

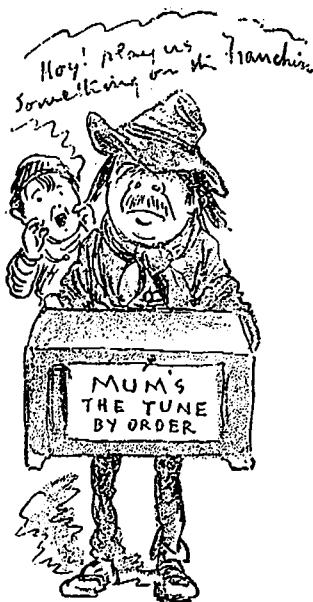
walk and sit doon in the gutter wi' mair speed than ceremony. Theither ane, gettin' feared, begood flourishin' a muckle baton; but afore he cud come doon on ma skull, I doon wi' ma head an' made for his stamack like a billy goat. The puir onfortunate deevil doobled up immediately wi' an' expression o' countenance that wad hae drawn pity frae the heart o' a stone. At that meenit up comes the sergoant an' wanted tae ken what was the maitter. "The maitter," says I, "is just this: Here's twa o' yer clever fellows shackled me—a decent warehousman, on ma road hame frae ma employer's hoose—Tamson an' Tamson, tae wut, an' arrested me for a forger wi' a hunder an' fifty names, a' because I happened tae hae a grey coat on ma back. Gin that's no maitter enouch, I'll be obliged tae ye gin ye'll tell me what can be waur." The sergoant laughed, an' said the forger was safe in the lock-up, but advised me tae wear ma ain claes after this. Wi' that he opened the shackles wi' a key an' ance mair I was mase' again. Fu' o' ma adventure, I flew hame tae ma boordin' hoose—but what was ma surprise tae find a' the boorders assembled in the dinin'-room an' the landlady greetin' an' roarin' oot that her hoose had been disgraced. The braw new lodger wha had sae generously lent me the grey suit was the vera forger I had been mista'en for. Noo, wha wad hae thocht it!

The excitement i' ma boordin'-hoose, hoovever, was na' a floo bite compared wi' the terrible steer an' commotion in oor warehooose the next mornin'. It was awfu'! Ye see, I had a wee bit bizness tae settle at the police court for assaultin' the police—although, as I telt the magistrate, it was them assaulted me, an' no me them. Weel, on account o' that, it was eleven o'clock i' the day afore I got doon tae the warehooose. As was nateral, I concluded they were handin' an indignation meetin' ower me bein' arested in sic an onlawfu' mainer, they were sae mony tongues gaun an' sic angry sounds comin' oot o' the office. I was just aboot stappin' in tae throw it on the troubled waters like, by tellin' them that I had been dismissed wi' a warrin' no' tae dae the like again, an' that the real forger was safe in government quarters, when I was stricken fairly dumb wi' the sight o' Tam—I mean Maister Tamson—comin' oot o' the office door, an' luckin' as if the warehooose had been a fire. He was in's sark sleeves, an' tryin' frantically to get his coat on, his pen instead o' bein' ahint his ear as usual was stickin' clean upright oot o' the croon o' his head! an' he was jubberin' awa in sic a high state o' excitement that he couldna see that the sleeve o' his coat was outside in, an' as for me he glowered clean ower ma head the same as though I wasna there. "Serves us right," he was sayin', "we condoned his political crimes, and instead of kicking him out then, we returned him to power with a large majority. Serves us right!"

I began to jalouse that it wasna me that a' the steer was aboot, for by the time he got him smuggled inside o' his coat, he rammed his hat doon ower his een an' gaed tairin' oot o' the warehooose door like a man possessed. I cam tae the conclusion that the bank had broken, or some o' his customers failed, an' offered him five cents on the dollar, for the condition o' the man's mind was awfu'. Sae I just tied on ma apron an' tuk ma broom i' ma hand an' slippit awa doon tae the basement. Gude sake! ye'd think the world had come till an end! There were a' the clerks, an' aboot a dozen country shopkeeper bodies, customers, a' gabblin' an' gabblin' like jucks roond a water pump. Sic another Babel, argyfein' an' jawin' an' lectirin' awa aboot the bill, an' the bill, an' the bill, till I thocht they had a' gaue him daft. It was naething but a confusion an' medley o' "Indians," "Pagans," "atrocious outrage," "Poundmaker voting," "no appeal from his decision," "liberty muzzled," "Old To-morrow," "Barristers," an' gude kous a'

what, but at length an' lang I managed tae find oot that it was a' aboot the new Franchise Bill. Noo, what I think aboot it is this: Folk may forgie ye for spendin' their siller, an' wink at a gude deal o' political sharp practices in the slump, but when it comes tae handin' folk ower individually to the tender mercies o' a lawyer to say whether or no they gaun tae vote, is anither maitter, a personal maitter in fact, an' a proposal that pre-supposes anything but a free an' independent speerit on the part o' the electors. Ma ain private opinion is that Sir John mann hae hatched oot this bill somewhere aboot the wee sma' hoors o' the mornin', when he had a drappie in his e'e, an' was dreamin' that he was the Czar o' Rooshia, an' Canadians a nation o' serfs.

