

PHIL MAY

1864-1903

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Title: Phil May, Master-draughtsman & Humorist

Date of first publication: 1932

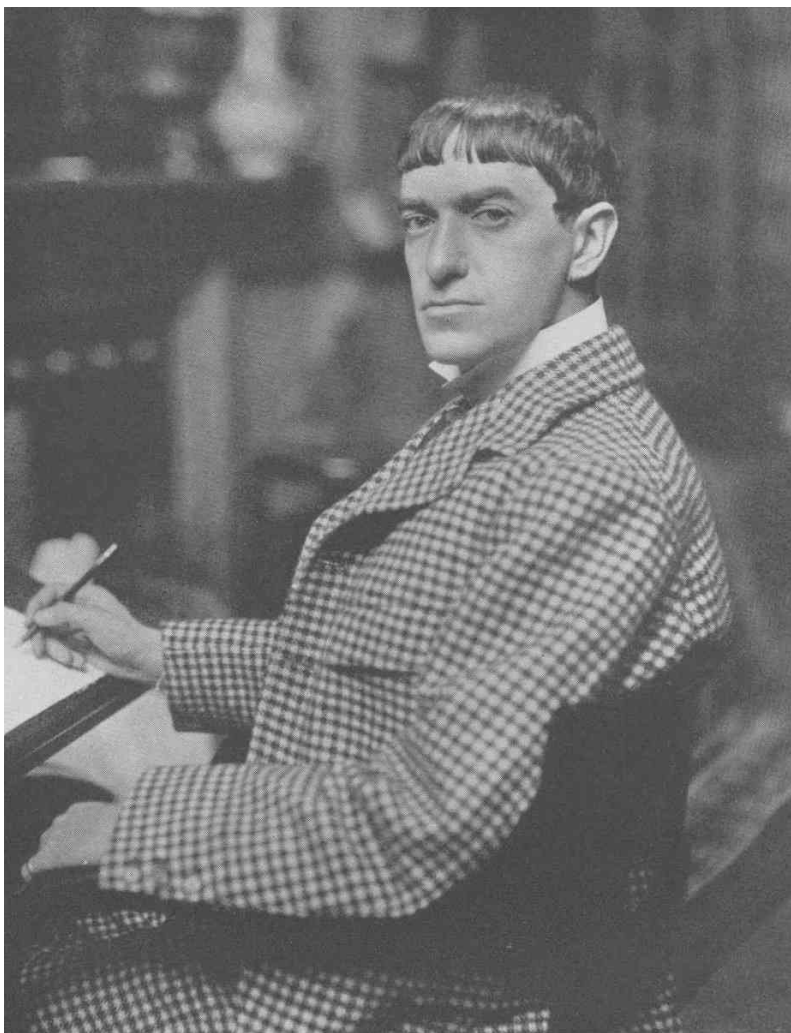
Author: James Thorpe (1876-1949)

Date first posted: Aug. 8, 2022

Date last updated: Aug. 8, 2022

Faded Page eBook #20220815

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PHIL MAY IN 1894
From a photograph by Elliot and Fry

PHIL MAY

*Master-draughtsman
& Humorist*

1864-1903

by

JAMES THORPE



LONDON
GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
BOMBAY & SYDNEY

First published 1932
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
39-41 Parker Street, Kingsway, London, W.C. 2

Printed in Great Britain by R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, Edinburgh

TO

ARTHUR MORRISON

FOR HELPFUL REVISION OF THE MANUSCRIPT
OF THIS WORK
AND FOR MANY OTHER KINDNESSES

PREFACE

The two heroes of my boyhood were W. G. Grace and Phil May, and they have never been altogether supplanted. The fame of the former is fortunately in little danger of oblivion, and it is because the memory of May, despite his great ability and popularity, has been very sadly neglected that this attempt has been made to pay homage to his genius. It is a simple fact that recently at a well-known London restaurant, where he spent a large part of his time and much of his income, it was necessary to spell his name to make my questions understood, and to explain that it was not a single word, but two. Even then no recollection was aroused, no souvenir or relic unearthed: and this less than thirty years after his death!

Considering the eminence of Phil May as an artist—the greatest English humorous artist since Cruikshank—it seems remarkable that no endeavour has been made seriously to discuss his life and work. That other great magician of the pen, Charles Keene, has been duly and worthily commemorated, and treatises have been written on many less worthy artists. Collections of May's drawings have been published and the chief incidents of his life summarized, but these have been limited generally to one phase of his work as represented in one particular periodical. Many more accomplished writers might have made a worthier memorial than this, but unfortunately they have not done so. This fact, and my own enthusiastic worship, make my only excuse.

Despite the publicity that attended Phil May during his too brief life, there is at this distance some difficulty in ascertaining definite particulars of his career. The memory of contemporaries is now somewhat uncertain, and the printed records are often conflicting. By collecting as many personal reminiscences as are still available, and comparing and verifying them as far as possible, I have done my best to compile a story of his life which I hope is in most respects true. An added factor of difficulty in this case is occasioned by May's incurable habit of inventing, or acceding to, any incident which appealed to an interviewer as containing interest for his readers. If the real facts had been assembled during his lifetime, or immediately after his death, they would, I think, have provided material of dramatic interest, pathos, and humour, worthy of treatment by some far abler pen than mine. If only the "twist of time" had permitted that Dickens should have written it!

Whatever the result, the work of collecting material for this book has been most interesting and delightful. This fact is mainly due to the willing and hearty assistance of many very kind friends and acquaintances of May who still survive, and the ready generosity of their help is in itself a great tribute to May's genius for friendship. For their valuable aid my very grateful acknowledgments are hereby tendered to his brother, Charles H. May, to whom I am specially indebted for much of the family history; to Lawrence Bradbury, Mrs Ernest Brown, Alfred J. Curnick, Frank Dean, A. S. Hartrick, John Hassall, Earnest Inchbold, Arthur Morrison, Sir Bernard Partridge, Walter J. Payne, Alfred Praga, L. Raven-Hill, M. H. Spielmann, Carmichael Thomas, Albert Toft, David Williamson—all contemporaries of May; to E. R. Phillips, of *The Yorkshire Post*; S. H. Prior, of *The Sydney Bulletin*; C. F. Hooper, of Messrs W. Thacker and Co.; Oliver Brown, of the Leicester Galleries; and to the courteous officials of the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Glasgow Art Gallery, and the Leeds Art Gallery and Library.

To those who neglected to answer my letters—forgiveness.

J. T.

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I

PHIL MAY THE MAN

Philip William May—this was his full name—was born at 66 Wallace Street, New Wortley, a suburb of Leeds, on April 22, 1864. The birthplace is a small, neatly kept ‘back-to-back’ house at the crossing of Bruce Place, near the top of Wallace Street, on the right-hand side as one goes up from Wellington Road. Shortly after Phil’s birth the family removed to Hanover Terrace, then to Bentinck Street, and later to 15 Kendal Lane. He was the seventh child of a family of eight, the second of three sons of Philip May, and his mother, Sarah Jane, was a daughter of Eugene Macarthy, a native of Dublin and a graduate of the University.

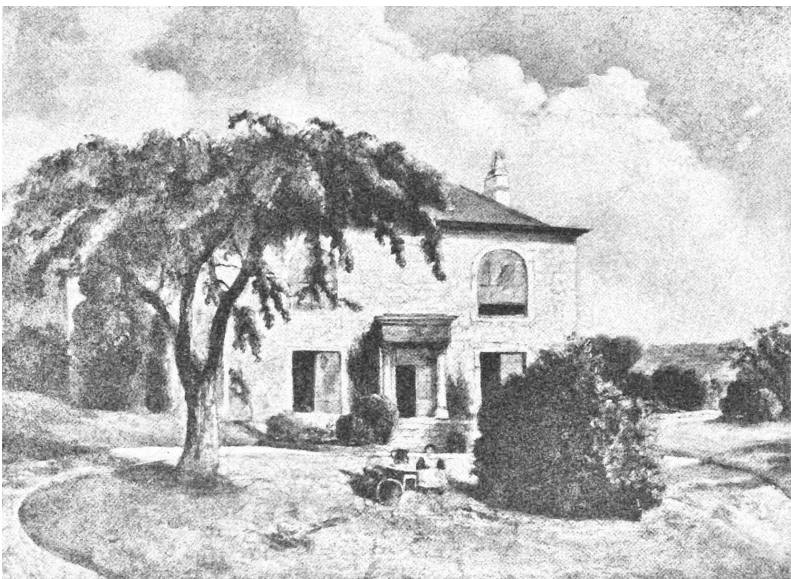
Fortunately we are able to go back beyond May’s immediate parentage and so perhaps gain some clue to any artistic strain he may be supposed to have inherited. On both sides he came of a stock above what might have been expected, in view of his early humble surroundings. His paternal grandfather was Charles Hughes May, a landowner and squire of Whittington, near Chesterfield, Derbyshire. He worked the Sneyd Colliery in that neighbourhood, and ran a pack of beagles, which young Philip followed on a pony. Further, he is said to have amused himself and his friends by making caricatures of his neighbours and acquaintances among the local characters. One of his sons, John A. May, had a pottery in Staffordshire, and in later years Phil treasured a china mug produced by his uncle John on which were painted huntsman, horses, hounds, and the family crest.

Among the friends and neighbours of Charles Hughes May of Whittington was the famous engineer George Stephenson, who lived at Tapton House, Chesterfield, and hunted with him. And so it came about that Squire May’s son Philip, brother of the potter and father of Phil, was apprenticed at the age of seventeen to the firm of George and Robert Stephenson, and set to work in their drawing office at Newcastle. The original indenture, dated January 3, 1840, is still extant, and in the possession of Mr Charles May, Phil’s elder brother, who happily is still living and hearty at the age of eighty-five. The term of apprenticeship was five years, and the apprentice was to receive an initial salary of four shillings a week, increasing annually by one shilling. But poor Philip found the work uncongenial, and he was not destined to rival the glories of the Stephensons

as an engineer. One seems to trace symptoms of the artistic temperament through his chequered and broken career even from the time of his apprenticeship, when he is said to have devoted much of his leisure to watercolour sketching. It was during the period of this apprenticeship at Newcastle that he met his future wife, Sarah Jane Macarthy.

She, as I have said, was a daughter of Eugene Macarthy, a graduate of Dublin University. Intended by his family for the priesthood, Macarthy took instead to the stage, and was in consequence disinherited by his sternly religious father. By way of clinching his adherence to his new profession he married the leading lady at the Dublin Theatre, and though his career no doubt had its vicissitudes, he became quite a successful actor-manager. He reached the height of his professional triumph as manager of Drury Lane Theatre, where he formally received Napoleon III and the Empress Eugénie on their State visit, walking backward, it is recorded, to lead them to their box, with a large lighted candlestick in each hand, no doubt after much arduous rehearsal.

Two of Macarthy's daughters were actresses, one Mrs Edward Chamberlain, wife of a Shakespearean actor, and the other Mrs Bob Honnor, whose husband was lessee of Sadler's Wells, where she played with much success the part of Black-eyed Susan, and that of Oliver Twist to her



Squire May's House at Whittington
From an oil-painting
By courtesy of Charles May, Esq.

husband's Fagin. The Honnors were prominent in the theatrical and artistic London of the forties and fifties, and were acquainted with Charles Dickens, who gave them an autographed set of his books. Phil May's mother lived with this sister in London in certain of her early years, and there met not only Dickens, but George Cruikshank, Albert Smith, Alfred Crowquill, Samuel Phelps, T. P. Cooke, and other celebrities of those times. Although she did not follow her sisters on the stage she had a good voice, and even late in life would sing excellently such old songs as "The Irish Emigrant," "Kathleen Mavourneen," and "The Ocean Child."

She and Philip May became acquainted, however, when Eugene Macarthy had not yet risen to his London successes, but was managing the Theatre Royal at Newcastle. This occupation he supplemented, as perhaps it would occur to a man of education to do, by keeping a bookshop in the neighbourhood of the theatre. The business comprised, as provincial bookshops often did, a lending library, of which Philip May, Stephenson's apprentice, regularly availed himself. As library and shop together were left almost entirely in charge of the proprietor's daughter, the natural and happy result followed, and when Philip came out of his apprenticeship he married Sarah Jane Macarthy.

Happy as the union was in itself, however, it was the beginning of hard times for the young people. Poor Philip was one of those luckless creatures with whom nothing ever seems to go right. His ventures were many and his successes none. With his share of his father's estate he began by setting up in London, in conjunction with a Mr Hyam, the business of a brass-founder. That enterprise failed, and he began again as an agent, working on commission, for some Sheffield firms. Here again he was unsuccessful; and so the ill-starred tale continued. One occupation after another proved alike his perseverance and his bad fortune, but one of these varied essays—as assistant manager of an engineering works



EUGENE MACARTHY, PHIL MAY'S MATERNAL GRANDFATHER

From a photograph

By courtesy of Charles May, Esq.



MRS ROBERT HONNOR, PHIL MAY'S AUNT

From a photograph

By courtesy of Charles May, Esq.

at New Wortley—brought him and his family to Leeds. In Phil May's birth certificate his father is described as a "commercial traveller." So the unlucky Philip and his devoted wife struggled on, till in 1873, at the age of fifty, he died in circumstances of much distress. Through all their misfortunes Philip and his wife never lost sight of better things and showed true parental pride in the drawings made by their boys. Mr W. Howgate, an art dealer who had a gallery at Leeds and knew the May family, relates that

Phil, a mere toddler, was often brought in by his father or mother, and he well remembers being struck by the youngster's keen interest in the pictures, his innumerable questions, and his shrewd comments. In the municipal collection at Leeds is a small, childish coloured drawing of Punch, strangely prophetic, signed "Phil May, aged 9 years," which he presented to Mr Howgate in return for his kindness. These facts about his ancestry are of interest because they help to explain certain later traits in his character and achievement. It may here be mentioned that the widowed Mrs May, a loving and devoted mother, lived to the age of eighty-four, and as a very charming old lady witnessed the triumphs as well as the tragedy of her distinguished son. She died in 1912.

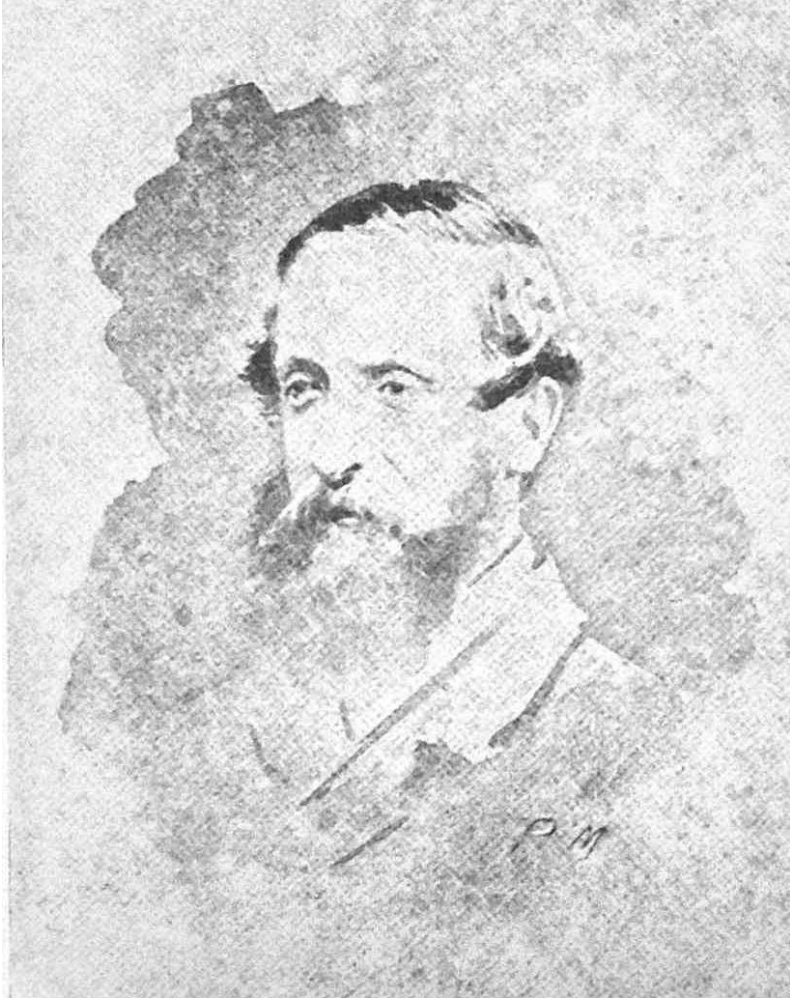
As the family was left without support, Phil May, who at his father's death was only nine years old, received very little schooling. He attended St George's School from 1872 to 1875, Oxford Place School from 1876 to 1877, and Park Lane Board School in 1877, but was sent to work before he was thirteen. A contemporary has told how he used to make copies of the drawings in *Punch* and *Fun*, and while still at school he won, as a prize for drawing, a T-square and drawing-board. He was even then a boy of distinct personality, a natural leader among the others, full of fun and the zest of life, interesting and lovable, and such a boy he remained to the end. His first effort at public entertaining was the recital of "Little Jim" at a Good Templars' Lodge in connexion with the Sunday school of St George's Church, Leeds, where he came under the personal influence and interest of Mr Richard Ainley, father of Henry Ainley, the actor, and himself an excellent reciter and entertainer. In this case the elder sister, as elder sisters so often did, assumed the responsibility for the moral welfare of the younger children and insisted on their attending Sunday school regularly. With four or five other boys from Miss Smith's school in Woodhouse Lane he formed the Hero Club, of which he was president and for which he designed a banner. By virtue of his office he gave an inaugural banquet consisting of a glorious tea-party. The hearty appreciation of his noble generosity by his fellow-members was somewhat modified when it was found that the feast had been paid for by their own subscriptions, which he had collected in his other capacity of treasurer. The boys' principal amusement was a toy theatre, for which Phil provided improved scenery and more elaborate characters. All the usual stage effects were produced, including the sheet of tin which simulated thunder and a large humming-top which gave a realistic imitation of the distant tones of a cathedral organ. By an ingenious arrangement of glass screens and mirrors a creditable presentation of *Pepper's Ghost* was staged, and received with enthusiasm by an indulgent audience of relatives.

Another popular turn was provided by a lifelike contrivance of a dwarf. One boy stood behind a covered table on which he rested his hands, encased in slippers, thus suggesting the illusion of the legs. Another boy supplied the arms by thrusting his own under the other's from the back, the union being discreetly concealed by a carefully draped tablecloth, and a most realistic effect was produced by the actions of drinking, smoking, and dancing, in which both parts of the quaint figure combined. In those days children were unspoilt by elaborate and too realistic toys, and were thus encouraged to exercise ingenuity and invention in devising their own amusements. Throughout his short life he retained his loyal affection for his early friends. Writing to one of them in 1881, he regrets the passing of the happy days of his boyhood (he was then only seventeen); but he finishes with this characteristic sentiment: "But away with melancholy: we'll have the dead past bury its dead and live only for the present and the future." To the same playmate of his boyhood he sent this anagram on the same theme:

Ere youthful recollections fade away,
As a sweet dream too beautiful to last,
Remember how as lads we used to play.
Now all is changed. Alas, oh happy past!
Ever to thee my thoughts are captive fast.
Stay thy cruel hand, old Time, and don't erase
The memory of dear departed days.

After assisting his elder brother Charles in colouring designs for wallpaper, Phil May's first job was in the solicitor's office of Mr Percy Middleton. Thence he went to an estate agent's, where he spilt ink on a plan and left hurriedly; and later he dusted pianos in Mr Archibald Ramsden's music-store for half a crown a week. Next he was appointed timekeeper in an iron-foundry, but was discharged because his good nature would not allow him to report unpunctual workmen. He became friendly with the young son of Fred Fox, scene-painter at the Grand Theatre, Leeds, who allowed him to go behind the scenes, where he helped to mix the paints, and was also encouraged to continue to draw. "I can't remember a time," May said in later years, "when I didn't draw." His early efforts consisted either of battle scenes, evoked by the Franco-Prussian War, with large crowds and much tactfully disposed smoke, or of hunting figures, horses, hounds, and fox, coloured and cut out to stand up as he had seen his father make them. Familiarity with the theatrical performers gradually led him to make portraits of them, which he occasionally sold, at first for a shilling each. As his skill increased his price rose to five shillings, and some of the drawings were exhibited in frames at the entrance to the theatre. These drawings

varied in size from quite small sketches to full-length portraits about three feet high.



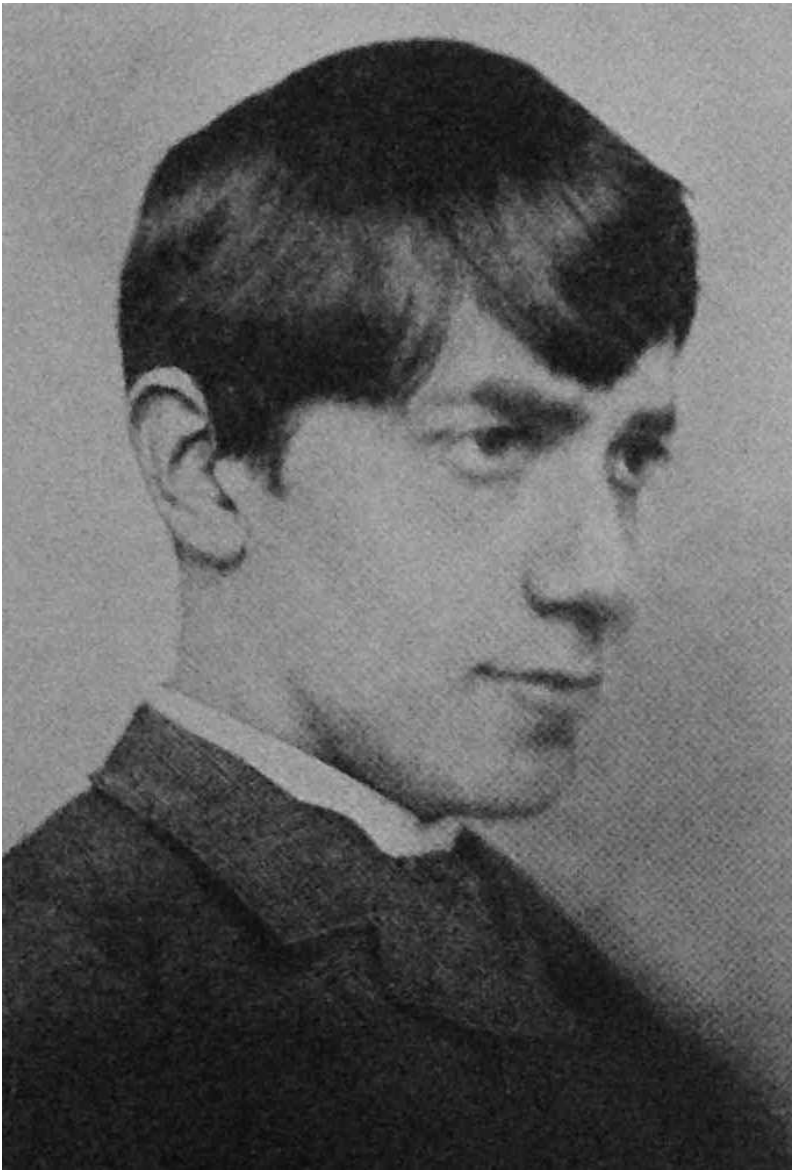
Philip May Senior
Drawn from a photograph by Phil May
By courtesy of Charles May, Esq.



Sarah Jane May
From a photograph
By courtesy of Charles May, Esq.

An interesting example included in the Leeds collection is a portrait of Jennie Hill (the “Vital Spark”), who was a great friend of the young artist. It measures ten and a half inches by eighteen and a half, and is in colour. The head is well drawn, rather photographic in treatment, and is probably an excellent likeness. It is certainly a remarkable achievement for a boy of fifteen years. With young Fox and other boys he performed plays of their own composition in which he was generally cast for the comedian. Under the encouragement of the scene-painter he drew copies of costume drawings for use in the wardrobe room, and then was allowed to make designs for dresses and masks, and to play small parts on the stage. Many of these very early drawings are quite undistinguished, but some of those done a little later show in their colour a definite resemblance to the well-known small

Chinese drawings on rice-paper. A little before this time, at the age of fourteen, he was invited to do some drawings for a local weekly comic paper called *The Yorkshire Gossip*, which unfortunately only lasted for four numbers. His contributions were entitled “People one meets at Dances,” and, although passable as a boy’s productions, contained little promise of future greatness. He also did some drawings for another Yorkshire paper, *The Busy Bee*. Both publications seem to have completely disappeared, and there are no copies in the files of the British Museum. Another of his boyish interests was a desire to become a jockey.



PHIL MAY IN 1878
From a photograph
By courtesy of Charles May, Esq.

In 1879 May joined a touring theatrical company under Mr Fred Stimpson, and was engaged to play small parts and make six drawings weekly at an inclusive salary of twelve shillings. A friend describes him at this time as being dressed in a long overcoat with enormous checks, a felt

hat much too large, and bell-bottomed trousers very tight at the knees. His dignity must have been enormously increased by a plush coat he used to wear, which had been discarded as too vivid for stage use. As a youth he was always fond of dressing up, and there are some snapshots taken by himself in which he appears in striking poses as Mephistopheles, Tony Lumpkin, and a 'swell.' He was at this time completely stagestruck and used to strut about the house declaiming Shakespeare in the style of his idol, Henry Irving. His first professional appearance was made at the Spa Theatre, Scarborough, and he remained with the company for about two years. In a letter to a friend dated July 30, 1882, he reports that he had been playing Simon Tappertit in *Barnaby Rudge* with one Joe Eldred, and accompanies the news with a charming little pen-drawing of himself in the character. What his talents may have been as an actor there is little evidence to show, but his versatility, or at any rate the need for it, is indicated by the fact that among the parts he played were François in *Richelieu* and the cat in *Dick Whittington*.

Late in 1882 he was back in Leeds, and designed the dresses for the Christmas pantomime at the Grand Theatre, where he also played Fred Storey's part during the last fortnight of the run. Here he probably met, or at least saw, many of the touring actors, among whom were Henry Irving and Wilson Barrett (lessee of the theatre), both at the time successful London managers. Whether or not some of these visitors may have suggested or encouraged the idea of going to London, he determined to put the idea into operation at the end of his pantomime run, and early in 1883 started for the metropolis with twenty shillings in his pocket, of which he had to pay fifteen shillings and sixpence for his fare.

His immediate ambitions at this time definitely lay in the direction of the stage. Robert Honnor, of Sadler's Wells, had died, and his widow, Phil's aunt, had married another actor, Fred Morton by stage name, a son of Mr Justice Mellor. Fred Morton had begun with small parts at Sadler's Wells under his friend Honnor's management, and afterward worked for some years with the Bancrofts in Tom Robertson's plays. Later still he was business manager at the Haymarket Theatre for J. S. Clarke, the American actor, still remembered for his performance in the part of Dr Pangloss. Morton's opinion of his nephew's prospects was evidently unfavourable, for, after showing him some of the sights of the great city, he put him on the train with a ticket back to Leeds. The boy was not readily discouraged, however, for, after a famous exemplar, he "turned again," leaving the train at the first stop, and with true Yorkshire grit walking back to London.

And now he fell on sadly hard times and touched the nadir of his ill-fortunes. Nobody in the theatre or elsewhere had work for him, and for long he did no better by hawking drawings of stage celebrities and others. It began to seem that he had better have stayed in that Leeds train after all. He could not command any such luxury as a lodging, and slept in the open, anywhere he could, on the Embankment or under carts in Covent Garden, and was even reduced to begging his food. This bitter time no doubt left its mark on his slight physical constitution, and made him the less able to resist the strains imposed on it in later and better times. But dawn broke at last, and his talent for drawing found him a friend. This was the proprietor of a photograph shop near Charing Cross, who was so much impressed by a drawing of Irving, Toole, and Bancroft that he published it as a print, bearing the date April 21, 1884—the day before Phil's twentieth birthday. Although his venture was not a financial success, this most excellent photographer remained a good friend to the lad, and often gave him a much-needed meal. But the print, though it brought no profit to the photographer, was the means of lifting the artist out of the depths, at any rate temporarily; for it brought him to the notice of a Mr Rising, of the Comedy Theatre. He introduced May to Lionel Brough, who bought the original drawing of the three actors, and sent the young artist with an introduction to the editor of *Society*, a weekly paper for which he did some portraits and caricatures. In the Winter Number for 1884 he had a double-page drawing, "The Seven Ages of Society," containing no less than 178 excellent portraits. A drawing of Sir (then Mr) Squire Bancroft brought him to the notice of Mr Edward Russell, of the Haymarket Theatre, who gave him an introduction to Mr Alfred Allison, editor of the recently started *St Stephens Review*, of which Colonel North, then very famous as the "Nitrate King," was proprietor. Although this was not at that time an illustrated paper, a Christmas Number, to be called *The Coming Paradise*, with drawings, was being planned, and there was hope that some of May's work might be utilized. Here, however, disappointment awaited him. The commission for the illustrations had been already placed, and there was no job available. May had been led to count on some definite help from this introduction, and in his weakened state of health the blow was just enough to turn the scale. He felt himself slipping back into the depths, and fell ill. Privation and disappointment and now illness made life so difficult a riddle that there seemed nothing for it but to abandon London and its hopes and get back to Leeds as best he could.

