



By HAROLD BEGBIE

Illustrated by F. CARRUTHERS GOULD.

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Birdwood

GREAT MEN

BY
HAROLD BEGBIE
AND
F. CARRUTHERS GOULD

Authors of
"The Political Struwwelpeter" and "The Struwwelpeter Alphabet"

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TO THE CHILDREN.

IN this excellent book with its wonderful pictures
You'll find what appear to be horrible strictures,
 But people don't say
 What they mean all the day,
And so bear in mind that we're mostly in play ;
Don't skip any lines, but just read in between 'em,
And when they are horrid you'll know we don't mean 'em.

But the morals, dear children, O ! get them by heart,
For that is the earnest, the beautiful part ;
 They did not appear
 In our book of last year,
That's why you still fly into tantrums, I fear ;
Ah ! learn them, dear children, and while *you* get reason,
We'll make up some new ones to give you next season.

WILLIAM THE GRATEFUL.

Not long ago it was the fashion
To fly into a *dreadful* passion
When anybody praised the Kaiser
But now we've grown—well, let's say wiser.

Great William, here in splendid state
You shine as Frederick the Great,
But O, he lacked your dash and vigour,
He never cut so fine a figure ;
His proud moustaches never rose
So godlike 'neath his Teuton nose,
Nor flashed there from his eyes the fires
Of such Imperial desires ;
And therefore, William, do not harden
Your heart, but grant us kingly pardon
For shoving you in Frederick's breeches
A license, William, but one which is
Poetical, and not at all
Intended as political.

Dear children, when you're kings and queens,
Avoid unnecessary scenes,
And if you telegraph at all
Never address your Uncle Paul.
Be modern, up to date, but ah !
Always speak well of grandpapa.



FREDERICK THE GREAT

KAISER WILHELM II.

BEST DANISH.

ONCE this Triton 'mong the Peers,
Played with flouts and toyed with jeers,
Flung his gibes with power and weight,
Flashed his rapier in debate,
Cracked his quip and rapped his pun,
Had his joke, and made his fun ;
Brilliant, caustic—wrong or right
Young Lord Rob at least was bright.

Now behold him ! O how sad !
This is really much too bad !
All his speech is pessimistic
Tragically cabalistic,
Gloomy, moody, grim, abysmal,
Dreadful sullen, awful dismal ;
Till of Empire you will hear
This perturbed portentous peer,
In his most depressing air,
Very ruefully declare
That, 'pon honour, he'll be shot
Whether things ought To Be, or not.

Children, in your gamesome youth
Stick to sober, Saxon truth :
Brighten not your speech with jeers
Leave all gibes and flouts to peers,
For when blood is running hotly
Pleasant 'tis to wear the motley ;
But beware the change, alack !—
From the motley to the black.



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HAMLET
THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY, K.G.

THE NEW BROOM.

HERE'S a pretty theme for fable
Roberts in th' Augean stable,
Where, from dreary barracks called,
Bovine creatures have been stalled
Ever since,—well, say the Flood—
Simply chewing of the cud,
While the stable filled with mud.

O! will little Hercules
His beloved Britannia please?
Will he, 'mid a nation's pæan
Make this stable less Augean?
Ah! behind he dreams once more
Of the old Nemean boar,
Hears the slaughtered creature roar—
Is *that* labour really o'er?

Children, trust this mighty man,
He will do the best he can;
And when you have got commissions,
And are in supreme positions,
Try, for Roberts' sake, to get
On the track of C. De Wet.



HERCULES
LORD ROBERTS.

A LITTLE NAP.

BORN in dear Dame Fortune's lap,
Primrose often takes a Nap
When he should be up and doing,
Still achieving, still pursuing ;
But he loves (I must relate)
Not to labour,—but to wait.

Here upon a rocking-horse
See him riding out to force
Yonder dark obstructing mass,
Which he knows that he must pass
Ere he reach the dizzy goal
Of his tired sporadic soul,—
Ere he drive his Party's coach,
Sans fear, also, sans reproach.

Up and down his gee-gee goes !
Can he cross thus ? Goodness knows !
Ask him, and he winks an eye
Making, with a yawn, reply : —
“ Can I cross ? I have a plan !
Say I can't ? Of Corsican ! ”

O the moral all can tell :
Confidence is very well,
But no poor supplanted Esau
Can get back his own by see-saw.



NAPOLEON

(After David)

THE EARL OF ROSEBERY, K.G.

NEW NOLL.

HERE'S a stern unbending fellow!
Ain't he looking dreadful yellow?
O! observe upon his features,
Scorn for all his fellow creatures,
High contempt for simple sinners
(Such as Leaders owning Winners.)
There's no Voltaire in his eyes,
Not a glint of Compromise;
No, it's plain this little man
Is a reg'lar Puritan!

Listen, you shall hear him say
In his calm unearthly way:—
“Take away that bauble, do!
“Empire's symbol? Piff! and Pooh!
“Athens, Carthage! Where are they?
“Where, in short, is Yesterday?
“Mark me, I am plain and true,
“Empire Jingoos? Piff! and Pooh!”

Obvious 'tis from this we learn
All that's vain and proud to spurn;
Children, imitate this Noll,
Spill the sawdust from each doll:
Lick no more your soldiers stark:
Kick to bits your Noah's Ark:
Never spin a top: of course
Never ride a rocking horse;
This, dear children, you must do—
If you want to Piff! and Pooh!

