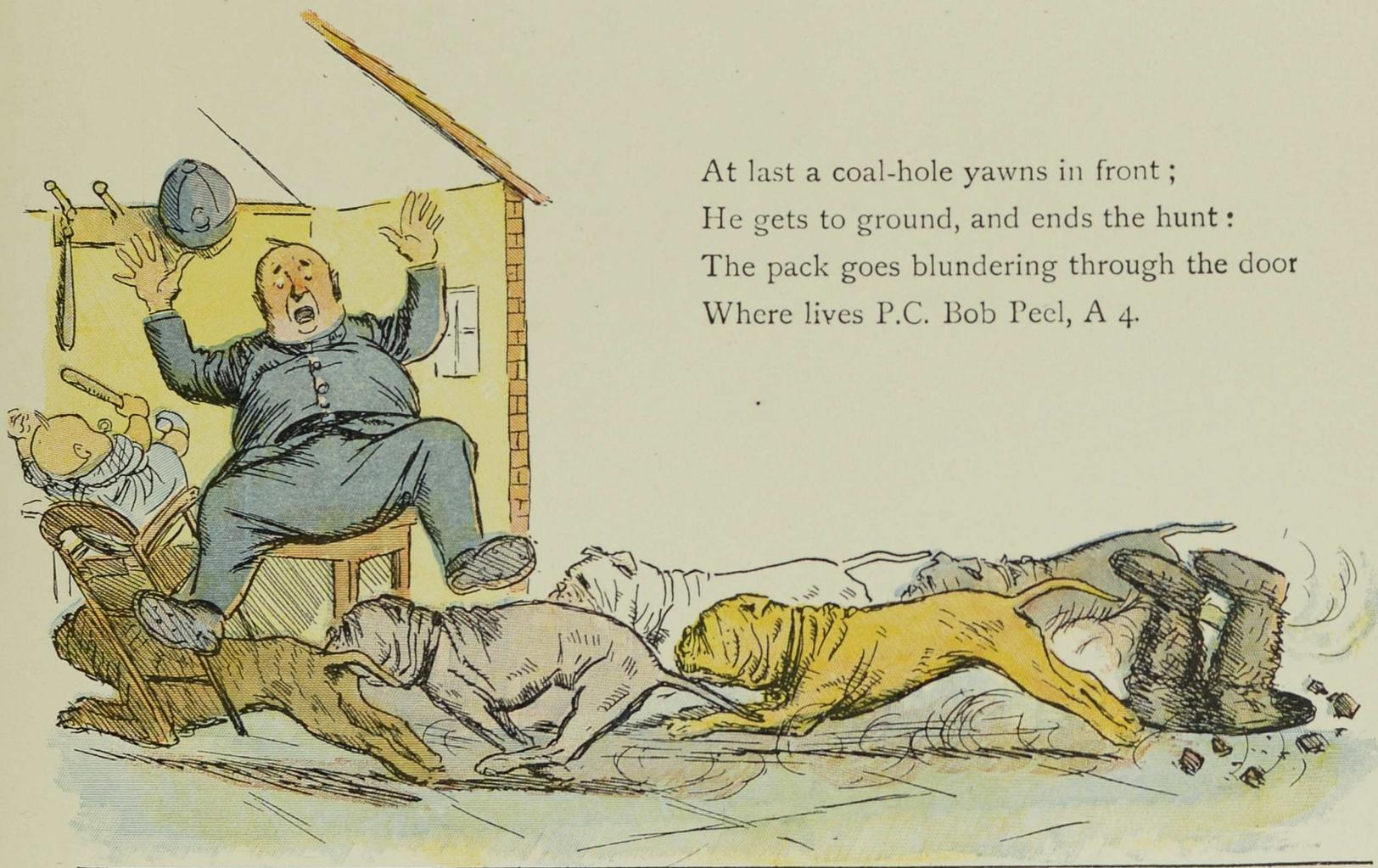
The bulldogs cannot see his phiz,
And wonder what on earth he is.

Belinda from her bower above
Quite failed to recognize her Love.
"The man," she laughed, "a bear must be,
That ventures thus to frighten me."
Now, when he heard his Lady doubt
Who stood below, he turned about,
Suspecting that it would not boot
While so disguised, to urge a suit.