This he did, sick, broken, and dispirited. But again the tide turned and hope revived once more. A telegram arrived from Mr Allison. The drawings commissioned for *The St Stephens Review* had been found on delivery to be

unsatisfactory. Could May do the whole thing afresh, in quick time? He could, and he did. Weak as he was, he shut himself in a room in a small hotel near the Princess's Theatre and did the whole thing—cover, cartoons, and other drawings—in a week. For a short time he was easier; he paid his little debts to the landlord and others, and his health mended. But no more commissions came, no drawings were sold, and the payment received from *The St Stephens Review* was soon exhausted. Once again he found a friend in the midst of his penury, and, just as the Charing Cross photographer had come to his aid before, fate provided him with another benefactor in the landlord of the little hotel, a good fellow who refused to allow him to go or to starve. This honest soul discovered that the poor lad walked about the town all day to avoid appearing at meals for which he could not pay, and each night greeted him with a dinner of such solidity as should make up for all he had missed, and saw, too, that it was not neglected.

But with this the last of his bad times passed and the broken dawn began to open into real daylight. Again it was Lionel Brough who befriended him. *Nell Gwynne* was to be put on at the Avenue Theatre, with three great favourites in the cast—Florence St John, Arthur Roberts, and Lionel Brough. Charles Alias was to provide the costumes, and Lionel Brough's suggestion that Phil May should design them was accepted. Alias was another of the good friends of the struggling youngster, who showed his grateful affection by the many excellent portraits of the French costumier which he introduced into later drawings. The small, dapper figure, the kindly, amused face with black hair brushed straight back, and the darkly tinted *pince-nez* will be found in many of May's illustrations connected with matters theatrical.

This work for Alias being completed, more orders followed. Again he contributed political cartoons to *Saturnalia*, the Christmas Number of *The St Stephen's Review*, and when in the spring of 1885 it was resolved to turn it into an illustrated paper May was appointed to the staff, earning thereby a regular eight or ten pounds a week. Political, theatrical, and racing drawings, and even illustrations of ladies' costumes, formed most of this weekly work. Many of these, done under severe restrictions of time, were naturally lacking in composition and design, but, as the work of a youth twenty-one years old, they were all remarkable for the fine portraiture. Tom Merry, an artist now almost forgotten, did a weekly coloured cartoon for the *Review* and was succeeded in the job by the better-remembered Matt Morgan, and May, during his connexion with the paper, often deputized for them.

The young artist now felt himself established, and with the new confidence came marriage. Surviving friends still testify to the unfailing charm and sterling worth of Mrs Phil May, who in often difficult and trying circumstances was her husband's salvation—so far as was possible through the rest of his short life. Her Christian name was Lilian, and she had previously been married to a Mr Charles Farrer. A capable and energetic woman, as she always showed herself, she kept a confectioner's shop opposite the Grand Theatre in Briggate, Leeds, which Phil and his friends regularly patronized, and it was there the young couple met. The shop was disposed of, and May and his wife made their first settlement together in rooms in Bedford Street, Covent Garden, and here he executed his work for *The St Stephens Review*. Always a hard worker, he was also contributing portrait caricatures to *The Penny Illustrated Paper* and *The Pictorial World*, and was beginning to establish himself as a regular contributor to the London Press. All his drawings at this time present a great vivacity and sense of enjoyment, and many were afterward reproduced in other papers.

In the autumn of 1885 a turning-point in his career arrived as a consequence of the visit to London of Mr W. H. Traill, managing director of the Australian *Sydney Bulletin*, in search of a cartoonist for that publication. Mr Traill obviously had an eye for a coming man, for May's work attracted his notice at once. He offered him a contract for three years at fifteen pounds a week, but this was not quite enough to tempt the rising young artist to uproot himself from London, break his newly formed connexions, and exile himself to the opposite side of the world. The offer was increased to twenty pounds, and this tipped the balance. There is no doubt that considerations of health had something to do with the decision. Since his illness he had worked hard, with little or no rest, and a sea-voyage promised well as a change and a tonic. The contract was signed, and May and his wife sailed for Australia on November 11, 1885.

He was succeeded on *The St Stephens Review* by George R. Halkett, later well known as the cartoonist of *The Pall Mall Gazette*, editor of *The Pall Mall Magazine*, and a fervent admirer of May's work. But *The St Stephen's Review* did not lose him altogether, for May had left work behind him, and the Christmas Number, called *The Great White Spot*, had a large double-page cartoon from his hand, wherein appeared about sixty portraits of contemporary celebrities as mermen and mermaids. After his return from Australia, the Christmas Number of 1889, entitled *Crime*, included another double-page drawing showing a crowd of well-known people in a prison yard, with Sir William Harcourt and Mr Henry Labouchere as gaolers. The figure of Lord Salisbury in the foreground is a masterpiece of bold pen-

drawing. The signature is attached to a portrait of himself hanging from a gallows on the farther side of the wall.

Of the voyage out in 1885 an interesting souvenir still survives in a copy of *The Orient Guide* for 1885, given to May when he sailed. In this book he has made some interesting pencil drawings of his fellow-passengers on the blank leaves and the backs of the maps, and the whole is inscribed "Lillie May, December 1885." It has frequently been mentioned that Haddon Chambers, the dramatist, had some connexion with May's journey to Australia. He seems to have advised in favour of his going, and he certainly witnessed the signature to the contract with *The Sydney Bulletin*, but beyond that he had nothing to do with the decision.

For the three years of the contract May worked strenuously and exclusively for the *Bulletin*, producing about nine hundred drawings—cartoons, caricatures, and joke illustrations—he and Rossi Ashton between them practically providing the whole of the illustrations required. He lived first in rooms at the corner of Pitt Street and Bathurst Street, and later in a hotel at the corner of Hunter Street and Castlereagh Street. Both he and his wife were extremely popular in Sydney, and May's humour, generosity, ability, and modesty made him liked by everyone. Rumour has it that Traill, notwithstanding his recognition of May's talent, was somewhat uneasy about the appointment, even after the artist had definitely established his position with the *Bulletin* readers. He appears to have misunderstood the apparently effortless character of May's work, and, showing him an obviously more laboured drawing by another artist, asked, "Couldn't you finish up your drawings a bit—more like this?" May's reply was characteristic. "When I can leave out half the lines I now use I shall want six times the money!"

One of May's rare excursions into art other than black-and-white was occasioned by a strange tragedy, witnessed during a performance of *Faust* at the Opera House in Melbourne, which he was often heard to describe with dramatic vividness in later years. The leading tenor was unable to appear, and at the last moment the manager with difficulty persuaded a well-known local singer to take his place. In spite of his inexperience of the stage, his excellent voice and the circumstances of his appearance won the complete sympathy and applause of the audience, and he scored a tremendous success. The excitement, however, was too great a strain on a weak heart, and in one of his exits through a trap-door he dropped dead. The dramatic group, lit from the hole in the stage above, with the pallid figure of the triumphant singer surrounded by angels and other characters of the opera in

costume, the distant excited cheering of the audience, unconscious of the grim happening, all produced such a deep impression on the young artist that he made a quick sketch of the scene, which he afterward developed into a painting.

The three years spent in Sydney had an enormous effect on May and his future. The compulsory and regular production of drawings may either by its monotony ruin an artist's work, or, if he can maintain his enthusiasm and interest, greatly strengthen and improve it. In May's case the novelty of his surroundings, the confidence of an assured income, and the constant intercourse with other artists, from whom he learned much, stimulated his powers and broadened his outlook. After years of struggle and hardship he began to realize that his talents would now provide him with comfort and security. He was always experimenting with various methods, and collecting knowledge and material which he often used in later years. The Australian climate, with his improved conditions of life, contributed very favourably to an improvement in his health, which, never very robust, had been sadly affected by neglect and poverty.



“AULD LANG SYNE” (A CERTAIN FAREWELL TO THE STAGE)
Henry Irving, J. L. Toole, and Squire Bancroft

Before the *Bulletin* contract expired in the autumn of 1888, May had attracted to himself another good friend, anxious to assist in his artistic development. This was a Mr Theodore Fink, a wealthy Australian, who thought that a term of study in Rome and Paris would be for the benefit of May's art, and so urgently pressed his desire to provide the expenses of the experiment that in the end May gratefully accepted the offer. There were many reasons prompting a return to Europe. Money in those days was plentiful in Sydney, living was extravagant, and May's earnings did not provide much surplus over the weekly expenses. Though his own health had improved, that of his wife had of late been indifferent, and with all their Australian success both were growing a little homesick. Moreover, beyond

Rome and Paris, there was always the lure of London, the centre of all things in Phil May's world. So with every gratitude to the excellent Mr Fink, who was well content to support the cause of art to the extent of the necessary thousand pounds, the Mays set out for Europe in the late autumn of 1888.

May's connexion with *The Sydney Bulletin* did not wholly cease, however, with the end of his contract, and he continued to send contributions from time to time for several years—in fact, until 1894—and to the end Sydney and its *Bulletin* never forgot Phil May. In 1904, the year after his death, a representative collection of his drawings was published by the *Bulletin* under the title *Phil May in Australia*, with an account of his life and an excellent appreciation of his work by Mr A. G. Stephens.



MRS PHIL MAY
From a photograph
By courtesy of Walter J. Payne, Esq.

Their sea-journey back finished at Naples, and the Mays went thence to Rome. Here Phil set to work to justify his patron's liberality, but with all his study of the old masters he did not neglect the close observation of contemporary characters. Indeed, there can be no doubt that the world of his own day was May's best school, and the life about him offered a better training for an artist of his temperament than the works of the great painters

of the past. Nevertheless Rome and its works of art and architecture impressed him deeply, and he expressed the fact in his own peculiar fashion when he wrote in a letter to his brother that "Be it ever so crumbly there's no place like Rome." From Rome, after a short visit to London, he went to Paris, where he shared a studio and garden at Puteaux with Henry Thompson, a landscape painter, whose portrait, like those of many other friends, often appears in his drawings. Thompson afterward edited the last seven of the Phil May *Annals*. Among other contemporary artist friends in Paris were William (now Sir William) Rothenstein, Charles Conder and Jack Longstaff from Australia, and two Americans, both famous illustrators, W. T. Smedley and C. S. Reinhardt.

Industrious as ever, May worked hard in Paris, though he did little or nothing of the conventional work of the schools. He began, it is true, by collecting a large stock of painter's materials, but went very little farther in that direction. His instinct was all for drawing, for the cultivation of beauty and significance in line, and the harder he worked the more he became confirmed in his devotion to the special department wherein his genius lay. Much of his time in Paris was spent in the streets and boulevards and in the *cafés*, collecting sketches and notes of types, ever improving his native gift of seizing and presenting character. One fine, sunny morning May and his wife determined on an excursion, packed a luncheon-basket and sketching materials, and set off for a picnic in the country. The village *café* at their destination displayed such an alluring menu that they decided to ignore the contents of their basket. The day was a complete success, until, on the way back, they reached the *octroi*, where the official demanded to see the contents of the basket. These included a chicken, on which he said they must pay duty. It was useless to profess ignorance, still more ineffective to argue the point; but May was determined not to pay. Accordingly they seated themselves by the roadside, quietly consumed the greater part of the bird, and walked smilingly past the irate official, to whom they graciously presented the wish-bone.

On his return from Australia May had renewed his connexion with *The St Stephen's Review*, to which he sent contributions from Rome and Paris, and he soon began making the drawings for *The Parson and the Painter*, which first appeared in its pages in 1890, the text being supplied by Alfred Allison. This was an account, week by week, of visits by the bland and innocent country parson, the Rev. Joseph Slapkins, and his more sophisticated artist nephew, Charlie Summers, to various well-known theatrical and sporting resorts 'about Town,' with occasional excursions farther afield to Whitby, Scarborough, Boulogne, and Paris. Allison later

became better known as an authority on horse-breeding and the “Special Commissioner” of *The Sportsman*. The artist’s original inspiration for the parson was an Australian curate, whose fame as a preacher was said to have been greatly enhanced by the celebrity thus conferred on him. Although on its first appearance in the paper the series created no great impression, the drawings mark another important stage of progress in May’s career. When in 1891 they were published in book form at a shilling, thirty thousand copies were sold, despite the protest of an eminent Church dignitary which kept it off the railway bookstalls, and at the present time a good copy is valued at many times its published price. A very appreciative three-column review of the book in *The Daily Chronicle* acclaimed its merit and set the seal on the young artist’s fame. It was at once recognized that here was a new genius among our graphic humorists, a very great master in black-and-white art. The marvellous portraiture, the accurate drawing, the magic of his line, the boisterous humour, and the delightful recklessness of the whole achievement were never surpassed even by May himself in any of his later work, and it was here that he first completely found himself, and definitely established his own personal method. As a brilliant record of an interesting phase of Victorian life it should be well worth republishing. On page 26 of the book appeared an advertisement announcing the forthcoming publication of a new Conservative weekly paper called *Big Ben*, with Phil May as its art editor, and as its motto “Death on Teetotallers.” This followed and incorporated *The St Stephen’s Review*, which really ceased on September 8, 1892, but it only appeared on December 8, 1892, as a dummy issue to register the title, and so continued until March 30, 1893, when it stopped.

Between the publication of *The Parson and the Painter* in *The St Stephen’s Review* and its appearance as a paper-covered book May was engaged by *The Daily Graphic*, in which his first drawings, illustrating “A Day with a Medicine Man,” appeared on November 12, 1890. The “medicine man” of the title was a travelling American seller of quack medicines and amateur dentist, who travelled the country under the name of “Sequah,” with bands and processions and every circumstance of Barnum-like roaring publicity. These and his other drawings for *The Daily Graphic* were reproduced the same size as the originals, without the usual photographic reduction. On October 10 of the following year the weekly *Graphic* printed his first contribution—Arthur Roberts in *Joan of Arc* at the Gaiety Theatre—and afterward many others, including coloured drawings in its Christmas numbers. One of his earliest commissions for *The Graphic* took him to the Mansion House to make sketches of the children’s annual fancy-dress ball. A proud mother was intensely interested, and asked to be

allowed to see the drawing of her small son. The impression was so satisfactory that it produced a reward for the artist of half a crown, which May used to display with glee in recounting the story. One of the artists on *The Daily Graphic* at that time has described how Mr Harvey Thomas, son of W. L. Thomas, the founder of both papers, brought into the studio a modest, smiling young man with wonderfully penetrating eyes whom he then introduced as "Phil May." Here he met, among other artists, A. S. Hartrick, E. J. Sullivan, and Frank Dean, who were numbered with his greatest friends and admirers till his death.

In 1893 Mr W. L. Thomas formed the excellent idea of sending May on a tour round the world in company with Mr E. S. Grew, a member of *The Daily Graphic* literary staff, the resultant text and drawings being expected to provide a notable feature of that journal for some months, as they did for so long as the tour lasted. A draft of a letter (probably to his wife) written in one of his sketch-books gives a dismal account of the voyage out, a very inauspicious start which probably did much to prejudice the success of the expedition.

Arrived on board and found letter from Thomas wishing us God-speed. Also two boxes of cigars, one for Grew and one for myself, from Harvey Thomas. We started from Southampton at 12 o'clock. Sorry to find did not stop at Queenstown; beautiful weather until we got past Cornwall. Since then most awful passage I have ever had. We have both been very sick. The morning after we left it was blowing a gale. I tried to have some breakfast and managed a little but everything was so sickly that I couldn't manage much. Fancy steak and eggs for a sick man! Lunch no better. How would you like some roast lamb and stewed prunes mixed? It turned me up again. Dinner I was feeling very qualmsy but they brought me some roast goose and stewed apricots and cherries. The Germans seem to eat fruit instead of vegetables with viands[?].

Whatever you do don't come by a German boat. The company on this ship is awful. I never met such a lot of German and American cads in my life. We have both been too ill to work, but are now getting used to the motion—but it's terrible.

The World's Fair at Chicago became the limit of the journey, and here May rebelled. Industrious and persistent as he was in his work, in other matters a certain whimsical irresponsibility was part of his nature, and no

doubt Mr Grew, who was inspired to style himself “Phil’s chaperone,” had not found it altogether easy to keep his erratic companion to the appointed track even so far. Probably the American types did not appeal to him like his beloved Londoners, or perhaps the home-sickness which had brought him back from Australia again asserted its influence. May insisted that America did not agree with him, and it was plain that he was indisposed to go on. It was a long way to London travelling west from Chicago, and much shorter to go back in an easterly direction. So it came about that on July 6, 1893, the two returned travellers might have been seen mounting the stairs of *The Daily Graphic* office to face the wrath of the disappointed proprietor.

Now it chanced that this was the wedding-day of their Majesties the present King and Queen, then Prince George, Duke of York, and Princess May of Teck. The streets were crowded with loyal citizens making holiday, Venetian masts lined the route of the procession, flags blazed and fluttered everywhere, and a device of the intertwined initials of the royal couple, G and M, formed a conspicuous feature of the decorations, repeated everywhere in a thousand places. All this having been duly observed and admired, Phil May burst enthusiastically into Mr Thomas’s room in advance of his colleague. “Well, well!” he exclaimed, “this is most handsome of you! Wonderful! We never expected such a reception as this. All these flags and things—they must have cost you a frightful lot! And our initials, too, everywhere all along the street! Grew and May—most gratifying! You *must* be delighted to see us back!” And he shook the astounded proprietor heartily by the hand. Even an editor with a small sense of humour could not have withstood this; and Mr Thomas’s sense of humour was of full growth. The return of the prodigals ended in a roar of laughter.

ROWSLEY,
HOLLAND PARK ROAD,
KENSINGTON.W.

My Dear Mr Spielmann

Thank you for your
congratulations. I found
the Punch staff last week
and dined with them last
Wednesday, and carved my
name on the scroll of fame—
I mean the dining table.

It has made me awfully
happy.

I will ride over to see you
when the frost breaks. I
thought you were in Hastings.
I was going to write and tell
you the news.

I have given my very kindest
regards to Mrs Spielmann
and believe me

Yours very Sincerely
Phil May



LETTER FROM PHIL MAY ACKNOWLEDGING CONGRATULATIONS ON HIS
ELECTION TO THE STAFF OF "PUNCH"
By courtesy of M. H. Spielmann, Esq.

Work was resumed in London, and May's drawings in *The Graphic* publications were none the fewer, though less world-wide in subject, than

they might have been. A selection from them, including several of those done in America, was published in book form in 1897.

By this time May was contributing to many of the illustrated papers: *Pick-me-up*, for which in 1891 he did an excellent series of thumbnail portraits called “On the Brain,” *The Sketch*, *The Pall Mall Budget*, *Black and White*, *The English Illustrated Magazine*, and *The Daily Chronicle*. The recollection comes to mind of some delightful studies which he did in 1895 for the last-named journal, of Jane Cakebread, a well-known character of the period, whose fondness for the bottle led to frequent and regular appearances in the police courts, and some amusing dialogues with the presiding magistrate. Artist and subject found a mutual sympathy, and he has drawn her again in the *Gutter-snipes* drawing which he calls “Two Penn’orth.” The work for *The English Illustrated Magazine* in 1893-94, then under the editorship of C. K. Shorter, consisted of three or four illustrations to L. F. Austin’s and A. R. Ropes’ monthly causerie “The Whirligig of Time.” It was in the early numbers of the same magazine that another great black-and-white artist—Hugh Thomson—first attracted attention to his charming work. In connexion with the *Pick-me-up* series it is interesting to note that in the first number of *The Man in the Moon* (February 1847)—an alleged humorous monthly, edited by Albert Smith and A. B. Reach—appeared a drawing of Balfe, the composer, with the top of his head lifted and musical notes issuing from it. It is possible that May (or his editor) might have seen this volume, and, having adopted the still-born infant, revived and developed it with his customary skill. May’s earliest contribution (January 2, 1892) to *The Illustrated London News* was “A Double Harlequinade,” with Harry Payne, the old-style clown, and Charles Lauri as his *fin de siècle* successor.

Editors now clamoured for his work because, apart from its humour and merit, it could be reproduced so easily and satisfactorily on any sort of paper: and his prices rose accordingly. He also made many drawings for advertisements, menu cards, and theatrical programmes, and was often called upon to do ‘lightning sketches’ at after-dinner entertainments and concerts. In 1892 he successfully launched his *Annual*, which appeared regularly until 1905, two years after his death, in thirteen Winter editions and three extra Summer Numbers. The early numbers were published by Mr Walter Haddon, who had issued *The Parson and the Painter*, and Mr Neville Beeman, but in 1898 the *Annual* was transferred to Messrs Thacker and Co., who for some reason spoilt the uniformity of the set by lengthening the page. The first editor was Mr Francis Gribble, who has told elsewhere of the difficulties he experienced in extracting May’s drawings, and among the

literary contributors were such well-known writers as Gilbert Parker, Israel Zangwill, Morley Roberts, E. F. Benson, Barry Pain, Conan Doyle, Eden Phillpotts, H. G. Wells, Kenneth Grahame, Walter Besant, Walter Raymond, Grant Allen, and Richard le Gallienne. Of the first number more than fifty-three thousand copies were sold.

Phil May made his first appearance in *Punch* with a small drawing on October 14, 1893. Ten of his drawings were published in its pages in 1894, and thereafter he rarely missed a weekly contribution, and was well represented in the Almanacks. At first his humour, dealing as it so often did with low life, was considered somewhat out of place in its sedate surroundings, and it was not until February 1895 that his powers, admirably championed by Mr M. H. Spielmann, were fully recognized, and he was elected to the *Punch* staff, where he remained a much-valued and very popular member until his death. His initials are carved on the famous table between those of Thackeray and Du Maurier. At his first *Punch* dinner he was obviously shy and nervous, and a little bored. At the end of the evening when nearly everyone had gone, though the table still carried many bottles of champagne and other desirable beverages, he turned quietly and timidly to Bernard Partridge with his customary suggestion, "Let's go to Romano's and have a drink." When other engagements prevented him attending the weekly dinner he generally managed to secure a copy of the menu as "evidence for Lil."

May's irresponsible vagaries, as may be supposed, were sometimes a source of worry to Mr F. C. (afterward Sir Francis) Burnand, the editor. He once sent in at the very last moment a tiny thumbnail sketch of a fat boy in buttons pulling a cork, with a note, "Herewith my full-page drawing as promised." For some escapade or another, some outrage on the ordained routine of the steady-going *Punch* of those days, he was summoned to answer at the editorial office; but on his arrival he found that Burnand was engaged for half an hour. This suggested an idea. Hansoms were available at the office door, any number of theatrical costumiers were within a few minutes' drive, and the half-hour might be put to some use. Returning at the end of that time, he tapped timidly at the sanctum door and entered. The irate editor turned to find the penitent artist transformed into a somewhat forlorn but much-lengthened figure of Little Lord Fauntleroy, in his pathetic costume of black velvet with lace collar and white socks, and once again an intended editorial reproof dissolved in roars of laughter. The two became



MAYS INITIALS
ON THE
"PUNCH"
TABLE

*By courtesy of
M. H.
Spielmann,
Esq.*

great friends, and May and his wife often joined Burnand's Christmas party at his home at Ramsgate. It was on one of these visits that Phil bought an old tub of a boat, for no reason except a sudden and violent desire to rechristen it *The Dredgenought*. It was at the suggestion of Burnand, too, that May on his deathbed received the last rites of the Roman Catholic faith.

Many of the earlier *Punch* artists—Doyle, Keene, Leech, and Sambourne among them—had been first presented to the public in its own pages. Phil May, with Bernard Partridge and Raven-Hill, belonged to a later generation, who had made their reputation elsewhere before joining the staff. Little or nothing in the way of official recognition came to any of the band, although John Tenniel and, later, Bernard Partridge received the honour of knighthood. In 1896, after the publication of *Gutter-snipes*, May was elected R.I., the only contemporary black-and-white artist who shared the distinction with him being Hugh Thomson. Lord Leighton, then President, who greatly admired May's work, wished to see him proposed for election as Associate of the Royal Academy; but Leighton's death early in 1896 ended the idea, for no other academician of that time had the temerity to adopt it. When one considers the names of many artists, long since forgotten, who received full academic honours, it seems remarkable that an associateship at least had not already been conferred on Charles Keene. May, at any rate, had the distinction of having forced on that august corporation the consideration of recognizing black-and-white drawing as a form of art. Once at least he contributed to the annual exhibition. Item No. 1558 in the 1898 catalogue was described as "Drawings illustrating J. M. Barrie's play of *The Little Minister*."

At this time May's output, charged with the feverish energy of genius, was enormous, and his work brought a large income, which was spent, or squandered, faster than he received it. As to the amount of this income many wild stories got about, and were even printed in 'gossipy' paragraphs of the less responsible papers, fantastic guesses many times greater than the true figures could possibly be. The maddest of these tales put the figure at a hundred pounds a day! In truth, for some years he made no more than a dozen other black-and-white artists of his time, and probably less than some. At his zenith his year's earnings must have been very good, but the money was mostly received in advance of the work, and probably spent in advance of receipt. If it had been spent on himself and his wife it would have been well employed, but he became surrounded by a crowd of sponging parasites who must have absorbed more than escaped them. A parallel with George Morland suggests itself, and it is the fact that, like Morland, May drank a great deal more than was good for him. "Here lies a drunken dog," said

Morland, suggesting an epitaph for himself; and May once said to Mr A. S. Hartrick, in one of his self-depreciatory moods of remorse, "My father was a drunkard and I'm a drunkard." But apart from the fact that there is little other evidence against the unfortunate Philip May, senior, there are kinds and degrees in drunkenness, and May's was not altogether like Morland's. Nobody who really knew Phil May can imagine him becoming drunk of set purpose; drunkenness simply overtook him as an almost inevitable consequence of too friendly a disposition in his erratic way of life. In those days the cult of the saloon-bar was at its strongest, and May spent very much of his time in those friendly haunts. Any man who goes about providing drinks for everybody in sight is inevitably certain to take too many himself.

May was the kindest and most generous soul imaginable. It was an ordinary incident for him to give a newsboy half a sovereign for a halfpenny evening paper, because he thought "the little beggar looked as though he could do with it." If he hadn't any money in his pocket he would give the suppliant his gold watch or his overcoat, telling him to get what he could on it and let him have the ticket. The casual visitor to his studio came away with his pocket stuffed full of cigars. A friend describes a characteristic scene in a West End bar from which a young girl of about sixteen was being ordered as she tried to push her way in to sell penny bunches of violets. May, noticing that the poor child's boots were in a sadly broken condition, stopped her and gave her a sovereign with instructions to buy a new pair and bring back the change, taking her basket of violets meanwhile "as security." As soon as her back was turned he went about the crowded bar, first among his intimates and then among the rest, with a broad grin and the three words, each time blurted from beside the cigar that never left his mouth, "Violets a bob!" When in due course the girl returned with the new boots, she found herself in the presence of a bar-full of men wearing her violets, and when the quizzical-looking man who had given her the sovereign handed her a nearly empty basket, and piled a large fistful of shillings on top of the change, the whole amazing situation so overwhelmed her that she burst into tears!

Surviving contemporaries can tell a score of such tales; but this easygoing generosity, it need hardly be said, attracted a swarm of would-be beneficiaries of a far less worthy type than the newsboy and the flower-girl, and his best friends were continually spending their energies in a hopeless attempt to defend him against the sham-Bohemian parasites who surrounded him: 'actors' who had never been seen on any stage, 'journalists' who had been kicked out of every office in Fleet Street, and 'sportsmen' on whom the racecourse police kept a sharp eye. His real friends usually had business of

their own to look after, and so were less continually in his company than the undesirable loafers who preyed on him for drinks, cigars, and other cadgings. Time and again he would be rescued from their clutches by some late-homing friend and carried off in a hansom, and such rescues were apt sometimes to lead to fights and scimmages and perhaps to the intervention of the police. At least two of his surviving friends relate a characteristic and exactly similar incident; in each case the friend had succeeded in depositing May in a hansom at the door of a Strand bar, and, stopping for a moment to give the cabman directions, found, on attempting to enter the cab himself, that two of the more persistent parasites had got in from the other side and filled it. They may have been the same pair in each case; at any rate, it became necessary to drag them out by the legs with the help of the door porter or the police. Some part of this following of undesirables may be attributed to May's longing for any sort of companionship in preference to being alone. Once, when Mrs May was away collecting their belongings from the Paris studio, he wandered about London disconsolate, and it was about this time that the need for nightly rescues was discovered by the good Samaritans among his friends.