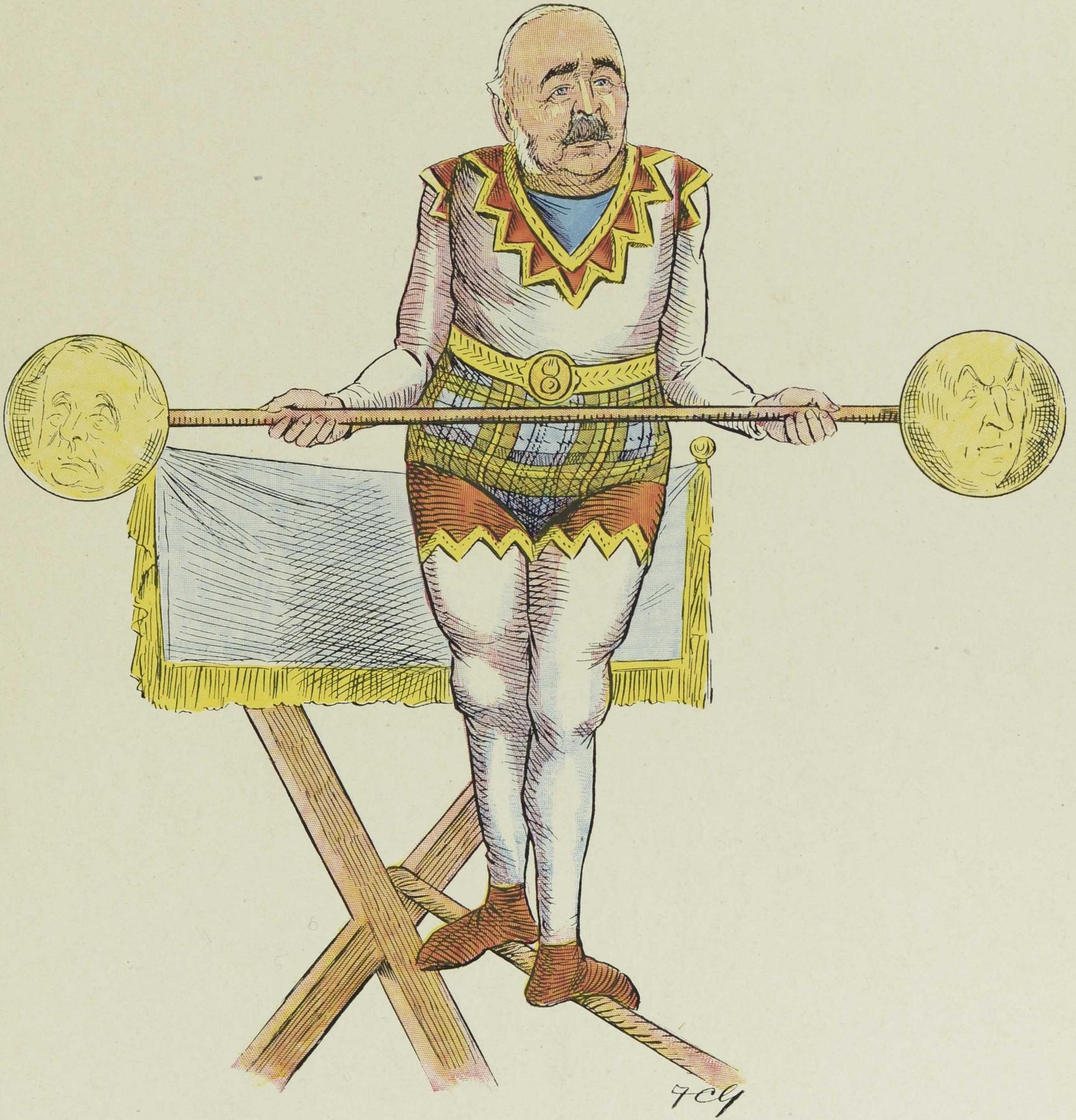


OLIVER CROMWELL
RT. HON. JOHN MORLEY, M.P.

A POLAR EXPEDITION.

CAREFUL Blondin, see he goes
Gingerly with spreading toes ;
O the anguish in his ankles,
O the fear that burns and rankles,
Tho' he wears a smiling face,
Practises an easy grace,
While a breathless audience gaze
Upward thro' the network's haze,
On the heavy pole that sways
Now to this side, now to that,
(O poor Blondin's much too fat !)
Bending, twitching like a twig,
Dancing now a very jig ;
He will never balance it,
Blondin nascitur, non fit !
Yet he plies a useful art
Keeping those two heads apart,
For (observe their looks of thunder)
They are utter poles asunder.
He himself will put an end
To his walk, I apprehend,
If—you must not think me rough—
If they give him rope enough.

When, dear children, you would walk
On a tightrope, do not talk !
Don't adopt a gait that's breezy,
Don't assert it's awful easy,
Simply get across—and then
Never try the trick again.