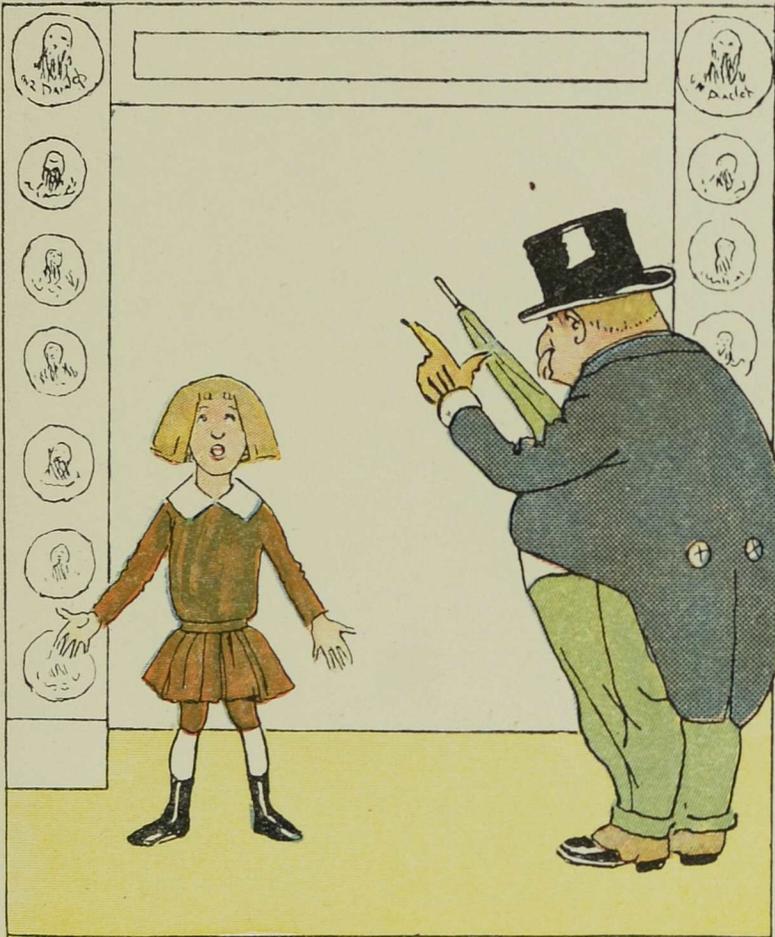
Alas! the bulldogs all concur
In scenting bear beneath the fur,
And now they're doing all they know
To stimulate the bounding beau.
The outlook isn't very rosy,—
He's lost his breath, and dropped his posy :
For such a race he finds, poor chap,
His skins a heavy handicap.





At last a coal-hole yawns in front ;
He gets to ground, and ends the hunt :
The pack goes blundering through the door
Where lives P.C. Bob Peel, A 4.

The Constable, all consternation,
Resents this alien immigration :
His dignity is much upset,—
No five dogs through *his* legs could get.
The baby, Robert's little heir,
Is rudely toppled from the chair ;
And while upon the floor they roll
The Bearman scrambles from the hole.
"Oh dear !" he says, "When dressed in togs
Like these, I must *not* go near dogs !"



6. THE STORY OF DISOBEDIENT FREDERICK.

One day, when starting for the train,
Papa warned Frederick again :
“ Now mind, though tempted overmuch,
My motor-bike you must not touch.
A belted Bobby always waits
For boys who mote outside the gates :
He bids you ‘ In the King’s name, Stay !
Your licence show without delay ! ’ :
And if you can’t produce one,—why,
In jail you languish till you die.”



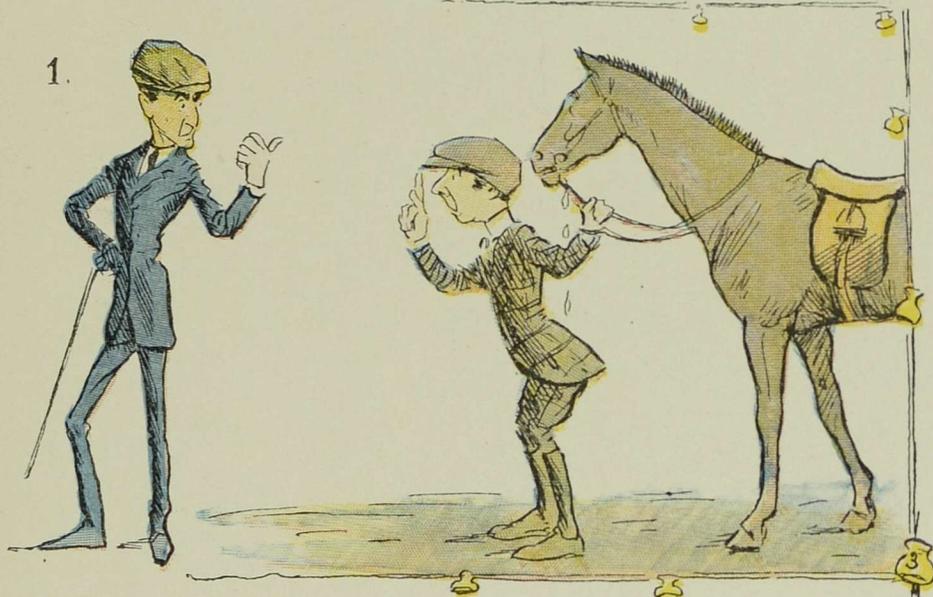
A minute later naughty Fred
Had fetched the cycle from the shed.