In such circumstances it will be understood that May's life was—in a double sense—a hand-to-mouth existence. Mr Ernest Brown, proprietor of the Leicester Galleries and a good friend of May, had quite a collection of letters, some charmingly illustrated, all appealing for money on account. Many of the letters referred to periods of ill-health, and, as may be supposed, much of his work was done under very adverse conditions. Often he had to escape to the country or to France to recuperate, to dodge the numerous callers who interrupted him, and to complete a batch of commissions; for nobody could have been more scrupulously conscientious in eventually fulfilling his obligations, whether he had already spent the money or not. Unfortunately he was not so particular in the important matter of punctuality, and most of the editors for whom he worked were obliged to send a representative to fetch his drawings. Sometimes the call had to be repeated several times, and often the work was done while the messenger waited. Mr Carmichael Thomas, of *The Graphic*, once sent him to Margate to recover from an illness and to finish a page drawing for the Christmas Number. The first part of the programme was a complete success, but no drawing came. Letters and telegrams produced no result; large printed notices, sent from London, were displayed by the landlady in prominent parts of the rooms; but still nothing happened. At last Mr Thomas grew desperate and engaged a sandwichman to pace up and down in front of the house with boards bearing the words, in large type, "Don't forget the

Christmas Number drawing!” This did have at least the effect of extracting an appealing protest from the aggrieved artist—but nothing more. Despite all these drawbacks, mostly self-inflicted, the amount of sheer hard work he got through was surprising.

Others beside Mr Ernest Brown, editors especially, must have received, if they never kept, similar collections of letters, and the cheques they elicited, although often large, usually melted in a few hours. One typical instance of this recklessness is concerned with a lunch which he gave to a party of friends at Romano’s. The principal item of the menu was a very special fruit salad on which all the resources of the restaurant were lavished, and the total bill came to £35. May had an arrangement with the publishers of his *Annual* that he should be paid £12 10s. in cash for every drawing delivered. He therefore sent a messenger with a note, “Dear——, Please hand the bearer £37 10s. The three drawings will be handed to you personally to-morrow.” The money came back within half an hour, the bill was paid, May pocketed the change, and the three drawings were duly delivered next day. Another characteristic incident, also connected with Romano’s, fortunately did not prove quite so expensive. A group of regular frequenters of the bar were discussing one night the subject of last trains, and comparing watches which all differed. It was proposed that they should settle the exact time by going outside and looking at the Law Courts clock. “Don’t be silly,” said Phil, remembering the two intervening churches; “you can’t see it from here.” “I’ll bet you a quid you can,” said the first man. “Done,” replied Phil promptly, and out they trooped into the Strand. Sure enough, there was the clock pointing plainly to ten minutes to twelve. The bet was paid and a mental note made of the curious fact. A little later Romano appeared on the scene, and May skilfully led the conversation round to the accuracy of the bar clock, which, he was prepared to bet, differed from that at the Law Courts. “Just go outside and have a look to settle it,” suggested the wily artist, with an eye to business. “The Roman” fell easily into the trap, and, to the extent of another sovereign, supported his opinion that the clock could not be seen. “Now, then, my lad, come and have a look,” said the triumphant Phil, and out they went again. But, alas, no clock was visible, and he began to wonder, as he parted with his second forfeit, whether on the first occasion he might have been ‘seeing things.’ The explanation, however, was far simpler: the light in the clock was always put out at midnight.

It was a standing order at *The Sketch* office that five pounds were always to be left out to be paid to May in exchange for any drawing he might leave. The result of this arrangement was that the artist, finding himself in need of

money when in the Strand neighbourhood, would draw a sketch (usually just a single figure—a type of character or the like) just as another person might draw a cheque, and cash it over the counter. Sir William Ingram's investment was quite a profitable one, for after May's death, when all the rest of his work had been published, *The Sketch* still had a long series of Phil May drawings in hand, slight though they might sometimes be, which, judiciously eked out, lasted quite a long time. Mr Harvey Thomas has described how Phil, finding nobody in *The Sketch* office but an inexorable clerk or office boy, who would part with nothing till he could grasp the drawing, would calmly stroll into *The Graphic* office, borrow a sheet of Bristol board and a pen, make a quick sketch, and take it straightway into the 'opposition shop' to draw his fiver! He had a similar convenient arrangement with Mr T. J. Barratt, the managing director of A. and F. Pears, Ltd., who used many of his drawings as effective and unconventional advertisements.

When he delivered his drawings personally he insisted on cash rather than a cheque, as being more immediately negotiable. Money, when he had it, was carried loose in his pockets, sometimes in his socks, and disbursed recklessly. Cab-touts, cab-drivers, hall porters, waiters, and commissionaires were staggered to receive gold for their services, real or imaginary. Reichardt, the proprietor of *Pick-me-up*, once paid him twenty-five pounds which all disappeared before he reached home. He had to explain to his wife that unfortunately Reichardt had not been able to settle the account, but that he would do so next day. To make sure of getting the money Mrs May herself called early at the office, and Reichardt, to whom Phil had already got through a cautionary explanation, let her have ten pounds. Later May himself appeared, thanked Reichardt for helping him out of the difficulty, and promptly drew another five pounds himself! Mrs May always endeavoured, generally, alas, unsuccessfully, to keep some control of the family finances. Once, when it was necessary for Phil to entertain some business acquaintances, she advanced him four pounds with the hope that he would try to keep the expenses within that limit. On the way to the dinner he collected an additional twenty-five pounds from Clement Shorter, then editor of *The Sketch*. During the evening he spent the lot, with the exception of one pound, which he produced triumphantly next morning, to receive his wife's commendation for his carefulness.

It will be readily understood that, after such a life of cheerful financial chaos, little or nothing was left at May's death; and even his original drawings, which he had intended to leave for the benefit of his widow, had been in large measure scattered freely among deserving and undeserving

alike. It will also be understood with what appropriateness he once went to a Covent Garden fancy-dress ball in the guise of a 'brass-finisher,' taking with him Peter Jackson, the coloured pugilist, in the character of a *punch* artist.

May's residences in London after his return from Australia, so far as I have been able to trace them, were at 34 King Street, Covent Garden; 7 Holland Park Road (1892); Rowsley House, Holland Park Road (1896); 11 Campden Hill Square (1899); 15 Elm Tree Road, St John's Wood; and 5 Melina Place, Grove End Road, St John's Wood (1902). It must have been in Holland Park Road that May's was one of three houses bearing a certain similarity. The other two were occupied by sedate and austere painters, whose feelings may be imagined when they were aroused in the small hours by some of May's very unconventional callers. On the few occasions when, to the delight of his wife, he spent a quiet evening at home, he was often brought down from bed to entertain his visitors until breakfast-time. The studios in Holland Park Road were the scene of the more notable of the well-remembered Sunday afternoon receptions. May always thoroughly enjoyed parties, and liked to see crowds of his friends at these very informal at-homes, which at first were very delightful. Singers, actors, writers, painters, English and Australian, all admirers of his genius, crowded into the studio with their friends, and no pleasanter, genuinely Bohemian gatherings are remembered by those still living who were privileged to be present. Melba was there more than once, and Agnes Nichols and Ada Crossley often came and sang.

One evening a distinguished Spanish dancer arrived, with a bag containing her collection of diamonds, and accompanied by her husband and her business manager. There is scarcely need to mention her name: she was very famous in her time, and Sargent painted her. For some reason that nobody quite understood, the harmony of the happy gathering was suddenly interrupted by a violent quarrel between the two men, who had to be separated by the other guests, the husband being kept in the dining-room downstairs, while the manager, who in the course of the argument had been discharged, was held down in the studio above. The latter was eventually persuaded to go, still remonstrating, threatening the terrors of the law, and declaiming loudly against the injustice of his dismissal. Soon afterward the dancer and her husband also left in a hansom, but presently returned post-haste in a state of great excitement to announce that the diamonds were missing, or, as they almost suggested, stolen. Consternation fell on the festive assembly, and everybody stared at everybody else, dumb with amazement and suspicion. What was to be done? Poor Mrs May was distracted, and even the usually imperturbable Phil's smile, displaced by a

grave perplexity, faded from round the eternal cigar in his mouth. Nobody wanted to stay, though nobody dared to go, and an uneasy feeling began to spread that a general turning out of pockets should be the next move in the proceedings. First, however, a hunt about the premises was undertaken as being a little less personal. This appeared to be effecting no more than a grievous domestic derangement, when it occurred to some detective genius that the hansom was still waiting outside, and there was a bare possibility that it might not be altogether time wasted to look in that. Once again was genius justified, for there lay the bag, with all its jewels intact, where it had slid off the seat and secreted itself at the foot of the door. Profuse Iberian apologies succeeded sombre Spanish suspicion, and nobody had to turn out his pockets.

Whether or not a certain circumstance had anything to do with this interlude in the Holland Park gatherings, there can be no doubt that it was a contributory cause in the gradual deterioration of the Sunday afternoons. The circumstance in question was that, high at the end of the studio, and conspicuous amid the varied refreshment lavishly provided for the company, stood a barrel of whisky, surrounded by syphons and tumblers. This was very well in the early days, but there arrived a time when the news travelled to the parasites in the bars, who could smell free whisky miles away, and at once the parties became diluted with a very undesirable element, uninvited and unqualified for such company as had hitherto gathered. Phil, kindly and easygoing, could never drive any sort of creature from his doorstep, and the situation grew a little difficult for his real friends, who began by leaving their wives at home, and presently, one by one, stayed away themselves; so that ere long the dilution became the sole element, the Sunday afternoons degenerated into a mass-meeting of parasites and spongers, and the whisky barrel had to be renewed far more frequently. To make matters worse, the parasites, nerved by impunity, began to cadge or steal drawings, together with almost anything else they could lay hands on, which they sold anywhere for any price they could get. In those days there was a pawnshop in the Strand where the Hotel Cecil afterward stood, and conveniently opposite Romano's, where many of these despicable characters converted their plunder into cash, and where May's original drawings were often obtainable at much less than their real value. Mrs May, who in the earlier days had gone about happily among her guests, now took, wisely enough, to watching from the studio gallery, and by way of saving at least some of the drawings from the harpies would often write on the back the words "To Lil." If she observed any such drawing in danger of changing hands, she would claim it straightway, turning it over and pointing conclusively to the

inscription. This was certain and final, for with anything he had given his wife, or thought he had, Phil May was adamant. One of these very drawings, with the inscription still visible, may be seen in the British Museum collection. It is entitled “Me when I’m Old,” and represents May’s grotesque idea of what he might look like in extreme old age—lank and toothless, but still smiling broadly. It was given to Mr Arthur Morrison at May’s death by Mrs May as a memento of his friend.

As may be supposed, this sort of thing could not last for ever. His undesirable acquaintances not only drank his whisky and cadged his drawings, but they lured him away from his work on all sorts of wild and protracted excursions from which he could not escape, and for which he was unpitifully mulcted. Some of them even went to the length of forging his name to bills, confident in the assurance, unfortunately justified, that May’s good nature would protect them from prosecution. Writing in *The Sketch* of August 12, 1903, Keble Howard, the editor, said, “Some respected his simplicity, fostering his genius, and striving their utmost to keep the curs, that hungry pack, at bay. But the curs won the day.”



Phil May in 1902, with his Dog "Mr Blathers"
From a photograph by Foulsham and Banfield Ltd.

Before this sad deterioration, however, these parties were most enjoyable, and May himself loved to take part in the burlesques and spoof plays; or he would do conjuring tricks, producing at the invitation of a confederate something very improbable, which he had previously concealed. Once he offered to give an exhibition of thought-reading and persuaded a lady to take a card and think hard about it. On his way out of the room he was pressed into a part in a stirring drama that Dudley Hardy—incomparable impromptu actor—was concocting, and instantly forgot all about the thought-reading. At the end of ten minutes the lady, who was still

strenuously concentrating on the card, had to be rescued from imminent collapse to receive May's sincere apologies. He could whistle well, and had a pleasant tenor voice, in which he loved to sing Sims Reeves's songs. Few people ever heard of him as a writer; but two songs of pretty sentiment were written by him—"The Rose that I gave to You" and "Souvenir." These were set to music by Francis Böhr, and published by Boosey and Co. in September 1903, just after his death. In one of the few surviving sketch-books he has written the rough draft of the first:

The roses that I gave to you
E'en yesterday all fresh with dew
Lie withered now and scentless too.
Hear me, Lilian, speaking sooth,
Gather the flowers of your youth
Ere they wither as they must:
Nothing lingers here but dust.
So do not waste a single minute,
But gather all the joy that's in it.

In the same book is another verse whose merit also lies mainly in its sentiment:

My wayward heart I can't control it.
I did not give it you; you stole it.
But I don't want it: I'd as lief
That you should keep it, lovely thief.



Phil May, by “Spy”
From *Vanity Fair*

Phil May could not be called a widely read man, as may well be supposed from the manner of his life; but in a restricted sense he might be called well read, for his taste in literature was extremely good. In all matters of the arts, indeed, he had a most accurate instinct for quality, and nobody could more sincerely love the best, whether in literature, music, or painting. His odd quietness and reserve, however, caused all this to be concealed from any but a very few of his intimates, who he knew could be trusted to feel with him and understand. He always had a leaning toward actors and the stage, partly inherited and partly resulting from his early associations with the Grand Theatre at Leeds. In 1902 announcements appeared in the Press that he was to appear with William Mollison on tour as Pistol in *Henry V*. What little indication we have of his native talent as an actor we get from Mr Mollison, who has said that "he had a fine conception of the part, a delicious sense of its humour, and an eccentric style that would have made an audience roar with laughter." Unfortunately his movements at this time were so uncertain that he never appeared even at rehearsal. The year before this a lecturing tour in England and America had been proposed to him by Major Pond, the well-known impresario who stage-managed many of the celebrities of the time. He went so far as to rehearse the quick sketches with which he proposed to illustrate his subject, "Humorous Drawings," but the fixed schedule of appearances was probably too much for his erratic temperament, and this project also failed to materialize.

Stories illustrating the irresponsible and delightful character of May are legion, and many have already been told elsewhere. Some of them are true. Very many are concerned with the well-meant efforts of his friends to take him home, an act of charity which was apt to develop into a long progress involving many calls *en route* at Romano's, the Devonshire Club, Verrey's, and other places where he had to "see a man." Innumerable personal contributions could be made to a chapter "On taking Phil May Home," but it might suffer somewhat from redundancy. He seldom went out without some humorous adventure, which would often provide him with material for a drawing. Many are concerned with his excellent wife, of whom he was very fond, a loyal and enthusiastic comrade and a capable woman, who managed her wild genius as well as was possible, and did her best to save him from himself and his unfortunate acquaintances. It is quite certain that none but a woman of an overmastering sense of humour could have led her life, and enjoyed it all (or almost all) as she did. In the early days in London, when it was essential that Phil should be undisturbed at his work, she would open the door to unnecessary callers in the dress and character of a charwoman, and announce blandly that Mr and Mrs May were out. There is a good

drawing of her in the Morrison collection in the British Museum, in which Phil has drawn the head with a quill pen and used the feather end to indicate a fur coat; and those who knew her will recognize her elegant figure in many of her husband's published drawings. His devotion to her appears even in some of the wildest stories of his friends' efforts to get him home to her at all hours of the morning. On one occasion, in a condition far removed from abstinence, with his own particular hansom at last turned in the direction of home, he found himself in the middle of the flowers at Covent Garden at its busiest hour of 4 A.M. "Roses!" he exclaimed, "red roses! Lil loves them!" And forthwith he had the cab filled with red roses till it would hold no more. Arrived home at St John's Wood, he found, as he usually did, that Mrs May had gone to bed, and was fast asleep. So, without waking her, he piled the bed high with the roses, and himself slept on a sofa, leaving her to wake and find herself bowered and covered with her favourite flower.

On another similar occasion, however, the presentation might have been designed as a burlesque on this idyllic ending of a truant night. It was not so late in the morning, but the other circumstances were much the same—perhaps a little worse. It was past midnight, but there was no Covent Garden Market yet for hours. A determined friend had planted Phil by his side in a hansom, and would hear of no divagations: "Home," was the order, by the nearest way, and nowhere else. But Phil was insistent on taking back something or other "for the missis," some little peace-offering, some little surprise. Flowers were out of the question at that hour, and, as it seemed to his friend, so was everything else. But Phil knew better. "There's a fishmonger's in Park Road," he said, "stop there," and straightway fell asleep. But not for long. As though by instinct he roused himself at Park Road, looked out, and stopped the cab at the desired spot. The shop, of course, was shut tight and dark, but that was nothing to Phil. He stumbled out of the cab, rang the bell, and attacked the door with both fists, calling on the slumbering tradesman by name. Presently a window opened above, and a sleepy head appeared.

"Is that Mr May?" demanded the fishmonger; for him, it was clear, this attack was no novelty!

"Yes—come down! I want something for Mrs May. Got a lobster?"

"No, there's nothing, Mr May; it's hot weather, and I've cleared off everything. The shop's empty. Good night!" and the window began to close.

"Goo' night be blowed!" and the assault on the door was redoubled. "Come down! Got a fowl? Pair o' ducks? Bit o' salmon? Must have

something!”

“There’s nothing at all, Mr May!” pleaded the victim. “Nothing till the morning.”

“Well, so it is morning. Come on! Must have something! What sort o’ shop’s this? Got nothing!” More thumps on the door.

There was nothing else for it; the unhappy tradesman gave in and descended. He unbolted the door, turned on the light, and displayed the empty shop with a sweep of his arm. “Look for yourself, sir—there’s not a thing—not a thing! If you *won’t* believe me, look!”

But May’s eagle eye discovered something in a far corner. “What’s that?” he demanded, advancing deviously into the shop and pointing.

“That? That’s a conger eel. When I said there was nothing I wasn’t thinking of that. You don’t want a conger eel for Mrs May! There’s nothing else—nothing whatever!”

The unwelcome shopper continued his devious course till he stood over the conger eel—an enormous five-foot specimen; then, with a last glance round the empty shop and a sudden resolution, he fell on the slimy dead monster with both hands. “All right! Got nothing else—this’ll have to do. Must have *something!*”

The fishmonger, anxious for bed again, produced bunches of wrapping paper, and May and his sea-serpent blundered back into the hansom. But the paper was all inadequate; the slippery monster escaped in all directions, and, as his companion afterward observed, the situation in the cab during the progress to Melina Place resembled nothing as much as a slimy modern version of the Laocoon at Rome.

Poor Mrs May had her “little surprise.” Full of the one idea that he had achieved *something* to delight her, and perhaps with a vague recollection of his success with the roses, he triumphantly dumped the slithering horror on the bed and woke her with a start to confront an ophidian nightmare that surpassed her wildest dreams. “It must have been a bit of a shock,” May confessed in later and cooler moments, “but she stood it, dear old missis—stood it like a brick, till she began sorting out all the beastly wrapping papers and found among them the drawings that I ought to have left at the *Graphic* office!”

He had one regular cabman who always drove him home after the weekly *Punch* dinner. One night, when driver and fare were both in a somnolent condition, the cab stopped outside May’s residence long enough

even for him to alight, and then was driven to its rest at Kensal Rise. Next morning at daybreak May, still sleeping peacefully, was aroused by the impact of a strong jet of water on the windows. The cab-washer without was perhaps even more surprised than the fare within. "Blowed if it ain't old 'Arry's We'n'sd'y regular!" Once, when he had let his studio and was living temporarily in rooms, he completely forgot the address. All he could remember was that it was near a church which he drew accurately enough for his cabby to recognize his destination and the potential value of the sketch, which he pocketed.

He had few personal extravagances; his money was apt to be diffused among his friends and the worst elements of the crowd surrounding him. But he did have a taste for expensive cigars, and was never seen in public—or, indeed, in private—without one in his mouth. His own particular brand was a dear one even in those days of cheap tobacco, when Simpson's shilling Havana was a really excellent cigar, and those who knew the ropes could get an exceptionally good article at the St James's Restaurant for ninepence. May's cost him ten or twelve pounds the hundred. It must have been the only personal extravagance his good wife ever grudged him. Mr Raven-Hill once called for him at his studio, and was offered with unusual diffidence a highly decorated but otherwise doubtful cigar. As soon as they were clear of the house, however, May threw away both cigars and led the way into the private bar of a neighbouring tavern, where he had secreted a box of his own special brand. "Sorry to have given you that other one, old man," he apologized quietly, "but Lil's got a sudden fit of economy."

Mr Arthur Morrison found him one night sitting in a very low and deep arm-chair in the lounge of the Hotel Cecil, where both had been guests at a little private dinner. During the dinner, where May had found the champagne good and abundant, his often-expressed wish to illustrate *A Child of the Jago* was discussed; and now, suddenly fired with a new idea, he sprang forward eagerly to communicate it. But the chair was very deep and low, the plunge forward was a trifle uncontrolled, and May came head downward on the soft carpet, turned completely over with the cigar still immovably between his teeth, and arrived in a sitting position at the feet of the astonished author. He took another puff and quietly observed, "I haven't done a somersault like that since I was a kid!"

In his later years, when his health was failing, he once appeared at the Savage Club with the most enormous cigar ever seen in that pleasant retreat, where no sort of cigar was uncommon. "Good heavens, Phil!" exclaimed the first member who met him, "where did you get that thing?" "Had it made,"

was the placid reply. "Had to wait months for 'em. You see, the doctor cut me down to seven cigars a day, so I had to do something about it!"

The late Colonel Mackenzie-Rogan had a sketch given him by May, a self-portrait with the usual cigar, but in this case carrying a large label

"s. d.
7/6."

This commemorates another adventure of the nineties. On some day of public rejoicing—it may have been a Lord Mayor's Day, or perhaps it was some other occasion of Victorian celebration—May had ensconced himself in one of the two little windowed recesses beside the stairs on the mezzanine floor at Romano's which gave a view of the street, in order to make sketches of the crowd and any incident that might occur. "For the good of the house," as the phrase goes, he ordered a bottle of champagne, which stood beside him as he worked. As he bent over his drawing he was aware of the sudden advent of a hand which, thrust over his shoulder, seized the bottle. Turning his head, he observed a perfect stranger helping another perfect stranger and himself to a glass of wine from the nearly full bottle. Quaint things were always happening in May's vicinity; as this was only another of them, and as he never grudged anybody a drink, and, further, as the bottle was duly returned to its place, he took no notice and went on with his work. But when the same hand flashed on his vision again and he turned once more to behold the same glasses being refilled from his bottle, even the easygoing Phil was impelled to say something. "You seem to like that champagne!" he observed.

"Yes," agreed the stranger briskly, "first-rate stuff."

"It ought to be," retorted May, "it cost me fifteen shillings!" Let it here be remembered that in the nineties this was a topmost price, even at Romano's.

The stranger's jaw dropped and his face went blank. "I—I *beg* your pardon, Mr May—really I *do* beg your pardon. I—I thought this was the Roman's treat!"

Here again it should be explained, for the benefit of those unversed in the Bohemian life of the nineties, that the astute Romano, called "the Roman" among his customers, on days of festivity, if trade seemed slow, would occasionally dispense a bottle at his own expense to "celebrata de occasion"; a form of ground-bait which had the immediate effect of leading to a series of orders from all quarters.

"I *do* beg your pardon," went on the abashed stranger. "I hope you'll accept my apologies, Mr May. I can't say how sorry I am. I—I—look here—will you do me a favour, Mr May—a great favour? Will you allow me to offer you a cigar?"

The kindly Phil was so overwhelmed by these apologies that he almost felt like apologizing himself. "Oh, it's all right—all right," he replied. "Don't bother."

But the stranger insisted. "Here, Miss Hunty," he called to the barmaid, "three cigars, please—the best—the best in the place, of course."

From some deep recess behind the bar came a soberly expensive-looking box of very large Havanas. Phil took one, the stranger and his friend one each, lights were duly applied, and the stranger clapped his hand in his pocket. "How much?" he asked.

"Twenty-two and sixpence, sir!"

For a second the stranger's jaw dropped again; his little error had been expensive. But he paid up like a Briton, and May, whose sketches had gone as far as he needed, strolled out into the Strand with his portfolio under his arm and the dearest cigar of his experience in his mouth.

His way led him past the Strand Theatre, where Mr Bicknell Smith was managing at the time. Phil looked into his office; and even as the familiar profile appeared at the opening door Bicknell Smith, who was a man of action, deftly snatched the cigar and flung it on the fire.

"Here, Phil," he shouted hospitably, "have a *good* one!" and presented his own box of very ordinary office smokes.

A hundred yards farther along the Strand May met the friend from whom I have the story. "Did you ever smoke a seven-and-sixpenny cigar?" was his greeting.

"Never!"

"I have—for nearly five minutes; and if you'd like to smell it you must hurry—it's on Bicknell Smith's fire!"

I have said that quaint things were always happening in May's vicinity, and all who were frequently in his company testify that his way was strewn with humorous incidents which seemed to attend him like the manifestations of a familiar spirit. Of course, the easy answer is that his ever-present sense of humour saw the points which others passed unnoticed; but that explanation will not do, for the curious fact is attested by men of as keen an

appreciation as his own, though without his executive ability in art; and the odd incidents were often perceived first by others. Quaint characters also were always coming his way; and it seemed that he could not even buy a dog that had not some sort of eccentricity. In the Holland Park Road time the Mays owned a terrier which was the delight of Mrs May's eyes and in every way exemplary, with the sole and singular exception that he *would* eat hats; not altogether consume them, perhaps, but chew and tear them to unrecognizable rags, and possibly swallow some or all of the *débris*. Mrs May's hats, of course, were safely secluded in cupboards, but Phil's were left about, and became an easy prey, as did the hat of any incautious visitor who was ignorant or forgetful of the terrier's taste. It was discovered early one evening, when the Mays had arranged to go out together, that the master's absolutely last hat had gone the way of the others, and a maid was sent hurriedly round to a hatter's in Kensington High Street to get another. She arrived just as the shutters were going up, and the shopman, who had arrangements of his own for the evening, handed her half a dozen hats of the required size from which one might be chosen, and implored her not to bring the others back till the morning. A suitable bowler was selected from the half-dozen, and the evening's expedition went off quite pleasantly, till the midnight return revealed the paralysing fact that Gyp's evening had been a happy one too. He had devoured all the other five hats.

May's unconventional habit of mind in connexion with money and its use is illustrated by a story told by an editor of his acquaintance. Those who were familiar with the Bohemian life of the nineties will remember a small club which existed in the upper floors of a house in the Quadrant of old Regent Street, where May was frequently seen in the early morning hours. A certain member—more than member, for in a wide sense he *was* the club—once appealed to May for a loan of fifty pounds. (Those who knew the club will supply Percy's other name at once.) But all Phil could manage at the time was twenty-five, which he freely handed over. A few days later a friend asked why nothing had been seen of him lately at the club. "Well," explained Phil diffidently, "I can't very well go in just now—I owe Percy twenty-five pounds!"

This punctilious exactitude about financial obligation is further exemplified by a receipted bill which lies before me as I write. Passing a tailor's shop on one of his visits to Leeds, he suddenly left his friend, rushed inside, and said, "I want to pay you for a suit you made me." "Yes, sir," said the assistant, with pleased anticipation. Reference was made to ledgers dating back many years, but no trace could be found of the transaction. May insisted on a further search, and the proprietor was summoned. He at once

recognized his former, and now famous, client and attempted to dismiss the subject of payment after so long a time. But May was firm and refused to leave the shop without a receipted bill. Reluctantly and with apologies the tailor sat down and wrote the acknowledgment. "How much are you making it out for?" said Phil, who in the absence of any record had supplied particulars. "Five pounds, Mr May." "No fear," said Phil; "I want discount for cash!" And so the stamped bill, dated November 6, 1897, acknowledges receipt of four pounds ten shillings.

I have never met anybody who ever heard May speak ill of another or even mildly criticize another's work; and it always seemed to afflict him with uneasiness if he heard anything of the sort from anybody else. "Act? He can't act for nuts!" said one well-known actor of another. "Why should he act for nuts?" came the quiet voice of Phil May from a corner.