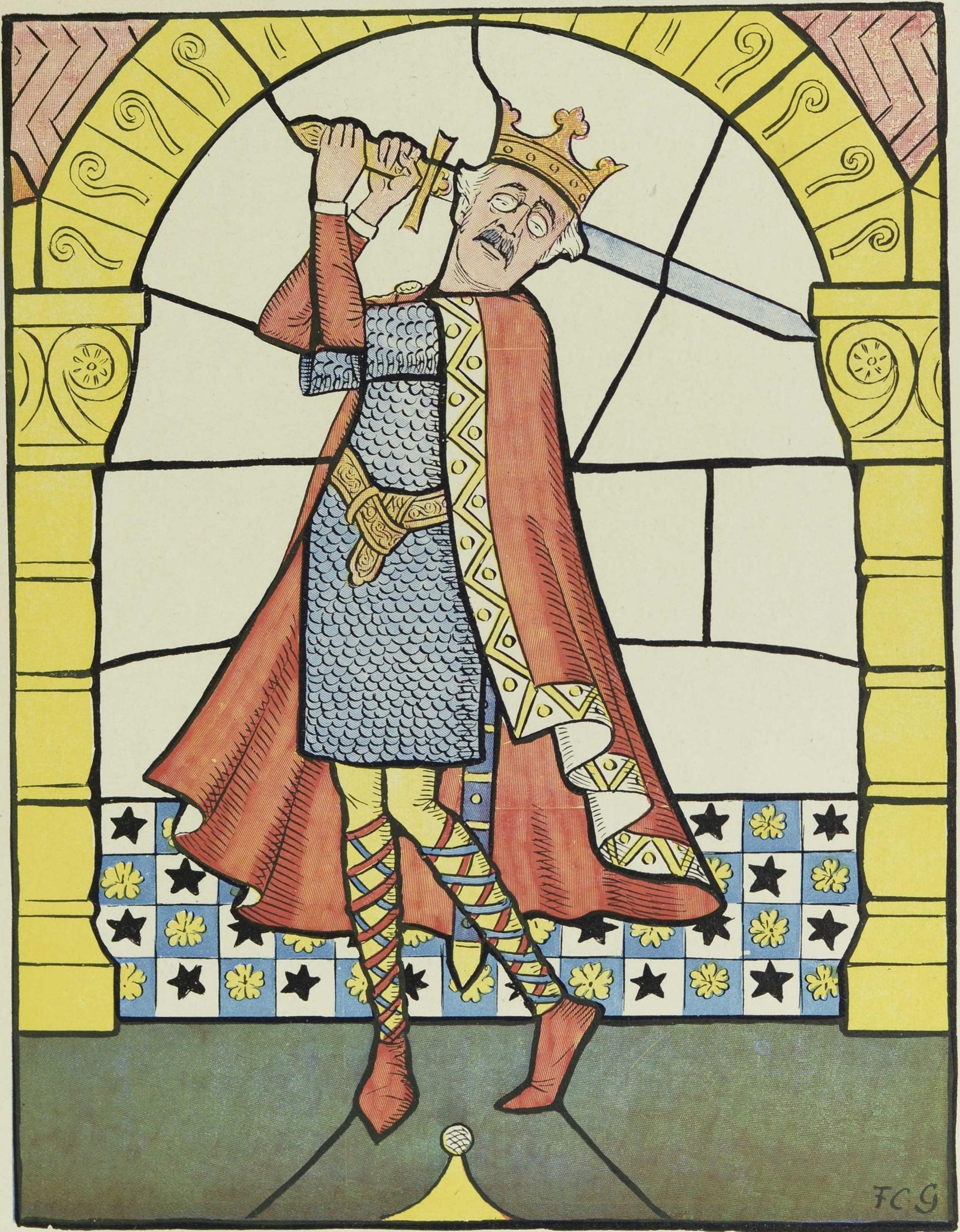
BLONDIN

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

SUAVITER IN MODO —

Look! King Arthur—do not scoff—
With Excalibur at golf!
Here's a subject for an idyll
Worthy our Austinian fiddle—
Arthur musing o'er his tee
Of a decade yet to be,
When the Irish will not bore:
When the Rads will be no more:
When the "disappointed" Tory
Will have gone—we hope—to glory:
When a table-round will nestle
Snugly in the Hotel Cecil:
All the wicked world at rest,
The remaining saints addressed
By King Arthur—duly pressed—
On, "Whatever Is, Is Best!"

Children life is hard and real,
If you'd make it more ideal
Do not use a sword in play—
Cut and carve your splendid way,
Don't conciliate each foeman,—
Hit him boldly on the Roman.



KING ARTHUR
MR. ARTHUR BALFOUR.

DIZZYING HEIGHTS.

Who's playing here, with the best intrigue,
A flowery part in the Primrose League?
O look you, look! the tuft on the chin—
If it isn't Joseph in Dizzy's skin!
But, mark you well, it's a tightish fit,
Look out, my friends, for a sudden split,
Another split, which you'll quickly note
Would entail the change of another coat,—
Perchance, if the tail of the Party wags,
A return into even Gladstone bags;
When the world agrees that the famed Old Clo',
Whatever they are, are not for Joe.
But O who knows what the end will be
Of the brilliant turkey-cock Joseph C?
Save only this, that he'll never stop
 Till he comes to the Top,
 With a bang and a pop,
This bright little, sharp little Joseph C,—
Till he comes to the top, and is duly peered
And has grown an Imperial, Dizzy beard.

Dear little boys of the British Isles
You've studied, I hope, your Doctor Smiles,
And you know, if you're seeking for fame or pelf
The way to obtain it is—Help Yourself.
This is our moral—By day, by night,
Take all you can get with all your might.



THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD
THE RT. HON. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.

A QUEER CARD.

WHEN a man is adulated
Only less than he is hated,
Rest assured he will not fall
By attempting to please all ;
He will play the card he chooses
Play to win—and, if he loses,
Shuffle up the pack, and steal
Forward to another deal,
Saving always his own skin
Whosoever lose or win.

Children, when your life's a slump
Gallantly turn up a trump,
And remember when you play
There are rules one must obey,
Don't revoke and play the martyr
Lest the State revoke your charter.



FCL

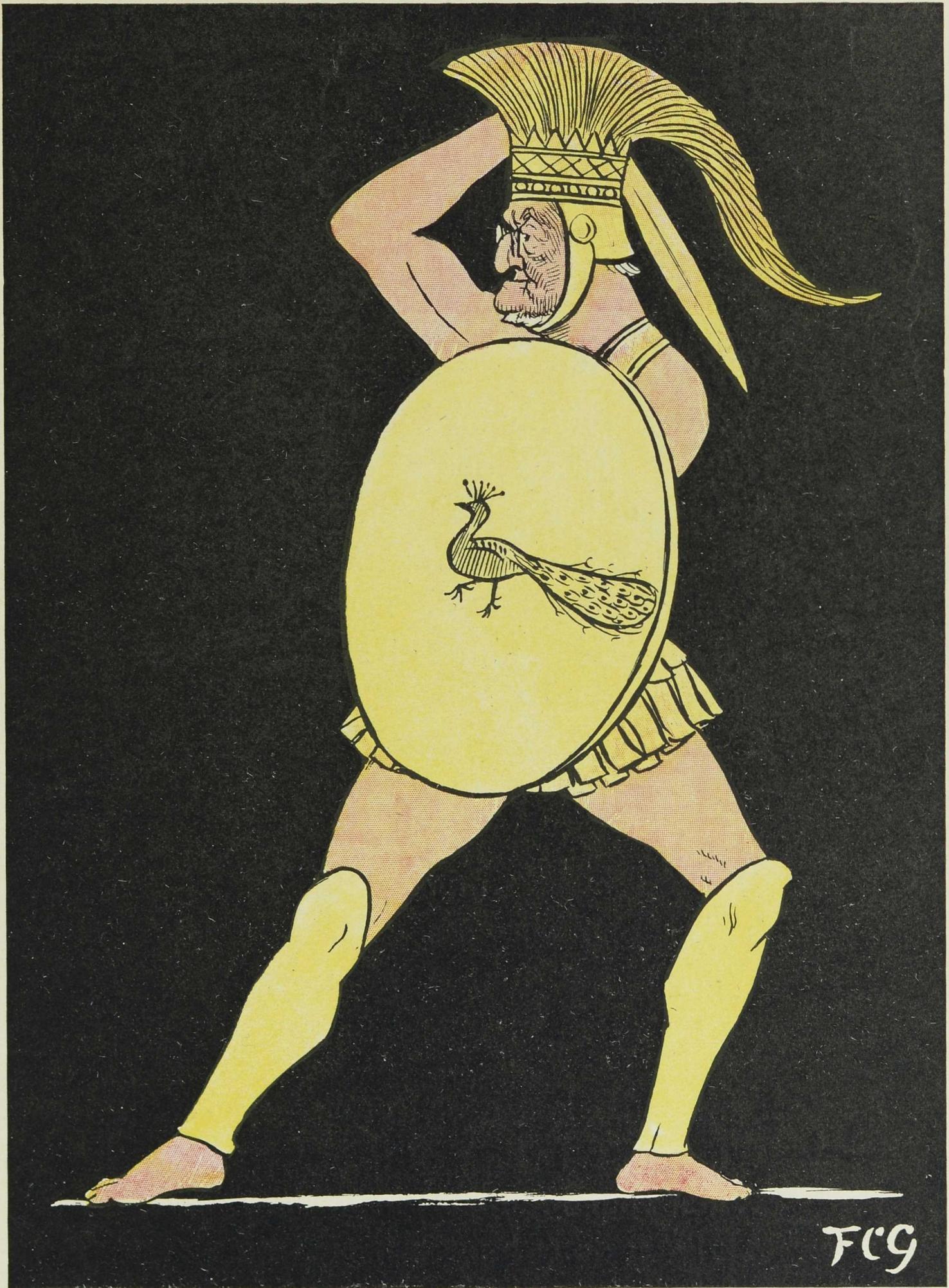
THE KING OF DIAMONDS

MR. RHODES.