He never saw the movements which
Disturbed the grass beyond the ditch:
The hedge divided,—out there flew
A licence-hunting Man-in-Blue!
Pop! Pop! Pop! Pop! the motor goes;
The Peeler peals his Wo! WO! Woes:
Those seven-league boots, they run so quick
That they soon nail poor Frederick.

Papa, returned, perceives, alas!
The yellow peril come to pass:
"I knew," said he, "that, trapped by guile,
Unlicensed joys brought durance vile."

7. THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO WOULDN'T TAKE ANY EXERCISE.

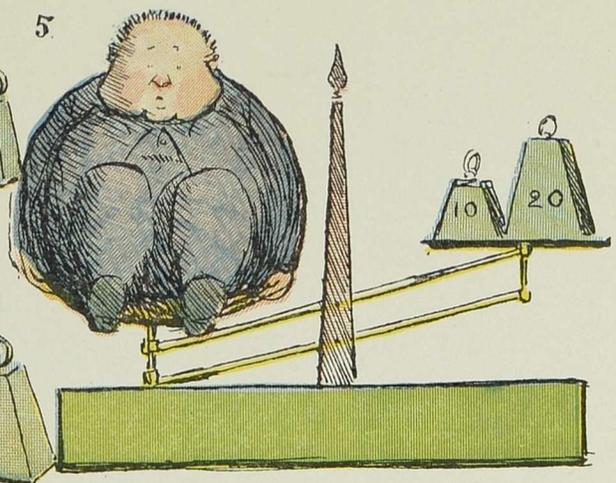


Sir Quinbus Flestrin, C.M.G.,
 Was once as slim as slim could be:
 Each morning, as a thing of course,
 He took an airing on his horse,
 And so contrived to keep the scales
 From telling unromantic tales.
 But one day, one notorious day,
 He bawled out, "Lead the brute away!
 Oh! 'Pratt's' more spirit has than hay:
 My Napier new I'll drive to-day."

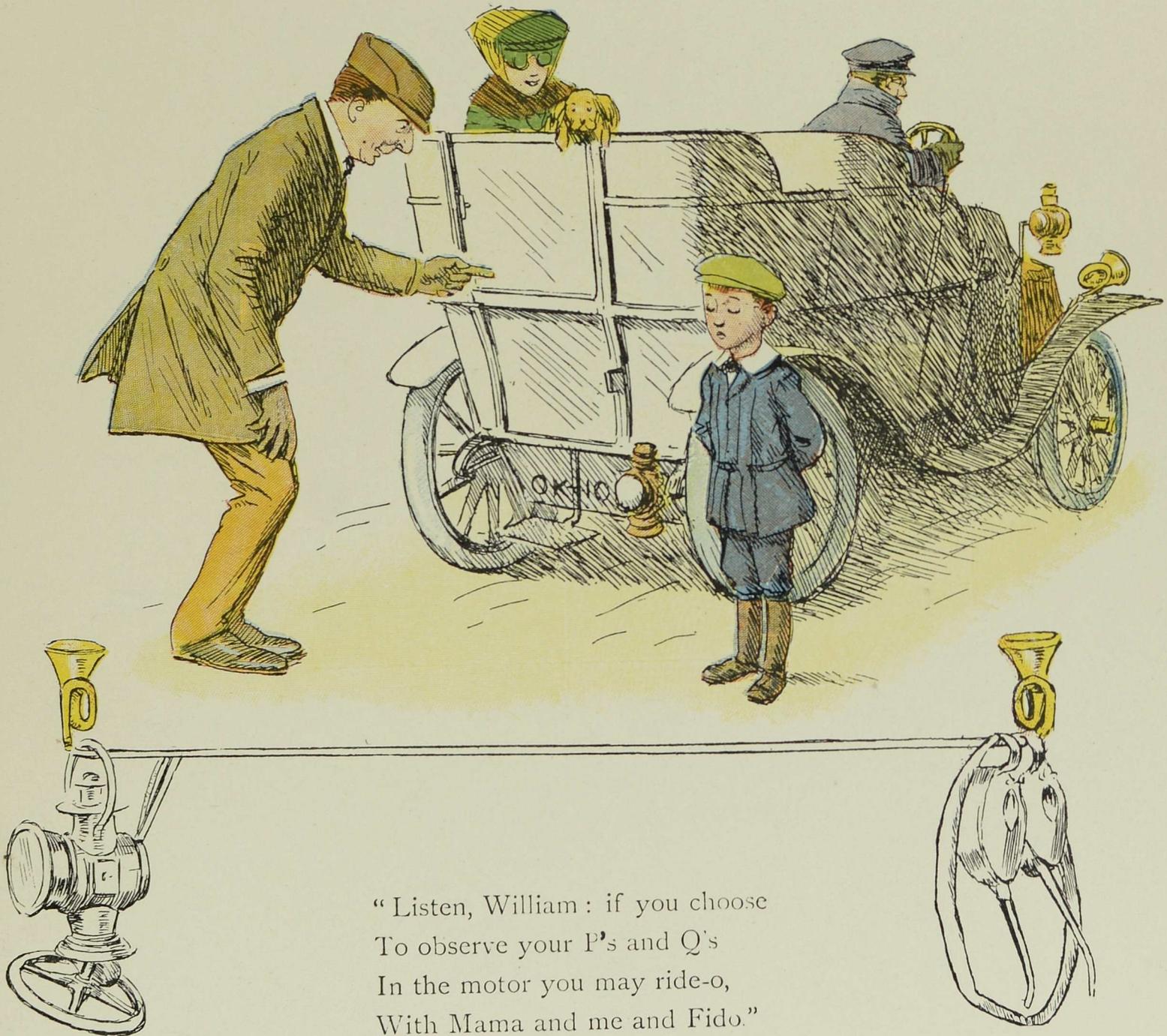
Next week, just look, the knightly figger
 Is palpably some sizes bigger:
 Friends warn him that the tonneau's case
 Can make the slimmest form obese:
 He snaps, while getting under weigh,
 "Oh! tell the horse-marines, I say:
 The poor old 'gee' has had its day."