Similarly he could never tolerate anything of pretence or pomposity, and it aroused, if not his resentment, at least his freakish humour. A certain journalist, an ex-clergyman of great social pretensions, well known in those days as an interviewer, immaculately dressed and very important, arrived one day to collect his views on various subjects. As it chanced, May was busy making studies of a coster model, who had left his donkey and barrow of vegetables in the yard beside the studio. This particular interviewer was notoriously difficult to get rid of, and had a way of quartering himself on his victims till their toleration gave out. This was not altogether so easy, perhaps, in a studio, and Mrs May had seen that for this occasion the house was rigorously shut off. But the man of words spun things out as he so well knew how, regardless alike of May's precious time and of that of the costermonger whose donkey-barrow and vegetables stood waiting outside the studio window. This piece of 'still life' gave Phil his idea. He took the conversation at once to the subject of coster-mongers' barrows, led his visitor into the yard, and explained that, though a barrow of this sort often appeared to be overloaded, it was really quite easily pulled because of the even balancing of the weights. Thus, he went on to show, it was even easier work for the donkey to pull two passengers than one, provided the weight was scientifically distributed; and he proceeded to demonstrate. "If you'll just sit on the back for a minute and I get in the front you'll see what I mean."

The scribbling exquisite gingerly took up a position among the carrots and cabbages; Phil instantly sprang into the front seat and whipped up the donkey, which dashed off with a jerk, and the whole equipage swung violently into Kensington High Street, with the disconcerted interviewer

grabbing his top-hat, and his white spats waving in the air. It was a good and willing donkey, the barrow was excellently balanced, and for the best part of a quarter of a mile the delighted populace enjoyed the exhibition. Then at last the donkey was pulled up, demonstration and interview ended together, and the interviewer retired to the nearest hatter's in the hope that ironing might restore the brilliance of his 'topper.'

May and his 'horsy' style of dress were well known about London, as may be supposed, but there are probably few still living who remember the similar 'get-up' of Joseph Crawhall, a contemporary genius. Crawhall, in fact, in his own day was known personally only to a select few among artists and writers, but those few will witness to his curious resemblance, in person as well as in dress, to May. The two men, as anyone might expect who compares their work, greatly admired one another, and each, on separate occasions, expressed his admiration of the other's drawings in curiously similar terms. This being so, Mr Raven-Hill arranged to introduce them at the Savage Club. The two men of genius duly turned up, and were introduced by their fellow-artist; and each was so amazed by the startling resemblance of the other to himself that for seconds he stood speechless before his double, doubtful if he might not be the victim of some recondite 'spoof' on the part of Raven-Hill.

Well known and conspicuous as May was by sight and reputation, it is curious to observe how he seems to have escaped the notice of one at least of his distinguished contemporaries. Riding his favourite horse Punch, he once called on Bernard Partridge, who was entertaining some friends at breakfast in his garden. Punch was brought in and filled in the time of waiting by browsing quietly on the flower-beds. Mr (afterward Sir Johnston) Forbes-Robertson, the famous actor, who was one of the guests, and as a brother artist might have been expected to know May, asked after he had gone, "Who was that strange man?" It was Punch, too, who was left in charge of a loafer outside the National Sporting Club one evening, and was only remembered early next morning when his owner, who had driven home in the customary hansom, was stepping into bed.

In appearance May was slightly above average height, perhaps about five feet eight, with a slight figure and something of the appearance of a groom, to which his fondness for wearing riding costume contributed. He had exquisitely beautiful and delicate hands, and his keen, alert face, with straight, smooth fringe, grey discerning eyes, and firm mouth, is very well known in his many drawings of himself, which are always excellent portraits. The mouth was the most striking feature, betokening that dogged

persistence that brought him through many difficulties to the position of a universally acknowledged master. He once explained that the straight fringe which was so noticeable a characteristic of his appearance was purely a result of maternal affection. "All owing to my dear old mother," he declared. "She *would* pat my head and smooth my hair down and tell me I was a pretty boy—and I think she believed it! But anyhow it won't lie any other way now."

"Spy's" *Vanity Fair* portrait (February 21, 1895) gives a very true impression of May as he was at the height of his fame. In *Jimmy Glover, his Book* (Methuen, 1911), is reproduced a self-portrait of May done at Leeds in 1880, in which he is shown wearing a similar bowler hat and long overcoat. J. J. Shannon's painting in the Tate Gallery is an excellent presentment of him in his later years, except perhaps that it gives the impression of a much taller man. He himself once described this to a friend as a masterpiece—"a perfect masterpiece, my boy: he hasn't missed a single—— pimple." Despite his enormous success he remained quietly unaffected by his celebrity, kindly, simple, and modest, interested in life and the people he met, and always reserved and shy with strangers. Toward the end of his life he was very sensitive about the disfigurement that drink had wrought on his face, a disfigurement which disappeared as if by magic when he died. One evening, calling at a friend's house, he found a party assembled in the drawing-room, and firmly insisted on remaining with his host in the billiard-room, where he amused himself by dexterously rolling empty tumblers into the pockets. The news somehow became known that he was in the house, and first one and then another drifted in, until gradually the whole party was transferred to the billiard-room.

Always conscious of his weakness, his respect for ladies was generally strong enough to restrain him from indulging too freely until they had retired. He was intensely fond of children, and would give and promise them all sorts of extravagant presents. He rarely talked about art or pictures, and then, as I have said, only to the few of his intimates who would understand; life and his own presentation of it interested him more. Although he loved horses and dogs, and was fond of riding—his only exercise—May could not be called a sportsman. He liked to wear sporting clothes, check coats, well-cut breeches, shining leather gaiters, because they had character, and he loved character both in life and in his work. So arrayed in complete and rather loud riding kit and a long check ulster, he appeared in public on the day of Queen Victoria's funeral, in complete forgetfulness of the occasion, until reminded by Mr Raven-Hill. "I clean forgot," he explained apologetically. "But here I am, and I can't do anything now—unless I put

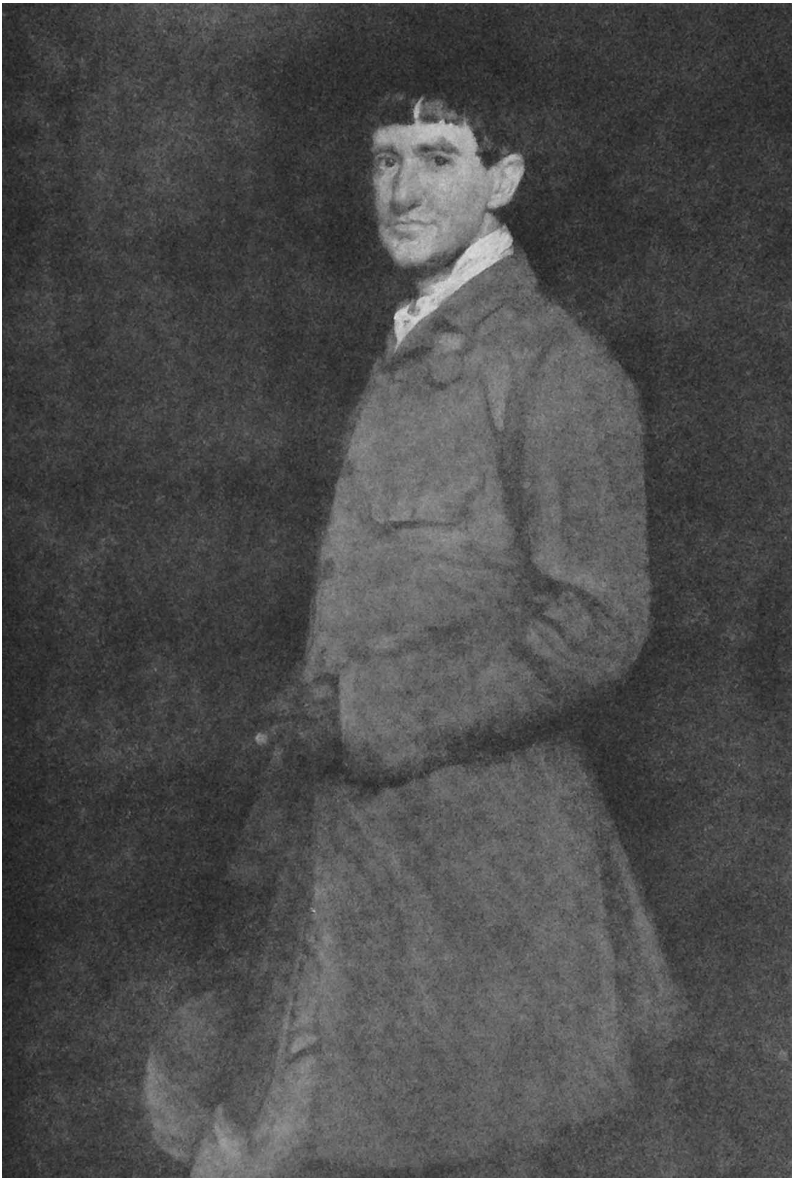
burnt cork on my nose!” He visited racecourses only for the purpose of making drawings, which were so wonderfully vivid and successful that they probably prompted the idea that he was a keen racing man. His pathetic and regrettable ignorance of cricket is deplored on a later page.

A friend who knew him well has written the following impression: “May was a man, in spite of all his faults and weaknesses, to whom one could not help being very much attracted. He was always gentlemanly in behaviour, had charming manners, was a very good talker on many subjects, very witty, and a great lover of music. I have seen him cross-grained, very, very depressed, and out of temper, but his charming manner never deserted him.” No man surely was ever more truly loved by his many real friends, for “e’en his failings leaned to virtue’s side.” All those who have spoken of him in connexion with the making of this book have referred to his character and even to his weaknesses in terms of such very sincere affection as to reflect much glory on the better side of his character. To all of them he was either “dear old Phil” or “poor old Phil.”

May was proud of his Yorkshire origin and was a member of the You-Be-Quiet Club, which softened the exile of Yorkshiremen in London by means of excellent dinners and concerts. He designed for them in 1901 at least one menu card, with portraits of Samson Fox, Archibald Ramsden, and himself as the Three Musketeers.

The tragedy of his life was caused by that easiness and friendliness of disposition which led him into drinking habits, and these in his case unfortunately produced little in the way of inspiration, but many sad and remorseful after-effects. As early as the year 1897 he had written to a friend, “I have been very unwell and overworked for the last year or more, and it is beginning to tell on me. I don’t see any prospect of a rest.” Perhaps enough, or more than enough, has been said of this outstanding failing, though, as I have endeavoured to show, he was largely the victim not of a culpable craving, but of circumstances arising from his own generous and companionable disposition. Hail fellow well (and too often) met, he was himself his only enemy, and dissipated far too much of his talents and affection on quite unworthy objects. Such characters would almost seem to require and justify the employment of a tactful but powerful attendant—an ex-naval petty officer, for example—with free discretion to use any means to keep his charge from his own undoing. Sir James Barrie once suggested that there ought to be a Home for Geniuses. If Phil May could have been lured into one he might be still, at the age of sixty-eight, delighting us with the magic of his art and humour. Nevertheless it was a sad tragedy that such

great abilities should have been weakened and cut short at the height of their fulfilment by this tax on his bodily powers. For days, when he was working hard, he would live entirely on whisky and cigars. His best friends, his wife, and his doctor tried in vain to check the trouble. His large circle of acquaintances and hangers-on absorbed too much of his life. The pace at which he lived, and the hopeless irregularity of his habits, acting on a naturally slight constitution, weakened by his early years of want and hardship, produced the inevitable result.



PHIL MAY

From a painting by J. J. Shannon, in the Tate Gallery

He died, all too soon, of phthisis and cirrhosis of the liver on August 5, 1903, at 5 Melina Place, St John's Wood, London, and was buried in St Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery at Kensal Rise. The headstone on the grave bears the inscription:



PHIL MAY,
THE GREAT BLACK & WHITE ARTIST,
"A fellow of infinite jest"
BORN at 66 WALLACE ST,
NEW WORTLEY LEEDS,
April 22, 1864,
DIED in LONDON, Aug: 5, 1903.
THIS TABLET, erected by public
subscription, was unveiled by
E.T. REED, a colleague A.D. 1910.

THE MEMORIAL TABLET ON MAY'S BIRTHPLACE
By courtesy of William Benn, Esq.



Pray for the soul of
Philip William May
“Phil May”
Who died 5th August,
1903, aged 39
Requiescat

The sad ravages of disease can be estimated from the fact that at his death his weight had been reduced to only five stone. It is remarkable that five of the greatest of English draughtsmen—Randolph Caldecott, A. Boyd Houghton, George J. Pinwell, Frederick Walker, and Phil May all died before reaching the age of forty. May never ceased to draw as long as his fingers could guide the pencil. A number of sketches, executed on his deathbed, of a model who sat daily in seventeenth-century costume—the absolute last—betray no sign of weakness or failing power. His humour at this crisis sometimes took a grim turn, and among the cavalier sketches were others of himself as a skeleton with Death hovering over him, dancing skeletons garlanded with roses beckoning him, and similar fancies. He faced death with a smile and a jest. “These doctors,” he said to his friend Arthur Morrison, “are a bit difficult. I’m to stay in bed for my lungs and take outdoor exercise for my liver!” So he remained the jester right to the finish. He had lived the life he chose to live and had lived it fully.

His widow afterward married Mr John Ross, an old and staunch friend, well known among artists and writers in his time, and a member of the committees of the Kennel Club and the National Sporting Club. She survived May six years only, dying, deeply regretted by all who knew her, in 1909. Mr John Ross lived twenty years longer, and after his death in 1929, when his effects were sold, many of May’s drawings still in his possession were dispersed.

A committee formed in Leeds in October 1909 was able, after much hard work, to place on the house where he was born a memorial consisting of an excellent bronze portrait medallion by Caldwell Spruce, a Leeds artist and a friend of May. This was unveiled in June 1910 by Mr E. T. Reed, an

old *Punch* colleague. It also gathered a very representative collection of his drawings for permanent exhibition in the Leeds Art Gallery, and established two small prizes for black-and-white drawing at the local college of art. Thus one prophet at least was not without honour in his own country. If Leeds, where he was born, could do so much to perpetuate his memory, surely London, where he did most of his work, might have commemorated in some way such a distinguished resident, such an enthusiastic and loyal Londoner, such a great artist and humorist.

The late Sir Sidney Colvin for years tried in vain to induce the British Museum Trustees to add some of May's drawings to the Print Room collections; and but for private generosity there would be none there now. As it is, however, he is represented by thirty-three drawings, mostly the gift in 1920 of Mr Arthur Morrison, and by seventeen drawings—a rather undistinguished group—at South Kensington. There are two drawings by May, of Lord Salisbury and Sir Henry Irving, in the National Portrait Gallery. The Tate Gallery has four excellent pen-and-ink drawings purchased so recently as 1927. Three of these were evidently made for *The Parson and the Painter*, but do not appear in the book. In the Glasgow Corporation Art Gallery are seventeen chalk drawings and eleven in pen-and-ink, most of them the gift of Sir William Burrell in 1925. The National Liberal Club has nine pen-drawings of Parliamentary subjects. The Leeds collection, which is very comprehensive, includes fifty-four items, most of which are the gift of the Memorial Committee, and a replica of the portrait medallion on May's birthplace.

So passed a lovable man and a great artist, “a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy.”

REQUIESCAT IN PACE

II

ENGLISH BLACK-AND-WHITE ART AND PHIL MAY

In the history of British Art in the past hundred years a very prominent feature—perhaps the most prominent feature—has been the wonderful development of drawing in black-and-white. Setting aside the great masters of monochrome painting in China and Japan, no other country has produced such a large number of capable artists working entirely or partly in this medium. Of all forms of graphic representation this is the most rigorous, because, by reason of its limitations, the faults as well as the merits of any particular performance are patent even to the inexperienced eye. No superficial technique, dexterity, or surface quality can conceal errors in perspective, proportion, or composition, which in a painting may easily pass unnoticed under the distraction or fascination of colour. A monochrome reproduction of a painting will often reveal faults unobserved in the original. The black-and-white artist has therefore to realize the restrictions of his materials, and in the skill with which he triumphs over them, and even uses them to increase the effect he strives to produce, lies the measure of his success or failure. Many men who have achieved but a modest mastery of black-and-white have afterward gained considerable success as painters in colour.

This, of course, is not to say that draughtsmanship has no great importance in painting, but merely to suggest that its relative prominence is far greater in the plainer form of monochrome drawing. Further, it must not be forgotten that colour can be expressed, or rather suggested, in the finest examples of black-and-white work, as can be seen in many of the best drawings by such men as Birket Foster, Charles Keene, William Hatherell, Frank Craig, Maurice Greiffenhagen, and others. Most black-and-white drawings are made to be printed in more or less reduced facsimile, and, in addition to his draughtsmanship, the artist must have a knowledge of the various methods of reproduction in order to ensure the most satisfactory results.

In this remarkable development of black-and-white drawing in England there have been two very great periods, which have been called “The Sixties” and “The Nineties.” The former includes the years between 1855 and 1870, and has been very ably recorded and summarized by Mr Gleeson

White in *English Illustration: The Sixties* (Constable, 1897). Most of this work consisted of illustrations for books, stories, and poems, and was done by artists who were painters, or afterward became more famous as painters. They were, many of them, not essentially black-and-white artists, but used this method of gaining experience and financial support to enable them to paint. Their drawings were reproduced by wood-engraving, and thus arose a school of very able engravers, technically skilled in translating a drawing, made either with a brush, pencil, or pen, into a very accurate representation on the printed page. For quick reproduction in newspapers the wood-block was often cut up, so that each part could be worked on by a separate engraver, the sections being afterward skilfully joined with a wonderful effect of uniformity of treatment. Many of the drawings were made directly on the wood-block and consequently disappeared in the engraving, but later a method was evolved of transferring the drawing by means of photography. The best-known engravers of that time were the Dalziel brothers and Messrs Swain, and much of their work appeared in the three most prominent illustrated magazines of the time, *Once a Week*, *Cornhill*, and *Good Words*. Copies of these volumes and others containing representative work of the period can still be obtained without great difficulty, and, considering the treasure they contain and their present very moderate cost, it is remarkable that more collectors do not avail themselves of the opportunities before them. For a few shillings may be bought books of excellent prints of some of the finest black-and-white drawings ever made in this or any other country. These have in their own medium all the charm of an etching, and much of the beauty of design and drawing of a Japanese print, and, in these days of economy, form an interesting and inexpensive field for the enthusiasm and discrimination of the collector. It would seem probable that in time these woodcut illustrations of the sixties will be sought for and treasured much as Dürer engravings and Rembrandt etchings are to-day.



W. S. PENLEY IN "THE PRIVATE SECRETARY"

Some of the principal artists who contributed to this rich harvest were Fred Barnard, the best of all the Dickens illustrators; Boyd Houghton, whose wonderful work is unaccountably too little known; Birket Foster, who produced hundreds of illustrations full of the charm of the English countryside; George du Maurier, whose drawings at this period are more interesting and varied than his later work for *Punch*; Sir John Gilbert, an extraordinarily prolific and spirited illustrator; Charles Green, who dealt so charmingly with old costumes, old rooms, and old furniture; Charles Keene, one of the greatest of all draughtsmen, whose excellence even now has not been fully recognized; J. E. (afterward Sir John) Millais, whose drawings for *The Parables of our Lord* have qualities equal at least to those of much of his later and more pretentious work. Others were J. W. North, G. J. Pinwell,

D. G. Rossetti, Frederick Sandys, William Small, John (later Sir John) Tenniel, Frederick Walker, and J. D. Watson. All these and many others were producing drawings full of charm and sound craftsmanship, and, although some of them afterward became more famous as painters, they never did finer work than their designs for the wood-engravings. Of those who continued to do black-and-white drawings, some lived and worked on into the second period—the nineties—and thus we have Barnard, Caldecott, Du Maurier, Green, Keene, Small, and Tenniel forming a link between the wood-engraving and the process-block as means of reproduction. Although the wood-engraving often lent added charm to the original drawing, there was no means of judging how much of the result was the work of the artist and how much was due to the personality of the engraver. The artist often complained, sometimes with reason, that his work had not been sympathetically or accurately rendered. Charles Keene's drawings, for example, often suffered by the failure of the engraver to translate the subtle variations of line and the delicate quality of the ink in the original design.



ARTHUR ROBERTS



EDWARD TERRY

Between the years 1880 and 1890 the invention and development of the process-block, by which drawings could be reproduced mechanically and with far greater accuracy and speed, led to an enormous increase in the number of illustrated journals and books, and a great revival and advance of black-and-white drawing. Newspapers could reproduce drawings and photographs far more quickly and cheaply than by the slow and laborious method of wood-engraving, and so were able to illustrate more recent events.

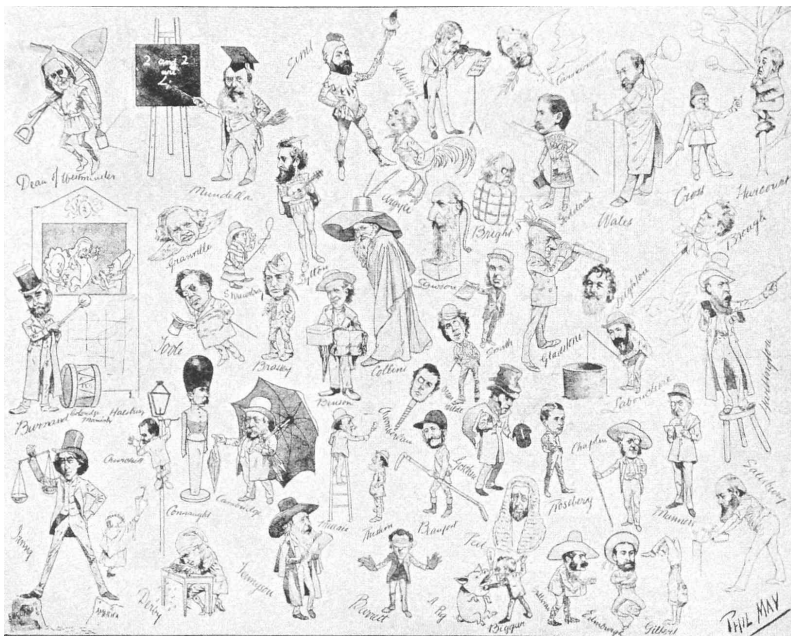
The construction of a line block may be explained briefly as a mechanical development of the process of etching. The drawing is photographed in reverse on to a zinc plate covered with a sensitized gelatine film. The lines are protected against the action of acid, which is used to eat away the exposed portions, or the 'whites,' of the drawing, leaving the artist's lines raised in relief. The metal plate is then backed with wood, and can be printed from in the same way as, and simultaneously with, ordinary type. For half-tone blocks, which are generally of copper, the illustration is photographed through a glass screen with fine lines of varying mesh drawn across in both directions. This breaks up the photograph into a series of dots of different degrees of size and closeness, thus producing a close approximation to the graduated depths of tone in the original. But the development of the half-tone block also facilitated the reproduction of photographs, and here time took its revenge, for, as the initial cost of photographs was far less, they gradually took the place of drawings; and so the process which at first encouraged the draughtsman presently threatened to extinguish him. To-day the pictorial record of news is almost entirely in the hands of photographers who are generally attached to the staff of the newspaper, and the use of drawings is restricted to the illustration and decoration of advertisements, humorous ideas, cartoons, and books. Thus the fevered haste of a news drawing, which often by force of necessity produced many good qualities, is a thing of the past, and it remains to be seen whether or not the more leisured opportunities of to-day will produce finer black-and-white work. At present there are few signs of this improvement, but rather a tendency to revert to an imitation of the old woodcuts, or to adopt sensational and freakish styles of draughtsmanship which are often a cloak for incompetence or hopefully meant as a short cut to public notice.

If Keene, Millais, Foster, and Houghton stand out as the great men of the sixties, the leading figure of the later revival of English illustration was undoubtedly Phil May. In fact, his pre-eminence, unanimously acclaimed by his contemporaries, and his influence on their work are even more

outstanding than in the case of any of the earlier artists. To appreciate this high distinction it is well to remember some of those who were working in black-and-white at this time: such as—to place them alphabetically—E. A. Abbey, Cecil Aldin, Aubrey Beardsley, Tom Browne, Reginald Cleaver, Frank Craig, Walter Crane, Arthur Garrett, Maurice Greiffenhagen, John Gülich, Chris Hammond, Dudley Hardy, A. S. Hartrick, William Hatherell, John Hassall, Alfred Parsons, Bernard Partridge, Fred Pegram, Joseph Pennell, L. Raven-Hill, Linley Sambourne, J. A. Shepherd, C. A. Shepperson, S. H. Sime, E. J. Sullivan, Hugh Thomson, F. H. Townsend, and Edgar Wilson: a galaxy of talent fit to rank with the men of the sixties.

In England the two chief exponents of drawing with a pen have been Charles Keene and Phil May, and it is extremely difficult, and equally unnecessary, to say which was the greater. Keene, with his long, placid, methodical career, always gaining in skill, May, in a short-lived, hectic, brilliant outburst, like a tremendous shower of rockets, both produced the finest results of close and conscientious observation and skilled draughtsmanship, with the individual charm of their own personality. If Keene delights us with his accurate realization of tone values, May astonishes us no less with the brilliance and joy of his technique, and the assured power of his virile line, and was pre-eminent in the skill with which he arranged the boldly contrasting masses of black and white, each brilliantly emphasizing the other. No draughtsman has ever equalled him in his vigorous and assured control of a pen, and it is remarkable that this wonderful strength should have proceeded from so physically frail a source. Keene used a pen and modified the colour of his ink to suggest perfectly the varying degrees of greyness and blackness that others could represent only with a brush or pencil. May's pen was never more or less than a pen: he gloried in the fact that it was a pen, and made us share the joy and magic of each crisp black line that it produced. He accepted fully the restrictions of pen-and-ink drawing, and by his genius converted them into an important factor of strength. At his best, Phil May represented the highest point to which black-and-white line drawing has ever attained. By his genius for observation and selection, and the extreme simplification of his method of presentation, he showed that a pen-drawing can be a very eminent form of art. By reason of its more restricted publication Keene's work was never appreciated by the general public to the same extent as May's, with its greater opportunity of appeal. Perhaps we may say that if Keene was the greater artist of the two, May was the greater draughtsman, and certainly he was the greater humorist. He once settled the question in his own characteristic way when some members of the Savage Club were debating

which was the better, Keene or May. "I am, of course," said Phil: "Keene's dead!" Both men, it should be noticed, devoted the whole of their talents and energy to black-and-white work, and did not regard it merely as a preliminary step to painting.



A PAGE OF CELEBRITIES
From *Society*, Christmas Number 1885

There is a general and regrettable tendency, not only with the general public, but even among art critics, to regard a humorous drawing as an ephemeral production, not worthy of further consideration after it has achieved its purpose of raising a laugh. An elaborate and sometimes badly drawn design of an uninteresting subject, evolved as a result of great research and laboured workmanship, and perpetuated in paint, may be considered as a work of art. If, however, the incident illustrated contains a humorous idea, and the drawing is done with simple materials, it is dismissed as a 'dashed-off sketch' of no importance. Nobody would think of rating Shakespeare or Dickens lower because of their humour, but it was more than a century before Hogarth was accounted the great painter he was. Of course, one understands that the ordinary person looks only at the subject of a drawing and sees nothing else; the merit of the work is assessed by the joke or description printed below it. But there are those who have knowledge and judgment in these matters, and among these it is well enough

understood that Daumier, Gavarni, Menzel, Keene, and May were all far greater artists in every respect than many more highly esteemed painters, whose work may attract attention from its pretentious and unjustified importance. How often, in a review of an illustrated edition of a classic, the critic will devote the greater part of his comments to a thorough and superfluous appreciation of the text, and dismiss the work of the artist, which is the *raison d'être* of the publication, in a sentence or two at the end.



THE NEW HEBRIDES

Showing the influence of Caran d'Ache. The French soldier is a portrait of Charles Alias. From *Phil May in Australia*, by courtesy of *The Sydney Bulletin*

In looking through a representative collection of Phil May's work, one of the first facts that strikes one is the amazing maturity of his earliest published drawings. His drawings as a child, and even the theatrical portraits he made in his youth at Leeds, although full witness of the artist's enthusiasm, were often weak, fantastic, and grotesque, and showed little promise of the truth and power which developed later. There is little to distinguish them, except perhaps their determined conscientiousness and skill in presenting a likeness, from the ordinary productions of almost any boy fond of drawing. But the group of Henry Irving, John L. Toole, and Squire Bancroft, which started his career at the age of nineteen, is almost equal in portraiture and drawing to anything he did in later years. This applies also to the other theatrical caricatures of W. S. Penley, Arthur Roberts, and Edward Terry which he made about the same time, in 1883. Their success is even more remarkable when one considers the very difficult and uncongenial conditions in which they were produced. The large drawing, "The Seven Ages of Society," containing no fewer than 178 perfect portraits of celebrities, which appeared in the Winter Number of *Society* in 1884, would not have been very much better done, except in the matter of composition, fifteen years later. Allowing for the possibility that all the portraits were made from photographs, as many certainly were, the handling is always that of a competent and experienced draughtsman. May repeatedly declared that he never had a drawing lesson in his life; but he worked hard, in the light of his intuitive genius, to attain that perfection that always recedes before the pursuit of the earnest artist. He drew, as a bird sings, because he couldn't help it. His eye saw things with keen and instant accuracy, and retained the vision long enough to enable his skilled hand to transmute them in the form of delightful drawings for our enjoyment and his own. If he never had a lesson he was, nevertheless, always learning, and reached the height of his achievement by the possibly slow, but certainly more thorough, method of continual practice, experiment, and experience.