HECTORING.

HERE is Harcourt! Who's he hacking?
Is't a Tory he's attacking?
Neither you nor I can say
For it's Hector Harcourt's way
Always to be slogging someone,
He is such a very rum one;
Now a Bishop, old and hoary,
Now the youngest ramping Tory,
Now a little Liberal,
Once, perchance, his fondest pal;
Now a leader, now the led,—
Always punching someone's head;
Never happy when he's not
Giving it to—someone—hot!

Children, if you're fond of fightin'
And would get both left and right in,
O take care while you attack
Someone doesn't hit you back.



HECTOR

RT. HON. SIR WILLIAM V. HARCOURT, M.P.

RIP.

ALL the knowing people say
In their comfortable way : —
“ Devonshire is so profound :
Devonshire’s entirely sound,”
Very true ; profound and deep
Even sound when he’s asleep ;
So that when he’s wide-awake
He’s as subtle as a snake,
Subtler, I’m inclined to think,
When those ponderous eyelids blink,
When he whets his nether lip,
Glares abroad like wakened Rip,
Shakes himself to disencumber
All his aching frame of slumber,
Stretches limbs, and with a shock—
Thunders fiercely,—“ What’s o’clock ? ”
Then he is so drefful clever
Everyone says “ Well, I never ! ”
But I’m forced to the confession
This is only once a session,
When to wakefulness he’s forced
By the Manipurring Gorst.

Children, when your troubles thicken,
When of very life you sicken,
When your brains begin to burn
And you don’t know where to turn,
Do not war with Fate (you’d lose)
Seek a quiet spot, and snooze,
Seek, while others pray the Sphinx,
An eternal Forty-Winks.



RIP VAN WINKLE
THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G.

WYNDHAM THE ACTOR.

ROMEO WYNDHAM, see him stand !
What's he up to with his hand ?
Ah ! I fear those finger-tips
Fly to Erin's rosy lips ;
He is wooing Erin's heart
With his own Shakespearean art, —
Making love (his words are mealy)
To that termagant Miss Healy,
And, e'en while her blushes rise
At Maid Dillon making eyes ;
Flinging secret airy kisses
To the jealous Redmond Misses,
Breathing whispers, soft and low,
To a dozen girls or so,
This is shocking, Romeo !

Children, when you go a-wooing
O be careful what you're doing,
Gentle speech and smiling face
Ofttimes bring one to disgrace.



ROMEO

RT. HON. GEORGE WYNDHAM, M.P.

RARE.

HERE in this historic picture
Stands the famous Jimmy Lowther,
Stands the one remaining scion
Of the ancient Tory race,
Looking with perplexed attention,
With an unillumined mind,
On the neo-Tory Party
Led by forward Chamberlain,
On the neo-Tory Party
Struggling hotly to out-Herod,
In the lists of useful measures,
In the field of legislation,
Democrat and Radical ;
Looking with perplexed attention
While his head goes round and round him,
While the silly Earth is spinning,
On a world that won't stand still ;
Here in this historic picture
Stands the famous Jimmy Lowther.

Children, if you wish to dwell in
Nice glass-cases in Museums,
If you want to live in story
Without doing anything ;
Seize on every chance that offers
To compare unfavourably,
To compare our rushing Present
With the Dark Barbaric Ages ;
Swearing Life went rather better
In the days of Protoplasm.



THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

THE RT. HON. JAMES LOWTHER, M.P.

A FOREIGN MINISTER.

LANSDOWNE's learnt his lesson pat,
See! his cloak's a diplo-mat
Laid for any foreign feet
Wandering up Downing Street;
Not a splash of British mud
Shall incense their fiery blood;
With obeisance he receives them,
By no word of English grieves them,
Lifts his eyebrows, spreads his hands,
Begs (in French) for their commands;
And his French so very nice is
That he smoothes away each crisis,
All objections, treaties, facts sent
Flying, by his perfect accent;
Ah! he has the courtly air
And, we hope, too, *savoir-faire*.

Babies, when you leave the pram
Do not emulate Lord Pam:
English bluffness always quench,
Learn to speak Parisian French;
If it do not make you shine,
It will help you, dears, to dine.



SIR WALTER RALEIGH
THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE.

PINCHBECK PHILOSOPHY.

THE sweetest soul that ever drew
O'er puzzled foot a leather shoe !

No milder creature daily seeks
To hide self-conscious legs in breeks :
Or, while the matin glass he faces
Buttons a collar-stud, or braces :
Or ties Cimmerian cravat
Or wears Sabbatical top-hat : —
Than Lecky, martyr every inch,
And useful person at a Pinch.
All controversies he has clinched
With wisdom some declare he's Pinched ;
And if you'd read his book on Morals
I'm sure you'd give up all your quarrels ;
You'd grow so very wise and good,
You'd do each day the thing you should,
And at the death of every sun
Exclaim, " No good I've left undone " ;
For Lecky's métier is to lay
Smooth miles each side the narrow way,
And make it broad for human feet—
A kind of moral Sackville Street.

O give not Tupper all your time,
Read Lecky ; he is, too, sublime.



TOM PINCH

RT. HON. W. H. LECKY, M.P.

GREED AND LABOUR.

(Dedicated to G. F. Watts.)

WHEN we all are tucked in bed,
Weary of our strife for bread,
Shylock thro' his chamber paces,
(Making hideous grimaces)
Thinking, scheming, in his turnings,
How to rob us of our earnings,
How to snatch a farthing there,
How to grab a penny here :
How, too, wretched thief ! to steal it
So that we poor fools won't feel it ;
Ay ! the crafty Jew once stole
Lumps of sugar ! knobs of coal !
Such a man deserves to be
Cast into the deepest sea,
And if that should hap, may we,
You and I, be there to see,
And to hear "the maddened scream
Of the Beach"—a poet's dream—
"Dragged down by the wave," down, down,—
There to do the Mermen brown !

O when pocket-money comes
Do not do addition sums,
Do not try to make it more,—
Buy your tuck and pay the score ;
Even play at pitch and toss, child,
Lest you grow a Beach, or Ro'schild.



SHYLOCK

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

IN A PICKWICKIAN SENSE.

HIST! dear reader, draw you near,
Let me whisper in your ear,—
Halsbury's secret soul's intent
Is to be benevolent!
That is why he toils to look
Like the picture in this book:
He can't bear your vulgar Nero
Gentle Pickwick is his hero,
Pickwick, honest-hearted man,
Lover of a warming-pan,
Lover of a chop—of course
Tempered with tomato sauce,
Pickwick,—gentle, simple, mild
With the nature of a child.
Like him, Halsbury's soul is meek,
For mob praise he does not seek,
All he cares for is to shine
With the host of the benign,
All the joy he finds in living
Is the power he has of giving,
Doing things that will endear him
To the people that are near him,—
O a sweet, a gentle chappy—
Don't he look uncommon happy?