The third week tests this self-assurance:
 His clothes are taxed beyond endurance.
 Still, he don't care a Dion Bouton,
 And puts a higher-powered suit on.
 The Doctor comes and says his say,—
 "Too fat! There'll be the deuce to pay!"
 No good: Sir Quinbus won't obey.

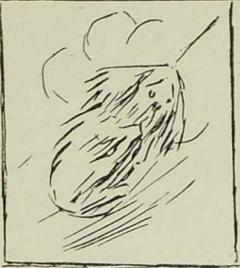
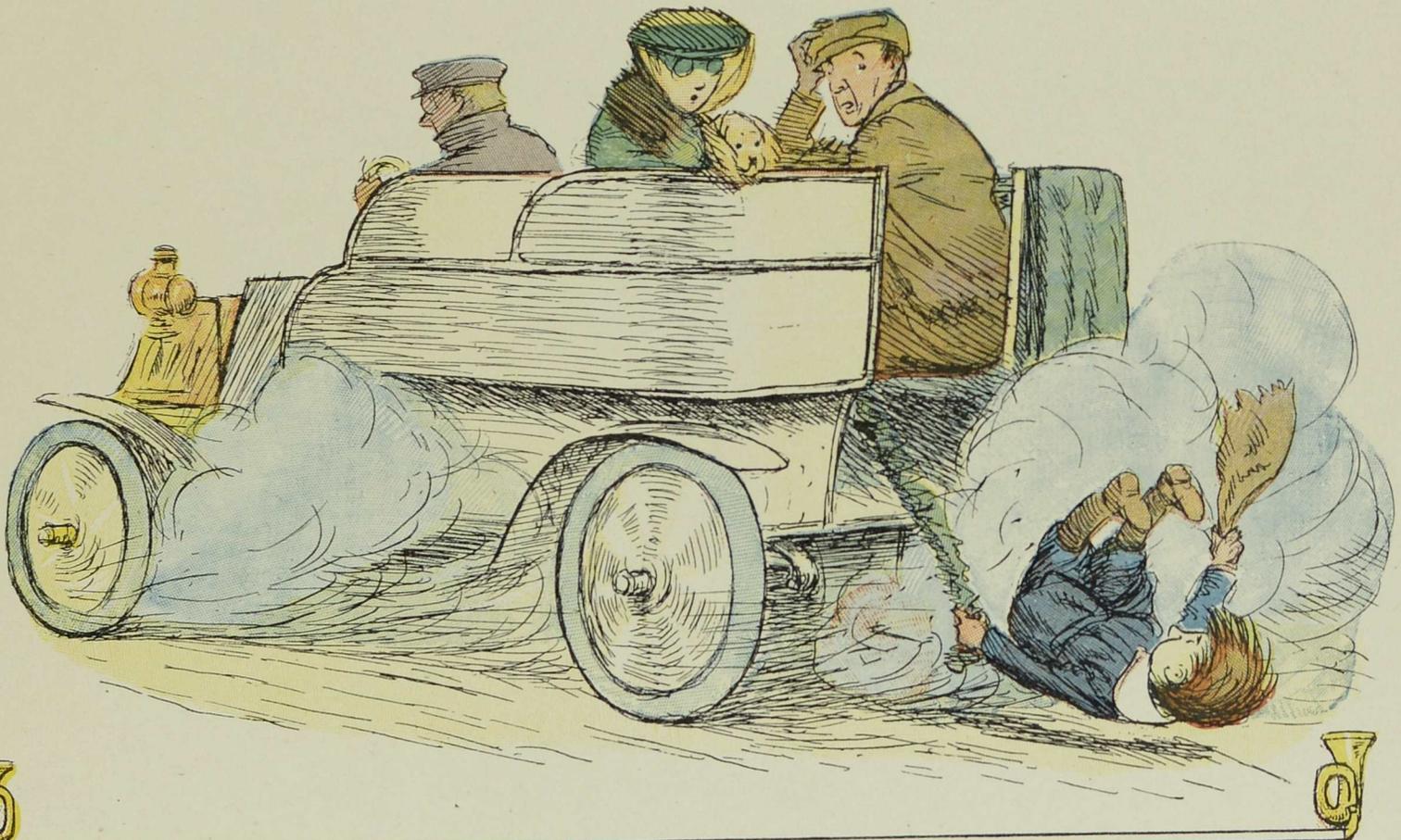
Our errant knight, the fourth week o'er,
 Can hardly pass the tonneau door:
 And now, a Daniel Lambert grown,
 He tips the beam at thirty stone.