Although his methods of using a pen were entirely and inimitably his own, he learned, as everyone must learn, from his predecessors. The collection of his *Sydney Bulletin* drawings, published after his death under the title of *Phil May in Australia*, indicates clearly the sources of the personal style which he afterward developed so wonderfully. The first and strongest of these influences, as seen in the large cartoons and portraits, was undoubtedly Linley Sambourne, of *Punch*. May used the same bold parallel lines of shading, following the surface planes, although at first he did not join the lines as skilfully as his master. Later he gradually simplified this method, using a flatter and simpler tone throughout, so that one is less

conscious of the means used to produce the effect. He once told Raven-Hill, "All I know I got from Sambourne." Many of the outline drawings recall the work of Caran d'Ache, the Russian artist who worked in Paris, the use of tone being almost altogether omitted, and the folds of the clothing being suggested by single lines. "All Full" (xxv) seems to reflect something of Jan van Beers, whose drawings, Mr Spielmann tells us, May greatly admired. Number xx, "Old Fashions," betrays a suggestion of W. G. Baxter, that fine humorous draughtsman who took up the character of Ally Sloper, created by C. H. Ross nearly twenty years before. There is also no doubt that he learned much in the handling of a pen from Rossi Ashton, an artist already on the staff of the *Bulletin*. Several of these *Bulletin* drawings, in their broad, aggressive humour and somewhat crude drawing, hint that May was not above accepting a suggestion from the work of "Cynicus" (Martin Anderson), a Scottish artist, whose hand-coloured satirical prints were very well known in the London print-sellers' windows at the time. "The Milk of Righteousness" (xvi) and the drawings numbered xvii, lxvi, lxxiii, and lxxix would seem to be cases in point. "Jumps and Jim-jams" (xxx) is interesting as recalling May's early work among the masks of the Grand Theatre at Leeds, and proves his power of comic invention. I have never been able to trace, as some have done, any indication that his work was much influenced by that of Randolph Caldecott. Both men certainly shared the same gaiety of outlook on life, and the same charming freshness and spontaneity of method in presenting it; but Caldecott never had the deep insight into character nor the strength of draughtsmanship of his successor. Some critics of May's technique have ascribed his bold line to the limitations of the Sydney printing-presses, but many of the drawings reproduced in this Australian book show that he often used quite a fine line, particularly in some of the shading of the faces. A comparison with the drawings made for *The St Stephen's Review* immediately before the journey to Australia shows that there was no sudden change in his manner of work on the *Bulletin*, nothing but a steady and gradual development of strength. Mr M. H. Spielmann in a note on May's pen-drawings tells us that "when he puts pen to paper and starts upon a line, he continues that line, without lifting his hand, until he finds himself in danger of going wrong." It was this slow deliberation and certainty which gave to his outlines their amazingly fine quality. He also had a wonderful gift of being able to begin the drawing of a figure anywhere. He could start with an ear, then go on to a sleeve, then put in an eye or the lines of the trousers, and return to the face to draw the mouth. Evidently the drawing was visualized completely on the paper at the outset and then marked down with the pencil. Although in the early part of his life he probably knew nothing of their work, May's drawings have much

of the strength and quality of line of the Japanese draughtsmen. Some of them bear a very strong spiritual resemblance to the figure studies of Hokusai, although these were made with a brush: the unerring, confident sweep of the lines is equally evident in both, and the essential characteristics of the subject are as wonderfully emphasized. In his very able account of May's work on the *Bulletin* Mr A. G. Stephens has an interesting note on the skilful way in which the artist could work from a photograph, extracting the spirit, omitting the unnecessary details, and presenting the result with delightful freshness and freedom.



ALL FULL

Showing the influence of Jan van Beers

From "Phil May in Australia." by courtesy of "The Sydney Bulletin"

This practice of eliminating the inessentials he applied with equal success to the pen-drawings he made from his own careful pencil studies.

This Australian collection is of the greatest interest to the student as showing the many influences which May used in developing his own methods of work, which first took definite form in *The Parson and the Painter* drawings made just after his return. In an interview in *The Sketch* of March 29, 1893, May thus described the way in which he built up a drawing: "First of all I get the general idea, of which I sketch a rough outline, and from this general idea I never depart. Then I make several studies from the model in the poses which the drawing requires, and redraw my figures from these studies. The next step is to draw the picture completely, carefully putting in every line necessary to fullness of detail: and the last to select the particular lines that are essential to the effect I want to produce, and take all the others out." Such an apparent sacrifice of so much labour required unusual knowledge, self-denial, and confidence, but was fully justified by the results. In some cases the figures were transferred from the sketch-book by means of tracing-paper, thus ensuring much of the freshness of the first sketch. He frequently used a sketch-book of semi-transparent paper. The sketch being made on the last leaf, he would drop the next leaf over it and trace on this the lines he selected as being essential; thus he worked from the back to the front of the book. His studies were generally made with a very sharply pointed lead or chalk pencil, although he sometimes used, with great effect, a carpenter's pencil, taking full advantage of the variations afforded by the width of the lead. He often persuaded his friends to sit for him instead of the professional model, and their portraits are easily recognizable in many of his finished drawings. For some time he attended weekly meetings in neighbouring studios, at which each artist took his turn in posing for his fellow-workers. His favourite model was one George Riches, whom many will remember, dressed in Georgian costume, taking tickets at the old Langham conversaciones. His portrait occurs in many of the drawings as a waiter, a loafer, a man-about-town, a monk, and even an old woman. Riches, a great character himself, who was very fond of the master, used to tell many good stories of the strange and unconventional happenings in the home life of the Mays.



THE CARDINAL
Showing the influence of LINLEY SAMBOURNE
From *Phil May in Australia*, by courtesy of *The Sydney Bulletin*

Every artist knows the great difficulty of retaining in the finished work the spontaneity of the first impression or of the study from the model. That May was eminently successful in this respect was due to the importance he attached to this freshness. The drawing must sparkle and must not look in any way strained or laboured, and it is in this quality, more than in any other, that his pre-eminence resides. Thus by determined effort he made the results appear effortless, and extremely simple, and this is why his drawings were equally popular with artists who knew how they were evolved, and with the general public, who did not. Many drawings, in spite of their technical excellence—or perhaps because of it—fail to produce in us such sense of enjoyment as we derive from others less accurately perfect. They interest, but do not please us. They lack that indefinable quality we call ‘charm,’ which is really the personality of the artist transferred to his work. Anyone can readily supply instances of both kinds, for the discrimination is largely personal. The charm of May’s work is universal in its appeal because it is so full of his own individuality and his own enjoyment in its production. His drawings were always jolly because he enjoyed doing them.

The essence of a perfect joke illustration, as in the telling, lies in its apparent spontaneity. It should suggest that the artist took his pencil and drew as he related the incident or dialogue. The more elaborate the drawing appears, the more protracted the recital of the story, the more “weary, stale, flat and unprofitable” it becomes. No greater tribute could be paid to May’s success and popularity in this respect than the fact that at one time a “Phil May drawing” was a general term among indiscriminating readers of illustrated papers for any humorous drawing in pen-and-ink. This was, fortunately, before the days of slogans, but May’s might well have been “Facility and Felicity.”



OLD FASHIONS

Showing in the two principal figures the influence of W. G. BAXTER
From *Phil May in Australia*, by courtesy of *The Sydney Bulletin*

Many boys and most men have at some time a longing to draw, and they would all like, if they could, to draw like Phil May. Unfortunately many professional artists, whose training should have taught them better, tried to do so, and there was a serious epidemic of imitations of his work. May, who

seldom voiced his opinion on art, was very rightly severe in his condemnation of these people who foolishly tried to steal some of his success. "Somehow I don't think they quite get it," was his usual modest comment on these 'pirates.' They were generally very unsuccessful because they aimed at no more than a superficial resemblance to the result without the sound preliminary construction which gave it strength and character. Even those fluent parallel lines of shading which he used with such perfect assurance were by no means easy for another hand to make convincing. May was, indeed, a very difficult man to imitate. In the first number of his *New Budget* (April 4, 1895) Harry Furniss, who had broken with *Punch* a year before, printed a full-page drawing of Harcourt and Balfour signed "Phil Mace." Although the drawing was intended to imitate May's style, it was obviously by another hand; but the signature was so close a copy as to deceive the majority of readers into believing that it was May's work. Furniss was compelled to apologize for this foolish action, and the block was destroyed.

The apparent simplicity of Phil May's drawings also induced a considerable output of forgeries which were, and are still, sold as originals. In a recent bequest of ten alleged 'Phil Mays' to the South Kensington Museum nine were obvious and unskilful fakes. Careful examination generally exposes the hesitancy and weakness of line which distinguish them from the bold sureness and strength of the real article. By long practice May was able in later years to dispense with some of the preliminary work, and toward the end of his career his drawings were obviously produced much more easily, though perhaps, now and again, with some sacrifice of the old solidity.

In all of his drawings that I have examined I have found no trace of any alteration, no erasures, and no corrections. This is unusual in line drawings, and emphasizes the certainty with which he decided on the exact method of treatment. He was fond of scribbling on any scrap of paper imaginary sketches of fantastic figures, grotesque heads, and exaggerated recollections of people he had seen. Very often these were done to test the possibilities of a new pen, and many of the results are intensely interesting as showing the wanderings of his fancy, unrestrained by the demands of reproduction, and the amazing sureness and dexterity of control of his instrument. May used every kind of pen in his work, from the finest steel 'crowquill' to the broadest and most responsive goose-quill and reed-pen. With these he practised for hours, drawing those swift parallel lines of shading which he used with such unhesitating conviction.

Phil May's advice to the young artist was to draw from life and to keep on drawing from life. He himself was always collecting material in the form of characters or types, and his notebooks, of which he filled hundreds, must have been intensely interesting. His pencil and pen were seldom idle. He would draw a fantastic and skittish bonnet over the grave profile of Queen Victoria on a receipt stamp, a self-portrait or character study in a few lines on a letter or postcard; or at a dinner he would scribble caricatures on his own and his neighbours' menu-cards to the huge delight of the owners. Even when his many spells of illness kept him to his bed he would amuse himself and keep his hand in by covering large sheets of paper with hundreds of tiny drawings. Some of his sketch-books should have been secured for our national collections, but it now appears to be very difficult to trace them. I have only been able to find two, both excellent, in the possession of Mr W. T. Spencer, of 27 New Oxford Street, London. Many were broken up and the sketches sold separately, and this probably accounts for their scarcity. The long series of "Things we see when we come out without our Gun," which he did for *The Sydney Bulletin*, was the result of these sketch-book notes, and shows his wonderful power of quick, accurate observation as well as his keen sense of character. Here is another instance of this alert faculty. A boyhood friend who had been in Australia for eighteen months returned to London unnoticed and unwelcomed. Arrived at his hotel, he was surprised to hear a well-known whistle repeated several times, and eventually May emerged from behind a pillar in the entrance hall. He had seen his friend's trunk on a cab, recognized the initials he himself had painted, and followed in another cab.

His drawings of costers and their 'donahs,' which were among the best of his studies, were obviously inspired by a deep and sympathetic understanding of his subjects. Their boisterous enjoyment of life evidently appealed to him, and he loved drawing them. These models were not always residents of the East End of London, as is generally supposed. He found all he wanted much nearer home, in Hammersmith. His bookplate, a charming study of a coster girl's head, was drawn in May's studio, directly on the block, by his friend Mr William Nicholson, and is also interesting as being Nicholson's first woodcut. Jews of all types also engaged May's artistic interest, and he was very fond of drawing them, with a particularly keen and sympathetic insight into their character. Once at a Maccabean dinner he illustrated on the backs of menus the gradual development through successive generations of the immigrant Hebrew, showing how he gradually acquired some of the personal characteristics of his adopted nationality. Then he added some recollections of Jewish types that he had met, and, with

his usual generosity, presented the sketches to his neighbour, the Rev. S. Singer, who published them with a personal tribute in *The Jewish Chronicle* of November 11, 1903. The pronounced physiognomy of the Chinaman, which in Australia had appealed strongly to his pencil, also provided material for some of his finest studies. With many artists it is easy to notice some personal peculiarity which distinguishes all their characters and gives them all a sort of family likeness.



EX LIBRIS PHIL MAY

Phil May. 1895..

PHIL MAY'S BOOKPLATE
Woodcut by William Nicholson
By courtesy of the artist

May's people were always different because they were always true, and were not grotesquely nor mechanically exaggerated: they were thus individuals, not only more convincing but also more truly humorous than the composite results of wild distortion. As Mr M. H. Spielmann said, in his introduction to the catalogue of May's first exhibition in 1895, "The essence of his work is its inexorable truth, recorded with the pencil of a laughing philosopher and observer. He is frankly and simply a humorist, whose aim is

to draw men and things as they are, seen through a curtain of fun and raillery, and not as they might or should be." He was concerned only with presenting clearly and simply the momentary humour of the story or situation, not with its possible sequel, nor with the deduction from it of any moral. But although his subjects were sometimes inelegant he always maintained the dignity of his art.

His method of selection and elimination generally led him to simplify, and in many cases to omit altogether, the backgrounds to his figures. If they confused the effect, or detracted from the force of the idea he was trying to express, they were sacrificed. That he could draw backgrounds is evident in some of the drawings in F. C. Burnand's *Zigzag Guide: Round and about the Beautiful and Bold Kentish Coast* (A. and C. Black, 1897), in his *Punch* work, and in many of the pages from his sketch-books. If these have not the full charm of Keene's backgrounds, it is probably because May much preferred drawing people.

Undoubtedly his best work was done in the early numbers of his *Annual*, where he had perfect freedom of subject and treatment, and some of his portraits and character-studies are masterpieces. It afforded also a valuable opportunity to print drawings which appealed to the artist himself, although they might probably never have appeared elsewhere. It is a curious fact that few editors would then, as still fewer will now, print a drawing, however good, simply as a drawing: it must have a 'tag' or joke below it. Look at the portraits of Sala, Mark Lemon, John Leech, and Thackeray on page 80 of the first number, and compare the first with the photograph on the opposite page. The Winter Number for 1892 contained perhaps the best collection of his drawings ever published, and the issue for 1893 includes his greatest drawing—the portrait of Mr Gladstone. This, he told Mr G. R. Halkett, he did from a photograph after two or three unsuccessful attempts. In the same number are the excellent Newlyn sketches, which, slight as they appear, convey a more complete impression of the little town and its unconventional inhabitants than many pages of description; and in the 1894 *Annual* are some interesting drawings illustrating an article on Bohemian life in Paris. There is a fine study of a Dutchman in the 1902-3 number, and the experimental portraits of 'brother brushes' and extracts from his notebooks throughout the series are full of interest.

The large page of *The Sketch* evidently appealed to him, and, beginning with the first issue in February 1893, he did a number of strong and bold drawings, fifty of which were afterward collected in *Phil May's Sketch-Book* (Chatto and Windus, 1895). Mr Raven-Hill considers that these *Sketch*

drawings were his best, and they certainly mark the highest point of his economy and strength of line. Somehow May never seemed quite at his best in the pages of *Punch*. His hearty, boisterous humour and his short, crisp jokes, set among the more sedate and elaborate contributions of those days, seemed at first almost unbeseeming. It was rather like Dan Leno bursting on to the Lyceum stage in Irving's time. The humour of low life had hitherto been regarded from a superior point of view and considered as hardly respectable. His own intimate knowledge, adequate presentation, and personal enjoyment introduced an entirely fresh aspect. *The Nation*, in its issue for June 27, 1910, had an article on May, written in connexion with the unveiling of the Leeds memorial. The writer says, "His work represented a conscious reaction against the English gentlemanly tradition in humorous art which *Punch* had incarnated." His finest *Punch* drawings were done in the larger spaces of the Almanacks and special numbers; "The Labours of 'Arry" (Almanack, 1896), "The Dream of Victorian Derby Days" (Diamond Jubilee Number, June 19, 1897), and the wonderful series of eight drawings, "From Petticoat Lane to the Lane of the Park" (Almanack, 1898) were the best of his contributions. On a few occasions in 1902 he illustrated, with keenly observed portrait studies, H. W. Lucy's *Essence of Parliament*. The first of these series, "The Labours of 'Arry," in the best Almanack *Punch* has ever produced, included a drawing of a cricket match, with the spectators not more than thirty yards from the wicket and the square-leg fieldsman, for some mysterious reason, wearing wicket-keeper's gloves. This so worried W. G. Grace that he sent the artist a telegram. "Why, oh why, does square-leg wear wicket-keeping gloves?" May received the query at a *Punch* dinner and waited till it was over before he sent off his reply; with the consequence that the great cricketer was roused from his bed at an unearthly hour on a winter morning to read the answer—"To keep his hands warm." Mr Punch's knowledge of the technicalities of sport has much improved since then.

Mr Lawrence Bradbury has preserved for us another story illustrating May's innocence of cricketing practice and theory. On one of his visits to Mr Bradbury at Cranbrook, in Kent, he was forced into a village cricket match by his host. Duly arrayed in pads and gloves, a bat thrust into his unwilling hands, with a few hurried instructions to hit the ball if he could and then to run like mad, he was directed to the wicket. He managed to flick the first ball a yard or two away and galloped wildly down the pitch. The dismayed batsman at the other end, who was well set and the sole remaining hope of his side, did his best but was run out by yards. May was much more at home, however, on this visit in certain private theatricals which Mr

Bradbury organized. On the wall of the dressing-room in the Town Hall he made a sketch in grease paints, which was at once glazed and preserved, and may there be seen as a more creditable memento of his visit than the cricket score-book.

May's *Gutter-snipes* (1896) and *ABC* (1897), both published by the Leadenhall Press, contain some of his best drawings of the low life which he knew so well. The children in the former are wonderfully true studies of poor but happy youngsters, and are real slum ragamuffins, not middle-class children dressed in rags. These drawings, which show a very intimate knowledge of the street games of the period, he told Mr Spielmann, were done largely from memory of his early life in Leeds, and he is said to have modestly explained their success by declaring, "I was a gutter-snipe myself." This is the sort of statement that was often attributed to May by contemporary journalists, and it must by no means be swallowed whole. Although his family after his father's death was extremely poor, he was not a 'gutter-snipe.' This is proved by the character and position of the boys with whom he associated. May always took great delight in the pleasing sport of pulling the legs of interviewers, and was rather apt to give them what they asked for. This was the kind of remark that he knew would please them and make 'good copy' for their readers. It is comforting to know, moreover, on the assurance of Mr E. J. Sullivan, that the over-sentimental and altogether uncharacteristic foreword to the book was copied by May from a draft made by his astute publisher.

The strange suggestion has been made that, in his studies of squalor and the humours of poverty, he heartlessly made fun of the misfortunes and unhappiness of the street-singers, the street pedlars, and the slum-dwellers. A writer in *The Daily Telegraph* of October 10, 1903, reviewing the exhibition at the Leicester Galleries of May's work, after admitting the artist's gifts of humour and caricature and his brilliant achievement, makes the following comments:

The element of kinship, of pity, taking the story out of derisive mirth, is weak, nay, often absent in his work, where it was strong in that of Keene. . . . For the element of pathos and tragedy, that may by genius be made to peep forth even through the mask of comedy, there is no thought. This side of life Phil May passes by, not in callous disregard, but because for him it has evidently no existence.

In spite of the eminence and ability of the critic, this appears to be an unnecessary, ill-founded, and unsubstantiated charge. Even the slightest knowledge of May's own life and character, which we must assume the writer to have had, is enough in itself to disprove the truth of the last statement. From bitter experience he certainly knew only too well the painful and ever-present existence of pathos and tragedy in the life of the poor, but he knew also the natural cheerfulness and sense of fun that help to make their lot bearable. When success eventually came to him he enjoyed to the full—as he was entitled to do—the joy and sunshine of these happier days, but the hardship and privation of his early life had made too deep an impression to be effaced. His exuberance and light-hearted outlook certainly pervaded his work for the relief, but not to the exclusion, of life's more serious and disagreeable phases. Careless and free as May was in his own conduct, in everything that concerned his work he was intensely earnest. Many instances can be quoted in which he employed his talent in presenting or suggesting the pathos, if not the tragedy, surrounding his characters. In his *Annuals*, for example, we can see this sympathy displayed in such drawings as "My Friend George" (Summer 1892), "Bound in Boards" and "Alone" (Winter 1893), "In Possession," the circus performer (p. 104) (Winter 1894), his studies of old men (pp. 69 and 95, Winter 1895; p. 58, Winter 1898), and "A Woman of No Importance" (Winter 1897). Under one of his drawings of old men he has written the lines:

No snow falls lighter than the snow of age:
Yet none falls heavier; for it never melts.

Gutter-snipes is full of sympathy with the sorrows as well as with the joys of the poor, as can be seen in "Bits and Scraps" and "Two Penn'orth." The drawing of "Getting Father Home," in his *ABC*, also shows an understanding compassion for one of the saddest phases of slum life. In one of May's *Punch* drawings the parson of a slum parish is seen showing a sympathetic American visitor the "sorrows of the poor." As they enter the alley unexpectedly they find the inhabitants of all ages dancing lustily to the music of a piano-organ. It was this part of their life, which was quite as true as its sadder aspect, that he preferred to show us.

One of the trials of the professional humorist in any medium is that as soon as he begins to do anything, or sometimes even before, everyone laughs. If Phil May made a true and sympathetic study of a street-singer it was immediately regarded as funny because he had drawn it. Beneath the humour of many of the jokes and ideas he illustrated lay a strong undercurrent of genuine pathos, but he was too good an artist to force or

underline the sentiment or to make it in any degree mawkish. After all, he was a jester, and the jester's mission is not to emphasize the sorrows of life, but, while recognizing them, to show us their lighter side.

In 1898 he illustrated for *The Daily Chronicle* a satirical booklet, written by Martin M. Donohoe and Barry Pain, on a topical celebrity, *Grien on Rougemont*, a subject which evidently appealed strongly to his sense of boisterous burlesque, and produced some delightful results. In the same year he provided fifteen charming pencil drawings for Cyril Maude's souvenir of *The Little Minister*, J. M. Barrie's play at the Haymarket Theatre. In 1900 *The Phil May Album*, containing a representative collection of his drawings from *Pick-me-up*, with an interesting biographical notice by Augustus M. Moore, was published by Methuen and Co., and, after his death in 1903, *The Graphic* (in *A Phil May Medley*), *The Pall Mall Gazette* (in *A Phil May Picture Book*), and Thacker and Co. (*The Phil May Folio*) republished selections from his work.

As might be expected, May was an ardent admirer of Dickens, and in 1898 announced his intention of making illustrations for an edition of his work to be published by George Allen. In one of his sketch-books there is a letter to George Allen dated February 17, 1898, asking for an extension of time.

"I have been very ill, though I am happy to say I am getting all right again. I am sorry to say I must ask you for a little more time as I have been too sick for the last six months to do any serious work, and, as I wish this work to be my very best, I want to feel quite fit before I turn it out. . . . I am trying to get all my ordinary work finished off six months ahead so that I can sit down and have nothing else to do but *David Copperfield*."

Unfortunately this, like so many of his schemes, was never fulfilled, although he did three drawings; but it is not difficult to imagine what a great success he would have made of the congenial task. A letter to a friend, which unfortunately is not dated, announced that he was illustrating a book of old songs for Bradbury and Agnew with a hundred pictures, mostly in colour, but this also was never accomplished. In one of his sketch-books, however, there are some very promising preliminary designs for these illustrations: six pages of "Widcombe Fair," and the title-page for "The Harvest Home." These were to be followed by "The Fly is on the Turmut" and "There's a Yard o' Blue Ribbon for Sal."

For years he cherished the idea of illustrating Mr Arthur Morrison's *A Child of the Jago*, and never failed to remind the author of his project even

up to the time when it grew evident that his days were numbered, and that little more of his work was to be given to the world. One can think of many other subjects and authors who would have afforded full scope for his fancy, humour, and technical skill. With his theatrical knowledge and experience, what a treasure he might have made of an illustrated edition of Shakespeare's comedies! It is a great pity that his short, crowded life did not allow him time to do more illustrations for books. In periodicals and paper-covered collections so much of his work has disappeared: in book form it would have had a much better chance of survival and appreciation. A friend asked him one day why he didn't do some more serious work. "Ah," he replied, with that whimsical twist of self-depreciation wherewith he often met any reference to his own work, "if you're going to be serious, you've got to be so dam' good."

May's early death at the age of thirty-nine raises the interesting question of his probable accomplishment had he lived longer. In his too short life he had revolutionized pen-and-ink drawing: he had introduced the line drawing wherein the line itself, by its strength and beauty, achieved its own success. Sir (then Mr) Hubert Herkomer, often a better critic than a painter, said that May's line was like the stroke of Joachim's bow. He might have added that in its sureness it also resembled a crisp late-cut with a cricket-bat, in its boldness a trapeze artist's leap from one swinging rope to another, in its deftness the fascination of Cinquevalli, and in its delicate certainty of touch Lindrum's use of a cue at billiards. Every great artist in any medium has the gift of making his performance appear perfectly simple and effortless. Who has watched Stevenson compiling a big break, Trumper or Hobbs scoring a chanceless century, or Taylor playing an approach shot to within a foot of the pin, without feeling that the difficulties which have previously deterred him must have been largely imaginary, and that the whole thing is really much easier than he thought? May's drawings, like all good drawings, seem to have floated effortless on to the paper. To appreciate this fully we have only to compare them with those of his contemporaries, which, often excellent in their performance, appear relatively cramped and laboured. His pencil drawings, although lacking the sparkle of the pen line, were equally certain, and no less effective in result. May shared with Keene the rare gift of retaining much of the charm and quality of the greyness of the pencil sketch in the finished pen-and-ink drawing. An excellent example of this is the head of the Gladstone portrait. One respect in which he was unique as a line draughtsman was his wonderful skill in portraiture. Although pen-and-ink is perhaps of all mediums the most difficult for this purpose, yet he gave with an absolute economy of means a perfect representation of his subject,

and this is particularly true in some of his many self-portraits. No one has ever equalled May in his quick grasp of character. Mr A. S. Hartrick says that in drawing a portrait from life he felt his way slowly and laboriously, following the profile very carefully, particularly the angle of the forehead and nose. Once he had done this to his satisfaction he could draw the face with assured freedom in any position and expression. When he was stalking an unsuspecting subject the various features of the face, the shape of the nose, the line of the mouth, the slope of the chin, were sometimes jotted down separately on his cuff or the back of an envelope, and later pieced together to form the perfect pen-portrait.



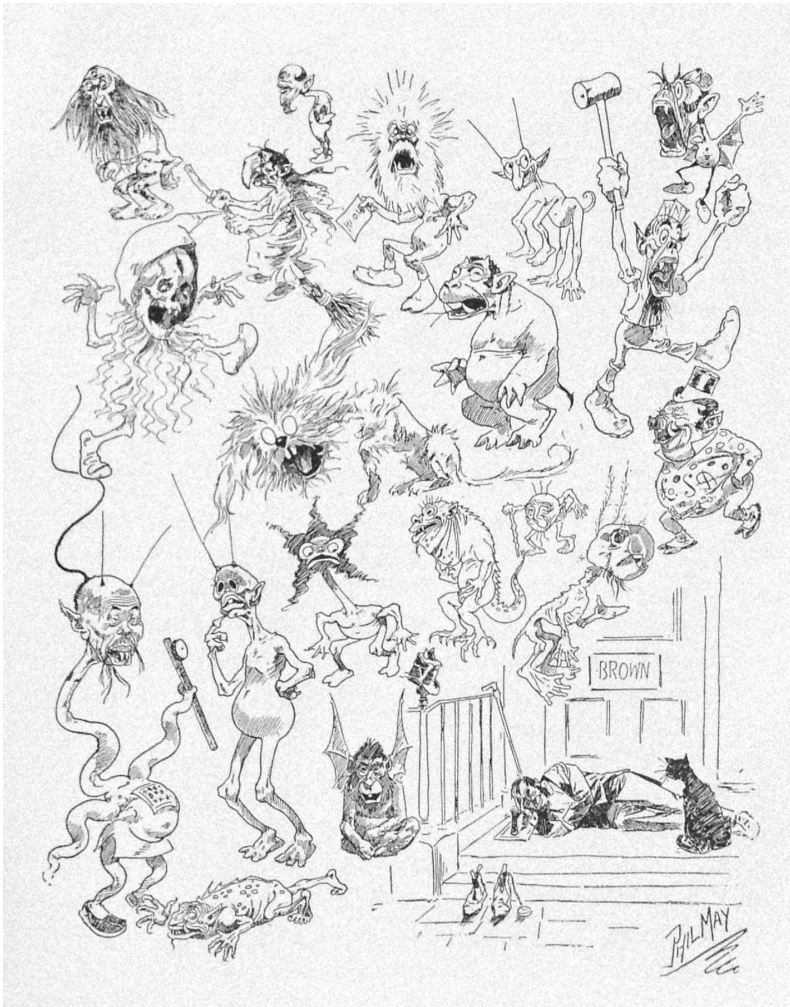
PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF

Drawn 1894. By courtesy of M. H. Spielmann, Esq.