Children, when it is your turn
To play patron, never spurn
Sons of your own son and daughter,
Blood is thicker far than water;
And if envious souls malign,
Take no notice—look benign.

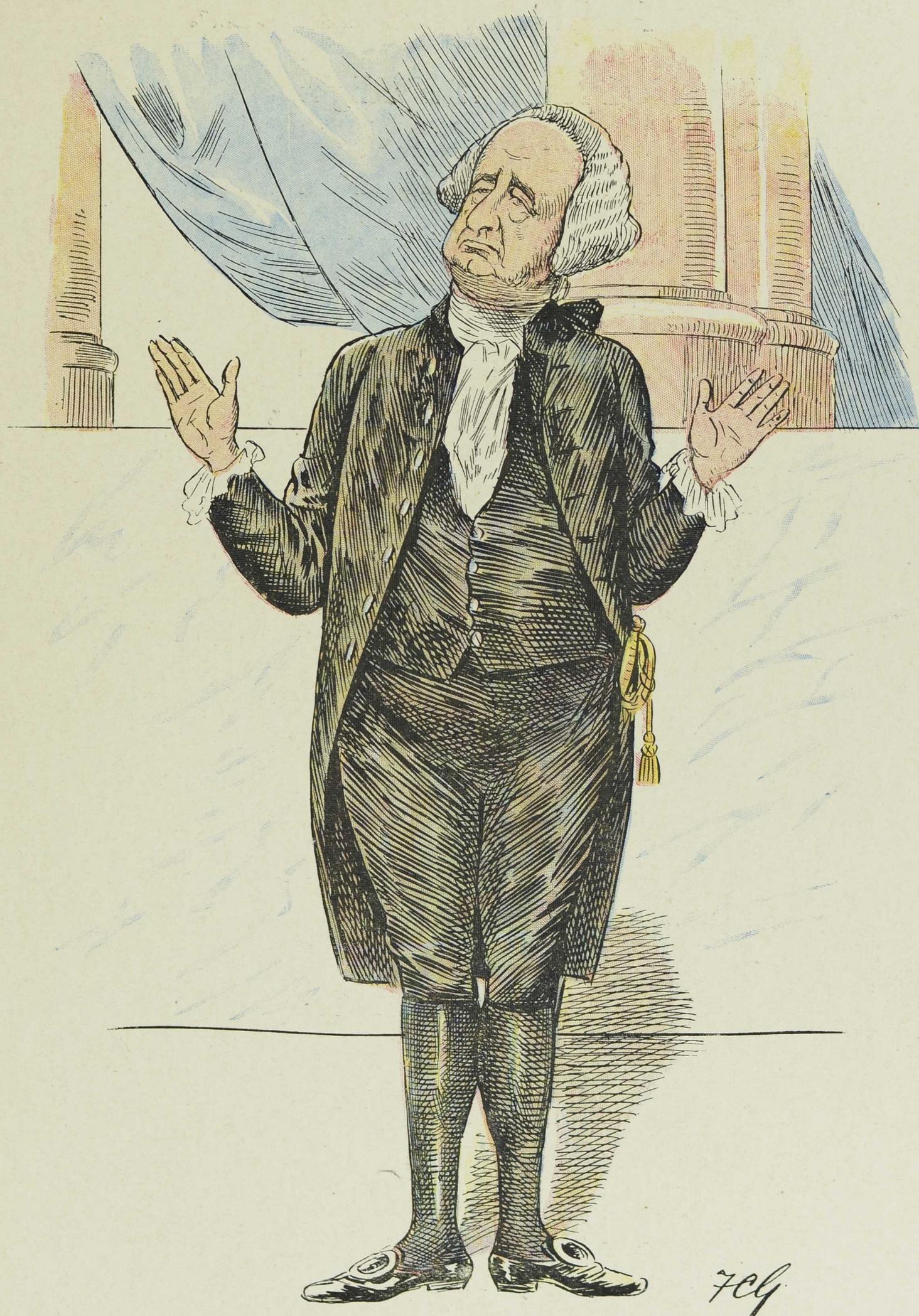


MR. PICKWICK
THE LORD CHANCELLOR.

A WEBSTER DEFINITION.

WHEN Alverstone from ermine slips
And to his home sedately trips
He turns into his secret den,
He locks, he bars the door,—and then
Arrays himself where none can peer
Exactly as you see him here,
Exactly like Sam's famous son
The immaculate George Washington ;
A hero Webster early swallowed
And since has dutifully followed.
For Webster never told a lie,
Or did a fellow in the eye,
And Webster's rather proud of that
Which makes his cheeks so plump and fat,
And gives the mouth and eyes and nose
Their *Who-so-pi.-as-I-am* pose,—
The look of one who feels *quite* sure—
Like Fry's—he's absolutely pure,
A look which all should cultivate
Who wish to grow both good *and great* !

Dear children when from bed you rise
Study the glass with anxious eyes ;
Remark if in your faces loom
Dear Richard's looks of holy gloom,
And if they do not—O dear me,
You're no way near as good as he !



