

Dramatic sketches of the new Poor Law, as administered by guardians, or, reality and fiction identified / By a surgeon [E.S.D. Groves].

Contributors

Surgeon.
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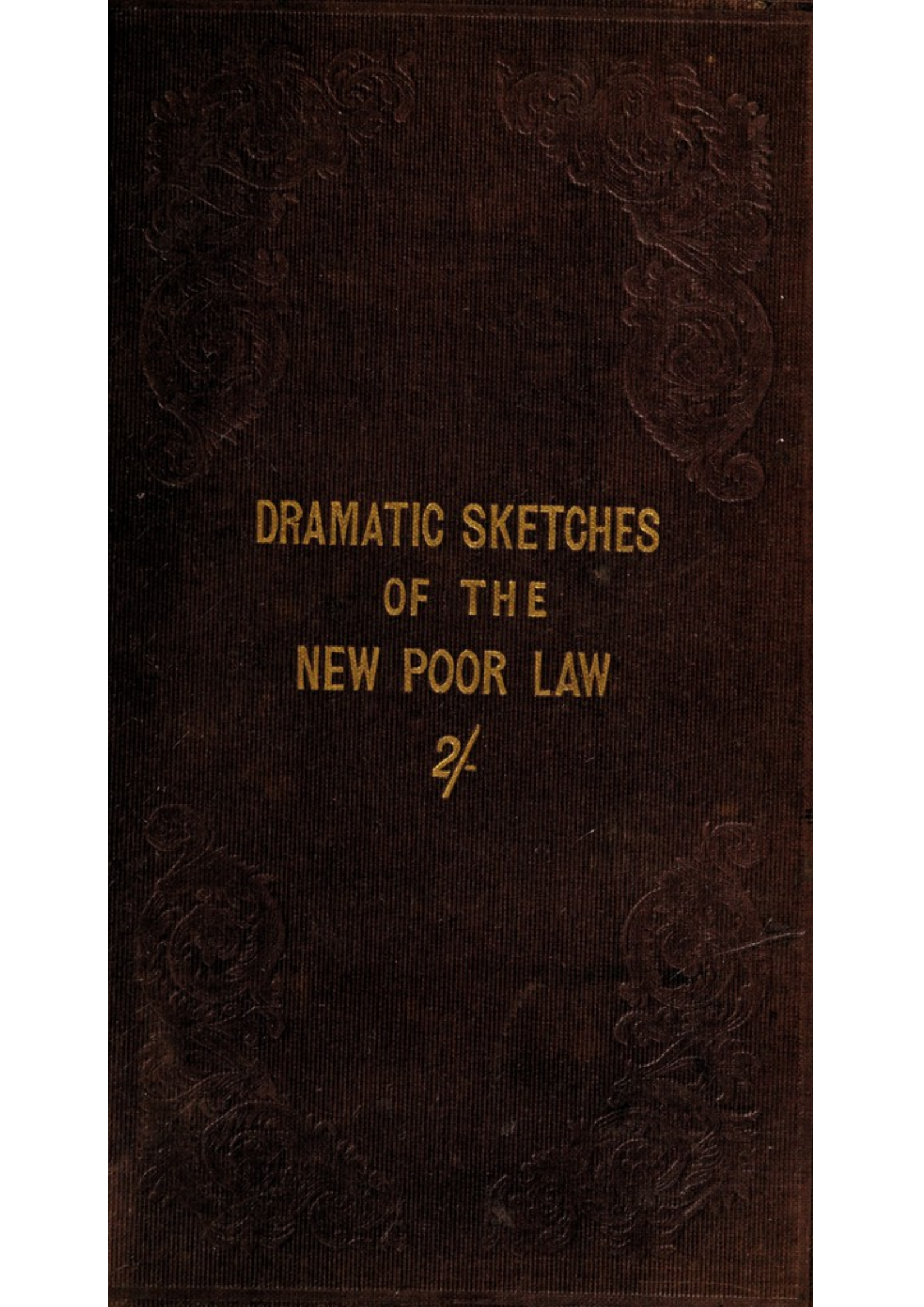
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DRAMATIC SKETCHES
OF THE
NEW POOR LAW

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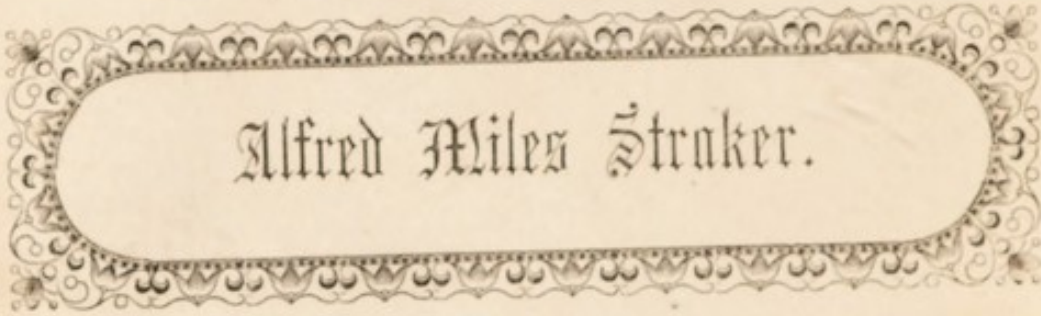
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(GROVES E.S.D.)




Alfred Miles Straker.

3/6

Presented to Mr. Alfred Sturges
with the author's
best wishes for

Oct 16th 1857 E. D. Hoove



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DRAMATIC SKETCHES

OF THE

NEW POOR LAW,

AS

Administered by Guardians,

OR

REALITY AND FICTION IDENTIFIED.

BY A SURGEON.

“ Romance to what is real is so allied,
That now the diff'rence we can scarce decide.”

LONDON :

J. DARKIN, 3, CLOUDESLEY STREET, ISLINGTON.

1845.

Dedication.



OMNIBVS CHIRVRGIS,

SVB PAVPERIANÆ LEGIS DELEGATIONE

OFFICIVM AGENTIBVS,

HOC OPVS

DICATVR.

P R E F A C E .

“Panditur interea domus Omnipotentis Olympi.”

THE author of the following pages has devoted a portion of his many unemployed hours to the elucidation of what, in itself, partakes largely of the mysterious; and he has resorted to no more fiction than seemed necessary for the interests of truth. His first appearance as an author entitles him to be protected from all severity of criticism; and should any persons feel disposed to quarrel with his verse, grammar, or the mode in which he has ventured to illustrate the several incidents, he would recommend them to consult their own resources. He has given fictitious names to some of the characters, but he has not thought proper to adhere to them invariably; whilst, to assist such as may be ignorant of the facts, which the Sketches are intended to represent, he has furnished an Appendix.

Lastly, with respect to the ill-treatment which many of the Sketches are designed to expose, in connection with the misrule of Guardians, he may sum up his own experience by borrowing the language of the immortal poet:—

Use.
 —————“ Quæque insa miserrima vidi,
 Et quorum pars magna fui.—Quis talia fando,
 Temperet a *Satyris* ?”

which, adapted to the present case, may be thus conveniently translated :

“ Her keenest indignation Justice owns,
 And gives a voice to inorganic stones. ” *

* “ *Lapides clamabunt.*”

Dramatis Personæ.

DOMINUS, The Chairman of the Board.

ECCLESIASTICUS, }
ARISTOCRATICUS, } Ex-Officio Guardians.
AMPHIBIUS, }

SACCHARINUS, }
COLONUS, } Guardians.
VOLUPTARIUS, }
TACITURNUS, }
VITULINUS, }

OMNES, The Guardians generally.

SANGUINEUS, Clerk to the Board.

DOCTORS,—RELIEVING OFFICERS,—OVERSEERS,

MASTER OF THE WORKHOUSE,—NURSE OF THE SAME,—

PAUPERS, &c., make up the Category of Persons represented.

DRAMATIC SKETCHES
OF THE
NEW POOR LAW,
AS ADMINISTERED BY GUARDIANS.

SKETCH I.*

SCENE, IN THE BOARD ROOM.

The Guardians are assembled, and DOMINUS proceeds to tell them that it is necessary to elect a Chairman for the year ensuing, his term of office having expired.

Dom.—Now, Gentlemen, you're all assembled here,
'Tis meet t'appoint some person to the chair.
Far be't from me to swell my own desert,
Or from a legal point your minds divert.
Remember what you do 'ere you decide,
And know your horse, before you seek to ride.
See to it, then, and let your choice declare
The wisdom us'd in filling up the chair ;
Give me no special preference,—but mind
The loss you'll feel, if I am left behind.

* The reader is respectfully requested to consult the Appendix previous to reading the Sketches respectively.

Col.—I rise a proposition to submit,
 Tho' for the purpose I am scarcely fit ;
 We all are well aware how much we feel
 Indebted to the former chairman's zeal.
 Such energy—such talent—we must own,
 Can, doubtless, emanate from him alone.
 What Mondays should we see, were he away !
 Our business surely would outlast each day !
 But in his able hands an hour or two,
 Suffices for the work which we've to do.
 So let me ask your pref'rence in his cause,
 And I will close my eloquentless jaws.

