

# West Countrie Tales.....

Containing

Ben & Nancy Sloper's Good Fortune

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Their Visit to Lunnen

ta zee tha

Drury Lean Pantomime  
of tha Vorty Thieves,

and ta tha

Allhamber Music Hall.

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SALISBURY  
R. R. EDWARDS, CASTLE STREET  
AND OF ALL BOOKSELLERS

## BEN AND NANCY SLOPER'S GOOD FORTUNE,..

I've a yeard voke zay, as ow a feller had better bin barn'd lucky than rich, bit I spouse tis better to av bin barn'd bouth lucky an rich too. I aelwys thought I wur tarblish lucky ta vall in we, an marry zich a nice comely looken young ooman as I did. Aelthough voke da zaay as ow beauty yeant ony skin deep, still, my wife Nancy is a good un every ninch on her, vrim tha crown of her yead to tha zole of her voot, and what zaays tha Pawitt "A thing a beauty is a jay vur ever an dever," an I aelwys thought, an velt purty zure I shood av a vartune in her ; but be drat if I ever damed or she neither, that she hood av a vartune lav'd her. An zoo you med well gace ower girt zaprise an delight, when one marnen jist atter las Chrismis, Pwoastmin brought ta ower cottage a girt lang blue letter saled up we rid salin wex, addressed to Missus Annie Sloper, an jist under tha girt sale, wur tha wirds "J. R. Marshy, Solicitor, Yeovil," in print. I looked at un, an Nancy looked at un, bit cooden zeem ta unnerstan un nar meaken out. 'Tis vrim a laayer Nancy thats zartin. What's up now I da wonder? we hant a done nuthen rong var zartin, an dwoant owe nobiddy nuthen neither, an we bouth trimbled a good un, zo much zo, that my han shook mainly as I ripped tha envelope open. Bit ower trimblin an wondermint wur zoon turned ta rejoicin when ower glistenen eyes lighted on tha vollern:--

*Yeovil, January 12<sup>th</sup> 18--*

*Madam,*

*I beg to inform you that Mr. Daniel Bowden, of Mudford, near Yeovil, lately deceased, has left by Will, one hundred pounds to each of his Nephews and Nieces, and on your furnishing me with proofs that you are the daughter of the late John Bowden, of Mudford, brother of the said Daniel, now deceased, the money will be forwarded to you.*

*I am, Madam,*

*yours truly,*

*J. R. Marshy,*

*Solicitor, Yeovil.*

*P.S. - A Certificate of your Birth and Marriage will be necessary.*

Lar a massy on ess, how we bouth cried an danced var joy, var ther wur no mistake about it. Nancy's fiather wur Jan Bowden, of Mudvird, an thease yer Dan'l jist dade wur he's brother, what went to Austilyer many years agoo, an who it zeems ad mead a lot a money out there ; an then com whoam an zettled down in he's neative village, wur a died las December.

Well, we cooden zeem ta ate nar bit a brekvist skiercely, thinken about it, var it come apon ess za zuddent like. Zoo atter the brekvist things wur clared away, Nancy teaks tha letter down to tha Vicarage var to konzult her woold measter tha Vicar how to zet about tha job, an atter he'd a rade un, an gratalated her on her good vortune, a promised ta get tha zistificat of her birth an marriage, an zen em on hiszelf to tha Laayer at Yeovil. Bout a week ar zoo atterwirds, Pwoastmin brought another letter ael saled up an

register'd, zoo that Nancy had ta zign a leetle zlip a peaper in proof she'd a got tha letter seaf an zoun. Pwoastmin zart a grin'd, an looked as though a wur main hager ta knaa what twur about ; bit we wurden gwain ta awpen un while he wur there. Zoo atter he wur gone, we ripped tha envelope open, an inzide wur a narrer blue an white bit a peaper, wie a rid stamp in one corner, and on it wur tha vollern:-- Wilts and Dorset Banking Co., Limited, Salisbury, on demand, pay Mrs. Annie Sloper or order the sum of One hundred Pounds. --- (Signed) J. R. Marshy.

Zoo tha zeam night she showed tha piece a blue an white peaper to tha Vicar, who zed as how twur a Cheque var tha money, an a zed as how she mist teak un inta Zalsbury an gie un to tha voke at tha Wilts an Dosset Baink there, an thay'd pay her tha money.

Nex Tuesday off we bouth gooes in Bob Kites' van ta Zalsbury ; bit we took proper good keer not ta zaay nuthen about it ta he, nar nabiddy else, what twur we wur gwain ta Zalsbury var.

When we gets to the Wilts an Dosset Baink, I gooes in an up to tha counter an gied tha piece a blue an white peaper ta one a tha Clerks as wur standin tother zide, a looked at it an then at I purty strait, an then a turned it auver an looked at I purty strait agean, an then a zaays "Thease yer cheque yeant endorsed - backed." "Backed" I zaays , "dwoant knaa what ya da mane, zur." "Who's Missus Annie Sloper?" a zaays. "My wife," I zaays, main proud. "Wur is she?" a zaays. "Out waiten gean tha dooer," I zaays. "You tell her ta come in," a zaays, "Tha cheque's mead out in her neam an she must come in an zign un." Zoo I gooes out an

brings her in, an she writes her neam right across tha back a tha cheque as tha man twould her, a then zaays, “How will ee av it?” “In money, a coose,” bouth oance zaays at once. A zart a grinned to heszelf, an zaays, “Notes ar goold?” “O goold,” zaays Nancy an I together, “Bit we'll av vive pounds wuth a zilver, zur, if ya think ya can speer it.” Zoo a took out ninety-vive goolden zovereigns vrom a girt drawer vull on em, an then handed auver vive pounds wuth a zilver done up in a leetle peaper bag. Zoo atter I'd a counted it ael auver mezelf, an vound twur right, I puts tha ninety-vive pounds in a leetle baig I'd a bought on purpose, an tha leetle baig a zilver inta me britches pocket along we't. Out we gooes, an reckoned ower two zelves about tha happiest an richest voke in ael Zalsbury. “Now,” zaays Nancy, “avore we da goo up ta Penny Varden Street ta zee uncle an aunt, I shood like ta goo zomewhere an buy em a leetle present, var thay've allwys bin very kind ta we one time an tother.”