GEORGE WASHINGTON

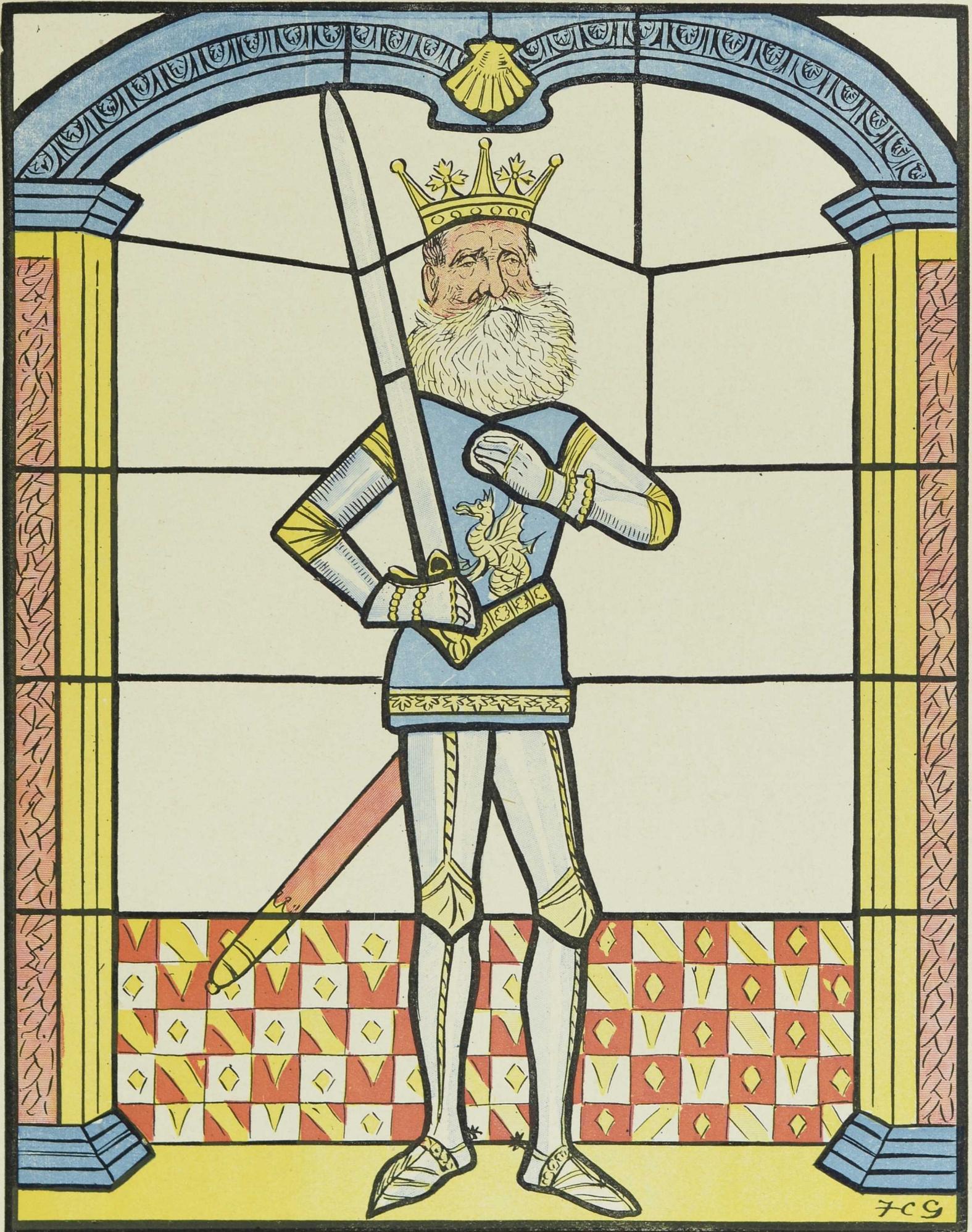
THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE.

POLITENESS ITSELF.

HERE is Spencer richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light,
Robbing all debates of rudeness
By his courtesy and crudeness ;
Here is Spencer in a window
Meditative as a Hindu,
Just, perchance, a little paned
Seeing that the glass is stained,
Yes, his noble looks betray it
Tho' he's too polite to say it.

No one in the reverent Lords
With the Red Earl crosses swords ;
Ribald Tories never mock him,
Feeling such a thing would shock him ;
No one asks about his dealings
Fearing it would hurt his feelings ;
None at school e'er cuffed or kicked him,
Masters dared not contradict him,—
Since he, with urbane uprightness,
Knocks one down with sheer politeness.

Little children, if you'd be
From all criticism free,
If you'd win without a struggle,
Without knavish trick or juggle,
Honour from your fellow man,—
Follow Spencer's simple plan :
Do not labour, do not fight,
Grow a beard, and be polite.



A SAXON EARL

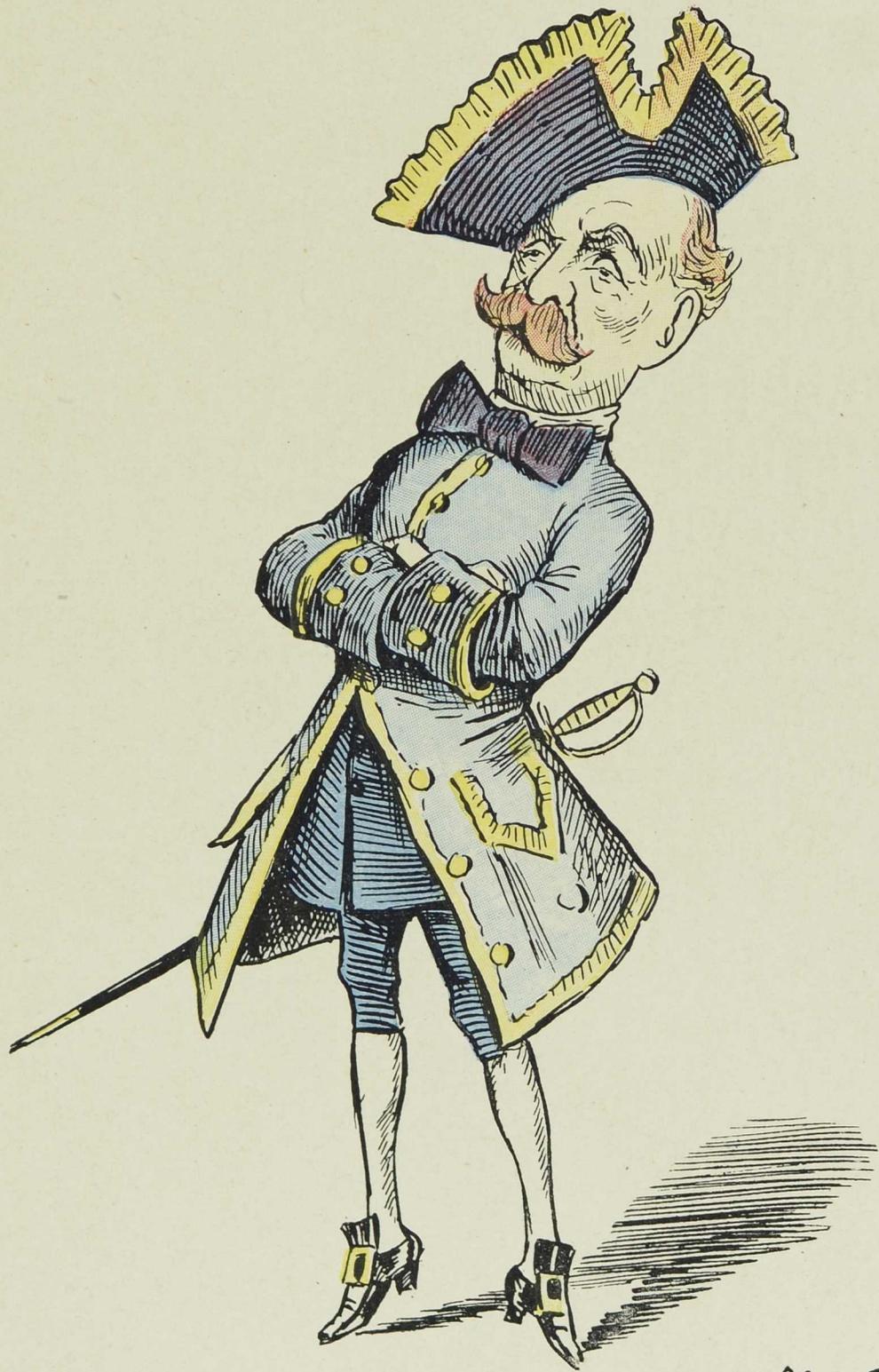
(From a Stained-Glass Window)

EARL SPENCER, K.G.