8. THE STORY OF WILFUL WILLIAM.

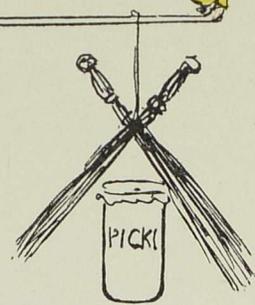
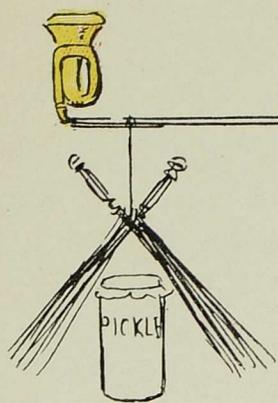


“Listen, William: if you choose
To observe your P’s and Q’s
In the motor you may ride-o,
With Mama and me and Fido.”
Thus Papa in accents gay:
William vows he’ll be O.K.
But a promise by Will
Is worth just *nil*:
He mumbles
And grumbles
And then, I declare,
Says “Shall if I want to!”
“What rot!” and “Don’t care!”
On occasion William can
Be a shocking Hooligan.



See! the rascal (little droll!)
 Lets down Fido for a stroll:
 Gives the motorman a pinch,—
 (Cart avoided by an inch!)
 Scratches "William" on the car,—
 (*I should box his ears, Papa!*)
 Cuts the cushions, tramples toes,—
 (*Why they let him, goodness knows!*)
 Then, more daringly inclined,
 Stands upon the step behind:
 Slips; and does a grievous hurt
 To his parents' coat and skirt.





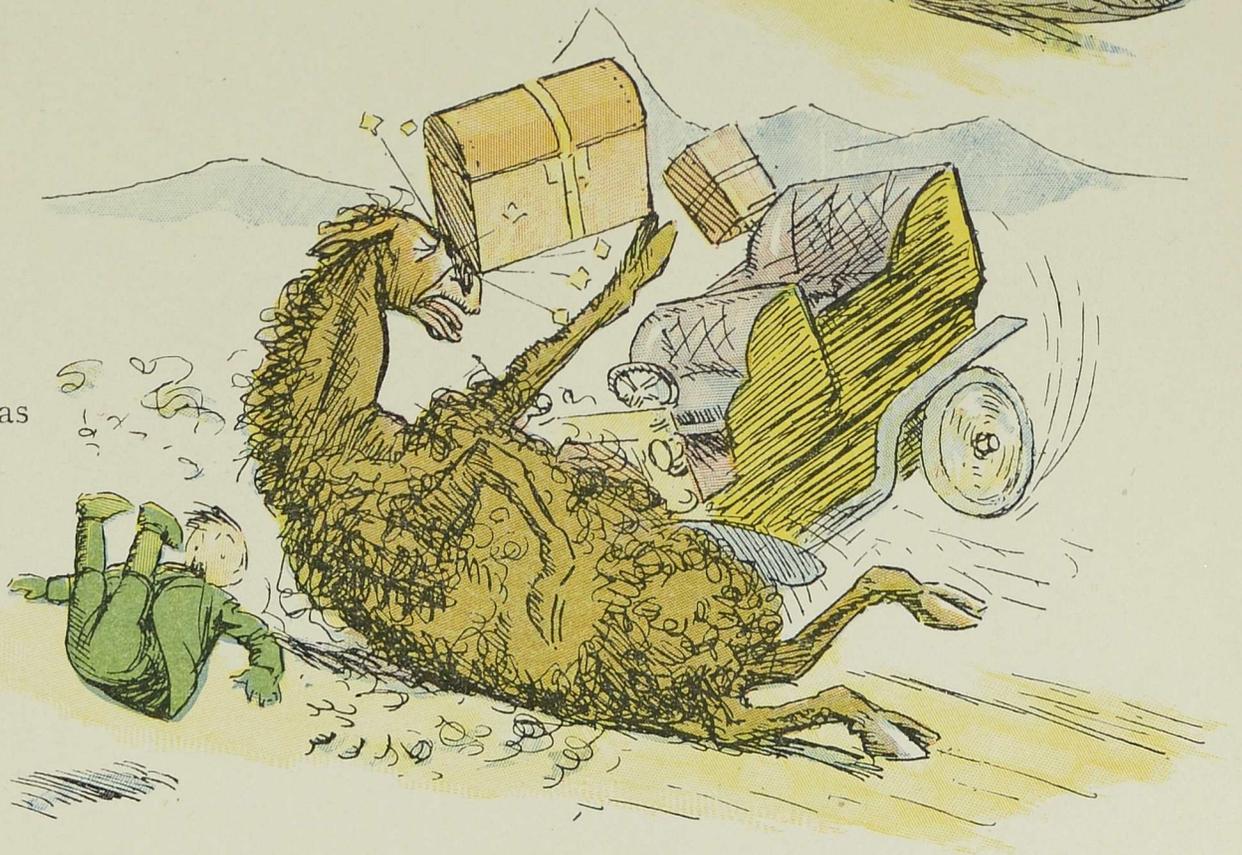
Is this William? Can it be?
Plastered o'er with mud is he!
Yet it's easy to discover
Damage in his outer cover.
Here a puncture; there a rip;—
William, this should mean the whip!
Poor Mama laments her gown:
Poor Papa looks quite a clown:
Both of them will have redress
In a way that you can guess,
So the prospects of the lad
Seem P-Q-liarly bad.