Sacch.—The proposition of our friend, 'tis clear,
 Requires no kind of advocacy here.
 It proves itself, that he who held the post,
 Of all of us, deserving is the most.
 Experience, too, a salutary guide,
 Attests the fact—there's none like him beside.
 I've been in business for many years ;
 Have known its hopes, its doubts, *but not its fears* ;
 I've seen the importance of his happy tact ;
 Can prove my statement, and affirm the fact.
 So let us not his merits now forsake,
 The main-link of the Union nor break.*

* The business of the Union was supposed to sleep in the absence of DOMINUS.

United in our hands, our hearts, and voice,
We'll fix upon him as our welcom'd choice !

Omnes.—Most sapient speech ! unanimous we raise
Our voices to accord his wonted praise !

Then, turning to DOMINUS,

Possess the chair ! 'tis certainly not fit
That one of us in such a place should sit ;
Dispense the laws ! and scruple not to strain
A point, when e'er you think we're sure to gain.
We'll meet you ev'ry Monday, and support
What e'er is said by you, or done, or thought !

Dom.—Elected by unanimous consent,
I haste my heartfelt gratitude to vent ;
I'm pleased to find my object is secur'd,
For all the pain and trouble I've endur'd ;
I enter on my office once again,
And trust my usual merits to maintain.

SKETCH II.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

The Guardians are requested to attend to a letter from the Poor Law Commissioners, respecting the state, &c. of the Workhouse, &c., which the DOCTOR had characterized as defective, and reported as such to the Commissioners.

Dom.—Now, Gentlemen, the *Dons** in London send
To ascertain the sums we weekly spend ;
How much in Out-Relief we give away,
And who they are whom we compel to pay.†
Then as to Workhouse matters ! why, I find
The Doctor has reveal'd his inmost mind !
The Workhouse was primevally design'd
Room for, at least, three hundred poor to find :
His calculation is one third below
The numbers which the builder's papers shew.
And how he made a blunder so absurd
I can't explain,—but move that he be heard !

* The Commissioners, of course, are here alluded to.

† This necessarily alludes to *loaning*, the most *execrable* part of the New Poor Law, and still more *execrable* in the hands of Guardians.

Omnes.—With your opinion, Chairman, we accord,
Then quickly summon him t'attend the board.
If he can justify his statements,—well—
If not! the fellow we will soon expel!*

[*Enter the Doctor, who has been previously summoned.*]

Dom.—Now take a seat, Sir, and to me attend,
Nor think I personate the foe—but friend.
We're very much surpris'd at your report;
The house was faultless, as we fondly thought;
But in your letter to the Dons we find,
Perfection leaves it many miles behind.
Your estimate's so very strange, it seems
You must have been indebted to your dreams!
We all feel very anxious, then, to know
Why your assessment is so very low?

Doctor.—Since I have serv'd in Med'cine's Godly
cause,
I've kept with great fidelity her laws;
My calculations have been made with care,
Tho' doubtless you are all dispos'd to stare.

* See Sketch V. or the "Advertising Sketch," which shews how they sought to eject the Doctor causelessly.

By cubic measure was the survey made,
 And to each pauper's rights attention paid :
 Statistics give so many feet to each,
 (Such as our Esculapian records teach) ;
 My calculations, with this common guide,
 Are to the fraction of an inch allied,
 And tho' I question not the builder's art,
 I cannot from my statement now depart.
 That health may be promoted in this place,
 We must allot to each a certain space :
 Nine feet in length, and nine feet in the height,
 With four feet breadth, is nothing more than right.
 The rooms I've measur'd, will most clearly shew
 That I'm *above* the standard—not below.

Dom.—Well, well! the point which we will next
 debate

Concerns the aged in a helpless state :
 Where would you put these people ? where dispose
 Of such as by their stench disgust the nose ?

Doctor.—An Out-house should be built! in such
 a case

How opportune would be a sep'rate place !
 The wards in which these hapless creatures lie
 Disgust the senses of the passers-by ;
 And well 'twould be, could we effect a change,
 And what is so expedient arrange !

Dom.—Well—much as it may seem you state the
fact,

We cannot yet regard it as exact.

The question, ne'ertheless, we must postpone,

And settle matters when we're *all alone*.*

* This alludes to their *secrecy*, the most prominent feature
in their character as Guardians.

SKETCH III.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

An Overseer attends to explain the cause of his having failed to procure an Order for the maintenance of an aged Man by his Son.

Dom.—Now, Gentlemen, the next material case
Which our deliberations should embrace,
Concerns an Overseer, whose wooden skull,
Without a doubt, hath made his mission null.
You're well aware how much we all require
That ev'ry son should help to keep his sire ;
To prosecute so worthy an intent,
This Overseer to London's town was sent.
'Tis true, he summon'd the ungodly son,
And thought the victory already won ;
But when the magistrate one question ask'd,
The blunder of the bus'ness was unmask'd ;
This Overseer could bring no solemn proof,
How 'twas the father liv'd within this roof,
And thus the case was lost !—so I insist
That he th' expences pay, or be dismiss'd !

Omnes.—Perhaps the Overseer would like to say
A word or two before he's forc'd to pay :

There may be something to extenuate
The blunder of his wooden-vaulted pate!

[*Enter OVERSEER, who has been summoned.*]

Dom.—Well, Mister Overseer, what have you done
With this undutiful and heartless son?
Have you an order got for him to pay
Something to keep alive his father's clay?
We'll hear you very patiently, but mind—
The truth to tell, and nothing leave behind.

Overseer.—Why, Gentlemen, I grieve the tale to
tell—

I manag'd not my bus'ness very well;
The London magistrate desir'd to know
How 'twas to work the father did not go.
At this I stumbled—and gave up for lost
The object which so much fatigue had cost!

Dom. (with much warmth).—You may retire,—in
twenty minutes hence

We'll let you know the total of expence!
Your place is yours if you will pay the score,
If not,—you're Parish Overseer no more!*

* The reader will have no difficulty in supposing that the countenance of DOMINUS, during the utterance of these lines, bore a very *terrific* expression, and the *barnacles* he wore but contributed to heighten this expression. The OVERSEER also wore *barnacles*—so that in this respect the two antagonists were well matched.

Overseer.—I'll pay the money rather than resign
 The situation into hands like thine.
 My family is large, I want the cash,
 Or otherwise I'd freely bear the lash.
 Your sentence is illegally severe,
 And presses hard upon an Overseer.

[*Exit OVERSEER, soliloquizing—now alluding to
 the Board generally—now to DOMINUS individually.*

Caprice, injustice, order all your works,
 And stamp you with a baser name than Turks.
 Why should the many pander to the few,
 And sacrifice their guardian rights to you?
 Mighty thou art! and mighty thou'lt remain,
 Until a stronger shall the conquest gain.
 A day will come when ancestral pride
 Shall sink beneath the swell of Reason's tide,—
 When titles—honors—and all earthly boast
 Must search for greatness in a distant coast;
 Then will you know—when p'rhaps 'twill be too late,
 That goodness only helps us to be great.*

* These lines admit of a *general* application, as the Board Rooms of Guardians form only a fractional part of those National Institutions, in which injustice is too obviously to be found the *rule* rather than the *exception*. Whatever of *republicanism* they breathe is best known to the author.

REFLECTIONS.

So this poor man was mulct'd in all th' expense,
Nor had a word to offer in defence.
Not so another of this Parish tribe,
Who loves to smoke, and heavy wet imbibe :—
He went in search of some ungodly chap,
Who left his family without a *rap* ;
Then at a public-house his pipe he sought,
Leaving the rogue by others to be caught ;
But, 'ere his pipe was out, the rogue got scent,
And to a distant town *instanter* went :
And though this mission so ignobly fail'd,
His pocket, ne'ertheless, was not impal'd.

SKETCH IV.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

DOMINUS is highly indignant that the RELIEVING OFFICER has charged a certain parish with a certain pauper—the said parish being the one represented by DOMINUS as Guardian. The purport of the Sketch, however, will be better culled by reference to Appendix.

[*Enter RELIEVING OFFICER.*]

Dom.—Relieving Officer, what is the case
In which the parish charg'd is out of place?
How know you where the settlement was gain'd?
I cannot comprehend!—'t must be explain'd!

Rel. Officer.—Why, Gentlemen, I saw the man
last week,
And ascertain'd, forsooth, he could not speak;
The evidence, I fondly thought t' obtain,
Was not enough to satisfy my brain.
The parish I have enter'd was declar'd
The one in which his settlement was rear'd.

Dom.—Who told you that the aged man was ill,
And stood in need of some physician's skill?

Now, state the fact, for I am much annoy'd
 To find so little care has been employ'd.
 The man is dead! and they will have to pay
 To whom you've charg'd him in your books to-day!

Rel. Officer.—The Doctor in a hurry was requir'd,
 And could not get the *order** as desir'd—
 But told me of the case without delay,
 And I officially appear'd next day.

Dom.—The Doctor told you of this pauper's case!
 Then, like the parish, you are out of place!
 And out of pocket too!—I'll make you pay
 For doing bus'ness in this stupid way!

To the Guardians.

Now, Gentlemen, respectfully I move,—
 Since conduct such as this I can't approve,—
 That for the blunder he disburse th' expense;
 It may instruct him to employ more sense.

Omnes.—We've nought to say—you're always in
 the right,—
 To serve your wishes is our sole delight.
 Then let the fellow pay—he'll better know
 When he's to keep away—and when to go.

* A *farfical* form for the supply of medical relief to the poor.