Yer brither,
HUGH AIRLIE.



THE FRANCHISE ORGANIST.

SUCH IS LIFE.

AN AMERICAN DRAMA OF THE AFFECTIONS.

DRAMATIS PERSONE:—*Nathaniel Byles, a merchant; Jabez Johnson, his confidential clerk; Justus Mildew, a broker; Mrs. Selina Byles; Mrs. Marian Mildew; clerks, sympathetic friends, etc.*

ACT I.

SCENE: *Nathaniel Byles' private office. N. B. discovered writing. Clerk enters with letter.*
BYLES.—Ah! what have we here? (Opens letter.) From my Marian. (Reads:

DEAREST NAT,—I have made every arrangement for our journey. Expect me promptly at the place of meeting. Justus suspects nothing. Yours ever, MARIAN.

BYLES (loquitor).—All goes well. This will be a little surprise party for Mr. Justus Mildew. He little dreams that before the midnight hour his wife will have gone on a journey with yours truly. But what keeps Jabez? He has been an hour away. Ah! here he comes! (Enter Jabez Johnson with a look of alarm upon his features.)

BYLES.—What has happened? Why this look?

JABEZ.—Have you not heard the news? Mr. Justus Mildew—

BYLES.—What! Has he heard of Mrs. Mildew's—that is, I mean—has he befallen some accident?

JABEZ.—Worse than that to you, sir. He has—eloped with—your wife!! (Double-forte chords by the orchestra. Byles falls into his chair with a crash. Jabez rushes to his side.)

BYLES.—Eloped with—my—wife! The villain! To rob me of my darling Selina. Jabez, this is too much. Leave me to my miserable reflections. (Exit Jabez. Byles paces the stage excitedly.)

BYLES.—Fooled, and by Mildew! Curse him!! Just as I am about to relieve him of his wife he scoops me clean by taking mine. The trick is clearly his with honors. However, I must not appear to be indifferent. I will, therefore, as did the villain in the old melodramas, dissemble. (He kicks over several chairs, upsets a pile of books, and falls with a dull, sickening thud. Enter Jabez, and clerks from the outer office; they pick up their employer, and as the curtain descends form a mournful tableau round him.)

ACT II.

SCENE: *Sitting-room in Justus Mildew's residence. Mrs. Mildew is seen seated sorrow-stricken on sofa in centre of stage surrounded by a crowd of sympathizing female friends.*

MRS. MILDEW (amidst sympathetic murmurs).—Oh! (tears) Oh! Oh! (more tears) Faithless Justus! (sobs) Neglected! (more sobs) It will break my heart! (hysterics) What shall I do? (more hysterics) I wish I had never known him!! (More tears, sobs and hysterics. As the hysterics increase the sympathetic murmurs grow louder. Enter several with letter. Sudden lull. With a gigantic effort Mrs. Mildew opens it. Sympathetics retire to back of stage. Mrs. M. reads:

MY MARIAN.—We have been badly left, but be not discouraged. Carry out everything as arranged. Half-past ten, Chink's Corner. I am as of old, NAT.

MRS. MILDEW.—Ladies, (sympathetic advances) this letter has much refreshed me. It tells me where I can find my faithless husband. To-night I go in search of him. (Murmurs of admiration from the sympathetics as they gather around Mrs. Mildew, who poses as Victimous Indignation to the tune "Oat Come His Eyes When I Catch Him," by the orchestra.)

ACT III.

(Six months have supposed to elapse.)

SCENE: *The Promenade at Saltwaterville, a very quiet seaside resort. A blind man and two dogs discovered basking in the sun. Enter Mr. Nathaniel Byles with Mrs. Marian Mildew hanging upon his arm.*

BYLES.—Saltwaterville is delightful. We shall be unknown here.

MRS. MILDEW.—Yes, Nat, we are almost alone. (They seat themselves in centre of stage facing Prompt, and talk about the weather. Enter Justus Mildew and Mrs. Selina Byles, O. P.)

MRS. BYLES.—This is charming; so quiet and so lonely. We are almost alone, Justus.

MILDEW.—We have struck the very spot. (They seat themselves in centre of stage, facing O. P.)

BYLES.—I wonder who those behind us are?

MILDEW.—Who the deuce are the couple on the next seat anyway?

BYLES.—What if he should be Mildew!

MILDEW.—What if he should be Byles! (They turn around cautiously and look each other in the face.)

BYLES (bounding to his feet).—Mildew, by thunder!

MILDEW.—Yes, Mildew! What want you with him? (Strikes intensely dramatic pose.)

BYLES.—You stole my wife.

MILDEW.—And you got mine in exchange.

BYLES.—Your body shall find a resting-place for my bullets, sir! (Pulls out revolver.)

MILDEW.—Two can play at that game, sir! (Pulls out revolver. Mrs. B. and Mrs. M. utter piercing shrieks, and throw themselves upon the bosoms of their respective lawful husbands.)

MRS. MILDEW (looking deprecatingly at Byles).—You monster of a man! Hurt my Justus if