

## At the Sign of the Wooden Leg

By "Silas Wegg."

### The Filing-Clerk's Revenge.

[Synopsis of preceding chapters:—Roger Rearguard is a Canadian civil servant. His Retirement Fund accumulations amount to \$42.46. He has paid 27 monthly instalments on his \$1,200 brick-veneer house on Tenth avenue. He still owes \$1,342.50.]

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Art thou armed?"

It is none other than Roger Rearguard, the filing-clerk, who speaks, for it is he. Who then, you ask, is the lean, straggling man, not mentioned in the synopsis above, whom he addresses. It is none other than Alfred Mynx, the poet, for it is he.

"Armed to the teeth," replied Alfred, removing a tooth-pick from his mouth.

"It is well," rejoined Roger, "it is well,—as far as it goes. Hast thou no lethal weapons, however?"

Alfred unsheathed a fountain pen.

"None other?" queried the impatient Roger in his friendly gruelling way, for he had partaken of oatmeal that morning.

"I have a poem on Spring," began Alfred, noble Alfred, faithful though dull.

"Produce it," Roger exclaimed, and a fierce, expectant light glowed and gleamed and glittered in his otherwise gloomy eyes.

The faithful Alfred produced the poem from the depths of a large old-fashioned portmanteau in which he had it artfully concealed.

"Read it," whispered Roger, as the two desperate men withdrew into the deeper shadows behind the towel rack. They had become conscious of a hun-

dred pair of eyes fixed upon them from the seat in which the fair stenographer sat.

Alfred read in that tone of voice which the gentle ibex uses when, proud of its silken coat, it flees before the onrushing emu. (The Author employs this figure with some and with all due apologies, to Mr. Arthur Stringer.)

But to return to Alfred Mynx. He read, in dulcet, fearsome, ibex tones,—

"Softly the night advances;  
Slowly the day retreats;  
A star on the fir-tree dances;  
The street-cars run on the streets."

"Hold," cried Roger. "I must remove these tears from mine eyes." Thus is shown his ever-watchful cunning in getting behind the towel rack. "Is there more?" he inquired eagerly. The ibex tones were heard again,—

"This is the style of stanzas  
I make in the month of May,  
When softly the night advances,  
Eke slowly retreats the day."

Alfred restored the manuscript to his portmanteau with a proud look and his right hand. Roger remained for some ten minutes in deep thought. At last he broke silence, "eke the towel rack," as Alfred would say, for he leaned on none other support than that frail railing.

"Is it — is it copyrighted?" Roger inquired concerning the poem, for the towel rack was patented, which is another story, although coming under the same Department.

"It is," replied Alfred.

"Alas, we are undone," exclaimed