Zoo we meaks ower way to a Jeweller's Shop in tha Blue Boar Row, an Nancy zelected vor em, a nice zilver-plateed taypot an shugger beasin, an ya caant think how plazed Uncle and Aunt wur, an zed as how thay shid valee it ael tha days a ther life. “Now Ben an Nancy,” zaays Uncle Steve, atter we'd a twould un about ower slice a good luck. “Let me gie ee a wurd of advice about that ar money, an that is, ta goo an putt what ya dwoant want inta tha Zalsbury Pwoast Office Seavins Baink, wur till be seaf an zound, you'll be yeable ta get a bit a interest on it, an can draa it out when ya da want too. Money ya knaa, is a terryable slippery thing, an ull milt away as vast as butter in tha zun if ya beant keervul on it.”

Zoo we studded it auver a bit, an then went an putt haughty poun on it in tha Pwoast Office Baink, zoo atter buyen a vew things var ower cottage an a good rig out a new toggery var ower two zelves, we started var whoam once mwore, Bob Kite steered mainly ta zee what a lot a passels Nancy an I had a got we ess, an zom mwore wur brought avore tha van started. I auver yeard un zaay ta one a tha passengers, "Looks as tho zomebidy ad bin in lucks way leatley ar had a windvall," hozemever, we wurden agwain ta zay nuthen ta he about it nar neet let un knaa ower business, aelthough at Nancy's wish I trated un to a good stiff glass a grog at one a tha stoppin places on tha road ta drink ower health we, bit a wur main curious an dubious ael tha way whoam, var twur a puzzle to un. Bout a vartnite ar dree weeks atter ower havin tha money, Nancy zaays ta I one marnen, "I thinks Benny as ow you an I ought ta av a bit of a hallerday an goo zom where an zee zummit we a bit a that are vartune a mine. What do ee zay about gwain up ta Lunnen jist var tha day, an goo an zee zom gran Theatre? I hant never a bin ta Lunnen ya know, an I da zee be tha newspeapers as ow there is zim chep trains da goo up vrim Zalsbury every other Monday, ony vawer an drippence there an back." "We ael me heart, Ducky," I zaays, "aelthough I've a bin up wonce we Uncle Steve to tha Voresters Fete at tha Chrysty Palace, I hant never a bin ta nar theatre, an I've bin longin ta goo a goodish many times. Zoo I'll write off ta Uncle Steve at wonce, an ax un ta zen ess a Skurshin Bill, an if a can putt ess up var a night if we da meak up ower mind ta goo, as we shaant get back ta Zalsbury zoon anuff ta goo whoam tha zeam night." Zoo we rote off ta Uncle, who be tha next pwoast rote back ta zaay as ow there wur a chep Skurshin train var Lunnen

tha very next Monday, an if twer greeable, He and Aunt had mead up ther mines ta goo we ess, a zed as ow we'd better manidge ta get inta Zalsbury Zundy night, sleep at he's house an then we shood be ael nice an ready ta start nex marnen.

We wur terryable plazed Uncle an Aunt wur a gwain we ess, specilly as Uncle had a bin ta Lunnen two ar dree times, an Aunt had lived there nearly two year in a gennelmin's vamly as cook ; an a coose, knaa'd her way about Lunnen purty well.

Zoo thic zeam night I went in an twould measter as ow I wanted a hallerdy tha nex Monday an Tuesday, as Nancy an I wur gwain ta Lunnen. Measter zart a steered an zed as ow he wur mainly aveared unless we'd a got zombiddy as know'd about Lunnen ta goo we ess, we'd better bide a touam. “O” I zaays, “Measter, Uncle an Aunt Sloper be a gwain we ess var ta show ess about a bit.” “Aelright Ben,” a zaays, “thee canst goo, bit a coose thee't av ta gree wie one a tha varm hans ta look atter thee hosses while thee bist away ; an mine thee doosen get took in wie nooan a thay there sharper fellers up in Lunnen.” “Aelright, Measter,” I zaays, “I'll teak proper good kear a that, thay'll vind thay've got ther match in Ben Sloper, if thay temps ta carry on any a their hanky-panky tricks wie un, I'll bet em a shillin.”

Zoo Zundy evenin we gets inta Zalsbury, wur we sleeps tha nite at Uncle Steves ; an nex marnin jist atter zeven a clock, away we ael vawer gooes up ta Stayshen, an took ower tickets var Lunnen. You shid jist av zeed ower Uncle an Aunt, how thay wur rigged out ta be zure. I thought Nancy an I hood a cut tha

shine, var we zartinly thought we wur a bit swellish, var Nancy had got on a sweet leetle duck of a hat, wie hostrich veather ael roun un, an a bit ta stick up in vront, an a nice leetle zart of a yallery browny jacket, nearly the colour of her purty chestnut hair, wie a darkish blue gown, lavender kid gloves, an a sweet purty leetle bit a nettin stuff roun her neck. I'd a got on me bran new zuit a darkish blue, wie a dark brown hat, squat down in tha middle ; a rid zilk necktie, wie a rale goold pin in un, an yaller kid gloves, an a cut-away short brown auvercoat on me yarm. Bit ower Aunt wur rigged out in ael tha colours a tha rainbow, purty nigh - gown, jacket, bonnett an all - wie a girt thic white spotted vail ael auver her veace, darkish brown gloves, an a girt peasly shawl on her yarm. As var Uncle a looked a regler maisher, wie he's vrock cwoat, dark brown trowjers an vancy weastcwoat, an a long sleeved brown hat, an girt blue top cwoat on he's yarm.

Uncle know'd tha Guard a tha train zoo a popped ess into a carridge ael be owerzelves, an we had a nice aisy comfertable time on it ael tha way up, we zart a mused owerzelves be looken out at tha winders at tha different varm holdins, an noticin how they wur cultivated, tha lay-a-tha-lan, tha hills, downs, rivers, medders, woods, hamlets, an buildins bouath zides a tha line as we went along.