Dom. (to Relieving Officer.)

Relieving Officer,—’tis our decree
That you directly pay the Doctor’s fee*
We will not suffer such presumption here—
Who dares with our arrangements interfere,
We’ll mulct in penalties the most severe !!

[*Exit* RELIEVING OFFICER.]

* The Relieving Officer called upon the Doctor and offered him the money, but the latter indignantly refused to accept it, thereby receiving nothing whatever for his attendance upon the old man, although he saw him every day for eight days.—
See the Appendix.

SKETCH V.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART I.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

The Guardians are assembled, and proceed to consider the question of providing Medical Attendance for the Poor during the year ensuing.

Dom.—Well, Gentlemen, 'tis time we should prepare

For such as may be indisposed next year.

Our Surgeons verily their charge fulfil,

And well attend the paupers who are ill.

What need of change?—But stay! a thought occurs—

There's *one* of them too oft *commotion* stirs!!!

What shall we do? what stratagem devise?—

Shall we continue him,—or advertise?

He does not work with us, but stands aloof,

And sadly plagues the master of this roof!*

* DOMINUS measured the incompetency of the Doctor according to his reluctance to join the Guardians in their oppressive treatment of the poor, whilst the Master's services were rather those of a *slave*.—See *Sketch VI*.

I think 'tis right he certainly should know
That all his projects we can overthrow !

Eccles.—I don't approve of such a course as
this !—

If he's done anything that's deem'd amiss,
Why,—have him in, and to his face explain
The cause for which you cannot him retain.

[*A Guardian touches his arm, announcing the real object
contemplated in advertising.*]

Indeed !—then silent I shall now remain,
And yield the point I fondly hop'd to gain.

Aside.] I trust you'll be successful in your scheme,
And let him know his masters are supreme.*

Dom.—I'm pleas'd to find his Rev'ence hath re-
vok'd

The words he utter'd e're his arm was *poked* !
We're all agreed !—two papers shall disclose
The awful doom which we reserve for foes !

[*He then turns to the Clerk, SANGUINEUS.*]

So, Clerk, let *Chronicle* and *Standard* tell
That we intend our Doctor to expel :
State terms—and all particulars, in short,
Lest we should find we've advertis'd for nought.

* The speaker's countenance is necessarily supposed to be expressive of a *jeer* during the utterance of these lines.

PART II.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

The Election is postponed.

Dom.—Well, Gents, our number is but small to-day,
 I fear th' election we must needs delay ;
 Doubtless it is so very grave a case
 That ev'ry Guardian should be in his place.
 But well I know how precious is the time,
 When corn is hast'ning to its latest prime.
 Suppose we send a summons all around,—
 Our complement will surely then be found !

Sacch.—To such proposal I, for one, accede,
 And willingly adopt the Chairman's *Creed*.

Omnes.—We offer no objection to the plan,—
Aside.] But doubt if we shall get a better man.

Dom. (to the Clerk.)

Has Surgeon G——been here? Now tell us, Clerk,
 And don't, I pray you, keep us in the dark.

Sang.—I saw the Surgeon some few moments back,
 He ask'd me if you'd given him the *sack* !

[*Much laughter.*]

Dom.—Indeed! Well, well! next Monday will
decide.

If District One we to his care confide.

To the Clerk.

So write, and say we wish them to attend,
That we may bring this bus'ness to an end.

PART III.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

The Election is proceeded with.

Dom.—Well, Gentlemen, our number is complete:
It gives me pleasure such a *host* to meet.
With much sincerity I thank you all
For having listened to the lawyer's call.

To the Clerk.

Well, Sir, what candidates are in the field,
Who for the situation have appeal'd?

Sang.—The number's three : I have not heard of
 more,
 Although I reckon'd we should have a score !

[*Laughter.*

Dom.—Now, Gents, each candidate must be
 propos'd,

Before this weighty business can be clos'd.
 I shall not move—since it would be absurd
 That, at the first, the Chairman should be heard.

Eccles.—With joy ineffable I now arise !
 And such an avocation* greatly prize !
 I name the Surgeon who hath serv'd so well—
 And seek the ire of all his foes to quell.
 No personal distinctions should there be :—
 Our object's not to differ,—but agree.

Aristoc.—I second all his Rev'ence hath express'd,
 And of the three, I like his man the best !
 Unflinchingly will I his cause maintain,
 In hopes that he may in his post remain !

Dom. (to the Clerk.)

Now, to your bus'ness, Clerk ! sound—sound the
 lot.—

And ascertain the votes this *chap* has got.

* The speaker's attendance at the Board is his *avocation* from clerical duties.

If he's successful,—why, I *must* rejoice,
Although against him I essay'd my voice.*

Sang. counts, and then reports.

I've added up the votes, and gladly find
He's left the others many grades behind.
A large majority are on his side,
And in his place he surely must abide.

Dom.—I'm glad our labours are thus far complete,
And haste the lucky candidate to greet.
If 'tis your pleasure, I will ring the bell,—
Such joyful tidings I'm athirst to tell.

Omnes.—By all means have him in! He's got
the day!
And we're prevented turning him away! †

Doctor sent for, who enters.

Dom.—Good morning, Sir! My duty 'tis to state
That you're declar'd the chosen candidate.
So keep your place:—my hearty wishes tend
That you may *certain* sentiments amend. ‡

* These lines are intended to exhibit the apostacy of DOMINUS, he having been loud in his declamations against the DOCTOR.

† This line refers to such as opposed the DOCTOR, simply because they had no warranty for such opposition.

‡ The DOCTOR would not swallow their *humble pie*.

We are your masters, and you should contrive
Our old opinion of you to revive.

We seek submission from the Union *slaves*,
And mark attentively how each behaves !
So take especial care, lest you offend,
And lose your situation in the end !

Doctor.—I'm much oblig'd for all that you have
done,

And hail with joy the victory that's won !
My course is clear :—I'll do my duty well,
Aside] And try to break this *oligarchic* spell.*

Dom.—We'll overlook your faults—they're not a
few ;

So take a friendly hint—adieu ! adieu !

* This points to the *powerful* few, as contrasted with the
supine *many* ; DOMINUS, with SACCHARINUS and COLONUS,
forming a species of triumvirate.

SKETCH VI.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

The MASTER of the Workhouse complains that the NURSE did not classify a certain Sick Pauper according to the wishes of himself and his Wife the MATRON, and the DOCTOR is lugged in for his share of the onus, which generally was a very large one, and tested his breadth of shoulder.

Enter the MASTER, or GOVERNOR.

Dom.—Now, Governor, what have you got to say?—

Speak quickly, for we cannot brook delay.

Master.—Why, Gentlemen, the Doctor-Surgeon,*
Nurse,

Have both conspir'd myself and wife to curse.

I'm master of the house, and can't conceal

What 'tis my bounden duty to reveal.

Tho' copious tears flow from my abject eyes,†

I cannot now the sober truth disguise.

* A mode of speaking peculiar to the character.

† The speaker was addicted to the habit of *crying* when before the Guardians.

My first complaint shall be against the Nurse,
 Whose foul transgressions I must needs rehearse.
 The sick complain, and not without a cause,
 That they can get no med'cine for their jaws :
 She's too familiar with the Doctor, too,
 As I can prove, if ordered so to do.
 Myself and Matron she will not regard,
 (A trial which, we think, is very hard,)
 And when our views we ask her to embrace,
 She looks *askew*, and laughs us in the face !

Dom.—Well, certainly, you're master of the place,
 And ought to have your will in every case :
 We cannot sanction such rebellion here,—
 So let the Nurse before the Board appear.
 But 'ere she comes, you'll state some special fact,
 That our impressions may be more exact :
 Now, make some formal charge,—define it close,—
 And we will give her a *tremendous* dose !*

Master.—Last week a woman was admitted here,
 Whose sickly looks occasion'd us much fear ;
 Myself and Matron thought she'd better dwell
 Where she would cause no nuisance by her smell.
 The Nurse, howe'er, refus'd to give consent,
 And treated with disdain our good intent ;

* DOMINUS was very severe in his use of the *lash*.

Then plac'd her in the aged women's ward,
And left us to arrange it with the Board.

Dom.—I understand—and shortly will declare
How far the Nurse should exercise her care ;
The case you've represented clearly shews
How little of her present place she knows.
The Visiting Committee, too, believe
That she is apt her *betters* to deceive.*

[*Exit MASTER.*

To the Guardians.

If this is then the case, why not dispose
Of one who such confirm'd resistance shews ?
'Tis possible we may another find
Who'll be more suited to the Master's mind.

[*Enter the NURSE, who has been previously summoned.*]

Dom.—Sit down, Nurse, and attend to what I say,
The Master of the house 'tis yours t' obey :
He's Master over all—the Doctor, too,
Is under his control, as well as you.†

* SACCHARINUS generally was Principal of this committee, and *secretly* fomented much of the mis-understanding which prevailed amongst the officers of the Workhouse.

† This alludes to the opinion which he (DOMINUS) had openly expressed : viz.—that the Master was, officially, above the Surgeon.

(You've read, I dare say, in some ancient books,
That broth is spoilt by having many cooks.)
This morning, he avers, that you declin'd
To classify the paupers to his mind :—
Now did you his authority despise,
And suffer angry feelings to arise ?
State what you know—and mind the truth to tell,
For we're surpris'd that you should thus rebel.

