

began to melt, an' though three fire engines played on 'er at once, they co:ldn't git the fire under till there wasn't as much left of the pore old Vanguard as 'ud 'ave made a cookin' range or a perambulator. Then come the cream o' the holiday, which was walkin' 'ome to Stratford without a coat in a drizzle o' rain what come on to make things pleasanter, an' Emma 'anging to my arm, as 'eavy as a sack o' coal. "Remember, you've arsked me to 'ave you, George, an' I'm goin' to put the banns up," she says when I landed 'er at her mother's. It cost me eighteen an' six an' a new 'at to git another gal what works at my shop—Luce Rainey 'er name was—to go round to Emma's mother's an' say as wot I was already promised in marriage to 'er, an' then the donah wanted to stick to me after me payin' 'er to get me out of Emma's clutches.

I've never bin for a beano in a motor 'bus since then. But now I've 'eard as wot Barney 'ud give anything not to be married to Leah, an' as wot Leah 'ud fair kiss the boots of any bloke wot 'ud take Barney in for a swim an' sink 'im, I'm gettin' more reconciled. See?