When we gets ta Beasinstoke, Aunt zaays, “I begins ta veel me usual marnen zinkin a comen on, zoo rache down tha Basket, Steve.” Uncle got down tha basket, an we wur zoon ael vawer doin justice to zim nice ham zanwitches an zim bottles a yale, which we drowed out a winder as zoom as they wur empty. Thic leetle bit a nammet put ess ael in good humour an zet



ess vit var Lunnen ar any wur else. In about another hower tha train pulled up at Vauxhall, wur thay zamined an took haaf ower tickets, an in a vew minutes ower train wagged agean, an we purty quick voun owerzelves landed at Waterloo Stayshen, zeaf an zoun.

It bein Nancy's vust visit ta Lunnen, she wur thunder struck we tha busy bustlin zene at thic ar tarminus, tha biggest stayshen in ael Lunnen, thay da zay now, trains a rushen in an out every minuet a tha day, an night too, to ael pearts a tha Wace of Englin, cabs, busses, private carridges, vans an drays, jinglin an clatterin about auver tha stones inzide an outzide a tha stayshen yard, an voke rushen about like mad, here, there and everywhere, as tho tha wordle depended on thay an their business. Nancy wur zo struck up we tha zite an zoun on it, that she cooden var zom time open her mouth ta let ess knaa what she thought on it ael, at las, when I spose she'd a swallerd ael o't in, she turns ta I an zaays, "var goodness seak Ben, what be ael tha voke in zich a tare var? a body hood think there wur a girt vire on zome wur, ar zome other girt kalamity had happened, ta zee em ael zoo helter skelter, hurry an flurry about zoo." "Lar bless tha young ooman," Uncle zaays, "tis like this yer every day a tha week, an at hallerdy times vorty thousand times wuss, specilly in tha zummer time. Come along," a zaays, "we mussen stan gapen yer ar we'll get rin into an be knocked down be tha traffic." Zoo we vollied on behine he an aunt out a tha stayshen, an down into tha Waterloo Road, wur we draps into tha "Duke a Yark," an had a quart a yale an zim biscuits an cheese, an then mead ower way up auver tha brudge, an Uncle pwinteed out ta Nancy tha girt wide river Tems, we ael tha shippen, barges, an bwoats gwain ta an vro on its muddy an slimy waater.

An then a show'd her, an twould her ael tha neames a  
tha girt big buildins an monnymints on tha bainks  
bouath zides a thic mighty river.

When a pwinted out Cleepater's Needle, she  
cooden meak it out, an wanted ta knaa wur tha eye on  
un wur, an what zart a drid a wur drided wie, an if tha  
Gipshun voke zowed up their mummies wie un. Bit  
what zeemed ta puzzle her mwoast wur ta zee tha girt  
crowds a people a passen backurds and vorreds on thic  
ther brudge ; she wur zure ther mist be zummit  
exterordinery a gwain on zomwhere, ar thay hooden be  
ael in zich a hurry an tare ta get a long.

Jist as we wur gettin tawards tha end on un, we  
met a long raink a men an bwoys a ael zarts an zizes,  
tha main on em ragged an rough lookin vellers, an zom  
vew on em looked like men as had zeed better days.  
Ache on em had a bouard slung auver he's showders,  
back an vront, on which wur printeed in girt bwold  
letters: "Drury Lean Theatre. Grand Pantomime of  
'The Forty Thieves.' Nellie Stuart, Dan Leno, Herbert  
Campbell, Whimsical Walker, and all the old  
Favourites! Today, at 1-30. Prices as usual. NB -  
Come early and avoid the crush."

"Look ere, Missus," zaays Uncle, "we'll goo an  
zee it, tis not jist leven a clock, zoo we'll goon av a  
look at Covent Gierden Market, an be tha time we've  
bin auver that an had a bit a nammet, till be time ta be  
there, var ther's zure ta be a girt crowd. I wur there,  
zome years agoo, when Jack an tha Bean Staak wur on,  
an I knaas what a job tis ta get a good sate ; Zoo we'll  
be there in time." When we got to tha Stran, Uncle  
zaays, "now then, ael o'ee be quick an cross auver

sharp.” Nancy looked quite bewildered : “Lar a massy on ess,” she zaays, “Ow's a bidy ta get droo thic thar crowd a people, cabs, busses, an carridges, I shid like ta knaa ; Adden ess better wait a bit till thame ael gone bye, ar we'll get rod auver var zartin.” Uncle zart a grinned an zed as how we shood av ta wait there till atter midnight avore tood slacky ar a bit. Zoo a kotch'd woold a Aunt an zeein a bit of a openin tween a bus an a brewer's dray, slips droo across to tha standin in tha middle a tha road. “Vollie on, Ben,” a zaays ; zoo I kotched woold a Nancy, to voller on, an if tadden bin var a Pleecemin, “who, zeein we wur country Voke,” an a bit meazed, helpen on ess across, I raaly do believe we shood a bin knocked down an praps killed, we a cab as wur comin tother way, which narn oance diden zee. Howzemever we ael got seafly across at las, an went straight up Wellintin Street ta Covent Gierden Market, which wur jist then in vull swing ; an tho twur Winter, tha smill a tha vlowers, vruit, an vegetables, wur auverpowerin inamwoast. There wur thousands a tha biggest vilets an daffydowndillys I'd ever a zeed in ael me life, an in tha vegetable market underds a tons a teaties, pasmets, carrots, turmets, cabbidges, an nigh every thing you cood mention; an amwoast on it being zould off be auction to tha dalers an shopkeepers ; as var oranges, bananners, grapes, vigs, an nuts, thay wur mountains high on em, an mwoast on em wur zould off as vast as you cood count purty nigh. We bought a dozen a oranges, which Aunt zed hood come in handy when we wur in tha Theatre.