THE GAY TOM TAPPERTIT.

THIS is the rollicking Captain Sim,
Dear little children, just look at him!
He stands on his toes, and he perks up his nose,
And he swaggers like fun, but why nobody knows!
 Such a queer little chit
 This absurd Tappertit,
With his views and his notions (he don't know a bit)
 With his threats and his bluster,
 The odd little buster!
With his milit'ry flings and his nautical jigs
(What a pity the House ain't in charge of Miss Miggs!)
 A stern mina-Tory
 Alone in his glory!
He really supposes Great Britain would fall
If *he* wasn't here to take charge of us all!

O children, however advanced and precocious,
Whatever you are, dears, don't be "braggadocious,"
Lest when you're in earnest, and work's to be done,
Folk laugh and remark that it's only your fun.



SIM TAPPERTIT

MR. THOMAS GIBSON BOWLES, M.P.

ALFRED THE LESS.

MARK the rapt poetic gaze !
Mark the agitated bays !
Hush ! he's hunting down a rhyme,
Has he got it ? Yes,—this time !
Down with ecstasy it goes,
And once more he's in the throes ;
Hush again ! Oh ! not a breath !
It eludes him, vanisheth !
No, he'll have it ! There it flies
Dancing mocking past his eyes,
Quick now, Alfred ! there it goes
Whisking underneath your nose,
Now then ! Seize it ! Left,—now right !
Have you got it ? Hold it tight.

Children if you wish to make
Verses that will “ take the cake,”
In the midst of bardic yearning
Mark you well the cake ain't burning.



ALFRED THE GREAT

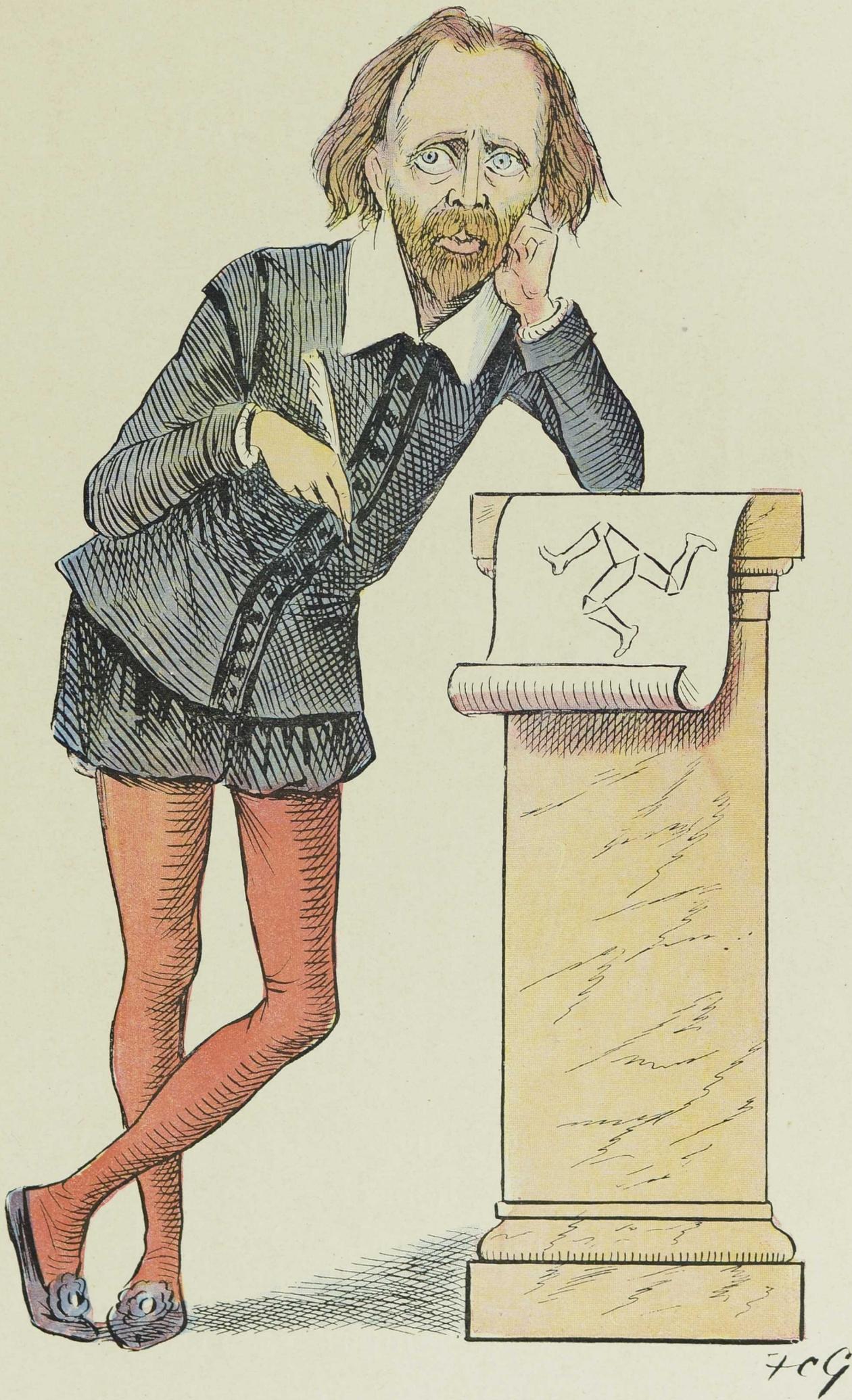
MR. ALFRED AUSTIN.

THE GOOSE OF SULBY.

(Dedicated to Miss Marie Corelli.)

HERE he stands "out-topping knowledge"
Like a Fresher new to college ;
See ! the weary shoulders bow
Under that "victorious brow" ;
While the orbs electric glance
Stare one out of countenance ;
While the careless tumbled hair
Drives Le Gallienne to despair ;
O the make-up makes it plain
Shakespeare's soul is in Hall Caine,
But that sun to Caine's is pale
Hall has made that Glory Quayle ;
Shakespeare's fame is mostly fable,
Caine, you know, is really able.

Children, making books will pay
If you take the Cainine way ;
Noble thoughts you need not harbour
Simply, dears, avoid the barber ;
(Of Caine they say at White's and Brooks's—
His only books are Shakespeare's lookses).

