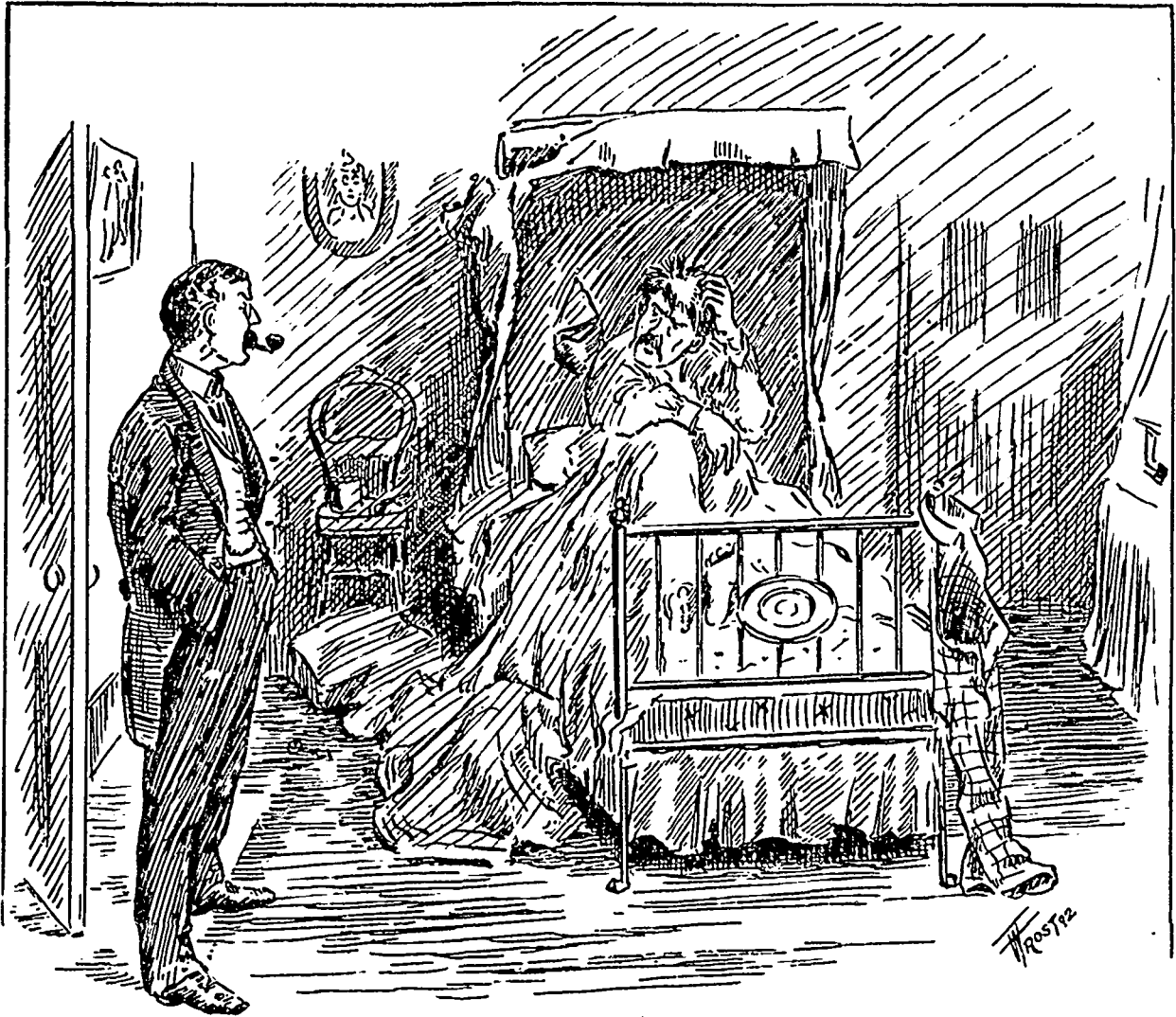




Nightmare and Night Dog.

BROWN—"Hello! Jones, my boy, what's the matter? You look as though you had had the nightmare."

JONES—"Nightmare be hanged! It was the night dog that 'murdered sleep.' Macbeth was not in it!"

CHARACTER SKETCHES.

No. 5.—OUR OLD MAID.

Old maids, for the most part, seem to be considered a fair target for satire,—in these days at least,—for there is scarcely a modern author, who has not more than once, held them up to ridicule or dislike. Sometimes we are made to laugh over her juvenile airs, in the unsuccessful efforts she puts forth to change her condition, while on other occasions our anger is raised at the spiteful dog-in-the-manger jealousy she exhibits against matrimony. How is it that the great master artist Shakespeare has handed us down no old maid among his portraits? Widows and old bachelors he has given us, but the old maid is, as far as we remember, missing from his picture gallery, so we must conclude that she is the offspring of our modern society. Whatever be the cause however, here she is, and so we will say a few words about her.

Our Old Maid is after all seldom very

ancient, indeed were she married, she would probably be considered as hardly beyond her prime, therefore why should we sneer at her for trying to look a trifle younger than she is? Tomkyns observes that if you were to pull her to pieces you would find nothing beyond skin and bones, but Tomkyns is naturally coarse, and we never discovered that there was much under his waistcoat. A dog—as a rule a fat dog usually follows our Old Maid and we fear he is about the only toady she has. She will tell you that Fido is ever faithful; then perhaps a little sigh follows and we scoff at the inference that some one was once faithless. Nevertheless it is possible she was a blooming lass several years ago, and though you shrug your shoulders, we have known such cases, when our Old Maid has borne her trial uncomplaining "never told her love," and if her damask cheek is not so bright as that of her sister, who has a husband's arm round her and children at her knee, it is hard-

ly generous to be always flinging sarcasm at the unsuccessful. All of which goes to prove, that there is the pathetic side to our Old Maid, and we should take off our hats to the sprightly, though may be exaggerated, youthful air with which she covers up the wound, reminding us of the cloak, that the Spartan lad wore over the fox, which was gnawing him. We have been acquainted with many thoroughly unselfish old maids, who have helped the needy when they themselves could ill spare the gift, in fact of the two our Old Maid is seldom as selfish as our Old Bachelor, but the latter must form the subject of another sketch, meanwhile we will bid adieu to our Old Maid—whether of a certain or an uncertain age—with a kindly smile for her troubles, which probably are but skin deep, and do not interfere with the warm heart beneath, which has not become hardened and cynical in its contact with the world. Can we of the other sex say as much?