9. THE STORY OF JOHNNY PASSE-PARTOUT.

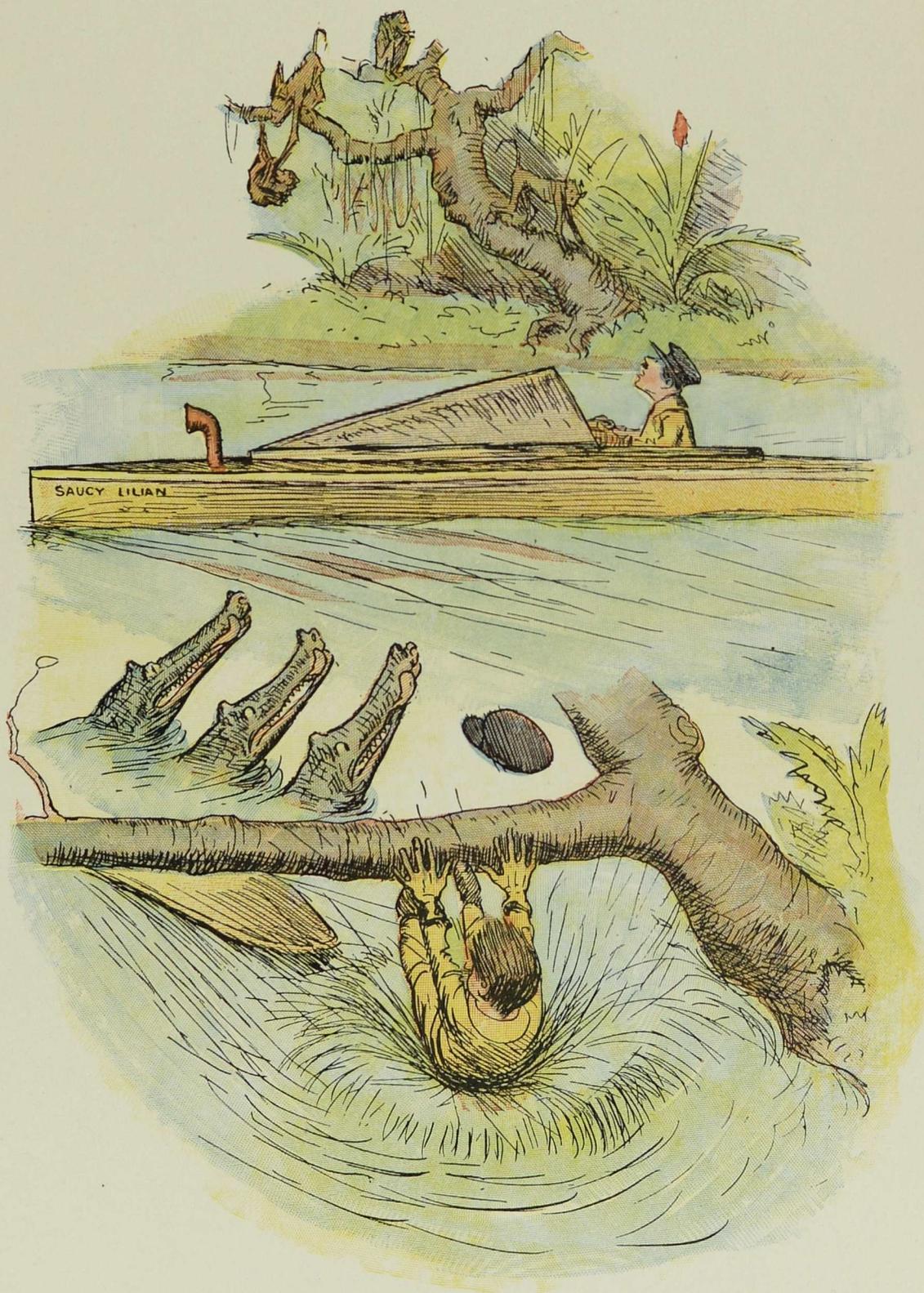


Tutored in the modern school,
Johnny understood the rule
That, if lion you would be,
Exploration pays the fee.
First he took to hunting scalps
In the Alps:
Motoring across the ice,
Contrary to all advice.
Then at higher game he flew—
Daring Johnny Passe-Partout.

While he climbed the Himalayas
A grand Llama crossed the way, as
At his topmost gear he pressed
To the crest
Of Everest.
Johnny never heard it bleat,
“Hullo, Chumbi, mind my feet!”
It, alas!
Tried to pass:
Naughty Johnny struck it full:
He lost balance; it lost wool!



Next, as go-ahead as ever,
Johnny thought he'd try a river ;
So he steered his "Saucy Lilian"
Into latitudes Brazilian.
It was fun
Cruising up the Amazon,
Where there really seemed to be
