

"As a consequence of this infamy, I withdraw all the country advertising from your paper. A man who could trifle in this manner with the feelings of a parent is a savage and a scoundrel!"

As the sheriff went out, Brimmer placed his head upon the table and groaned.

"Really," Mr. Ott reflected, "that person must be deranged. I tried, in his case, to put myself in his place, and to write as if I was one of the family, according to instructions. The verses are beautiful. That allusion to the grief of her aunt, particularly, seemed to me to be very happy. It expresses violent emotion with a felicitous combination of sweetness and force. These people have no soul—no appreciation of the beautiful art."

While the poet mused, hurried steps were heard upon the stairs, and in a moment a middle-aged man dashed in abruptly, and seizing Brimmer's scattered hair, bumped his prostrate head against the table three or four times with considerable force. Having expended the violence of his emotion in this manner, he held the editor's head down with one hand, shaking it occasionally by way of emphasis, and with the other hand seized the paper and said:

"You disgraceful old reprobate! You unsympathetic and disgusting vampire! You hoary-headed old ghoul! What d'you mean by putting such stuff as this in your vile sheet about my deceased son? What d'you mean by printing such awful doggerel as this, you depraved and dissolute ink slinger—you imbecile old quill-driver you:

"Oh! bury Bartholomew out in the woods,  
In a beautiful hole in the ground,  
Where the bumble-bees buzz and the woodpeckers sing,  
And the straddle-bugs tumble around;  
So that, in winter, when the snow and the slush  
Have covered his last little bed,  
His brother Artemas can go out with Jane  
And visit the place with his sled."

"I'll teach you to talk about straddle bugs! I'll instruct you about slush! I'll enlighten your insane old intellect on the subject of singing woodpeckers! What do *you* know about Jane and Artemas, you wretched buccaneer, you despicable butcher of the English language? Go out with a sled! I'll carry you out in a hearse before I'm done with you, you deplorable old lunatic!"

At the end of every phrase the visitor gave the editor's head a fresh knock against the table. When the exercise was ended Mr. Brimmer explained and apologized in the humblest manner, promising at the same time to give his assailant a chance to pommel Ott.

"The treachery of this man," murmured the poet, "is dreadful. Didn't he desire me to throw a glamour of poesy over common-place details? But for that I should never have thought of alluding to woodpeckers and bugs, and other children of Nature. The man objects to the remarks about the sled. Can the idiot know that it was necessary to have a rhyme for 'bed'? Can he suppose that I could write poetry without rhymes? The man is a lunatic! He ought not to be at large!"

Hardly had the indignant and energetic parent of Bartholomew departed when a man with red hair and a ferocious glare in his eyes entered, carrying a club and accompanied by a savage-looking dog.