Many critics have assured us that May had little sense of colour, and from the painter's point of view this was perhaps true. He undoubtedly saw his subject in black and white. Herkomer, who himself had started with black-and-white work, had great faith in May's potentialities as a colourist and persuaded him to attempt some paintings. These, however, failed to satisfy his own ideals, or even to encourage him to continue, and, much to Herkomer's disappointment, were destroyed. Some of the last drawings he did were chalk studies of figures in cavalier costume, which certainly indicate a restrained but discriminate appreciation of colour. Whether or not this would have been developed, and, allied to his other great gifts, have produced a great portrait-painter, is at least a very interesting possibility to contemplate, but it seems certain that all his interest and ambition were centred in black-and-white. In his last year he did some watercolour drawings of Volendam which appeared in *The Graphic*, and a series of portraits of politicians in the same medium, but in most cases the colour was applied in thin washes over a line drawing, rather in the manner of Hugh Thomson or Randolph Caldecott. Many of these tinted drawings were coloured by another hand. A rough tracing of the line drawing was made by the artist and the scheme of colouring indicated by pencil notes. I have had one of these tracings offered as the original drawing. May was a great favourite with the Volendam children, who pestered him good-naturedly and had to be bribed to allow him to work more or less in peace. He learned to shout lustily with them the chorus of a Dutch song, which he discovered afterward was full of abuse of the English for their part in the Boer War. He once told his brother Charles that his greatest ambition was to follow the work of Hogarth by painting the manners and foibles of his own day. His genial humour, however, was of a very different character from the penetrating and savage satire of Hogarth; and perhaps what he has left us carries as good a personal record of his times as can be expected from his short life. He cared less than might have been expected for pictures, and visited few collections except when he was in Holland, but he was a great admirer of Franz Hals, and had several portfolios of reproductions of his work. With his exceptional gifts there is very little doubt that, had he mastered the technical processes, he might have been very successful as an etcher. His accuracy of drawing and complete control of line values, one would think, must have produced some very great plates.

In Phil May the artist, the humorist, and the man were one. The jokes he illustrated were in most cases the results of his own humorous observation or invention, and this fact accounts for their completely successful alliance with the drawing. Many of them have become classics, and still are often

quoted with no knowledge of their originator. Every admirer of May's humour will have his favourites. Mine are the Dottyville inhabitant inviting the patient angler to come inside, the actor who often heard of salaries of twenty-five or thirty bob a week but never saw them, and the bibulous gentleman at the railway-station bar who was asked whether he wanted tea. The reply, "Tea!! Me!!!!" is perfect. Charles Keene, on the other hand, was supplied with nearly all the jokes and situations for which he supplied such excellent illustrations. Very many were sent regularly by his friend Joseph Crawhall, father of the well-known painter. There is in existence a series of albums containing these suggestions in the form of somewhat crude coloured drawings with the joke printed below in ink. Whistler, who was a great admirer of May's work, in a letter (May 1895) to Marcus B. Huish, editor of *The Art Journal*, wrote, "I take a great delight in Phil May. Certainly his work interests me far more than that of any man since Charles Keene—from whom he is quite distinct. There is a lightness and daintiness in what he does combined with knowledge, together with the fact that in his drawings the wit is the artist's, which makes a vast difference between him and his contemporaries."



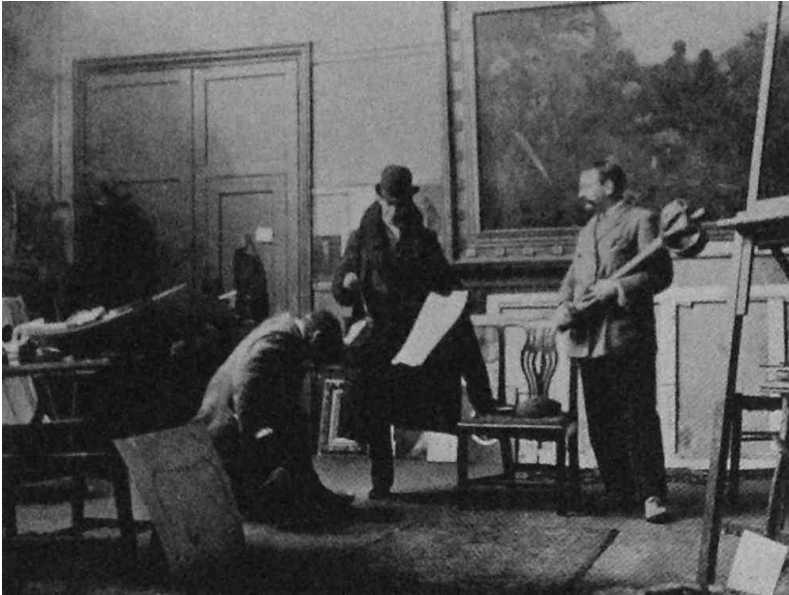
JUMPS AND JIM-JAMS

From: *Phil May in Australia*, by courtesy of *The Sydney Bulletin*

May in himself and apart from his drawings was one of the greatest of our humorists. His gift for conciseness and the elimination of everything not essential is exemplified as well in the wording of the 'legends' as in the pictures above them. The choice of words was restricted to the utmost limit of brevity. He forcibly discarded the long, superfluous explanations, often discreetly enclosed in brackets, which were so apt to kill spontaneity in both joke and drawing. Obtuse people who could not see the point of a Phil May joke were not worth bothering about. In his *Winter Annual* for 1892 is a glorious drawing of a lion-tamer who has been out late and has sought refuge in the den of wild animals, against one of which he is dozing

triumphantly. His wife stands outside with a lantern and remarks scornfully, “You coward!” Mr E. J. Sullivan says that May considered “You” unnecessary and would have omitted it.

His early ambition to become an actor fortunately never developed, and although his sense of humour would have proved an important asset, his natural shyness and reserve would probably have been too great a handicap. Although he rather hated talking, in the sense of making a speech, he could tell a story excellently in a quiet, deliberate way which missed nothing of the humour. On one of his rare appearances at the



PHIL MAY SIGNING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE LONDON SKETCH CLUB, 1898

The kneeling figure is Cecil Aldin, and Dudley Hardy holds the mace

By courtesy of Walter Churcher, Esq.

London Sketch Club, of which he was one of the founders, he once kept us enthralled with a pathetic narrative of a model and her mother, which, after leading slowly to a climax that almost moved us to tears, ended in his sudden admission that he had “clean forgotten what happened to them afterwards.”

Even in black-and-white drawing it is difficult to see in what direction his talents would have developed. He had already reached the highest point in technical skill, and no experiments in treatment could have added much to its efficiency. The principal field for surmise lies in the possibility of his

extending the scope of his operations in the direction of great illustration, as Menzel did in "Frederick the Great," or as Abbey did in the Shakespeare plays. His careless, uncontrolled temperament would probably have prevented him from giving to the work that close study, deep insight, and careful preparation necessary for the finest results. Had he been able to develop sufficient real interest in the world of politics he had the necessary equipment to become one of the greatest cartoonists; but here again his sense of the ridiculous would probably have precluded any other point of view. Possibly he himself was beginning to realize these limitations imposed by his temperament, and sought another outlet for the expression and development of his humour on the stage. One almost feels that Nature, seeing that he had completed his work, stepped in and wrote "Finis."

But perhaps these might-have-beens are all unprofitable. Let us be grateful for Phil May as he was: a very great draughtsman, an exquisite humorist, a man of delightful, lovable, and even, in some respects, determined character, who triumphed over great difficulties, and achieved the highest success in one of the finest forms of art—the art of making people laugh.

III

THE DRAWINGS REPRODUCED

It is a difficult matter to make a small and representative selection of Phil May's drawings. There are so many of them, and they are all so good. As far as possible I have allowed my choice to be influenced by consideration of their artistic interest rather than their humour. There are many hundreds of others which I should like to have printed, but even my generous publishers had to fix a limit to the number. Those who are sufficiently interested to wish to see more are referred to the iconography. Acknowledgments are made in each instance to the kind people who lent me drawings or gave permission for reproduction. To them all my best thanks. In some few cases it has been impossible, despite determined efforts, to trace the present owners of copyrights of published drawings, and I plead humbly for their forgiveness.

DRAWINGS PREVIOUSLY REPRODUCED

[Actors in Parts they never Played](#)

[Wanted: an Idea](#)

[High Jinks at Scarborough](#)

[The Pelicans at Home](#)

[Key to “The Pelicans at Home”](#)

[Skating by Torchlight on the Serpentine](#)

[“What next?”](#)

[Jane Cakebread](#)

[Information](#)

[An Idle Fellow](#)

[Four “On the Brain” Portraits](#)

[Illustration to *Charles Dickens at Gadshill*](#)

[The Rival Mephistopheles](#)

[The Superiority of Man](#)

[The Trocadero Bar](#)

[“What’s ’e done, Governor?”](#)

[Count von Moltke](#)

[A Plantation Dance](#)

[Gladstone](#)

[“Mos’ ’Strornary Thing!”](#)

[A Bit of Newlyn](#)

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[The Broken Melody: Auguste van Biene](#)

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[Title-page of *Gutter-snipes*](#)

A Characteristic Drawing from *Gutter-snipes*

Another Characteristic Drawing from *Gutter-snipes*

At 'Appy 'Ampstead on Easter Monday

'Ammersmith

A Sunday Dinner

Pickings from Picardy

Petticoat Lane

The National Sporting Club, London

"Let's 'ave our fortins telled!"

Eighth Labour: 'Arry experiences the Pleasures of driving Tandem

Courtyard of the Hôtel de France, Montreuil

A Diamond Jubilee Dream of Victorian Derby Days

Title-page from *The Sketch*

An Evening Pipe

"We're a fair old, rare old, rickety rackety crew"

A Soft Answer

A Cavalier



ACTORS IN PARTS THEY NEVER PLAYED

From *The St Stephen's Review*. Drawn just before May went to Australia.



WANTED: AN IDEA

From *The St Stephen's Review*. Drawn just after May's return from Australia.



HIGH JINKS AT SCARBOROUGH

About one-quarter of the size of the original reproduction.

From *The Parson and the Painter*

By courtesy of Walter Haddont, Esq.

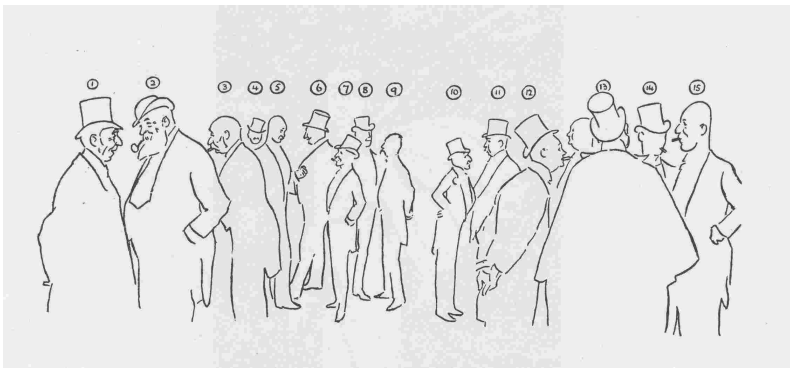


THE PELICANS AT HOME

About one-quarter of the size of the original reproduction.

From *The Parson and the Painter*

By courtesy of Walter Haddon, Esq.



KEY TO "THE PELICANS AT HOME"

By courtesy of Mr A. J. Curnick

1. Marquess of Queensberry, patron of boxing
2. Sir John Astley, all-round sportsman
3. Sam Lewis, moneylender
4. Walter Dickson, "Dicky the Driver"
5. B. J. Angle, amateur boxer and referee
6. Major Hope-Johnstone
7. Alec Knowles, journalist
8. ——— Beckett, coaching man
9. Cecil Raleigh, dramatist
10. W. Greenberg, "The Shifter"
11. Ernest Wells, proprietor of the Pelican Club
12. George Fitzwilliam
13. Sir Augustus Harris, lessee of Drury Lane Theatre
14. A. J. Curnick, amateur boxer and steeplechase rider
15. W. H. Yardley, cricketer and playwright



WHAT NEXT?

A parody of *The Daily Graphic* weather forecast lady.



SKATING BY TORCHLIGHT IN THE SERPENTINE
 From *The Daily Graphic*
 By courtesy of Allied Newspapers, Ltd.



JANE CAKEBREAD
 From *The Daily Chronicle*
 By courtesy of "The News-Chronicle"



INFORMATION

OBLIGING DRIVER (to country visitor in intense fog): "That there's the Halbert Memorial, but you can't see it!"

From The Phil May Album

By courtesy of Methuen and Co., Ltd.

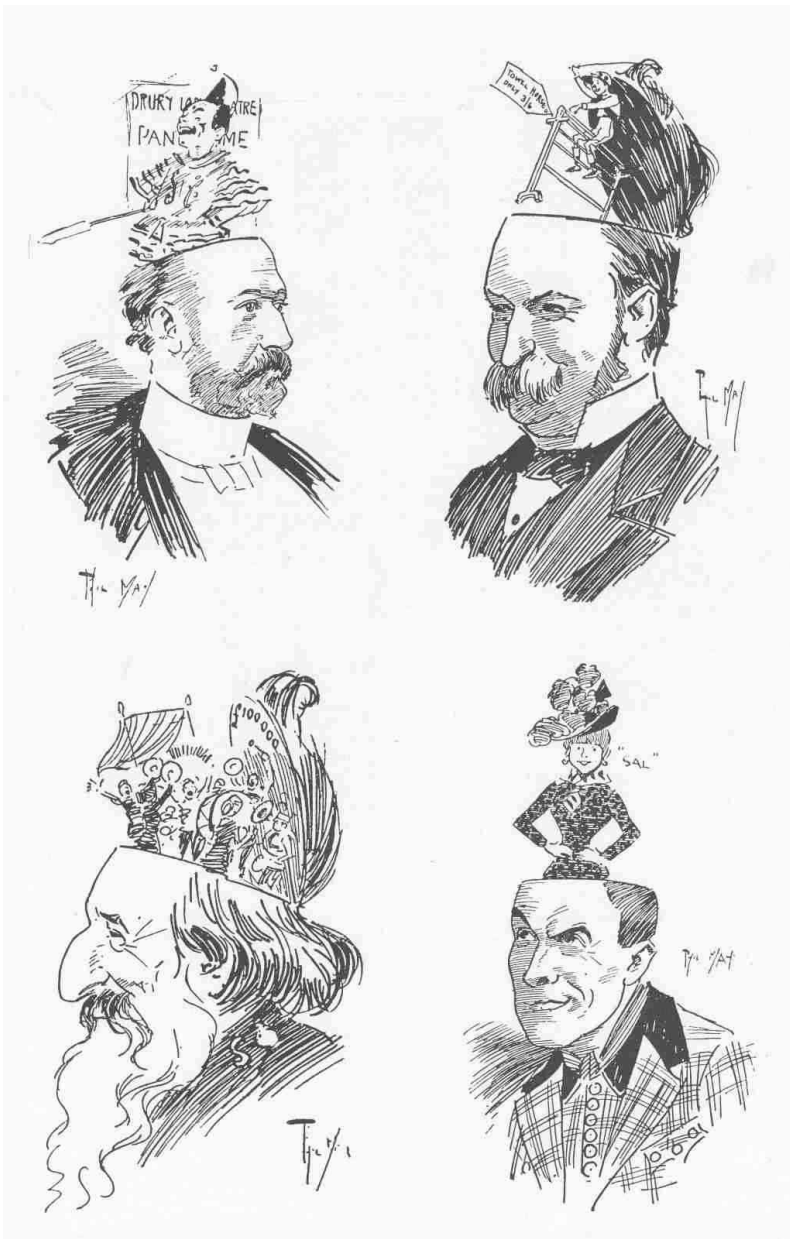


AN IDLE FELLOW

VISITOR: "I hear you've had the celebrated Mr Abbey, the artist, staying with you down here."

PROPRIETOR OF OLD-FASHIONED INN: "Yes, sir, an' he be the laziest man I ever came across. He do nothing but dror and paint all day!"

From *The Phil May Album*
By courtesy of Methuen and Co., Ltd.



FOUR "ON THE BRAIN" PORTRAITS FROM "THE PHIL MAY ALBUM"
 Sir Augustus Harris, Sir J. Blundell Maple, M.P., General Booth, and Albert
 Chevalier.

By courtesy of Methuen and Co., Ltd.

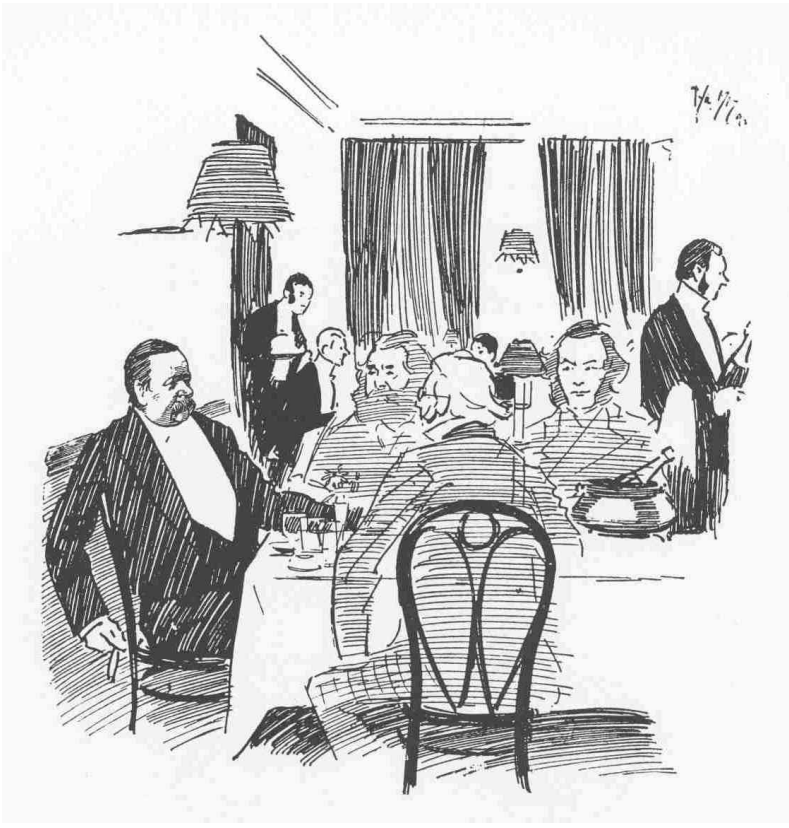
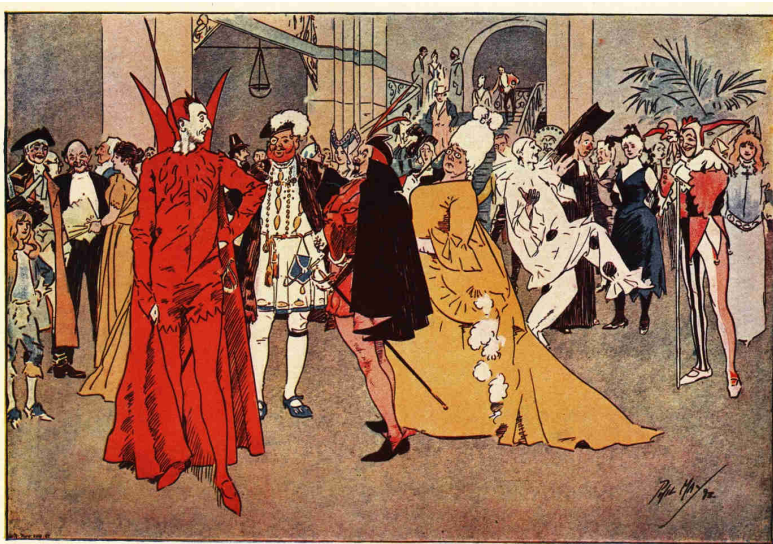


ILLUSTRATION TO "CHARLES DICKENS AT GADSHILL"
Portraits of Sala, Mark Lemon, W. M. Thackeray, John Leech. Drawn at
Rule's Restaurant.
From *Phil May's Annual*, Summer 1892
By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co.

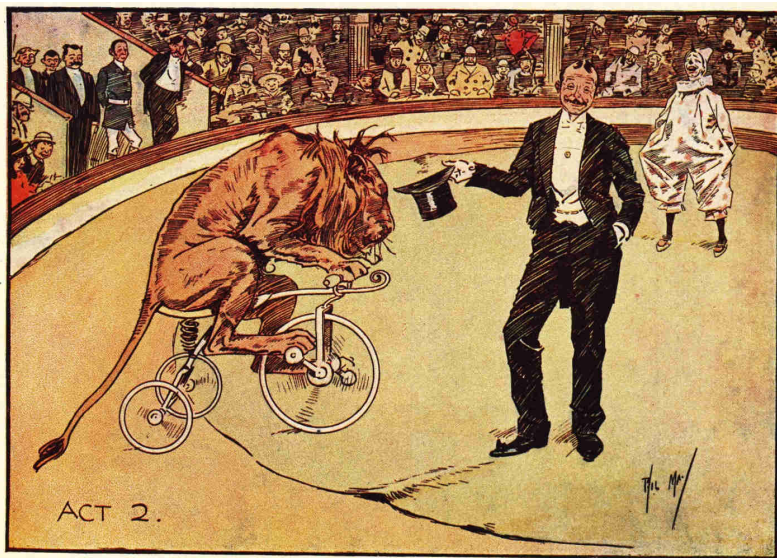


THE RIVAL MEPHISTOPHELES

From *The Graphic* Christmas Number 189

This is about two-thirds the size of the original reproduction.

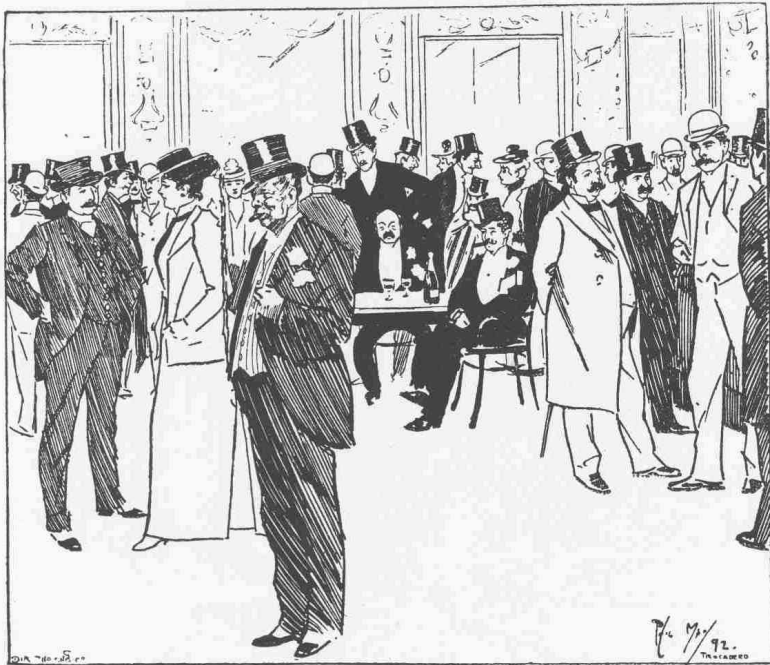
By courtesy of the Illustrated Newspapers, Ltd.



THE SUPERIORITY OF MAN

Act I showed the lion in the desert preparing to spring on the explorer, now the trainer.

By courtesy of Illustrated Newspapers, Ltd.



THE TROCADERO BAR
From *Phil May's Annual*, Summer 1892
By courtesy of *W. Thacker and Co.*



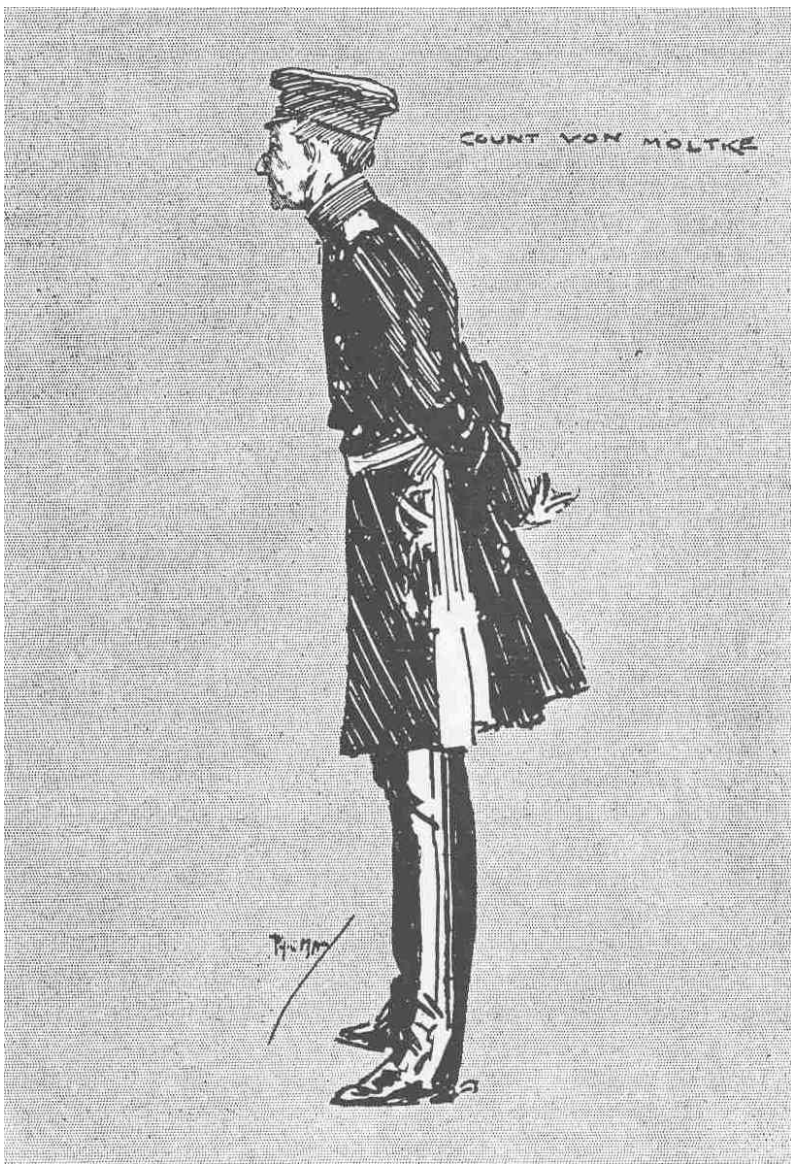
“WHAT’S ’E DONE, GOVERNOR?”

May did a parody of this with a portrait of his publisher, Walter Haddon, and called it

“Who’s ’e done, Governor?”

From *Phil May’s Annual*, Winter 1892

By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co.



COUNT VON MOLTKE

A good example of strong, direct portraiture.

From *Phil May's Annual*, Winter 1892

By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co.