Nurse.—I'm at a loss to know what he can mean
By introducing me to such a scene.
I've done my duty, and could prove the same,
Although, perhaps, your anger 'twould inflame.*
I plac'd the woman where I thought it best,
And little dreamt, forsooth, that I transgress'd.
She's very dirty, and emits a stench
Which baffles every antidote to quench.
This is the reason, then, I now assign
For having subjected his will to mine.
The Doctor, too, confirm'd the course I took,
And said he'd represent it in his book.

Dom.—Indeed ! the Doctor then espous'd your cause,
And dar'd to break our peremptory† laws !

* The Guardians were never content to believe that the speaker was an able and conscientious servant.

† This has reference to the *despotic* character of the Guardians, particularly of *DOMINUS and Co.*

We'll teach him thus our orders to despise—
Aside] And once again his office *advertise*!
 Now you may go your way :—and mark the end
 Of such as dare our DIGNITY OFFEND !

[*Exit NURSE.—the DOCTOR is summoned.*

Dom.—Well, Gents, these House disputes I don't
 approve,
 And gladly would the cause of them remove.
 The Master, it would seem, has clearly shewn
 That his authority they fail to own ;
 The Doctor and the Nurse have both combin'd
 To thwart the wishes of the Master's mind.
 Unless we use some forcible restraint,
 We must repeatedly expect complaint :
 I therefore move that Doctor G—— be heard,
 To know how this anomaly occur'd !

Omnes.—Most certainly ! The wish is that of all :
 Then let the Chairman on the Doctor call.

Sacch.—We blame him much : for nothing can be
 worse
 Than harbouring so villainous a Nurse !!*

* Through the influence of Saccharinus, the Nurse was ultimately dismissed, without any cause being assigned for the same.

[*Enter the Doctor.*]

Dom.—Well, Sir, what reason have you to assign
 Why with the Nurse you venture to combine ;
 The Master of the House is much annoy'd
 That you have rendered all his efforts void ;
 And rather than support him in his scheme,
 Have rashly joined the *opposite extreme*.^{*}
 A certain pauper, who was very ill,
 And sought, 'mongst other things, the Surgeon's
 skill,
 Though deem'd in character a worthless bawd,
 Was plac'd within the aged women's ward.
 Now we request that you will shortly state
 What tempted you our laws to violate ;
 The Master, doubtless, order'd for the best,
 Nor was it yours his wishes to molest.

Doctor.—You seem to be concern'd about this
 case,
 And think that I misunderstood my place !
 What could I better do with such a wench
 Than place her in the ward reserv'd for stench ?†

* The Master was the generalissimo of the workhouse—the Nurse was the lowest subaltern. The Doctor therefore joined the weaker side, which gave great offence to DOMINUS. In this course the Doctor only did his duty.

† A general laugh excited amongst the Guardians.

The two old women could receive no harm,
Nor offer ground for such absurd alarm.
In what was done, the Nurse arranged it well,
By *concentrating* such a loathsome smell!

[*Exit DOCTOR, amidst roars of laughter.*]

Dom.—Well, Gentlemen, I'm puzzled to invent
A remedy for all this discontent.
The Master's so obedient to our laws,
We needs must advocate his weaken'd cause ;
And if the Nurse refuses to submit,
We'll give her *notice*, by and bye, to quit.*

* This is somewhat *prophetic*.—See *Appendix*.

SKETCH VII.

PART I.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

A Female Pauper complains that the DOCTOR refused to give her a certain plaister for her breast, &c.—The Guardians are assembled.

[*Enter the PAUPER.*]

Dom.—Well, now, young woman, what is your request?

Speak quickly!—for with bus'ness we're oppress'd.

Pauper.—May't please you, Gentlemen, I'm far from well,

Sometimes my body is dispos'd to swell!

My breast is bad—my gen'ral health's impair'd,

Although the contrary has been declar'd.*

I want a plaister for my troubled breast,

As through the night with pain I'm sore distress'd.

* The Doctor had distantly hinted to her that her breast was diseaseless, and that she was rather "too healthy" than defective in so precious a commodity.

I ask'd the Doctor, but he has declin'd
 To give me med'cine suited to my mind ;
 And says, that if a plaister I desire,
 I must at such Dispensary inquire,
 Where I have hitherto been under care
 For nigh a period of half-a-year.*

Dom.—Well, well! we'll grant the favour which
 you ask,

And bring this Doctor certainly *to task* : †
 If you are right, and he is in the wrong,
 We'll teach the duties that to him belong.

[*Exit* PAUPER.]

To the Guardians.

Well, Gentlemen, I cannot comprehend
 Why such a case our Doctor don't attend!
 The girl's assertion must be entertain'd
 Until the Doctor has himself explain'd.‡

* The girl had been trifling with the medical authorities of a dispensary for six months, 'ere her entrance into the work-house.

† The speaker is necessarily supposed to be enjoying *secret* satisfaction at the prospect of having to reprimand the Doctor—the line expresses that satisfaction.

‡ In this Sketch they are represented as calling upon the Doctor for an explanation, and so far were commendable; but, in Sketch VIII. they altogether omitted this *necessary* and *legal* duty.

I think we'd better write—until next week—
When we shall have more time to hear him speak.

Omnes.—Send for him now, or write, if it should
please

Our Chairman to consult his noble ease!
Our time's exhausted: p'rhaps we'd better wait
Till Monday next, since now 'tis very late.

Dom. (to the Clerk.)

Now, Sir, take up your paper, ink, and pen,
And tell the Doctor what you've heard and seen;
How that the girl no plaister has receiv'd,
And how she feels herself to be aggriev'd.

PART II.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

The Doctor's reply, &c.

Dom. (to the Clerk.)

Now, Clerk, the minutes read of Monday last,
That we may be inform'd of all that pass'd.

Clerk reads.

The minute which stands foremost in the page,
And's likely much discussion to engage,
Concerns a girl, who ventur'd to complain
That she could get no plaister for her pain.

Dom.—I well remember! and she also said
How much she suffer'd in her aching head.
But where's the Doctor's letter in reply?—
What!—has he dar'd our orders to defy?*

Sang.—I had no kind of note from him last
week:—

Perhaps in person he's prepar'd to speak!
But stay,—we'll just examine his report—
Aye,—here it is! as I correctly thought.

Dom.—Well, what's he say? Read,—read aloud
the lines,

And let us know the reason he assigns
For not attending to this woman's case,
Thereby appearing to forget his place!

Sang.—The Doctor says the woman has receiv'd
Some med'cine, and express'd herself reliev'd;
A plaister, he declares, was not requir'd,
He therefore did not give what she desir'd.

* The intention here is to shew how obsequiously DOMINUS expected the Doctor to conform to his wishes and mandates.

Dom.—But that won't do! We'll summon him
 t' appear,
 And try th' effect of placing him in fear! *
 I do not see that his reply explains
 One atom of the charge the girl maintains!

[*Enter the DOCTOR, who has been summoned.*]

Dom.—Be seated, Sir!—'Tis ours to ask the cause
 Why you have not observ'd the Workhouse laws.
 'Tis yours such med'cines to the sick to give
 As may not kill, but suffer them to live.
 What reason is there why you should refuse
 To give the poor such med'cines as they choose?
 A certain girl submitted her request,
 And ask'd a plaister for her aching breast:
 You gave her none, but answer'd her appeal
 By doubting all that she profess'd to feel.
 We hope you will remove, for sake of fame,
 The stigma which attaches to your name.

Doctor.—I've listen'd to your tale with much
 surprise—

It certainly astounds my very eyes!!!

The girl who has preferr'd this dire complaint
 Partakes much more of *sinner* than of *saint*.†

* Many attempts were made from time to time to effect this, but unsuccessfully.

† Sinners abound among the poor as well as the "rich."

Her breast, she says, is bad : I doubt the fact,
 Although I did not subject it to *tact*.
 If you will deign to study my report,
 You'll find her statement dwindled down to nought.

Dom.—But did you see her breast with open eyes,
 'Ere you presum'd her statement to despise ?
 Methinks you surely could not judge aright
 Unless it was submitted to your sight !

Doctor.—I did not want the girl to be undress'd
 To ascertain the ailment of her breast :
 The his'try of the case I knew too well,—
 Her *nudity* no better tale could tell !
 Her statements were equivocal throughout,
 And such as forc'd the most reluctant doubt.

Dom.—Well, well !—at length 'tis our united wish
 That you should now *a little deeper fish*.
 The clothes remove ! expose the suff'ring part !
 And let us know the issue e're we start !
 We cannot comprehend what you can mean
 By judging of a part you've never seen.
 No jury would accredit what you say,
 Although you took a thousand oaths per day !
 And, strange it seems, that in your whole reply
 You look upon the case as *all-my-eye* !

[*Exit* DOCTOR.]

Dom.—(To the Guardians.)

Well, Gentlemen, what have you to advise !
 What shall we do, this case to compromise ?
 'Tis difficult indeed to reconcile
 The clashing interests of truth and guile.
 I was prepar'd to recommend—but list !
 Some person's at the door—so let's desist.*

[*Re-enter DOCTOR.*]

Doctor.—Well, Gentlemen, I've seen the naked
 breast,
 And with the same opinion am impress'd.
 Beyond a slight abrasion of the skin,
 There's nought to see without, nor yet within :
 The breast is soft—nor have my peering eyes
 Detected any error in the size.
 If there were any ailment in the breast,
 The truth would out, when put to such a test.