Travellers' tails in every tree.
Gaping Johnny kept his eyes
Always turned towards the skies,
While the motor made the pace
Of a Calais-Dover race.
This the alligators saw,
And each reptile licked its maw.



Sad to tell, a drooping branch
Lifted Johnny from the launch :
And the saurians wondered how
They *could* lose their dinner now.

There lay Johnny, short of breath,
Almost in the jaws of death,
When two natives heard him and
Kindly lent a helping hand :
Till, by hook and crook, the twain
Had him on his legs again.



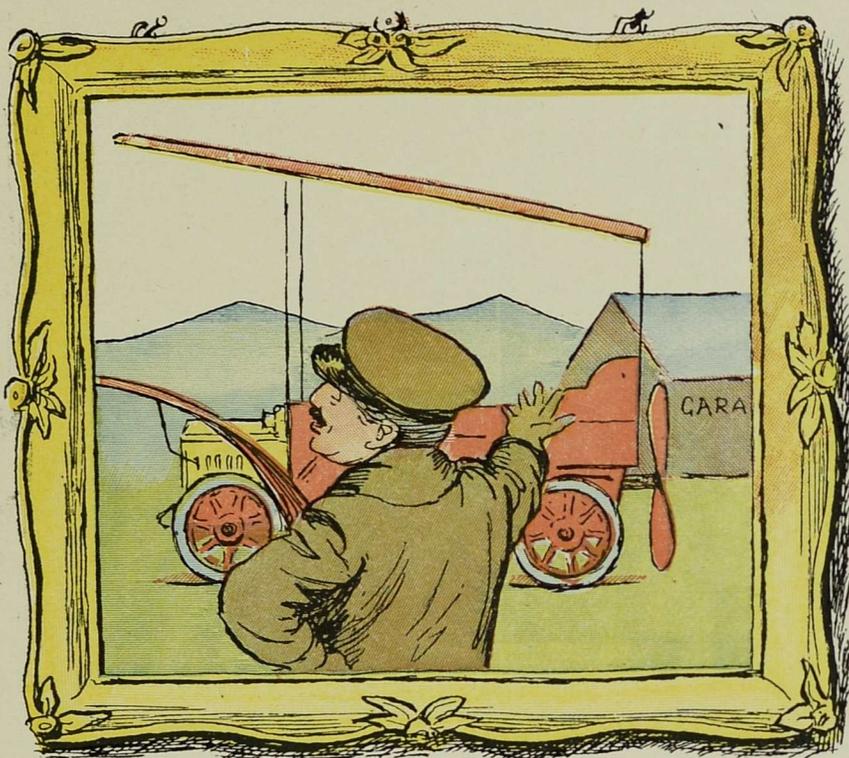
Oh! his nerves were badly shaken,
Though the men had saved his bacon.
But for aid upon the spot
He'd have suffered Jonah's lot,
With the difference that *he* would
Have been swallowed up for good.
Johnny doesn't like to speak
Of that very narrow squeak.