Zoo atter we'd a done havin a good look roun tha market, we meaks ower way ta Long Yeaker, wur Uncle know'd zim Zalsbury Voke as kep a Yeatin House ; thay wur main glad ta zee ess come in, specilly

Uncle, who thay'd knowed var a longvul time when thay lived at Zalsbury. Zoo they showed ess ael up stayers inta a nice girt room, wur we cood look out a winder an zee tha traffic goo bye ; in a vew minets we had a nice leetle dinner put avore ess, roast pork an apple saace, teaties, pasmets an cabbidge, an atter that, ta ower zaprise, thay brought in a nice leetle rubub tart, which tha voke as kep tha house intended as a leetle present ta top up we, var auld acquaintance as thay zed, var thay diden much expec we had had many rubob tarts ar puddens not heet, zoo atter thanken on em var thur kineness, an paid ower whack, we had a nice glass a warm tidley apiece we em, an then started var Drury Lean Theatre, which wurden a girt way off.

When we rached it, tha voke wur crowded roun what thay caal'd tha Crush Dooer - yards thick - wur var zixpence extry you wur zapped ta be let in twenty minets avore time. "Well," zaays Aunt, "I beant agwain ta get scrunged, jammed and squeezed in a crowd like that if I da knaa it, an zoo we'll goo roun to tha regler Pit entrance, an bide ower time. We be come var pledjure, zoo we wunt meak a toil a pledjure." "Hear hear, Aunt," I zaays, "teant every day we kills a pig, zoo we'll teak it aisy be biden ower time, and chaance gettin a good sate." Bit when we got roun ta tha regler Pit entrance, begar twur as bad ar wuss than twur at tha Crush Dooer ; an tha longer we stopped tha bigger got tha crowd. We stood back a little, an in a vew minets tha dooers wur awpened, an in swung tha people. About vive minets atter a girt bouard wur hung out, on which wur printeed in girt letters, "No room in Pit or Gallery ; All full up."

“Well, well,” I zaays ta Uncle, “here's a purty goo ; come ael tha way ta Lunnen ta zee a Theatre, an now caant get in, mid as well goo whoam agean.”

“Stop a minet,” zaays he, “dwoant caddie theezelf Ben.” Zoo a gooes straight up to a Perleecemin, who wur stannen at tha vront entrance, an axes un what we'd better do ta get in an av a good sate ; A zed as how we shudden get a good sate, neet narn at ael neether, unless we mead up ower mines, an cood avourd ta goo up into tha Ampatheatre stalls, as a caaled em - Vive shillins a piece. “Lar a massy,” I zaays, “we can't avourd that, why that's a poun var tha vawer on ess, that tis.” “Look here, Ben,” zaays Nancy, “we've come ta Lunnen on purpose, purty near, ta zee a Theatre an enjoy owerzelves, an tis ard we caant avourd a poun out a thic ar underd me Uncle laved I ; zoo we'll goo in an I'll pay var Uncle an Aunt meszelf, therenow.” “Aelrite, me dear,” I zaays, “if you'm greaable I be.” Zoo we gooes up to tha vront dooer, an inzide a lobby pleace, an then ael up a wide carpeted stayer kease, on top a which we paid down a poun var tha vawer tickets, an then droo another swing dooer, laden into tha Ampatheatre Stalls. As luck hood av it, we ad tha pick a zim sates right in tha vront row, as many voke adden a come in ta thease peart a tha house not heet. We ad a splendid view an mused owerzelves be avin a good look roun at ael tha deckerations, in goold an zilver, an paintins a ael colors a tha rainbow. Tha galleries at tha top wur crammed vull a people, an zoo wur tha Pit on tha groun vloer at tha bottom, an thay diden varget ta kick up a vine shindy neither, laffin, zingin, shouten, an whistlen, ta wile away tha time.

At tha zides, about haaf way up, wur tha Private

Boxes, zart a comfertable coopy houses looken plazen, wur ael tha Nobs an gran voke did zit, zome on em we yeard, wur as much as vive an ten guineas a box. Be quarter past one nearly every zate in thease girt Theatre wur vull, an then, just on tha stroke of haaf atter, tha splendid girt Band of nearly a underd Musickers zet up 'God seave tha Queen,' everyboddy took off their hats an stood up, an when twur vinished, thay zet up zim lively Scotch, Irish, an Welsh hayers, an then ael at wonce dropped down to zim slow an zolemn zart a music, when you cood hear a pin drap nearly, in tha midst on't, up went tha curtin in vront, an ower wonderin eyes lighted on tha vust zene a tha Vorty Thieves in Drury Lean Theatre.

It represented a rale Cwort a Justice, we judge an jury, laayers, clarks, witnesses, jailers, prisners, an people a ael zarts an sizes, an drased in every possible way, come ta hear tha trials. Two trumpets blared out. Tha judge took his sate, and then a komical zart a bailee feller in cocked hat an wig baals out, "Oh yes! Oh yes!! Oh yes!! order, in Her Majesty's Cwort a Justice." Then tha trial begun of a lot a Company Promoter Fellers, who, accordin to tha evidence, had chated tha British voke out a millions a money, be promisen on em, tween varty an fifty per zent var their money, out a zim goold mines as zombiddy had just a voun out auver in Americky, an which turned out ta be nuthen bit a rascally swindle. Twur a rale bit a vun ta hear tha laayers an tha witnesses ranglin an swearin one ageanst tother, an tha judge every now an then sheakin his vist at em ta zilence em. Tha clammer, however, got wusser an wusser, an jist as a couple a laayers wur squaren up var a vight tha Cwort vill ael ta pieces as tho a earthquake had a happened, down

tumbled the judge vrim his sate, the jury box wur  
blowed ta pieces, an the laayers, witnesses, jailers, an  
perleecemin ael bolted var the life on em, an then down  
went the curtain in vront, amid roars a laater vrum the  
while house.

