

"The horrid old wretch. I am sure I was neither a snake nor an eel: was I, Eldon? I hate both."

"Oh, no, my dear," I replied. "But Tom, that surely is only an *obiter dictum*, not a decision of that worthy judge."

"Of course," replied Jones; "but all the dicta of judges are entitled to weight." Tom had just been called to the bar.

"It is time that you two horrid creatures left here," said Mrs L.

"Well, suppose we start. Mind, dear, to tell the man to be sure to meet us, two hours from now, at Mrs Smith's."

"Is your life insured against accidents, Mr Jones?" asked my wife. "You are sure to be run away with and upset."

"Only against railway accidents," he said.

"That's stupid," I remarked, "for it is well settled that hardly seven per cent. of accidental claims arise from accidents in travelling by rail or water, while those arising from horse or carriage injuries exceed in number those from all other causes combined."

"A pleasant idea wherewith to start for an afternoon's drive," quoth Tom.

Off we went, followed by the best wishes of my loving and lovely spouse. Scarce had our feet touched the sidewalk when, with the exclamation "Get out you rascallion!" Jones executed a *pas*