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**Pirates.** Many people will confess to a sneaking regard for the picturesque ruffian made familiar to lovers of comic opera in that production of Gilbert & Sullivan, known as "The Pirates of Penzance." The robber on the high seas who makes it his business to cruise for plunder is a much more desirable acquaintance than one who publishes the writings of other men without permission. We feel impelled to express our preference for the former kind of a pirate, because we have of late been annoyed by such petty pilfering from our poor pages.

**Old Age Pensions and Poetry.** One of the most recent utterances of the Colonial Secretary on the subject of Old Age Pensions, has begotten doubts of his earnestness upon the vital question of improving the condition of the aged and deserving poor.

No less than seven bills have been introduced at this session of the British House of Commons, by private members of parliament, dealing with the difficult problem of pensions, or making provision for insuring the old and helpless poor. However, when the matter became the subject of debate in the House on the 24th ult., Mr. Chamberlain's speech had so little of the ring of interest in the bills introduced as to inspire a poetical representative of the Old Aged Peasant to serenade the Colonial Secretary with the following touching lines:—

Joe Chamberlain, my Joe John,  
When we were first acquaint,  
Your voice was like a turtle dove,  
Your troth without a taint.

But now you're getting old, Joe,  
And getting cunning too,  
Yet still in all the world, Joe,  
There's nobody like you!

Joe Chamberlain, my Joe John,  
When you to me "proposed,"  
I took it for a promise then,  
And on your trust reposed.

But now I see it all, Joe,  
As it is only fit,  
And all you told me then, Joe,  
You did not mean a bit.

**The Banks and the Burglars.** It seems singular that the season of spring should be chosen as the one when, to be Gilbertian, "*the enterprising burglar is a-burgling, or maturing his felonious little plan.*" Yet so it is. It, therefore, behooves bankers to enquire into the state of their defences against the unwelcome visitor. It becomes a matter of the most serious nature if the profits of a branch bank for twelve months can be carried away in such summary fashion as that adopted by the modern burglar. The suggestion that the banks will be warranted in refusing to establish branches in any towns or districts not affording them proper protection is unworthy of serious attention. It is not likely that any community will provide special protection, or increase its police force, for the mere sake of guarding a bank. The defence and the remedy must be found by the bankers themselves, and, since it seems that the modern safe yields too readily to new explosives and clever cracksmen, it may be necessary to place reliance upon an armed guard selected from the staffs of the endangered institutions. The bank clerk of the period is usually alert, active and fond of adventure, and if he can add to his frequently much too slender salary by exposing himself to a meeting with a burglar, he will not be found wanting in the courage necessary to his somewhat unpleasant duty of guarding the bank. Some of the larger banks still adhere to the old custom of having one of the staff "on guard," and he proceeds to his post with all the regularity of the soldiers detailed to protect the Bank of England. The record of one large Canadian institution shows that the money expended on this special service has provided the bank with a much better system of protection than the mechanism of a new lock, or the perfunctory visits at very irregular periods of a patriarchal night watchman and a diminutive dog.

If the bankers desire to have the duty of guarding their treasures well performed, they must do it themselves. They have the right kind of men for such service, and money wherewith to pay them.