In a vew minets a wur up agean an there bevore  
ower wonderin eyes wur a raaly gran an wonnerval  
Vorest Zene, girt Woaks, Beeches, Aishes, Birches, an  
taal Vir Trees, we their trunks, lims, an branches ael  
knarled an twisted, Ivy an evergreens clingin an  
twinnin about ael auver em, an swingin vrim bough to  
bough, an vrom the ground girt tall ferns, bracken, an  
vlowern shrubs a growen we birds, butternlies, moths  
an bumble bees vlitten an vleeun about amangst the  
vlowers and leaves, an amangst the grass an vlowers  
wur ael zarts a leetle hanimals rinnin in an out. It wur  
ael za nateril like that you cood raaly vancy yerself  
looken at a rale vorest. In a minet ar zoo in come  
underds an underds a varies, vrim leetle bits a beabies  
ta grow'd up ooman voke, who danced an vrolick'd ael  
up an down the vorest glades an in an out, an droo an  
roun amangst the trees, an some on em wie wings on,  
even vlitted about vrim tree ta tree, risin an vloatin  
about in the air as vree as the birds, an then zettled  
down on the groun as aisy as a lark ar a butternly out in  
the green vields atouam. Then ael at wonce, mid a girt  
vlourish a trumpets, a leetle zide door sprung open an  
in come the Vorty Thieves we their Captin, an a  
terrible owdacious an ferocious rum lot a cut droats  
they ael zeemed too, atter the Captin had a caal'd auver  
ael ther neams, an drilled em, they brought in a  
Donkey, who's pranks an komical actions on the  
steage zet everybidy in roars a laafter, var zich a  
Moke as he wur we'd never a zeed in ael ower lives

avore, he'd do anything an everything a wur axed ta do, even square up var a vight. A gennelmin as zit nex ta we, zeein we wur vrim tha countery, zed as ow twerden a rale Donkey bit done be two young fellers inside of a Donkey's skin, Nancy cood ardly believe it na mwore cood I, till one a tha robbers pulled un in two pearts cos a zet up kicken zoo, an then we zeed two pair a laigs run off tha steage in different directions, one we he's yead a girt long ears an tother we he's skin an tail, hozemever twur well acted, an we wur main zorry when tha curtin went down on thic ar zene.

Tha next zene wur a zart of a zacrit parlour pleace, wur Ally Barber, tha Captin a tha Vorty Thieves, wur countin out thousands a goolden sovereigns an then shovelin on em into a couple a baigs which a slung across tha Donkey's back an mead off we to tha sacrit Cave of tha Vorty Thieves. Up in one corner a tha room, quite out a zite, tha good Vairay ad bin a watchen on un ael tha time, zoo she puts a Peerleecemin on tha track a tha thieves, who scowerd ael tha Country ta vind em out ; at las they wur ael traced ta Lunnen wur thay'd took lodgins in a girt vlat. Tha next zene wur tha Ragents Park, in Lunnen, handy ta tha Zoological Gierdens, wur ael tha Vorty Thieves had azembled, an who atter a sacrit conflab, went in ta zee tha wild baste, which wur ael showed up in girt keages, bouth zides a tha steage, jist like tha rale thing. There wur Lions, Tigers, Wolves, Hyaners, Jackals, an Monkeys ; wie a girt Hellyphant an Kamel, waakin about on tha steage amangst tha crowds a voke come ta zee tha gierdens. Twur a main bit a vun ta zee an hear, Herby Campbell drased up as Zuckley, a girt vat young ooman, taaken an jokin we Ally Barber tha captin a tha Vorty Thieves, to tha girt hainger an disgust a Dan'l



Leno, who wur actin tha peart a Abduller, her usbin, an looken as jealus an spiteval as tho a cood a murderd tha pair on em ther an then, howzemever, Ally Barber explained to he's satisfaction how twur a come to vall in wie tha young ooman, an then ael dree on em zet up zingin what thay caaled a Topical Zong, ael about every thing an everybody inamwoast, which caased loud clappen a hans an roars a laafter, an when tha curtin went down, thay wur ablidged ta draa un up agean, an let em ael dree come on agean an zing two ar dree mwore verses, tha people wur zo took we't.

Tha nex zene wur tha Bar Parlour of a Public House, wur tha Vorty Thieves wur ael zat down drinkin, smoakin, an playen wie cards an dice, an a purty zart of a gamblin pandemonium it wur too, var jist as thay wur ael in tha het a excitement, an quarrelen auver their winnins an losses, tha Lanlard a tha Pub popped he's yead inzide tha dooer an baaled out "Perleece." Thay scrabbled up tha cards an dice, an scamperd away ta tha back yard wur there wur vorty empty beer barrels, ael in a row. Ache a tha Thieves jumped into a barrel out a zight, bit tha good Vairy happenen ta be passen bye, looked droo tha kay hawl a tha yard geats, an zeed em ael get in ; zoo she tells tha Bobby, who vastens tha geats, blows he's whistle, an thirty nine mwore perleecemin come up an in quick sticks thay wur let in, ache man on em collars a barrel, turned un topsy turvy, an shot tha vorty thieves out on tha vloer a tha steage, ael lookin vrighteed ta death, purty nigh. Thay wur zoon ael hancuffed an marched off ta Newgeat jail, wur atter thay'd a ad ther neames a took down, an wur jist agwain ta strip var tha bath, tha govenor a tha jail pops in an zaays as how thay mist ael be zet vree agean, as thay wur ael voreigners, an as

noonan a their robberies hadden a took pleace in  
Englind, twur out a ower jurrysdickshun.

Massy on ess, what a ta do there wur when thay unnerstood they wur ael ta be zet vree agean, thay zet up shouten, singin, kissen an embracin one anodder like mad. Tha Captin wur za auvercome we jay that a gied the govenor of the jail vive poun, an tha turnkeys and perleecemin a zovereign a piece ta drink he's health we. A coose thay zed as how twur mwore than their pleaces wur woth ta teak tha money, bit thay pocketed it ael tha seam ; an then thay zet to, dancin, shouten, an zingin long we tha Thieves, as mad vrisky, an merry as any on em, amid which down went tha curtin, an zoo ended tha Drury Lean Pantomime a tha Vorty Thieves. Atter which come on tha Gran Transvermation Zene, an which wur a blaze a light of ael colours a tha rainbow, an troupes apou troupes a young leadies dancin, skippin, vleeun an vlitten about, amangst tha various zenes which wur truly wonnervul an ameazin. It ael zeemed ta spring up vrim tha vloer a tha steage an gradly rise to tha roof, zome zixty ar zeventy veet high, an when thay as come up vust touched tha roof an cooden goo no wurder tha movin spectickle stopped ; an I shood think there wur quite two ar dree underd young leadies a ael zarts an zizes in thic ar zene ; thay wur perched up on ael zarts a plazen tween tha rocks, vountins, trees, shrubs an vlowers, an zome on em, wie wings on, vloated about in tha hayer jist like birds ; twur raaly ameazin ta know ar zee what twur kep em up, as ya cooden zee no ropes nar strings, nar neet nuthen under their veet ; zome on em wur ael in white vlowen robes an darted about vrim pleace ta pleace as tho thay wur hangels, an then zettled down on tha grass as light an zoft as a veather. Tha zene wur