A Plantation Dance
From *Phil May's Annual*, Winter 1893
By courtesy of *W. Thacker and Co.*

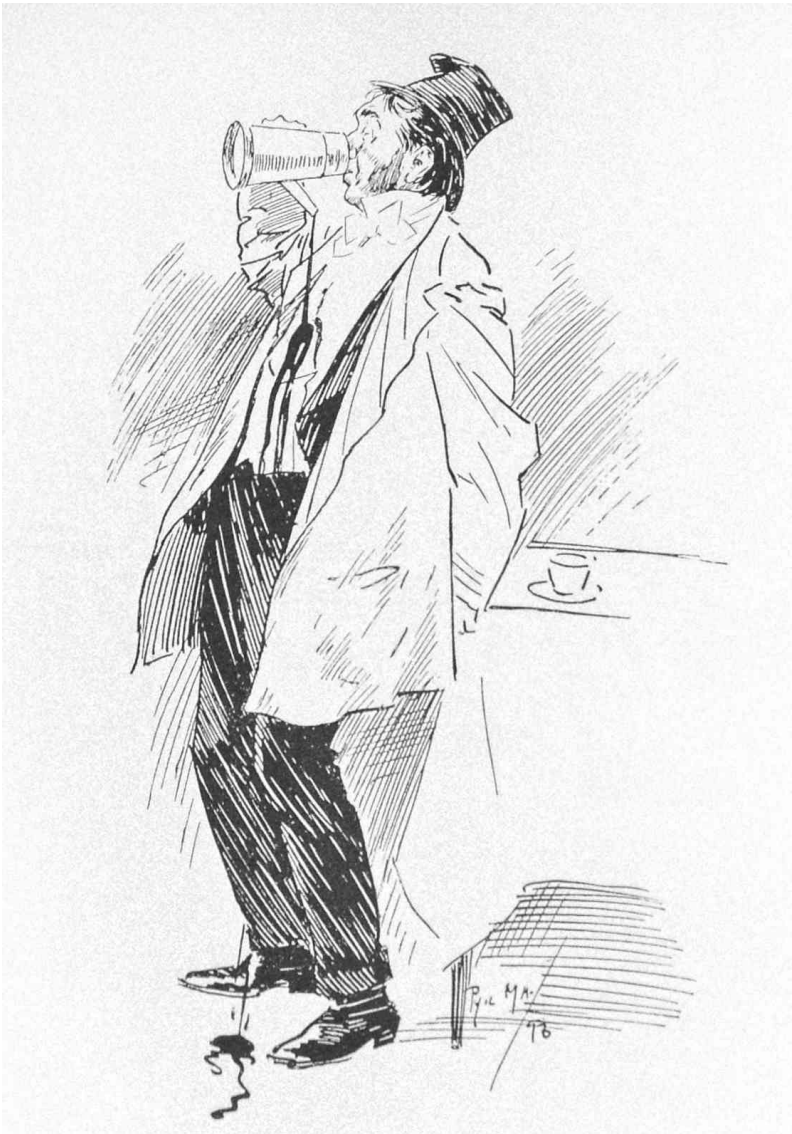


GLADSTONE

Perhaps May's finest drawing. A *tour de force* of pen portraiture.

From *Phil May's Annual*, Winter 1893

By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co.



“Mos’ ’stornary thing! a’most shertain th’was shome coffee in it.”

From *Phil May’s Annual*, Winter 1893

By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co.



A BIT OF NEWLYN
From *Phil May's Annual*, Winter 1893
By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co.



A NEWLYN TYPE

The reproduction has lost something of the delicacy of the pencil.

From *Phil May's Annual*, Winter 1893

By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co.



ALL HOT!

A fine study drawn with a very soft pencil.

From *Phil May's Annual*, Winter 1895

By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co. and G. L. Stampa, Esq.

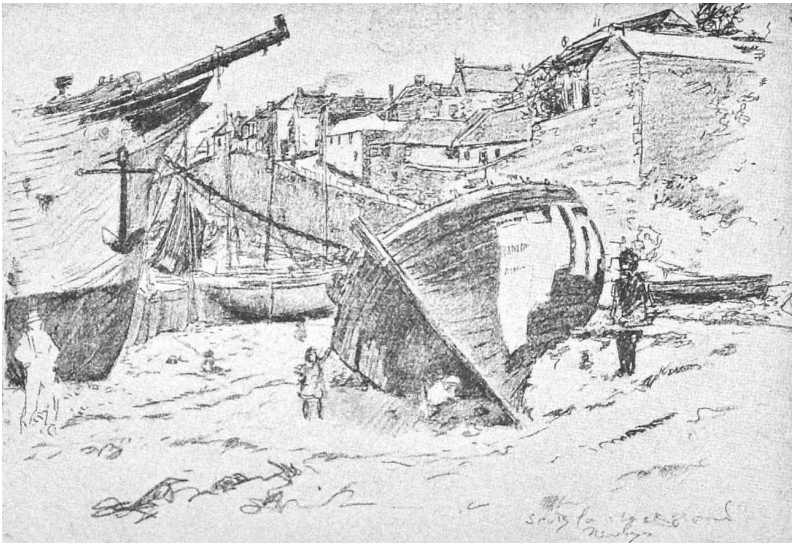


FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

A beautiful study drawn with a soft pencil.

From *Phil May's Annual*, Winter 1895

By courtesy of *W. Thacker and Co.*

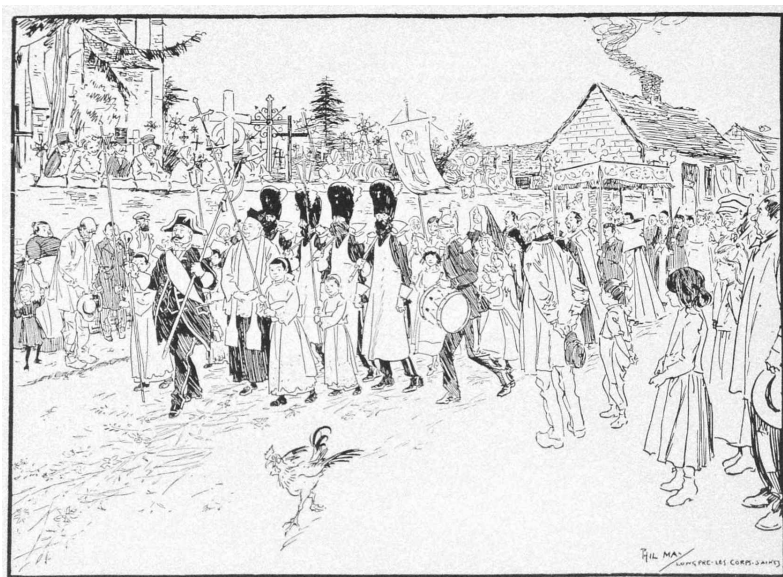


STUDY FOR A BACKGROUND AT NEWLYN

A good drawing with a black pencil which has much of the quality of an etching.

From *Phil May's Annual*, Winter 1896

By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co.



A PROCESSION IN PICARDY

About three-quarters of the size of the original reproduction. Longpré was one of May's retreats for rest and work.

From *Phil May's Annual*, Winter 1898

By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co.

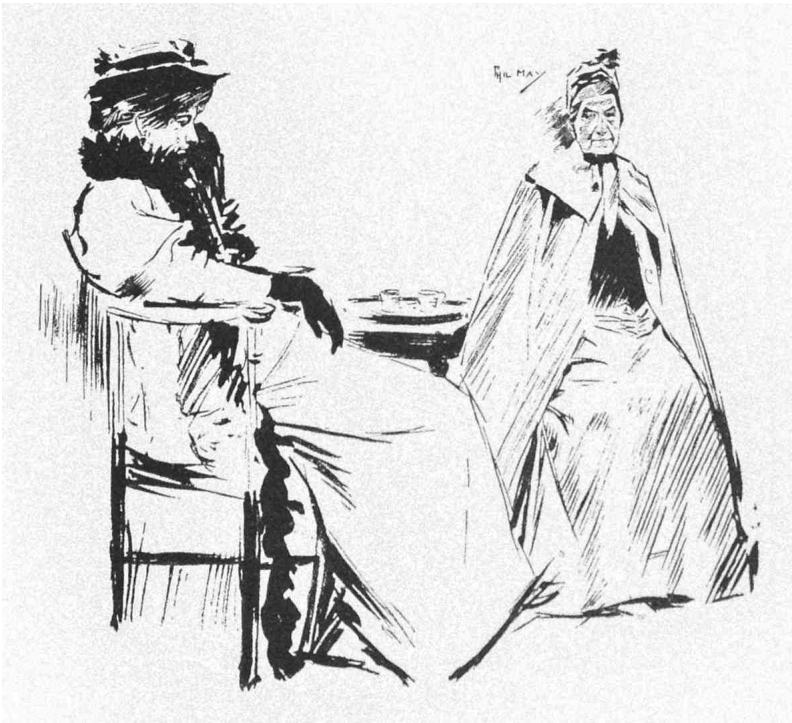


STUDY OF A DUTCHMAN

A fine chalk study worthy of an old master.

From *Phil May's Annual*, Winter 1902-3

By courtesy of W. Thacker and Co.



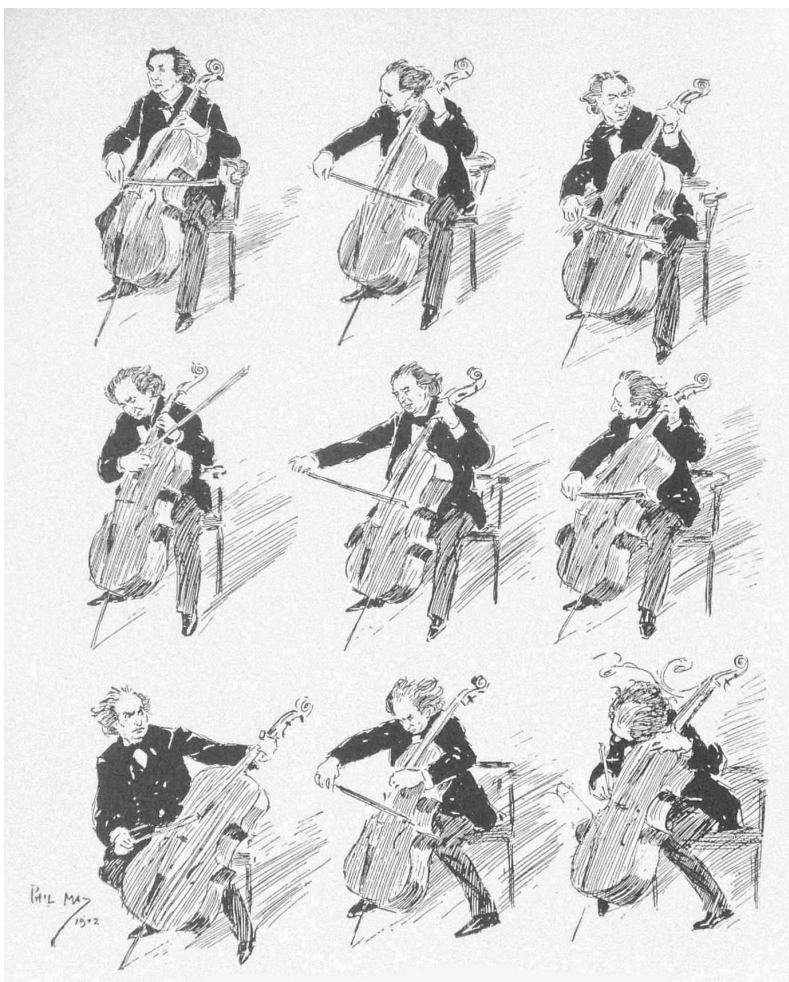
“And how is your husband to-day, Mrs Mangel?”

“Well, mum, the doctor says as if ’e ’olds out for another two days, he’ll
’ave ’opes of ’im; but if ’e doesn’t, we must prepare for the wust.”

Drawn apparently with a brush and reed-pen.

From *Pick-me-up*, April 17, 1897

By courtesy of C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd.



THE BROKEN MELODY: AUGUSTUS VAN BIENE
From *Black and White*, February 1, 1902
By courtesy of M. H. Spielmann, Esq.



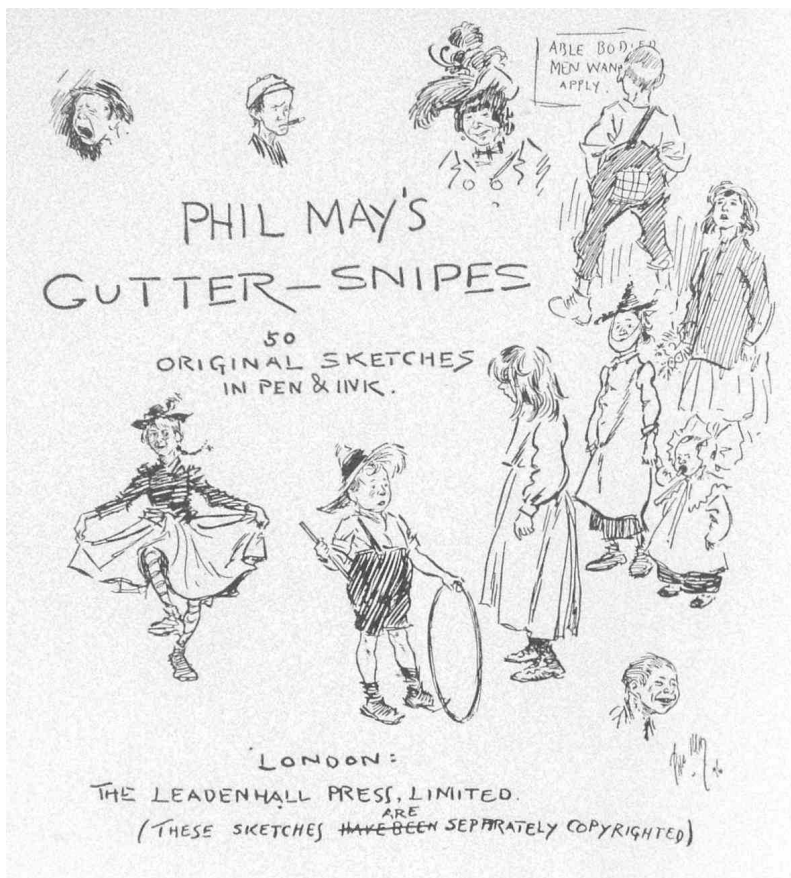
AN AUGUST BANK-HOLIDAY IN THE EAST END
An illustration from *East London*, by Walter Besant.
By courtesy of Chatto and Windus



“DEUCED FUNNY!”

Portraits of Melton Prior, war correspondent, and A. C. Corbould, *Punch* artist.

From *Phil May's Sketch-book*
By courtesy of Chatto and Windus



TITLE-PAGE OF "GUTTER-SNIPES"
By courtesy of the Leadenhall Press



CHARACTERISTIC DRAWING FROM "GUTTER-SNIPES"
By courtesy of the Leadenhall Press



ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC DRAWING FROM "GUTTER-SNIPES"
By courtesy of the Leadenhall Press



AT 'APPY 'AMPSTEAD ON EASTER MONDAY

A good example of irreducible minimum and strength of line.

From *Phil May's Sketch-book*

By courtesy of Chatto and Windus



'AMMERSMITH

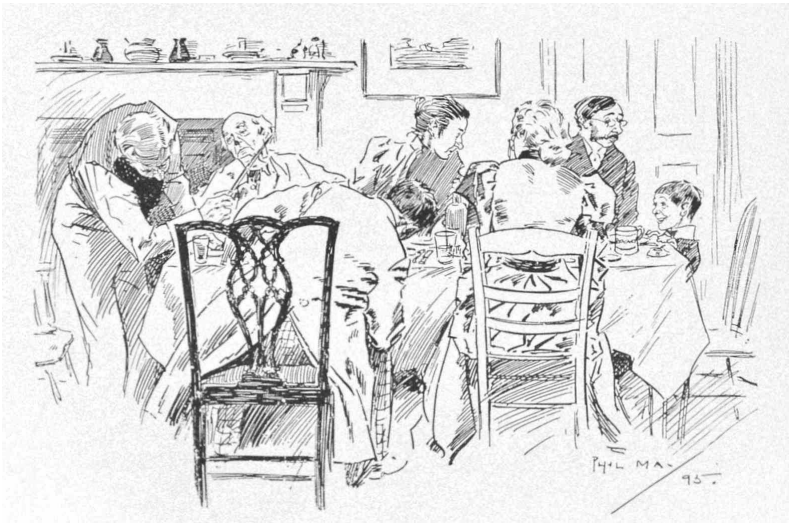
“What sort of a stone do yer call that as yer’ve got in yer ring, ’Arriet?”

“Well! dunno: but my chap says as ’e thinks as it’s a ’Ammersmith.”

The coster girl *in excelsis*.

From *Phil May’s Sketch-book*.

By courtesy of Chatto and Windus



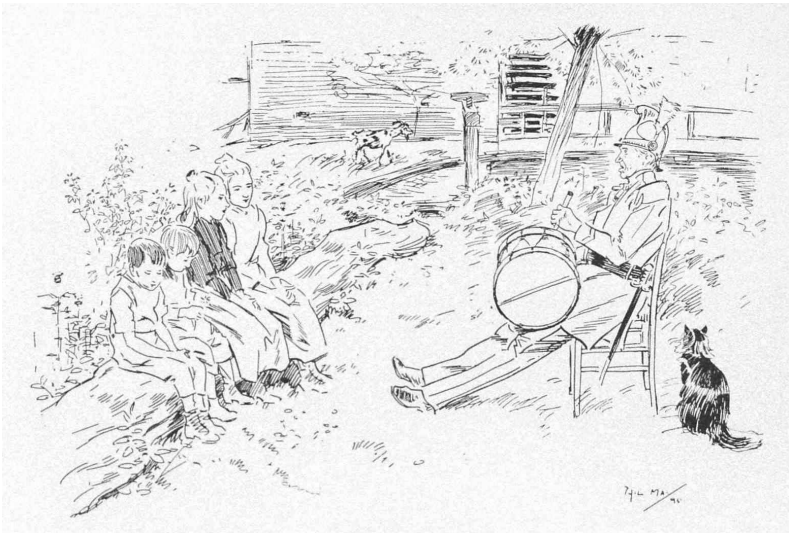
A SUNDAY DINNER

FATHER OF FAMILY (who has accidentally shot the leg of a fowl under the table): "Mind t'dog doesn't get it!"

YOUNG HOPEFUL (triumphantly): "All right, feyther! I've gotten me foot on it!"

From Punch, July 27, 1895.

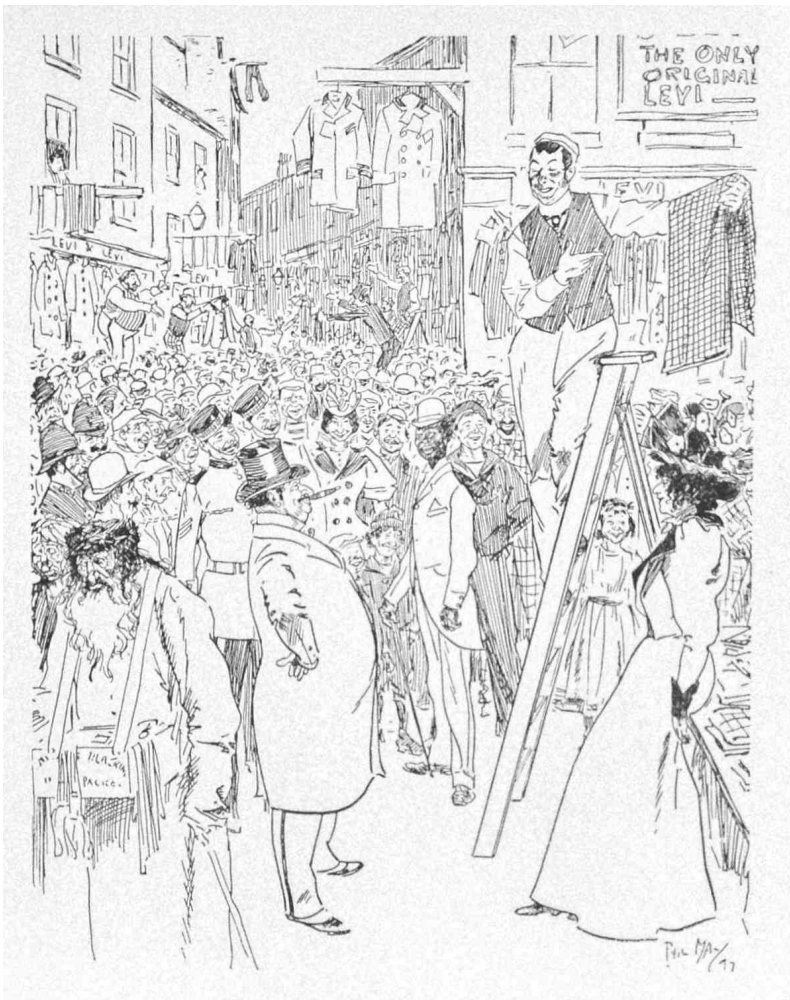
By courtesy of the Proprietors



PICKINGS FROM PICARDY

From Punch, September 7, 1895.

By courtesy of the Proprietors

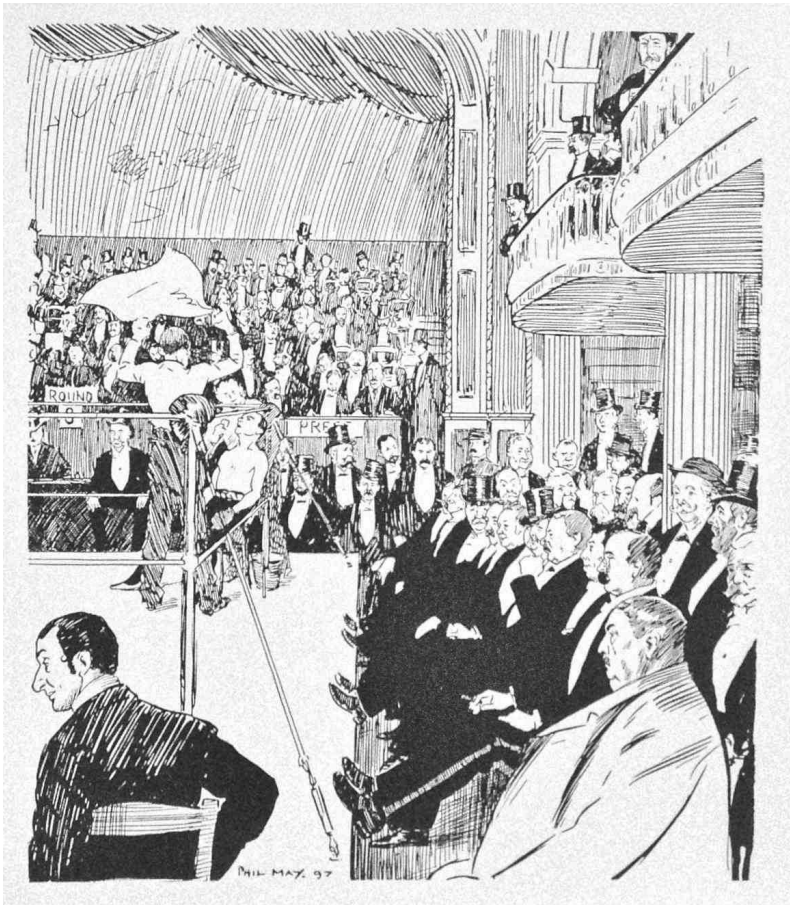


PETTICOAT LANE

From the series "From Petticoat Lane to the Lane of the Park."

From Punch Almanack, 1898.

By courtesy of the Proprietors



THE NATIONAL SPORTING CLUB, LONDON
From the series "From Petticoat Lane to the Lane of the Park."
From *Punch* Almanack, 1898.
By courtesy of the Proprietors

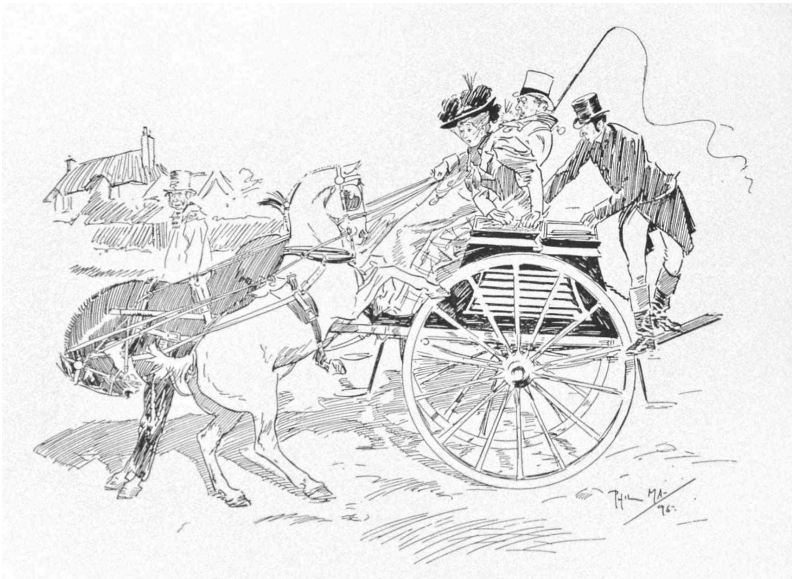


“I say Billy, ’eres a gipsy! let’s ’ave our fortins telled!”

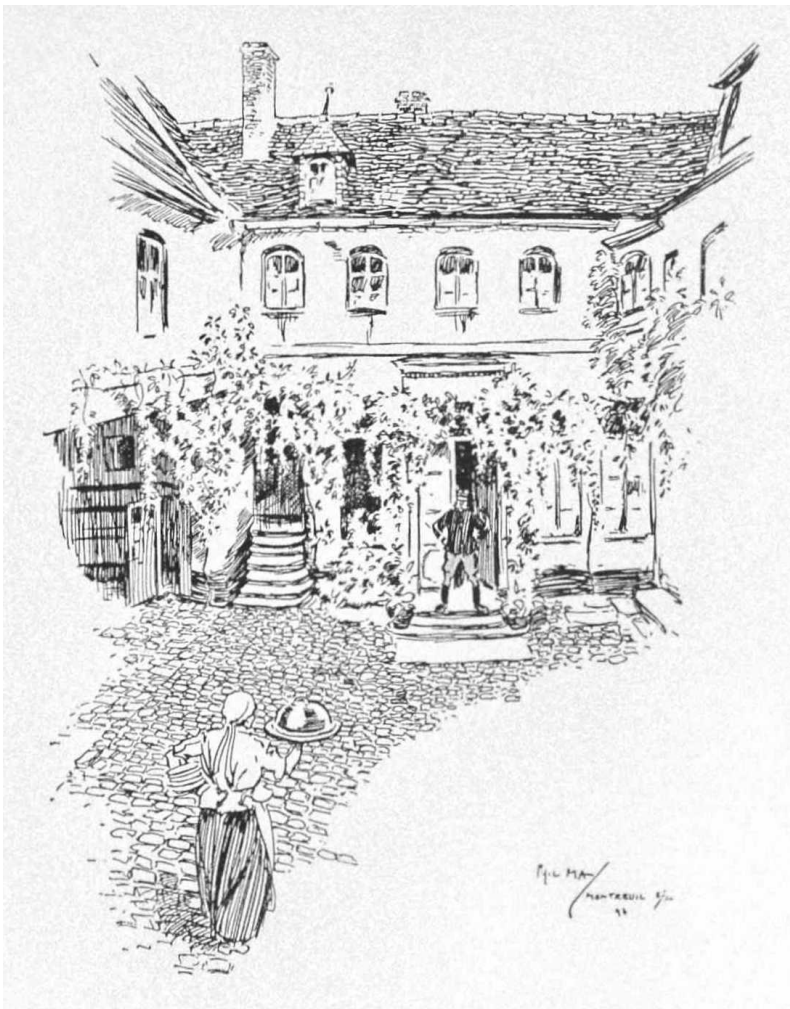
A fine suggestion of outdoor sunlight.

From *Punch*, July 30, 1902.