Dom.—Good morning, Sir ! We've nothing more
 to say :
 What'er we want, we'll ask another day,—
Aside] And some physician for his service pay.

[*Exit DOCTOR.*]

* Another allusion to their secrecy.

To the Guardians.

Well, Gentlemen, I ask your aid once more—
 These awkward cases we must needs deplore.
 The girl asserts that she's extremely ill—
 The Doctor says she wants a *Springfield* pill !*
 Such differences how are we to decide ?
 Come, lend your aid !—the task with me divide.
 I'll make a proposition, if you please—
 And let him ope his mouth who disagrees !
 Suppose we ask another Doctor's aid,
 That all conflicting feeling may be stay'd ?

A Guardian.—I second what the Chairman has
 propos'd,—

'Tis time that all these bickerings were clos'd.

Dom.—(To the Clerk.)

Now, Clerk, cast up the votes and let us know
 If we're to strike this all decisive blow.

Clerk counts, and then proceeds.

I've ascertain'd on either side the score,
 And find the issue is as four to four :

* The girl had a sweetheart at the gaol, and was herself tolerably well fitted for residence there.

Your casting vote, Sir Chairman, will suffice
To give the last decision to the dice !

Dom.—I give it freely, and without regret,
Although the parish will incur *a debt*.
We cannot our resources better spend,
Than using means to bring about the end.

Then addressing the Clerk.

So, Clerk, pray write, and e're the morrow's sun
His daily course hath through the heavens run,
Request this Doctor to attend alone,
That nothing by the other may be known.*
We then shall see, next Monday, when we meet,
What means to use to make the case complete.

PART III.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

The second Doctor's reply, &c.

Dom.—Good morning, Gents ! The weather's so
severe,
I thought it would prevent my coming here :

* The order for the Physician was given without apprising
the Author of the same.

But there's a matter which I much desire
To settle finally e're we retire.

To the Clerk.

Pray, have you got the note from Dr. B——— ?
What does he say ?—I'm all athirst to see.

The Clerk reads the note, as follows:—

“ The Doctor says he visited the case,
And found good health depicted in the face ;
The ailment of the breast he feels inclin'd
To estimate as trifling in its kind.
He says she needs no plaister for the breast,
But thinks it ought with ointment to be dress'd ;
And as she does not like the workhouse fare,
The Doctor says she ought not to be there.”

Dom.—’Twould be but right, our Surgeon to
apprize

Of this opinion—but ’twould not be wise ;
Since he would doubtless in the fact exult,
And p'rhaps our *ultra-dignity* insult.
I therefore move that she have Out-Relief,
As this may serve to moderate her grief ;
Say, for one month, (the trial will be just,)
But after that, no more the girl we'll trust,

Unless she brings some proof that her disease
 Forbids her working for her bread and cheese.

Omnes.—Unanimous we are in our desires—
 We think the girl some change of air requires ;
 Then let her have a month's relief outside,
 Tho' some perhaps this measure will deride.

[*A Cough is heard.*]

Dom.—(*To relieving Officer, who had been summoned.*)

Relieving Officer ! you'll weekly give
 Some money, that a certain girl may live,
 And when one lunar month has passed away,
 Without a doctor's note, you'll cease to pay.

[*Exit RELIEVING OFFICER.*]

To the Guardians.

Well, Gentlemen, I'm sorry to declare
 The disappointment most of us must share ;
 I would be silent, rather than proclaim
 The glorious triumph of our Doctor's fame.
 If you will recollect, he once before
 Prostrated us upon this very floor ;*

* The Guardians had served the Author a similar trick some years before, but they failed to effect their object, being defeated upon the *suo sibi gladio* principle.

And had I known, forsooth, what has occur'd,
I'd not have made a motion so absurd ;
But now 'tis worse than useless to regret
That we have thus incurr'd a *guinea-debt*.*
The deed is done ! Our steps we can't retrace,
But may derive a lesson from this case.†

* Their spending the guinea (Poor-Rate money) was *illegal*.

† The Author would have added a few Reflections to this Sketch, but he was reluctant to visit with satire one poorer than himself. He may here mention that, ultimately, the girl could get no certificate from the Dispensary authorities, and was, therefore, obliged to earn her bread by the industrious use of her own hands.

SKETCH VIII.

PART I.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

*Another female Pauper complains of the DOCTOR'S ill-usage,
&c. The PAUPER is entering, or so supposed.*

*[The hammer sounds, and thus the Pauper speaks,
Whilst acrimonious tears pour down her cheeks.]*

Pauper.—I've come, please Gentlemen, to seek
redress,
And get, if possible, a better mess ;*
My tender stomach all my food rejects,
Whilst Doctor G—— my interest neglects ;
Then pray excuse me, if I now intrude,
And order me a little better food.

Dom.—The diet of the House we cannot change,
The Doctor all such matters should arrange !

* This word is used in the military sense.

What food have you ?—why do you look so sad ?

Aside.] I'm sure the girl must be extremely bad.*

Pauper.—I've pudding suetless, with bread and
cheese—

Not one of them with my complaint agrees ;

And Dr. G——— has been so very rough,

I've had of his attendance quite enough.†

I'd like another doctor ;—p'rhaps he'd find

A diet more adapted to my mind !

If you will grant it, I am well assur'd

That all my ailments will be quickly cur'd.

Dom.—Well, well, young woman ! we'll protect
your cause,

And for your sake forget the RULING laws ;‡

Your case shall be consider'd, and we'll try

Some scheme those *overwhelming* tears to dry.

[*Exit* PAUPER.]

To the Guardians.

Well, Gentlemen. Alas ! what shall we do ?

One Doctor's not enough—we must have two !

* Here the speaker was very correct, although the badness of the girl partook more of the *moral* than the *medical* character.

† Or quantum suff !

‡ The facility with which the Guardians forgot their relationship as *co-workers* of the New Poor Law was most astonishing.

The girl's complaint is hallow'd by her tears,*
 And worthy of our closest heed appears.
 I move another Doctor be employ'd,
 (Although our own will sadly feel annoy'd ;)
 Before all other things, we should attend
 To what is most important in the end.

Omnes. — Agreed, most noble Chairman ! once
 again

From urging any veto we refrain !
 Let all be done according to your will ;
 Do what you list,—we'll reverence you still.

Dom.—(To the Clerk.)

Now, Mister Clerk, take up your pen and write,
 Whilst I, the Master of the Board, indite ;
 Request a certain *local* Doctor's aid,—
 And tell him that he'll certainly be paid :
 He'll visit one of such and such a name,
 And, his opinion form'd, report the same.

* The reflections appended to this Sketch must be borne in mind when reading these lines.

PART II.

SCENE, AS BEFORE.

SECOND DOCTOR'S *Reply, &c.*

(The order-calling hammer sounds once more :
 And when all's still, and fasten'd is the door,
 Our Chairman to his colleagues reads aloud
 The statements which this Doctor hath avow'd !)

Dom.—Now, here we have it, Gentlemen, at last !
 The girl's to fatten, rather than to fast !
 The Doctor states in two expressive lines,
 The cause for which the sickly pauper pines.*
 I'll read the doctor's words, and you will judge
 How far we ought a boon like this to grudge.

(DOCTOR'S *letter read.*)

“ I found her living on the workhouse *dregs*,
 And order'd meat and, daily, two boil'd eggs.”

Consummate proof that her complaint was just,
 In such opinion we can safely trust ;
 Then let the girl continue eggs and meat—
 Since one *like her* must relish *such a treat* !

* Whines will do equally with pines.

Whilst we shall feel we've order'd for the best,
In succ'ring those who are so sore distress'd.*

REFLECTIONS.

Most charitable men ! who lend their ears
To idle tales when join'd along with tears !
To get a boon—to urge a worthless suit
We must consent to give them tears “ to boot.”
But should an applicant forget to cry,
Nor irrigate with plaintive tears her eye—
Should dire necessity's commanding tongue
Reverberate the Guardian's ears among—
Should poverty† unfeign'd and squalid frames
In simplest voice present their urgent claims—
Then straight to law their intellects they steer
To find some pretext for refusal there !!!
To serve the needy's scarce within their creed,
Who seeks a boon—her tears must intercede
Before the pockets of these men will bleed !

* It is only just to the Author to say that he had treated the girl in the kindest and most humane manner for two months—this the Guardians cared not to ascertain nor inquire into. Truth also obliges the Author to add that the girl, on leaving the workhouse, returned to the paths of prostitution.

† See Sketch IX.

ADDENDA.

Or should the Surgeon ask his rightful dues,
(Oh ! how delighted are they to refuse,)
The contract, then, is summon'd to decide
How far to pay his merits are allied.
Farewell to hope—should this ignoble deed
Refuse his meritorious cause to plead.
No argument, no logic will avail,
To give effect to his unwelcome tale.
Whate'er his labour and whate'er his skill,
They seek the contract and reject the bill ;
And joyous with a pretext for dissent,
They give to Tyranny its wonted vent.

SKETCH IX.

SCENE, &c., THE SAME.

A pregnant woman, very poor, requests an order for the DOCTOR'S attendance in her accouchement, and is refused, as the text will shew; as also the grounds or plea for such refusal.