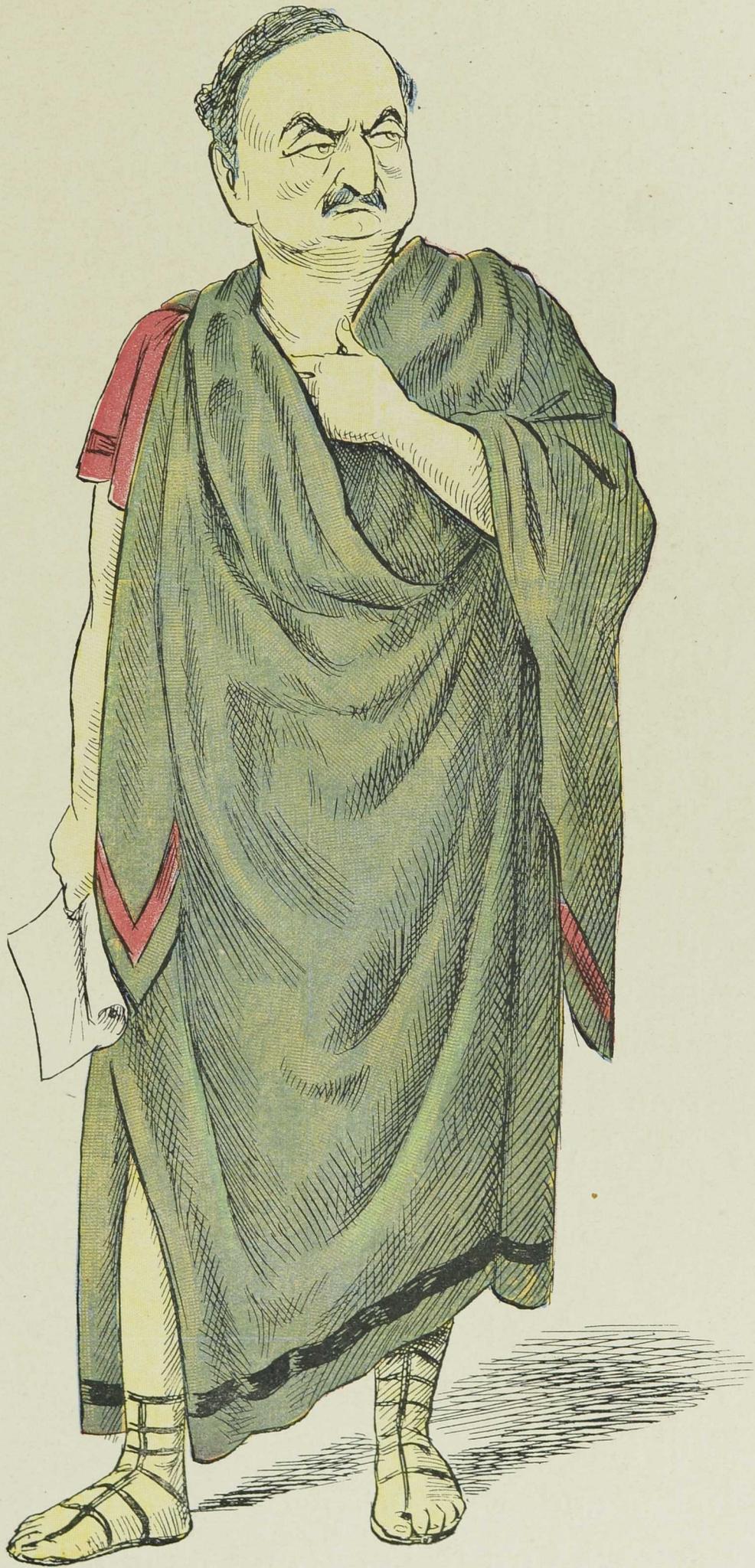


SHAKESPEARE
MR. HALL CAINE.

THE UNRULY MEMBER.

HERE'S the man who loves to speak
Six-and-thirty times a week,
Not as Tom would talk to Dick
But with gorgeous rhetoric,
Not with mere colloquial chaff—
But *ex tempore* "Telegraph"—
Monosyllables impounded
Every period swiftly rounded ;
Out it streams, this panting diction,
Carrying all things save conviction ;
All unwearied as the doors
Swinging ceaseless at the Stores—
Sending people in and out
While they merely bang about.
Sexton never poured such prose ;
How he does it no one knows.
And the Ills his words deplore !—
Shure, his pathriot throat is sore.

Children, when you come to pose
As Lord Chancellors of Prose,
Bear this truth in mind,—One word
Truly said is ever heard
More than all the glittering stuffing
Which, as you would say, "means nuffing."



BRUTUS

MR. JOHN REDMOND.

A PRIVATE CHAPLIN.

FIT it is that in conclusion
We should make a brief allusion
To the end of those whose fate
Is to labour for the State.
This is Chaplin, he who came
From the field for England's fame :
Left his turnips, corn, and taters
Stood among our legislators,—
Held the Liberals at bay :
Drove the Irish hordes away :
Warred with Gladstone : wrestled Bright :
Fisted Joey's throat in fight :
Grappled Hartington, and fell
Like an eagle on Parnell—
While Lord Randolph laughed like mad,
And dear Leader Smith looked sad ;
Always foremost in the fray
Breezy, gallant, reckless, gay ;
Always foremost in the battle,—
Specially when it turned on cattle.

What the world still calls Success
Ends at last in bitterness ;
There's no genial ray of glory
Will last out life's painful story ;
In the end, with furrowed brow,
Back we turn to home and plough,—
Foeman's pity, scorn of friend,
Then forgotten. That's the end.



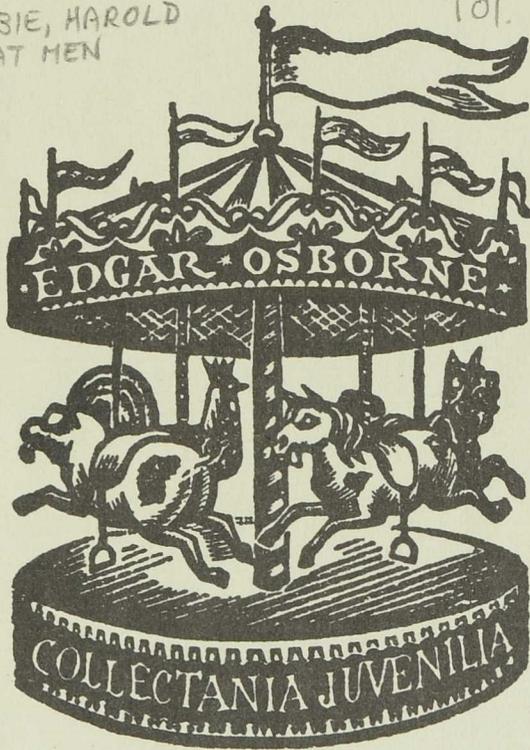
CINCINNATUS

THE RT. HON. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.

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BEGGIE, HAROLD
GREAT MEN
1901

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