truly marv'lous, an ael ower eyes zeemed vixed upon it. Ael at once tha zene wur changed into a rosy-like tint, an then lavender, an then a zart a greeny, an then yallery, jist like goold, which mead tha vlowers, dresses, an spangels look like a mass a diamonds and precious stounes a ael colours, an tha vountins an water valls at tha back looked like moulten zilver a vlowen down. "Thease yer zene," Uncle Steve zed, an zoo did Aunt, "wur tha grandest thay'd ever a zeed in ael ther lives," aelthough boath on em ad bin ta Drury Lean many times avore. Tha people zet up a harty cheer, an clapped their hans a good un, when tha curtin went down ; zoo much zo, thay thay had ta pull un up agean var ess ta look on it jist wonce mwore var a minet ar zoo ; at last a went down var good, an then tha Band het up zim lively music, lots a tha voke in tha zide boxes begun ta put on their things in readiness var ta goo. Zoo I zaays ta Uncle, "I spoose tis ael auver now, " bit a zed as how we'd better stop ta zee tha Harlyquinade, as tood be a rale bit a vun. "O eece," zaays Nancy, " let's zee it ael now we be here." Zoo we had zim oranges, an in a vew minets tha curtin went up an showed ess a girt vine Lunnen street, we ael zarts a tradesmen's shops one zide ; in a second ar two, "Tha Clown, Whimsical Waaker," turned a zummerzalt right droo one a tha shop winders on to tha vloer a the steage, an we a broa grin on he's veace, balls out --

"Here we are, met again,

Once more at Drury Lane."

a wur zoon vollied in be tha Harlyquin, Perleecemin, Pantaloon an Colombine, tha last a young ooman who kept dancin in an out long we pantaloon ael droo tha piece. Tha woold Clown an Harly, wie their artvul tricks, komical ways, an witty zayens, kept tha geam alive, thay robbed everybidy as come along, men,

oomen, an children, gentle an zimple, thay broke into tha drapers, butchers, grocers, an beakers shops, an jist as thay wur robben a Pork butchers an had got two girt long strings a saacengers in their pockets, tha Bobby come upon tha zene, a jist as he wur chucklin to hiszelf how nice he wur gwain ta nab em, I'm drat if bouath on em didn't turn zummerzalts right droo tha winder wie tha girt long strings a saacengers hangin out a their pockets, an got right away, thay manidged ta dodge thic ar Bobby every time he got upon their track, an at las thay decoyed un into a public house ta av a drink, wur thay mead un stwoane drunk an then zat un down on a empty beer barrel, in which thay'd a put zim gunpowder, tha Clown, we he's rid hot poker, put un to tha bung hawl an blowed tub, Bobby an ael ta smithereens ael auver tha steage. Twur a rale bit a rollicken vum vrim beginnin to end, an nearly mead ess split ower zides an draa tha tears out a ower eyes a laffen zoo. This bein tha last act the curtin went down, the band zet up "God seave tha Queen," an tha Pantomime, which took vower howers ta get droo wur ael auver at last.

Well, in one zense we wurden nar bit zorry ta get out into tha hayer an stretch ower laigs a bit. "Now" zaays Aunt, "avore I da goo much vurder I mist av a cup a tay, that I must," zoo we gets down into tha Stran, wur we goes into a nice leetle pleace which Aunt know'd o, an ad a proper good tay - brade an butter wie shrimps, an ael zarts a keak, var a shillin a piece. "Now missus," zaays Uncle Steve, "what be ess gwain ta do now? ya da knaa mwore about Lunnen than I do, zoo wur ad ess better goo?" "Well," zaays Aunt, "as tis tha vust time Nancy av a bin ta Lunnen, we'd better teak a Bus an ride down as vur as Victorier

Stayshen, she'll zee zim zites agwain along she wunt never varget, I warn.” Zoo we hailed a dree hoss Bus, wie a girt umbreller stuck up in vront, an ael vower on ess went up stayers ta tha roof ; twur a main job ta lug Aunt up, bit I took hold a one of her hans, an Uncle pushed up behine, an zoo landed her seafely on top. She hooden a went up, she zed, ony she wanted ta pwint out ta Nancy ael that ther wur ta be zeed gwain along. As luck hood av it, tha vront zates jist behine tha draver wur empty, zoo we mead var em, an purty zoon wur comfertably zettled down an joggen along ael droo tha Stran, tha traffic wur za thick it took zome time ta rache Trafalgar Square.

Nancy, wie her eyes wide open, zeemed struck wie meazement, she cooden zeem ta open her mouth when Aunt pwinted out ta her tha girt buildins, monnymints, an vountins a playen, an axed her what she thought on it ael ; bit her eyes an thoughts too wur zoo vixed, she diden speak a word. When we got down auverite tha Hoss Gards, an zeed tha two girt vine zolgiers on hossback in their leetle zentry boxes, an lots mwore on gard, waakin backurds an vorrards, wie their zilver lookin helmets an swords a glissenen. Ael at wunce she bawls out, “Ben, I do believe there's ower vren tha Zargent, who we zeed at tha Manoovers on Zalsbury Plaain. Let's hail un! Do ee stop a minet, Mister,” zaays she to tha draver a tha bus. Bit he turned roun to her an grinned a good un, an zed as ow twur mwore then he's pleave wur woth ta stop var a zolgier, unless a wanted ta ride; “bezides,” a zaays, “thay Hoss Gards there be ael on duty, an diden deer ta leave ther pwoosts till their reliefs com.” “Hoss Gards, be em,” I zaays, “well, if that's het, caan't be ower vren, var he belongs to tha Cwooldstream Gards.” “O,”

zaays tha draver, “thay be voot zolgiers, an their Barricks beant no wur handy here.” Purty zoon we got down ta Parleymint Square, an tha zite a shops an buildins ael tha way down Victorier Street to tha stayshen, quite bewildered Nancy an I too, var I'd never a bin thic ar road avore.