N.B. This case is an epitome of too many *exactly* allied to it in all its features.

“ ——— ab uno,
Disce omnes. ——— ”

Enter the APPLICANT.

Pauper.—Please, Gentlemen I've come to ask a boon,

As I expect to litter very soon :

I'd like to have the Doctor at the time,

And hope my asking will be deem'd *no crime !**

Dom.—Pray, Ma'am, how many children have you got ?—

What earns your husband to support the lot ?

* It is almost *criminal* to be poor now-a-days !

What rent, what money also do you pay,
 To make provision for a rainy day?*

Why ask, indeed, the Parish to disburse,
 What should be paid from people's *private* purse?

Pauper.—Please you, my gentlemen, our means
 are small;

Nine shillings by the week to keep us all!
 There's me, my husband, and three *brats* beside,
 With whom this paltry pittance to divide.

Dom.—We can't indeed accede to your request,
 But must forthwith adopt the workhouse test.†
 The order you can have if you will pay
 The sum demanded on a future day.
 Your number's not enough,—if you had four,
 You might, indeed our CHARITY implore.

Pauper.—The Doctor's fee I'm sure I can't afford,
 And, therefore, ask the favor of the Board;
 But since you will not grant me my desire,
 I'll in disgust and bitter hate retire.

[*Exit* PAUPER.]

* An allusion to "Independent Clubs," which are designed to transfer the dependence of the poor upon the few, that is, the medical faculty, rather than upon the many, alias the great mass of rate-payers. Its term "Independent," therefore is mere burlesque.

† An engine as powerful as that which we see on railways.

ADDENDA.

So this poor woman went away in grief,
And wonder'd that she could not get relief ;
To pay the Doctor was to pawn her clothes,
And add another to her many woes,*
Or generate a thousand *bitter* oaths.†

* Conventional rhyme.

† Literal rhyme.

SKETCH X.

SCENE, &C., AS BEFORE.

The SURGEON charges One Guinea for his services in a certain case of illness, in administering to which he had to travel more than 100 miles, and perform a surgical operation every day for a period of eleven days.

16/ .
Heu, fuge ~~cr~~deles terras et littus avarum !
Nam Polydorus ego !

[*Enter RELIEVING OFFICER.*]

Dom.—Now, Sir, what Union bills remain unpaid ?
Let them before the Guardians be laid.

Rel. Officer.—I've got receipts for all except one
bill,

And that I left unpaid against my will.

If you will recollect a certain charge

In Doctor G's accounts was deem'd too large !

One guinea was, forsooth, the charge he made ;

You order'd but five shillings to be paid !

I offer'd him this sum, but he declin'd

To yield a point so hostile to his mind.

He then contended that his claim was just ;

And, lo !—I have the money now in trust.

Dom.—But did he doubt the Guardian's right to
use

Such power as they list?—and hence refuse?*

Now tell us what discourse between you pass'd,
Since truth looks better at the first than last.

Rel. Officer.—He said few words, the money he
declar'd,

In such degen'rate times could ill be spar'd ;
He travell'd many miles to earn the fee,
And could not bend to your unkind decree.

Dom.—But did he say that he should write or come,
To prove his claim to this *enormous*† sum?

Rel. Officer.—I do not know, but doubt not he
will use,
His best endeavours to obtain his dues.

[*The Doctor is announced, who enters.*]

Doctor.—Good morning, Gentlemen, I've come
t' inquire
The reason why you underrate my hire,

* The Guardians entertained a very extravagant notion of their power and authority.

† Guineas were very small sums when expended upon idle paupers.—*See Sketches VII. and VIII.*

My charge is one pound one—you've brought it down
By some manœuvre, to a paltry crown !
What compensation are your sixty pence,
For labour so important and immense ?
The task impos'd on me compris'd a score
Of miles one hundred and some twenty more !
The case itself was difficult to treat,
Besides the labour of my blister'd feet.*
E'en first-rate eminence hath fail'd t' impart,
In such a case, the help of Surgeon's art ;
Besides, the contract does not disallow
The claim which I am vindicating now.

Dom.—The contract, Sir, is silent all throughout,
And leaves no room for entertaining doubt !
Indeed ! the only guinea case it owns
Refers to such as break their precious bones !
That your fatigues were great we don't deny,
But do they vindicate a charge so high ?
For us—the contract is our only guide,
And by its letter we must now decide.

Doctor.—I do not read the paltry contract thus ;
Nor comprehend the meaning of this fuss.
I ventur'd to believe the clause remain'd,
Which last year's contract certainly contain'd.

* The Doctor had no horse, and was, therefore, compelled to walk.

And great is my surprise when you declare
 That no such clause affects the present year.
 But are you bound the contract to observe
 So rigidly—and from it never swerve ?
 Look at the labour, and the anxious care
 Which I supplied, the patient's life to spare ;
 And will you, then, my honest claim refuse,
 And let the contract regulate your views ?

Dom.—Had you thus represented your appeal,
 We might some *pity* for your labours feel.*
 But when we have a contract, where's the need
 Of wasting so material a deed ?
 The labour undergone—the art employ'd—
 To us are arguments entirely void ;
 And tho' you did the case so well attend,
 We must the letter of the law† defend.
 Five shillings is the sum we're bound to pay,
 Whate'er your labours by the month or day.
 So take the cash, and forward the receipt
 By Monday next, the day on which we meet.

[*Exit* DOCTOR.]

* The Doctor shared but *meanly* in the pity of the Guardians ; of course his portion of their *favors* amounted to nothing.

† Or Contract.

REFLECTIONS, OR EPILOGUE.

Thus was the Surgeon's worthy cause despis'd,
 And thus his merits by the Guardians priz'd!
 One halfpenny per mile his sole reward
 For serving such a Contract-loving Board.
 Not so—when paupers urge their plaintive cries,
 Whilst tears descend from acrimonious eyes.
 The poor-rate money, then, they freely spend,
 The foolish with th' extravagant and blend.
 No Contract, Law, nor other cause appears
 To hinder their indemnifying tears.*
 Whate'er the boon, how contrary to sense,
 How useless and unneedful the expense; †
 With purse-strings drawn, and hearts inflam'd with
 ire,
 They yield the point to sate their mad desire.
 But when for services and labour done,
 They're ask'd to pay the sum of *one pound one*,
 Then mark the quibbling pretexts which they use,
 Rather than pay for *wear and tear of shoes*.
 Who work for them will calculate in vain,
 Due recompense for services to gain;
 For Justice in their counsels has no share,
 And would be libell'd were She to be there.

* See Sketch VIII.

† Sketches, VII, VIII.

SKETCH XI.

PART I.

SCENE, IN THE BOARD ROOM.

An Overseer gives an Order to a poor person for Medical Relief, and omits to send a notice of the same to the Relieving Officer, thereby subjecting himself to a fine of Five Pounds, in conformity with a statute of the Poor Law Commissioners, of which the Guardians eagerly availed themselves. The Scenes are twofold; one in the Board Room, and the other in the Room appointed for the Magistrates, who are introduced among the Dramatis Personæ.

[*The Guardians are assembled, and the RELIEVING OFFICER has entered.*]

Dom.—(*To the Relieving Officer.*)

Now, Sir, what is this case? and do you know
Who told the Doctor to the case to go?

Rel. Officer.—I do not know, nor have I yet
receiv'd

A notice that the woman was reliev'd.

Dom.—Then you will use all haste to ascertain
From whom the Doctor did the order gain.

We cannot suffer bus'ness thus to sleep—
 Who marrs our schemes, his purse shall surely weep!

[*Exit* RELIEVING OFFICER.]

To the Guardians.

Now, Gents, 'tis necessary to be STRICT,
 And punishment for negligence inflict;
 'Tis useless to invent such wholesome rules,
 If they're to be despis'd by Parish fools.
 The law commands, that ev'ry Overseer,
 Who shall with Union matters interfere,
 Must send a notice, howsoever brief,
 That he hath giv'n such and such relief.
 The case before us indicates, 'tis clear,
 The stupid meddling of some Overseer;
 And if 'tis so, as I indeed divine,
 We'll make him pay the whole amount of fine.*

Omnes.—Most certainly! 'twill be no more than
 just

To make him pay for disregard of trust:

Sacch.—His duties he will better comprehend,
 When INT'REST is his monitor and friend.

* DOMINUS was a stranger to mercy in these and other cases.

PART II.

SCENE, IN THE BOARD ROOM.

[*The hammer sounds, and silence is restor'd,
Whilst DOMINUS addresses thus the Board.*]

Dom.—Now for the case in which an Overseer
Hath fail'd our laws and precepts to revere.
But, first of all, we'll due inquiry make,
Concerning this unparallel'd mistake.
Relieving Officer, what is the cause
For this contempt of Guardianic laws ?

Rel. Officer.—I call'd upon the Doctor, and
inquir'd
At whose request his med'cine was desir'd :
A paper was produced, when, lo ! my eyes
The manuscript could fully recognize:
It was the Overseer's ! for oft, indeed,
I've had this person's manuscript to read.
That 'tis the case, I'm ready to appear
Before the Bench, and on my oath to swear.

Dom.—Well, Gentlemen, it only now remains
To subject him to penalties and pains ;*

* A very easy process with DOMINUS.

