

ACT I. THE PLOT.

SCENE I.—*The Studio.*

*Enter* RAPHAEL GAMBOGE, *excitedly holding a newspaper in his hand.*

*Gamboge.* I don't mind the fellow making an infernal fool of himself as long as some other idiot can be found to pay him twenty dollars a column for it, but I wish to heaven he would make an ass of himself on some other subject than Art! Was ever such a lot of rubbish palmed off on an unsuspecting public! [*Reads.*] "There is an indefinable something which steals upon the beholder, a lack of symphonic treatment, so to speak—a subtle idea—er—er—that is to say—aw—he—in fact he does not grasp his subject boldly, and there is a lack of a sense of vacancy about his sky, as it were, that seems to express, clumsy handling—Ah—h—h! The Old Masters! They were the glorious fellows." D—n the Old Masters! If I had this ill-conditioned mule in the open air, I'd let him know pretty precious quick if I could not handle a subject boldly and give him such a sense of vacancy, regarding the sky, as would send him home on a shutter!

*Enter* MODDLE.

*Moddle.* Halloo, Gam, how *is* things? Somehow you don't look happy! Oh, ah, you've been reading the Fog Whistle, have