When we got down into tha Stayshen yard, we laves thic bus, an went an had zum revreshment auver at a nice leetle pleace in tha Wilton Road, an then atter zeein tha stayshen an waaken about a bit on tha girt wide platvorm, we gooes out an teaks another bus up ta tha Marbil Arch an ael down Oxvird Street to tha Ragents Zarcus, wur we gets down an stretches ower laigs a bit be waakin ael down vine Ragent Street, as you med well gace, tha milliners, drasemeakers, an drapers shops, wur tha chief traction var tha two ooman voke, we had a main job ta get em along, bout haaf way down we come to a splendid girt shop, we winders I shood think a dozen veet square ache zide a tha dooer, twur a cwort milliners an drasemeakers shop, dresses, gowns, mantles, an tippets one zide, bonnets, hats, an tokes tha tother. Agean tha dooer two millentry looken men wur on guard lookin main hager at ael who went in an com'd out ; Ael at wonce, Nancy, ael out a breath come rinnen up ta I an zaays, “Ben, do come yer an av a look at thease here purty leetle duck of a bonnet, O, how I shood like to ave un, jist my style, an hood zuit my light complexion lovely, hoodner Benny? I wonder how much he is, do go in an ax em.” “Lar massy on ess,” I zaays, “I dwoant like ta goo into a girt vine shop like thic, thay'll steer at I zoo, jist upon it, one a tha shopmen comes out an hans in a passel ta zim ladies as wur waiten in their carriage gean tha peavemint, zoo we axes un tha price a thic

leettle bonnet which we pwinteed out, "About vower guineas," a zed, "O lar," zaays Nancy, shruggen her showders, "we caant avourd ael that, I thought about zeven an zix ar ten shillins at tha outside hood be tha price on un," tha young man grinned an zed as how we'd better goo ta tha East End - wur ever that wur - if we wanted a bonnet at that price, zoo we jogged on a bit vurder an Aunt spied out a nice long waater-proof cloak at a lady tailor's shop, which she twould Uncle Steve twur jist tha very garment she wanted var tha wet weather, zoo atter a lot a perswaiden, Uncle goes in ta ax tha price, a comes out looken terryable blue, var tha cost on un wur vive guineas a zed, "O lar," Aunt zaays, "poor voke like we mussen think a getten no bargins in Ragent street," zoo we jogs on a bit vurder, veastin ower eyes on everything there wur ta be zeed. I do believe ower Aunt an Nancy hood a bin gappen in thay there vine shops till twur time ta shut em up if thay cood av had their way, howzemever, we got em down ta Picketdilly Zarcus at last, wur tha traffic wur thicker than ever, a regular crush, we had a job ta wiggle waggel droo tha voke, even in raike, and wur martil glad ta get into a leettle atin house in Wardour Street out on't. Atter avin zome leettle revreshment, Uncle zaays, "tis now zeven a clock, ower train dwoant goo till quarter ta twelve ta night, zoo what shill ess do this evening?" "O," zaays Aunt, "I thinks as how we'd baste goo ta zom Music Hall, we can come out a there when we be a mineteed. Here's tha Pavilion cloas handy, an a leettle vurder on, in Lester Square, tha Hempire an Allhamber." "We'll goo ta tha Allhamber," zaays Uncle, "I've a bin there woance avore, an tis a nice airy pplace an generally a good pervormance too." Zoo we meaks ower way ta tha Square, an in vront a tha Hempire wur a girt long raike

a voke two be two jist as tho thay wur gettin ready ta march to a Club Veast. Aunt zed as how thay had ta vorm up like this an teak ther turn ta get in when tha doors wur aupened. An she zed, when ther's a popler pervarmence a gwain on, ar zom pertickler Actor ar Zinger agwain ta act ar zing, tha voke ull actly come an stan about like this var howers an howers, even bring their nammet an leetle stools to zit down on, we raaly did zee zome a tha young ooman doin zim knitten an croachy work, while thay waited var tha dooers ta open. "Begar," I zaays, "I hood zooner never zee a Theatre ar Music Hall, then av ta wait about like that."

Zoo we gooes auver to tha Allhamber, wur crowds a voke wur stannen avore ael tha dooers, yards an yards thick, howzemever we wurden agwain ta mix in we thick ar crowd a voke, zoo we stood back ta let em draa a bit - as we da zaay we tha sheep vair time, - bim bye ael vawer a tha dooers wur swung open, an in swung tha crowd ta every peart a tha house, bit mwoastly ta tha shillin an zixpenny sates ; howzemever, we wurden agwain ta caddle owerzelves as we velt purty zure there hood be plenty a room in tha two shillin sates, wur we mead up ower minds ta goo, an we wurden disapointed neither, var we got in an had a nice aisy sate apiece, athout any drungen ar squeezezen, push, ar bodder.

Nancy an I, too, wur quite plazed wie thic ar nice Music Hall, var it had bin jist newly-painted an gilded, an ael o't looked splendid an smill'd za nice an vresh too. Tha Band a music wur tha vinest I think we'd ever a yeard, an thay played mwoast a their own musick, rote be their conductor, Measter Jacoby.



At zackly haight a clock, tha girt vine painteed curtin in vront rolled up, an tha Ballet begun ; twur a piece caal'd "Jack Ashore," an a main lively an komical piece it wur too, nuthen bit rollicky vun vrim beginnin ta end, wie men, oomans, bwoys, an maidens of ael ages an zizes, an drast out in every zart a vaishen you cood think of, an of ael colours too, dancing, skippen an vlitten about ael auver tha steage, here, there, and everywhere, we joy at Zailer Jack's seaf return whoam vrom sae ta he's neative village. An when a vell in love wie tha village innkeeper's daater, an got married to her, tha zene an carousals at tha weddin baigers ael description.