Our precepts and our laws he hath defied,
 And from the path of duty turn'd aside.
 Then let him have a summons to appear
 Before the Bench, in Petty Sessions here,
 Such opposition we cannot endure :—
 Who brings disease must find the means of cure.

SCENE, BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES.

[*The CLERK reads the Indictment, &c.*]

Clerk.—The Guardians, Gents, your interference
 ask,
 And seek to bring an Overseer “to task ;”
 The London Dons* are privileg'd to use
 What power and authority they choose ;
 A certain law which they have made, 'tis clear,
 Hath been evaded by an Overseer,
 Who, if convicted, will be doom'd to pay
 Five pounds in money, and the costs defray.

Magis.—Where is the man you call the Overseer ?
 Let him before the Magistrates appear !—

* The Poor Law Commissioners.

The statute name, by which you now proceed,
That nothing may the course of law impede.

Clerk.—The statute of the London Dons appears
To point *exclusively* to Overseers ;
In such and such a page, if you will read,
You'll find the one by which I now proceed.

[*The Magistrates consult the statute, and then call upon the
OVERSEER to plead.*]

Magis.—Well, Sir, what is your plea for this
offence,
In which you've shewn so *great* a want of sense ?

Over.—I plead “not guilty” to the charge that's
made,
Nor seek your jurisdiction to evade.

[*The CLERK then calls the witnesses for the prosecution, and
first questions the RELIEVING OFFICER.*]

Clerk.—Look at this writing, and on oath declare,
Whose signature the document doth bear !

Rel. Officer.—It is the Overseer's, beyond a doubt,
The manuscript, indeed, is his throughout !

Clerk.—But did he send you notice of the case,
Or fail t'observe the duties of his place ?

Rel. Officer.—He sent no note, he utter'd not a
word,
And I, forsooth, knew nought that had occur'd!

[*The Doctor* then is questioned.*]

Clerk.—(*To the Doctor.*)

Now take the book, and give a solemn pledge
The truth and nothing but the truth t'allege.
How came you by the paper that is here?—
Did you receive it from the Overseer?

Doctor.—I did, and gave the necessary aid;—
The cause of illness could not be delay'd.

Clerk.—(*To the Magis.*)

The case is clear;—both witnesses combine
To prove his liability to fine!

Magis.—(*To the Over.*)

Now, Overseer, what have you got to say,
Before compell'd the fine and costs to pay?

Over.—Five years I've serv'd as parish Overseer,
Nor has one blunder mark'd my long career;
I hope your sentence will be sound and just,
Since in your mercy I must place my trust.

* Not the Author.

Magis.—Although the penalty is so severe,
 We're not content to hurt an Overseer ;
 The sum of thirty shillings is th' entire
 Of what the Magistrates and Clerk require ;
 We're bound to vindicate the ruling laws,
 (*Aside*) Or, otherwise, we might dismiss the cause.*

REFLECTIONS.

Thus was the law's integrity sustain'd,
 And thus a reverence for duty feign'd !
 To sate the vengeance of a Mighty Chief,
 This Overseer was treated like a thief.
 Traduc'd before the magistrates and fin'd,
 Because to unimportant duties blind !
 But was his crime so heinous and so great
 That nothing less than cash could expiate ?
 Were there no intermediate means to use,
 Rather than pow'r so cruelly abuse ?
 Why seek a measure so unkind and fierce ?
 When rous'd by trifles why so deeply pierce ?
 For what cost five why thirty shillings ask,
 And give yourselves so meritless a task ?
 Your power had been better understood
 By checking evil—not disturbing good !

* The Magistrates inclined to *leniency*.

But in this memorable case, 'tis plain,
You sought the good by evil means to gain !
You broke the greater law,—the less to keep,
And made the pockets of your victim weep !
And what was *venial* in the simplest sense,
You punish'd as a pardonless offence !—
Should you such anger seek again t'appease,
If not the fine—be't your's to pay the fees !

SKETCH XII.

SCENE, IN THE BOARD ROOM.

The election of a REGISTRAR of BIRTHS and DEATHS, &c. The DOCTOR, who had the best and purest claim, and was clearly most adapted for the office, notwithstanding the opinion of a CLERICAL NABOB to the contrary, was no sooner thought of than forgotten. In other words, his cause was meanly and shamelessly abandoned. AMPHIBIUS, VOLUPTARIUS, VITULINUS, and TACITURNUS, are introduced in this Sketch.

PROLOGUS.

No voice disturbs the quiet of the place ;
But all is still,—and pallid ev'ry face.
Now anxious thoughts distract each Guardian's sight,
Whilst all are eager for the coming fight.
Each has a friend, whose interests to serve
Requires the efforts of the stoutest nerve.
Now Parsons thicken, and Sectarians throng,
The Guardian rights to take their share among ;
But some there are who ne'er the Board attend
Except to serve the purpose of a friend :
Yet all have votes, and are prepared to use,
Like and dislike, according as they choose.*

* Too many of their proceedings were regulated by the principles of like and dislike.

Now Reason sleeps, now Justice takes her flight,
 Whilst Guardians turn the Day into the Night ;
 And when the door is fast, and all is still,
 And each his part is ready to fulfil,
 Our noble Chairman, without more delay,
 Proceeds his *all-surpassing pipe* to play.

Dom.—Well, Gents, I had design'd to keep away
 Nor meddle with the bus'ness of the day ;
 But public duty has the first of claims,
 And should engage our best-directed aims.
 A certain Gent has recently thought fit
 His place, as District-Registrar, to quit ;
 Th' alternative I cannot but lament,
 Since all were with his services content :
 But, as he now th' appointment has resign'd,
 'Tis ours another in his place to find.
 Each Guardian will do as he thinks best ;
 Our rights are free :* I need not add the rest.

To Sanguineus.

Now, Clerk, proceed the candidates to name,
 And let us know the number of the same !

Sang.—The number, I believe, amounts to four :
 The Doctor's one ;—and no one needs it more.

* This may safely have a query appended to it, as the *right* was only *deputative*.

Then there's a Druggist also, who applies,
 And with a Vender of Tea Kettles vies ;
 Then our Relieving Officer comes next,
 And if he fails, will terribly be vex'd.

Dom.—Now, Gents, perhaps some Guardian will
 name

A candidate, and specify his claim :
 'Tis not the Chairman's duty to propose,
 But have the last—the *very last* of throws.

Eccles.—Religious feeling urges me to state
 How much I like a certain candidate ;
 His fitness none will surely now dispute,—
 So let me ask your pref'ence in his suit.

He well observes Ecclesiastic rule,
 Takes sacrament, and tends the Parish school,
 (*Aside*) And I design to use him as a tool.

So energetic is he in the cause,
 That, to befriend him, I'll forsake the laws,
 And overlook another's prior claim,
 To further, if 'tis possible, my aim.

Then, as to London Dons,—I scorn the lot !
 And bid defiance on this very spot !

What right have they with us to interfere,
 And cheat us of a privilege so dear ?

Our right is unrestrained ;—so I will vote
 For him whose cause I've *bargain'd* to promote.

I know full well the doctrines which I preach,
 But fail to practise what my sermons teach :
 And, tho' so orthodox in pulpit lore,
 Forget the *Surplice* when within this door ;
 I freely own my apostolic pride,
 And urge a right which laymen are denied.
 Nor sense of justice, nor Mosaic law,
 Nor Gospel, too, my purpose shall withdraw.
 The cloth I wear imposes no restraint :
 I can't be *Sinner*—therefore must be *Saint* !
 So aid me, I beseech you, in this toil,
 And stir the fire to make the *Kettle* boil ;
 For if you will accord your votes with me,
 I'll promise you a potent cup of *Tea* ! *

Amph.—My rev'rend brother chip I gladly aid,
 And cordially respond to all he said ;
 I seldom come your efforts to assist,
 But yet am number'd in the Guardian list ;
 My right to vote none present will deny,
 Nor give my Magisterial claims the lie !
 I advocate the Ironmonger's cause,
 And vent for him the substance of my jaws : †

* It is unnecessary to add that ECCLESIASTICUS advocated the cause of the Vender of Tea Kettles.

† AMPHIBIUS's countenance was rather repulsive in the region of the lower-jaw.

Whene'er I want a pot or warming pan,
 I have recourse to this deserving man ;
 His goods I recommend to all who use
 Oil for their lamps, or blacking for their shoes :
 Besides some other things, he deals in nails,
 And wat'ring pots, as also wooden pails :
 He has pretensions that by far exceed
 The claims which possibly the rest may plead.
 So let your votes in thick profusion press,
 And crown the Parson's fav'rite with success.

Vitul.—I rise a candidate to recommend,
 And haste to serve the int'rests of my friend ;
 The druggist is the person whom I name,
 And loudly vindicate his better claim :
 He's nephew to the Gent who now retires,
 And more than all the vacant place desires ;
 Besides, we ought full-Registrar to *dub*
 One who has served the office of a *Sub*.
 This is so plain and substantive a right
 As must convince the most untutor'd sight :
 His merits 'twould be needless to record
 Who well deserves the preference of the Board.
 Your minds arrange—your votes for him prepare,
 And he the laurels of the day shall wear.