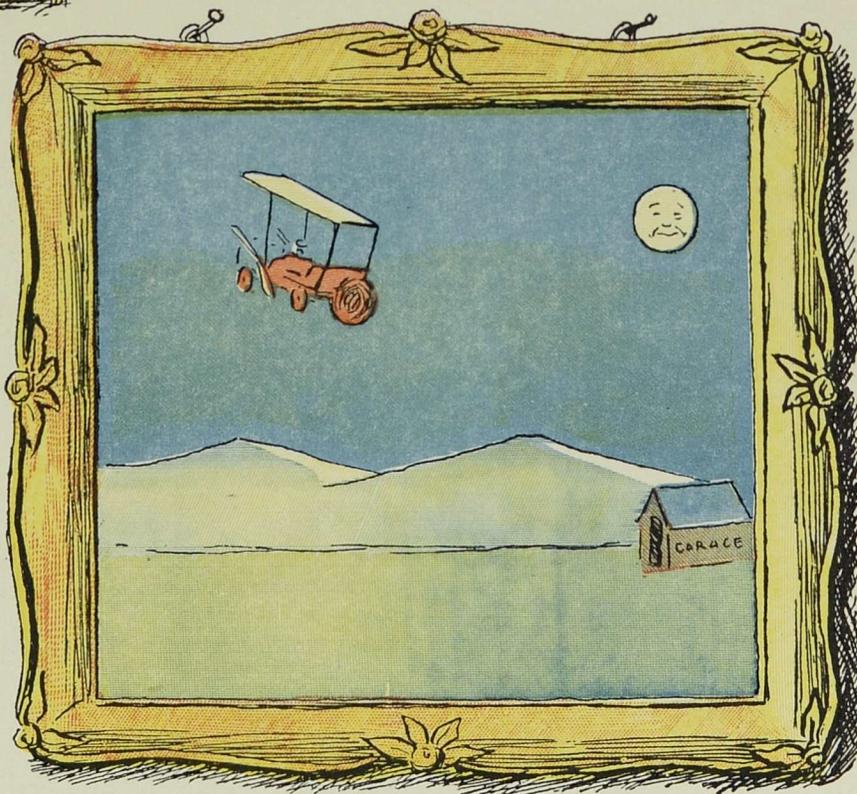
Eager for a little game,
Up the Alligators came.
"Oh! they cried, "how you *are* dripping!
Isn't exploration ripping
When one makes a little splash,
Even if the method's rash?
How romantic this will look
When you write your story-book!"

10. THE STORY OF FLIGHTY MICHAEL.

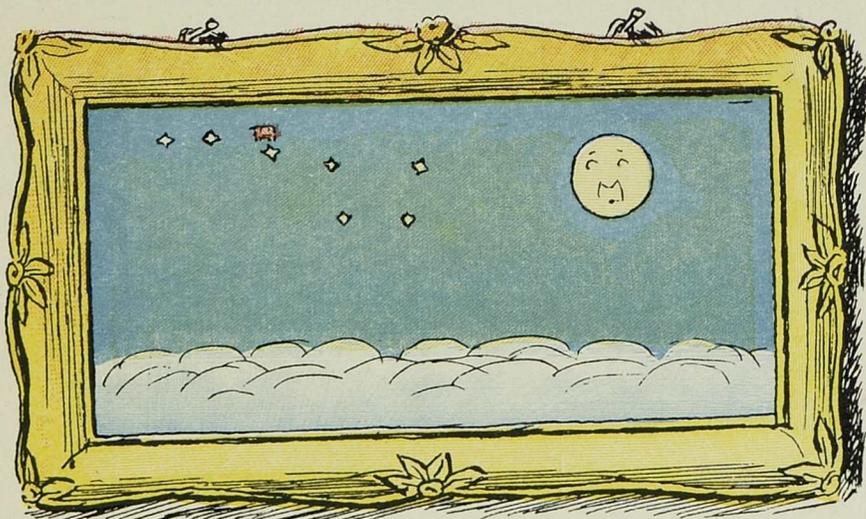
When the weather's very dry,
And the dust begins to fly,
Men who ride on motors are
Glad to screen the flying car:
Michael thought, "A better plan
Would be to erect a fan
For the cylinders to turn
At the stern."
Here you see him, clever feller,
And his patent dust-dispeller.



Look! without a moment's warning
Breezes strong lift up the awning;
And the splashers' upward twist
Helps to raise the motorist
Every minute,
Like a linnet,—
Maxim's air-ship isn't in it!
Far above the clouds they took him
Till what wits he had forsook him.



When the car was seen again
It was perched on Charles's Wain,
Put *en panne* by empty tanks
Or a motor's usual pranks.
His address, while in the stars,
Will be "Michael, care of Mars":
And from there he'll send us soon
Picture-postcards of the moon.







(P)

WILLIAMS, ARCHIBALD
PETROL PETER

[1906]



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