Atter thic Ballet, zim Ackerbatic pervormances took plecth wie a troop a men an bwoys, their swingin, jumpin, an tumblin about one auver tother wur raaly wonnervul, an ta wind up we, thay ael stood bolt upright on one anodders showders, tha leetle bowy on top, nearly touchen tha roof, an then ache on em turned a zumemrzalt ta rache tha vloer.

Then come on a lot a Rooshan voke, ael drased out in their own neative custom an zung a lot a gleees, ditties, an zongs in their own vunny laingwidge.

Fred Russell, tha champion Ventriloquer, come on nex we he's zix dummies, a woold man an he's wife, as a caaled Darby an Joan, a young maisher feller, ael cuffs an collars, an top hat, a leetle Nigger as black as ink, an a Dog an Cat, a put em in cheers ael in a row on tha steage, stood behine an mead every one on em taak, laff, whistle, zing, bark, an mew, jist as tho thay wur ael alive, Darby an Joan ache zung a zong an then a duett. Tha maisher chap a komik zong, an tha nigger

axed a lot a riddles, gigglin an laffen a gooden an  
showen up tha whites a he's eyes an teeth ta-rights, tha  
Cat mewed, an as var tha leetle Poodle, a lifted up he's  
yead an bow wowwed a good un, while tha totherun  
wur zingin, twur a rale bit a vun this wur, an however  
one man cood himitate em ael I caant think ; var ya  
cooden zee un open he's mouth ar even move he's lips.

Then we had a grand Auverture be tha Band, an  
then a leady Hoperer Zinger, who cood warble an trill  
jist like a Nightingle ; atter she, a Vrench Clown come  
on we he's taakin Pwony, bit as ael he tried ta zay wur  
in Vrench I cooden tell ee what twur.

Twur now time ta begin tha tother Girt Ballett,  
caaled the "Rid Shoes," a Rooshian piece, an in which  
there wur zom wonnervul an lovely zenes. Tha vust  
o'm wur a rale Rooshian village, wie ael tha pesantry  
keepin up a high Vestival. Then a rale Rooshian  
vorest, wie bears an wolves roamin about amangst tha  
trees ; an then a beautivul valley wie rocks an vountins  
a water runnin down between em, mingled wie trees,  
shrubs, an vlowers of every colour. Ta wind up wie,  
come a gran zene of a rale Rooshian Winter, wie tha  
snow a vallen down jist like tha rale thing. Tha  
dresses, zingin an dancin amangst tha various zenes  
wur splendid, thase ballett took nearly a nower to get  
droo. Then their wur zom mwore ackerbatic  
pervormances, on girt high ropes an wires, an a thing  
caaled a trapease, on which tha pervormers tumbled an  
vlitted about as aisy an light as tha birds do up in tha  
trees. Then come a Shaddergrapper who we ony he's  
two hans, varmed on a girt white sheen or screen,  
every zart a hanimal or bird you cood menshin, vrim a  
hellyphint to a mouse, an vrim a hostrich ta a leetle

tomtit, besides zom rale good komical skecthes, zich as a Punch an Judy Show, a Vox Hunt, a Barber sheavin a customer, a Dentist draaen a tooth, an even a Passen prachen in he's pulpit, an lots mwore ; an as I zed, ael done be ony he's hans an vingers.

Tha las thing we stopped ta zee wur a Merricken Musical Tramp, a rough dirty looken feller a wur too, ael in raigs an tatters, bit be drat if a cooden play lovely on every musical instermint you cood menshin, vrim a pianner to a tin whissle, an ee brought out zum beativul music out of zim instermints of he's own meaken. Tha voke cheered un, zoo a had to come back agean, an begar if a diden play zim lively hayers out of a thing var ael tha wordle like a woold boot.

It now ony wanted a vew minets ta leven a clock, zoo we ael left tha pplace an got inta Zaint Martin's Lean, wur we voun out a Eel pie shop, went in, an ad a proper good veed, an then mead var Waterloo Stayshin. When we got down to Zaint Martin's Church, it ony wantede vive an twenty minets ta twelve. Aunt zaays, "Steve, caal a cab, I shaant never be yeable ta waak ael tha way in time." Zoo Uncle hailed a Vawer wheeler, what Aunt caaled a Growler, an we promised tha draver a shillin mwore then he's laavul vare, if he hood lan ess at tha stayshin in good time. Zoo a zet he's hoss agwain, ael down Whitehall, Parleymint Street, auver Wacemister Brudge, an up Yark Street, an then under zim main dark arches ; an be drat if he diden land ess at tha vront entrance a tha stayshin dree minets avore twur time ower train wur due ta start. We wur terryable glad, an steeds of a shillin gied un haighteen pence extry. Uncle zoon voun out ower Gard, who put ess inta a

nice aisy carridge ael be ourzelves, wur we took a corner apiece, an in a vew minets atter tha train starteet, wur ael vast asleep, we wur zoo vaigged out. I doo believe we shooden a woke up till we got ta Zalsbury if tadden a bin var Aunt bawlen out ta Uncle Steve, who wur vast asleep an snorrin away wuss than tha engine, ta han her tha leetel bottle a tidley he'd a got in he's girt cwoast pocket ; zoo we ache on ess had a swig, an then zettled down var another good snore, an which we diden wake up out o till Zalsbury Stayshin wur rached, about haaf atter two thic ar Tuesday marnin. We zoon gets up ta Penny Varden Street, went ta bade, an diden wake up till nearly ten a clock. Zoo atter a good dinner, long wie Uncle an Aunt, an thanken on em var ther kineness in gwain ta Lunnen wie ess. Bout vower a clock we starteet off var whoam in Bob Kite's van, an got there tween zix an zeven, well tired out. It took ess nearly a week ta get well auver thic ar trip ta Lunnen, an ta thease day Nancy haan't a done tellen ower Measter an Missus bout Lunnen, the Drury Lean Pantomime, the Allhamber Music hall, an everythin else she zeed, an which she zaays she wunt never varget as longs she lives.

FINIS