Volup.—I join his cause, and hope the coming *tug*
 Will end in victory to Mr. Drug ;

I oft engage his services, when ill,
 And have a draught or antibilious pill :
 Or, if the Summer's heat my thirst excite,
 I drink his ginger-beer with much delight ;
 And, when inclined to smoke, I seldom fail
 Myself with an Havannah to regale ;
 I'm pleas'd to serve him whensoever I can,
 Or right or wrong,—I mark him as my man.
 His cause with utmost warmth I then espouse,
 And seek your kindest energies to rouse :
 Then vote for him ;—he's worthy of your choice,
 For whose success I've rais'd my willing voice.

Col.—One candidate there is, whom I propose ;
 His merits surely ev'ry Guardian knows :
 He serves the purposes which we design,
 And leaves the poor to famish and to pine.
 The Doctors, too, engage his constant care,
 And largely in the Guardian meanness share.
 Then mark the use of his evasive pleas,
 In cheating them of their accustom'd fees !
 A willing tool in our tyrannic hands,
 Or right or wrong—his law is our commands.
 Then why omit to give him your support ?
 And count his service as allied to nought ?
 Our own Relieving Officer I name,
 And feel convinced of his superior claim ;

We should not overlook our servant's worth,
But so arrange that he may have the berth.

Tacit.—'Tis not for me so long a speech to make,
Nor will the cause my eloquence awake ;
It needs no aid from oratoric art,
But's fully equal to sustain its part.
Entreaties, supplications, would denote
The weakness of the cause which we promote ;
So, trusting to the merits of the case,
I'll give my vote that he may have the place.

A GHOST *speaks.*

I've heard your speeches with extreme surprize :
Small is the truth—abundant are the lies !
You've overlooked the Doctor's matchless right,
Nor seem dispos'd his labours to requite.
Oh ! base ingratitude ! Oh ! worthless Board !
How can your consciences such deeds applaud ?
You seem to chase the mem'ry of the past,
And for the first account him as the last !
Look at his pay !—a mean, disgraceful sum !—
When is his day of recompense to come ?
And will you dare your consciences to drown,
And pander to a Parson's paltry gown ?
Ignoble lot ! no kindlier feelings dwell
Where each his conscience has resolved to sell !

Foul Prejudice usurps the lofty throne
 Where Reason should preside—and She alone!
 'Tis hers to guide men's intellects aright:
 She is the Day—but Prejudice the Night.
 Your deeds are deeds of secrecy; but mind—
 'Tis not for you the eyes of Truth to blind.

[*The first heat terminates in the entire rejection of the Doctor and Relieving Officer; and the contest is ultimately between the Druggist and Vender of Tea Kettles.*]

Dom.—Now, Clerk, you'll count the votes, and
 let me know

Which candidate requires my final throw;
(Aside) I've got already one of them in view:—
 'Tis quite impossible to serve the two.

Sang.—The Druggist has the best of it by one,
 And promises his rival to outrun;
 But, should you join the Ironmonger's side,
 The two competitors will even ride.

Dom.—I'll make the numbers even—so here goes!
 The Ironmonger has my first of throws;
 Then comes my casting vote—aye! there's the
rub!

Record it, Clerk!—I vote against the *Sub!* *

* Sub and Drug are identical as regards person.

EPILOGUS.

The die is cast—th' Election is complete,
And Sub, poor man! sustains a sore defeat.
Warm was the contest; by one vote alone
He finds his hopes entirely overthrown!
Tho' half the Board their preference denote,—
How hard to lose it by a single vote!
But do not grieve, nor let your sorrow shew
How much you feel this unexpected blow!
'Tis well to be rejected by the Board,
Nor dragg'd within the clutches of a Lord!
Whose rule, as tho' descended from the skies,
Terrific strikes, and all control defies!
Then why lament the issue of the day,
When spar'd the curse of such imperious sway?
Contempt alone a remedy supplies
For all the ills to which the day gives rise;
Dry, then, your tears! in silence mourn your fate;
And bury there the objects of your hate!*

* It is scarcely necessary to add that Sub was immeasurably disappointed at the issue of the contest.

APPENDIX.

SKETCH I.—The object of this Sketch is to illustrate the high opinion entertained of Dominus, as the most suitable person for the office of Chairman, as well by the Guardians as himself; as also the readiness with which they collated or inducted him to the said office. Many of the succeeding Sketches will show how far such opinion was or is well-founded.

SKETCH II.—This has reference to a survey which the Poor Law Commissioners requested the Doctor to make of the Workhouse, in order that its capacity, as a residence for the Poor, might be finally assessed. The Guardians were exceedingly indignant at the Doctor's report, and the Sketch gives the substance of his vindication, &c.

SKETCH III.—This has a three-fold intention. 1st. It shows the extreme severity with which Dominus and the Guardians punished a poor Overseer, for a blunder or defect, which, to say the least, was venial, and common with mortals generally. 2ndly. The injustice or inconsistency in measuring his fitness to continue in office by his ability or readiness to expiate in cash the blunder he had committed. 3rdly. The reflections demonstrate the partiality of the said Guardians, in having visited with so severe a punishment the more excusable offence of the one Overseer, whilst they altogether overlooked a greater blunder in the person of another Overseer.

SKETCH IV.—The object of this Sketch is similar to the last. The same principle of severity was practised in this case, although the pauper was well attended. The

case, for the mis-management of which the Relieving Officer was peremptorily ordered to pay the Medical expences, (amounting to the enormous sum of five shillings, for a week's attendance and journeys of forty-two miles in the aggregate!) differed in no respect from the ordinary character of cases of medical relief; but because the Relieving Officer charged him to a parish without the necessary evidence of his *actually* belonging to such parish, he was mulcted in the expences, the man's death precluding all hope of "appeal" respecting the question of settlement. The attendance, which the man or pauper received, holds, therefore, a favourable contrast with the harsh and unfeeling treatment exhibited by the Guardians to the Relieving Officer, whose means to ascertain the parish to which the man belonged were, necessarily, very remote, as the man was more than seventy, and had never been chargeable before.

SKETCH V.—This relates to a *scheme* contrived by Dominus and the Guardians to terrify the Doctor into a course of submission to their will and mandates. The Doctor's skill and fitness for his office were in no way doubted; and at the time, to which this Sketch refers, he had served them for a period of four years, during the two last of which they had never thought proper to resort to advertisement. How far their scheme succeeded must be left to more competent judges than the author to determine.

SKETCH VI.—A Workhouse narration. Considerable mis-understanding prevailed between the Master (a protegee of certain of the Guardianic oligarchy) and the Nurse, in which the Doctor was officially called upon to share. Some of the more leading features of the Master's character, deportment, and feeling are delineated, as also the views of Dominus respecting the relations of the Master and Doctor as Workhouse colleagues; and the final sentence pronounced upon the Nurse (more

sinned against than sinning) is hinted at; a sentence which, at the time of the author's writing, had taken effect.

SKETCH VII.—This Sketch so fully illustrates the course pursued by the Guardians towards the Pauper in the one case and the Doctor in the other, that any additional explanation would be superfluous. It shows too well how their wonted parsimony (to give it the mildest term) was sacrificed to gratify the feeling prevalent at the time being; as also the rebuke which the second Doctor's opinion gave to the course adopted; and the mode in which the case was finally compromised. A month after the events happened, which this Sketch is designed to record, the girl was left to earn her own bread.

SKETCH VIII.—Like the last. The *cacoethes administrandi*, as developed in this and the foregoing Sketch is fully represented in the reflections appended to Sketch X. The girl, who occupies the position of complainant in this Sketch, was a most worthless, obstinate, and perverse character, and more suited for the *bitters* than the *sweets* of a Workhouse.

SKETCH IX.—The truth conveyed in this Sketch is so *literal* as to require no elucidation. How far the Guardians were justified in withholding the relief solicited the New Poor Law alone must decide.

SKETCH X.—Illustrates the readiness which was exhibited in sacrificing the arduous and important services of the Surgeon at the shrine of a mere contract, which, at least, gave the Guardians the opportunity of proceeding upon a principle of Equity and Justice. This, however, they pertinaciously declined to observe, and the reflections are intended to contrast such refusal with the principle

observed in Sketches VII. and VIII., in reference to Poor-rate expenditure, where they are represented to have wantonly and unnecessarily imposed burdens upon the said rate.

SKETCH XI.—This is designed to demonstrate the very severe remedy which was employed to rouse an Overseer to a more accurate and punctilious observance of a *mere nominal* duty. The lenity exhibited by the magistrates, forms an agreeable contrast to the severity and extremity of rigour resorted to by the Guardians. It should be observed that this system of fining Overseers is calculated to interfere with the due administration of Medical Relief, as well in reference to the diseases of the Poor as the recompense of the Surgeon.

SKETCH XII.—This is designed to exhibit the undue and unqualified preference which was given to a certain Ironmonger, or vender of tea kettles, &c., in the election of a Registrar of Births and Deaths. The Doctor's right to the appointment was manifold. 1st. The preference suggested originally by the Poor Law Commissioners in behalf of the district surgeon. 2ndly. His need of better pay. 3rdly. His greater competency. 4thly. As a servant of the Guardians for many years, his better claims to any office at their disposal. 5thly and lastly. The debt or debts contracted by the Guardians in their repeated ill usage of him. The cause of the Ironmonger, who was ultimately successful, was warmly espoused by a certain Parson, in consequence of the zeal, &c., with which he had served the interests of the Sunday School! With respect to this and the rest of the candidates who applied for the situation, it may be observed, that not one of them had any claim whatsoever.

FINIS.