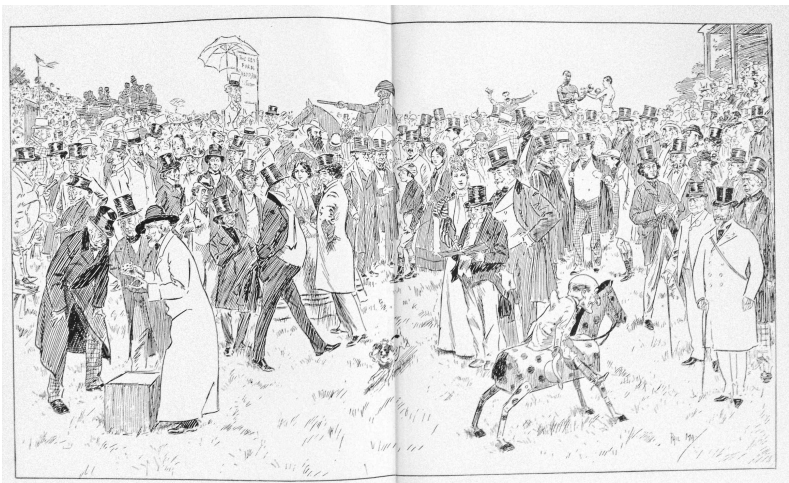
By courtesy of the Proprietors



EIGHTH LABOUR: 'ARRY EXPERIENCES THE PLEASURES OF DRIVING TANDEM
From the series "The Twelve Labours of 'Arry."
From *Punch* Almanack, 1896.
By courtesy of the Proprietors



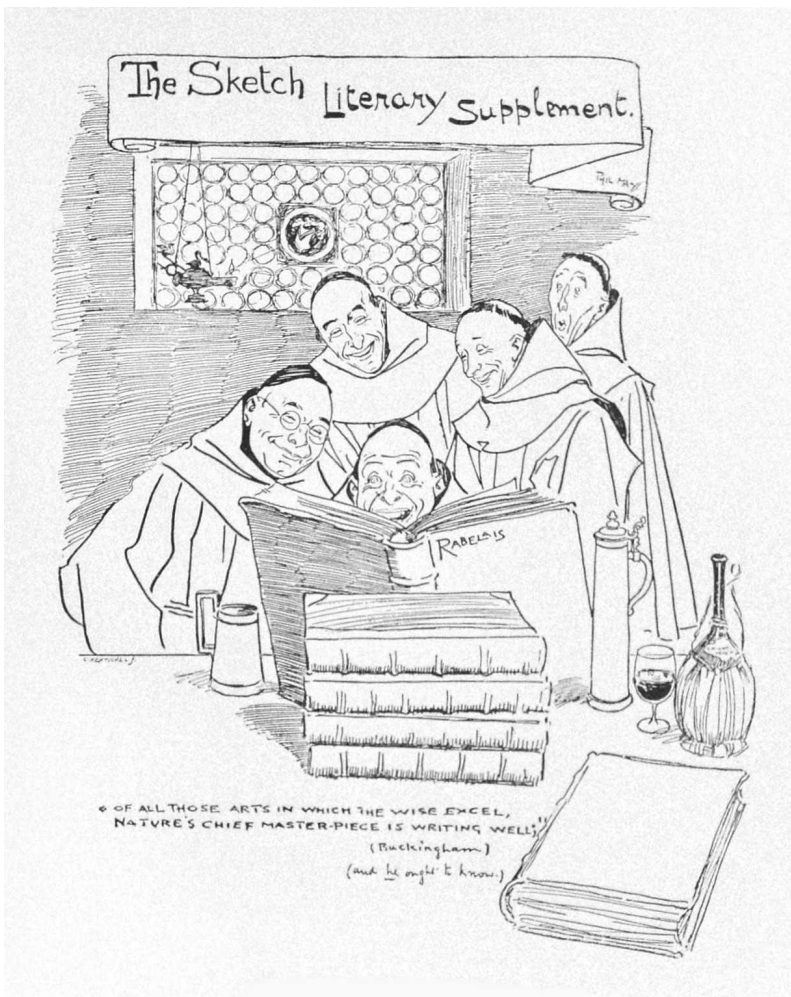
COURTYARD OF THE HÔTEL DE FRANCE, MONTREUIL
An illustration to *The Travel Diary of Toby, M.P.*
From *Punch*, October 17, 1896.
By courtesy of the Proprietors



A DIAMOND JUBILEE DREAM OF VICTORIAN DERBY DAYS

From *Punch*, June 19, 1897.

By courtesy of the Proprietors



TITLE-PAGE FROM "THE SKETCH"
By courtesy of Illustrated Newspapers, Ltd.



AN EVENING PIPE
A Newlyn study, from *The Sketch*.
By courtesy of Illustrated Newspapers, Ltd.



Phil May's only published lithograph. Made for an exhibition arranged by Charles Goulding at Dunthorne's Gallery in 1895.



A SOFT ANSWER

George Riches in disguise.

From *A Phil May Picture Book*

By courtesy of "The Evening Standard" Co., Ltd.



A CAVALIER

One of Phil May's last drawings, made in coloured chalks.

From *A Phil May Picture Book*

By courtesy of "The Evening Standard" Co., Ltd.

DRAWINGS NOT HITHERTO REPRODUCED

[Charles May](#)
[Study of a Rustic](#)
[In a Garrison Town](#)
[Study of a Jew](#)
[A Sheet of Scribbles](#)
[Mrs Phil May](#)
[Study of a Photographer](#)
[Studies of 'Drunks'](#)
[Head of a Fat Man](#)
[Me when I'm Old](#)
[Study of an Old Woman](#)
[Jenny Hill](#)
[A Sheet of Sketches](#)
[Hampstead Heath Studies](#)
[Three Small Studies](#)
[Sir Henry Irving](#)
[A Negress](#)
[A Pin](#)
[The Model](#)
[A Political Argument](#)
[A Golf-caddy](#)
[A Country Type](#)
[Cinderella](#)
[Three Pen-and-ink Studies](#)
[A Page of Chinamen](#)
[Interior of an Italian Church](#)
[Art in Whitechapel](#)
[Head of a Chinaman](#)
[Black-and-white: a Letter](#)
[An Illustrated Letter](#)
[A French Peasant](#)

[Heads of Chinamen](#)

[Invitation Card](#)

[Coster Girl's Head](#)

[A Back Garden \(probably at Newlyn\)](#)

[Rome](#)

[Sandwich](#)

[Quayside \(probably at Newlyn\)](#)

[The Market-place at Hyères](#)

[An Interior](#)

[Exercises with a Pen](#)

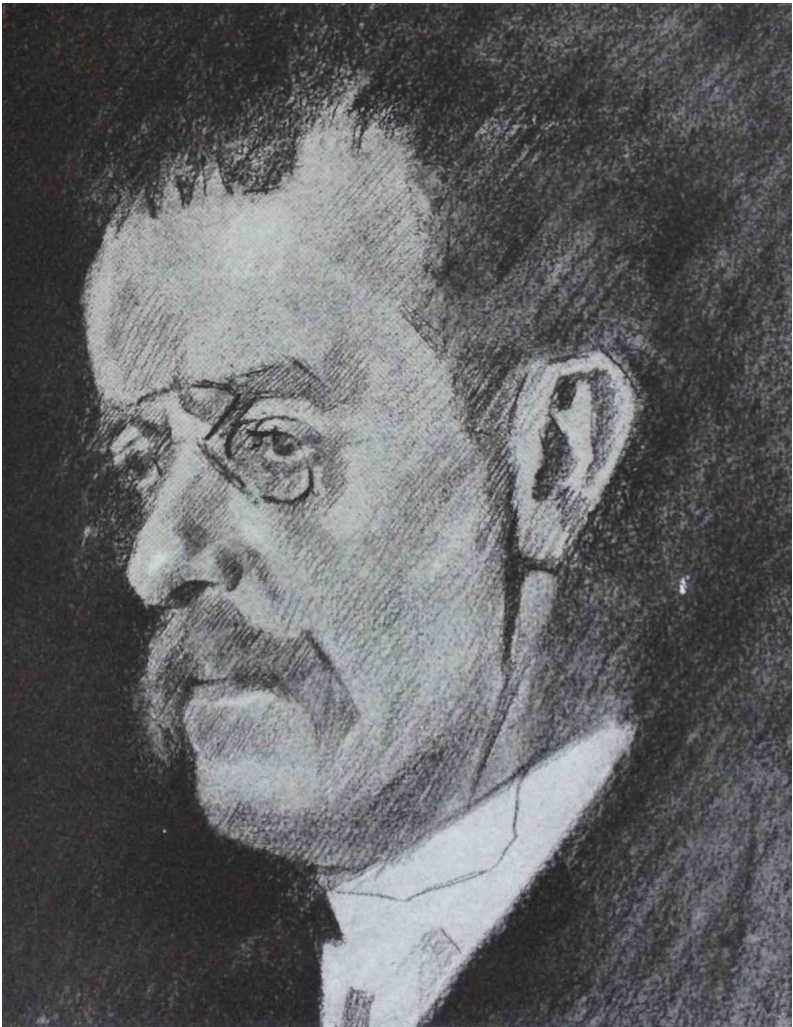
[J. L. Toole](#)

[A Costume Design](#)

[Sir Henry Irving](#)

[Study of a Scotsman](#)

[Study of a Hired Coachman](#)

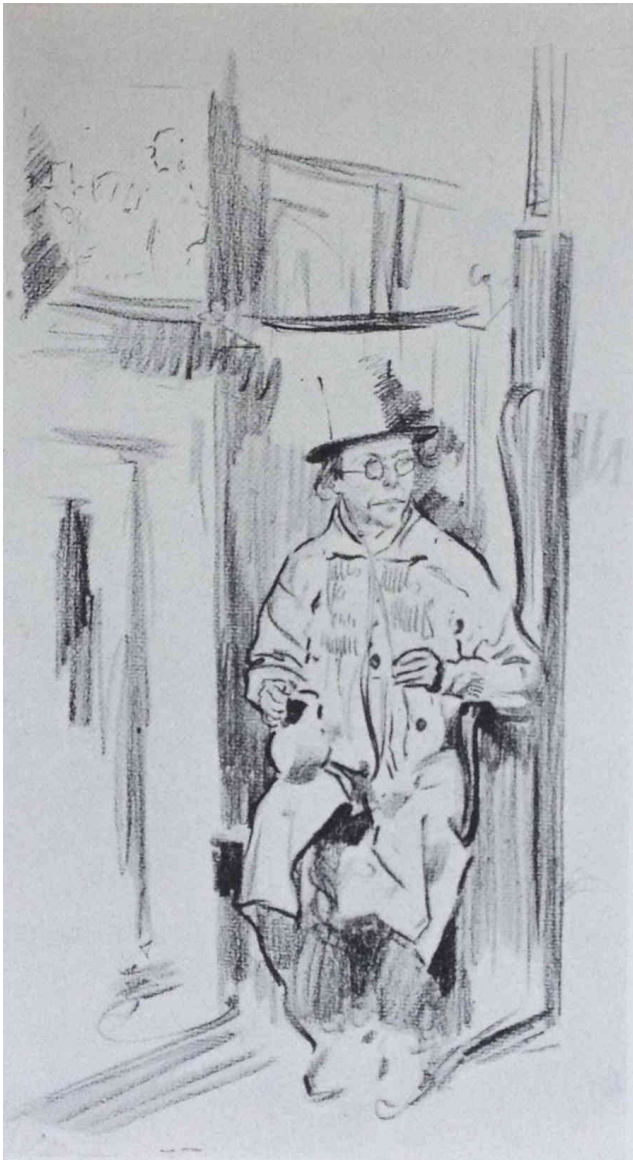


CHARLES MAY

Size of drawing, 8¼" x 6½"

An early pencil portrait of his brother. It has lost some of its delicacy in reproduction.

By courtesy of Charles May, Esq.



STUDY OF A RUSTIC

Size of drawing, 13¼"x 7⅞"

A portrait of Sir William Rothenstein. The setting is probably at Broadway.

The figure was used in a *Punch* drawing, November 6, 1901.

In the British Museum Print Room



IN A GARRISON TOWN

Size of drawing, 8³/₈" x 6¹/₂"

A preliminary sketch in pen-and-pencil for a drawing in *Phil May's Annual*,
Winter 1897.

In the British Museum Print Room.

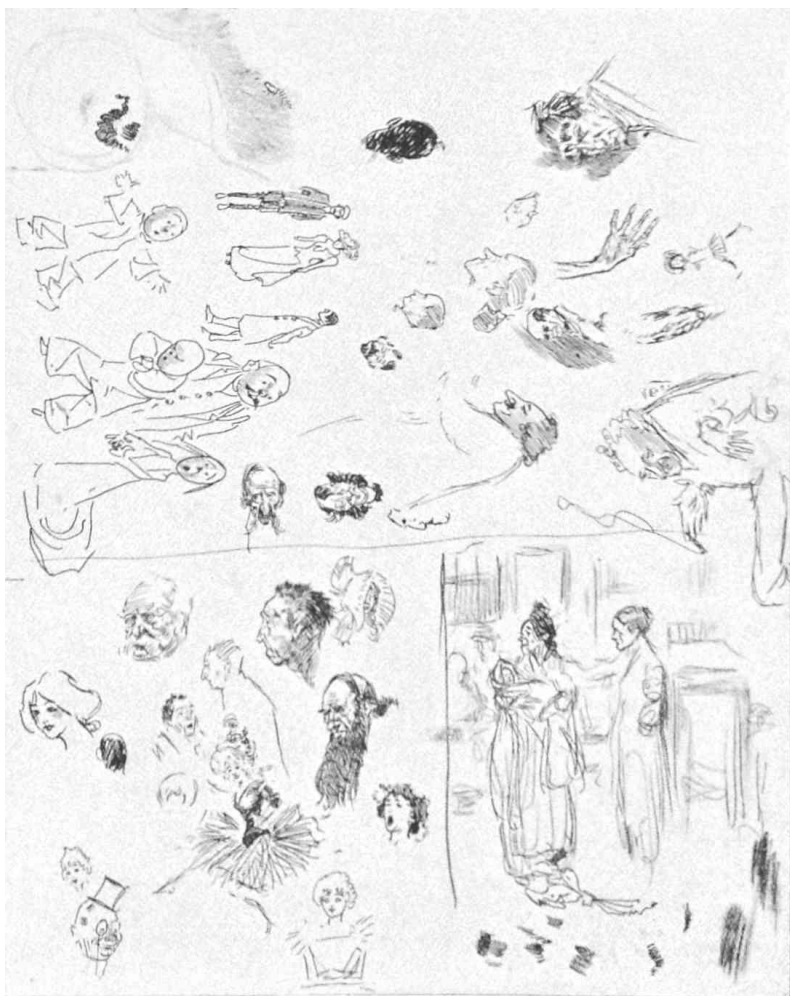


STUDY OF A JEW

Size of drawing, 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ "

A masterly study in charcoal and chalk which was probably never used.

In the British Museum Print Room.



A SHEET OF SCRIBBLES

Size of drawing, $11\frac{5}{8}$ " x $9\frac{1}{4}$ "

Drawn for practice or to test a pen. A self-portrait in top right-hand corner.

In the British Museum Print Room.



MRS PHIL MAY

Size of drawing, $8\frac{7}{8}$ " x 8"

A quick impression done with both ends of a quill

In the British Museum Print Room.



STUDY OF A PHOTOGRAPHER

Size of drawing, $10\frac{3}{4}" \times 7\frac{3}{8}"$

A quick pen-and-ink impression: very like a Charles Keene sketch.

In the British Museum Print Room.



STUDIES OF 'DRUNKS'

Size of drawing, 13¼" x 9"

Pen-and-pencil preliminary trials for a drawing in *Punch*, August 10, 1895.

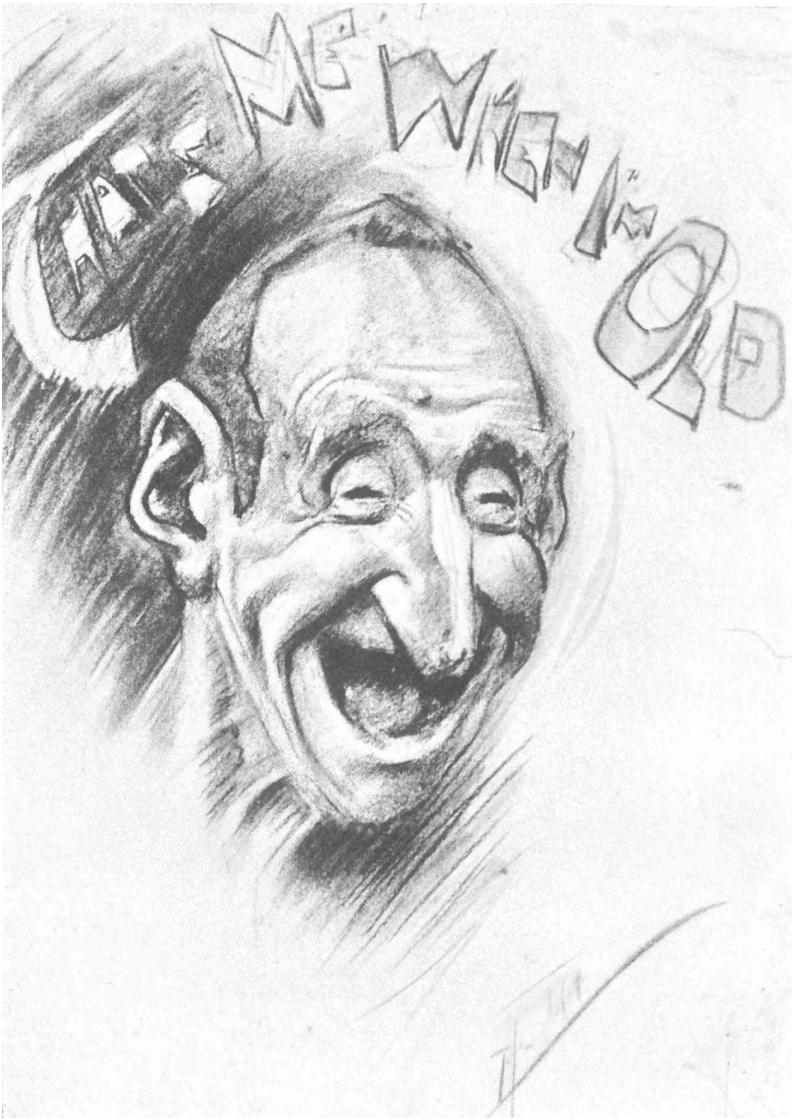
In the British Museum Print Room



HEAD OF A FAT MAN

Size of drawing, 8½" x 9⅛"

In the British Museum Print Room



ME WHEN I'M OLD

Size of drawing, 17³/₄" x 12¹/₂"

There is a similar drawing in pen-and-ink in *Phil May in Australia*. This also was probably done in Australia. It bears Mrs May's proprietary signature.

In the British Museum Print Room

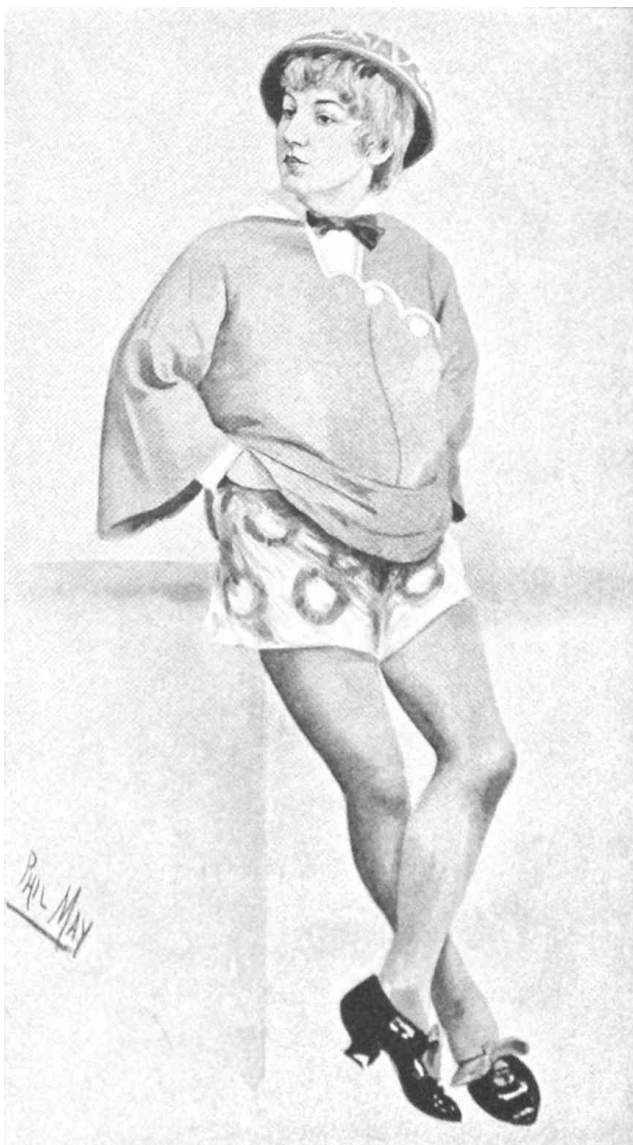


STUDY OF AN OLD WOMAN

Size of drawing, 12" x 9½"

The face has suffered somewhat in reproduction.

By courtesy of the Committee of the Leeds City Art Gallery

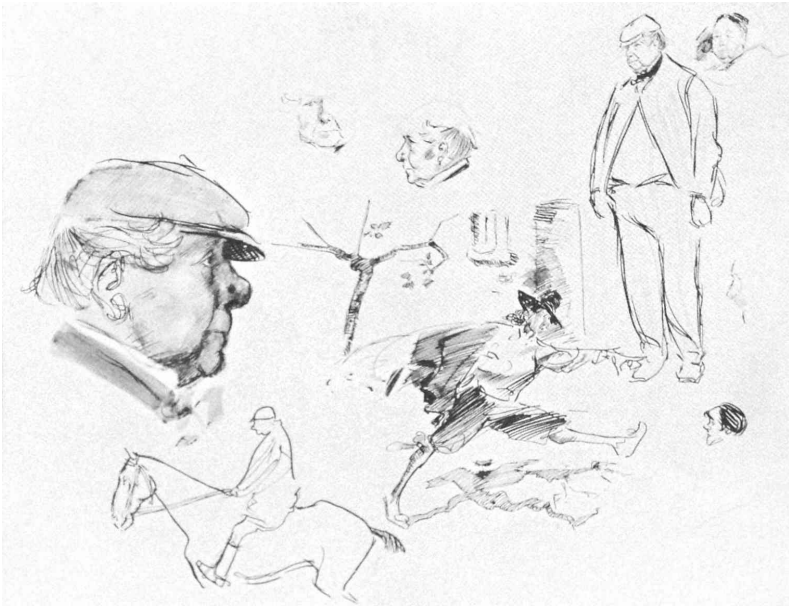


JENNY HILL

Size of drawing, 18½" x 10½"

One of the early watercolour theatrical portraits (about
1880).

By courtesy of the Committee of the Leeds City Art Gallery



A SHEET OF SKETCHES

Size of drawing, 14" x 18"

The little head in the top right-hand corner in the original is a gem.

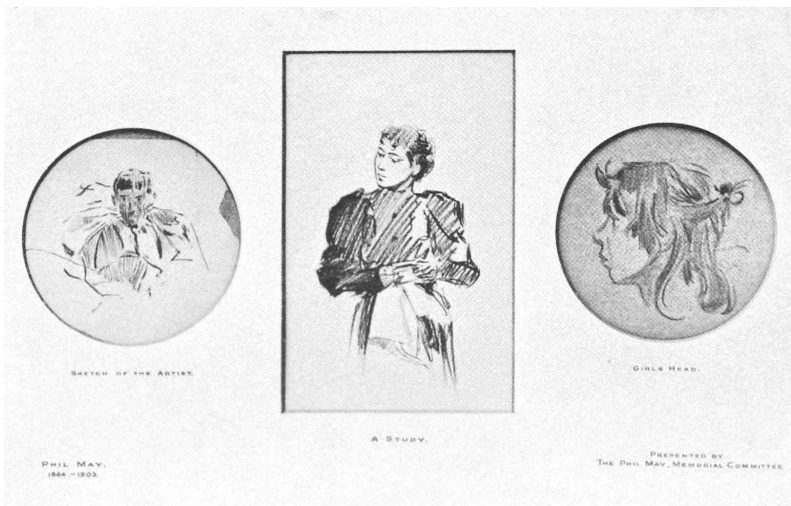
By courtesy of the Committee of the Leeds City Art Gallery



HAMPSTEAD HEATH STUDIES

Size of drawing, 14" x 10¼"

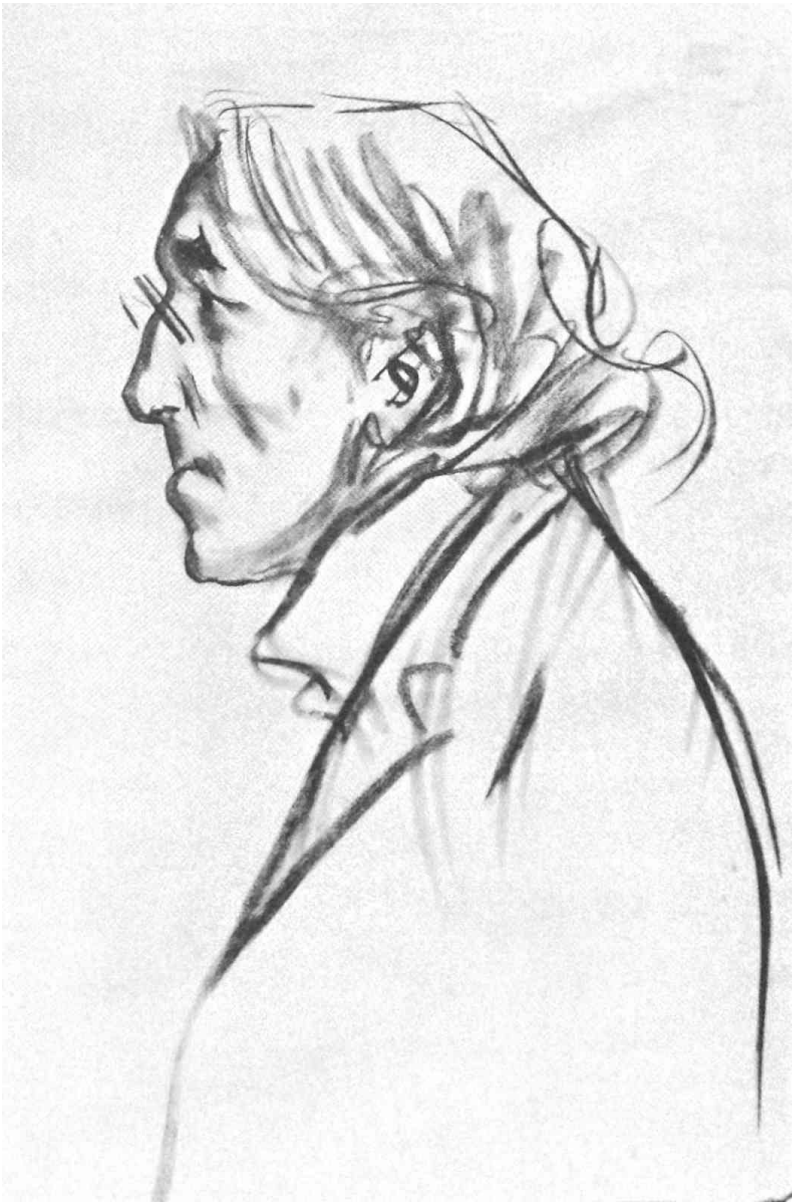
By courtesy of the Committee of the Leeds City Art Gallery



THREE SMALL STUDIES

Size of drawings, 4" x 4"; 6½" x 4¼"; 4" x 4"

By courtesy of the Committee of the Leeds City Art Gallery



SIR HENRY IRVING

Size of drawing, 22" x 13"

A 'lightning sketch' drawn in black chalk at a lecture which Phil May gave in Leeds in aid of the widows and orphans of the Boer War.



A NEGRESS

Size of drawing (in coloured chalks), 42" X 27"
Done on the same occasion as the Irving portrait.



A PIN

Size of drawing (in black chalk), 28" X 24½"
Done on the same occasion as the Irving portrait.



THE MODEL

Size of drawing, 10¼" x 8¼"

A fine free chalk study, quite modern in treatment.

By courtesy of the Committee of the Leeds City Art Gallery



A POLITICAL ARGUMENT

Size of drawing, 10½" x 8"

By courtesy of the Committee of the Leeds City Art Gallery



A GOLF-CADDY

Size of drawing, 8" x 6"

Soft pencil on brown paper.

By courtesy of Percy B. Tubbs, Esq.



A COUNTRY TYPE

Size of drawing, 7¼" x 6"

A Broadway character who appears in several of May's drawings. Drawn probably about 1902.

By courtesy of Percy B. Tubbs, Esq.



CINDERELLA

Size of drawing, 8½" x 6¼"

Pencil study for a proposed series of children's books.

By courtesy of Earnest Inchbold, Esq.



THREE PEN-AND-INK STUDIES

Size of drawings, 5½" x 3"; 7½" x 4"; 6⅞" x 2"

These three sketches, particularly the figure on the right, which is a portrait of E. S. Grew, are very reminiscent of Charles Keene's pen studies.

By courtesy of Earnest Inchbold, Esq. (the two figures on the left), and Arthur Morrison, Esq.



PAGE OF CHINAMEN

Size of drawing, 9¾" x 7"

By courtesy of Arthur Morrison, Esq.



INTERIOR OF AN ITALIAN CHURCH

Size of drawing, 8¼" x 10½"

A beautifully free pen-drawing, reminiscent of Vierge.

By courtesy of Arthur Morrison, Esq.



ART IN WHITECHAPEL

Size of drawing, 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ " x 10 $\frac{5}{8}$ "

Preliminary sketch for *Punch* drawing (May 1, 1897). The picture referred to in the poster is a Graphic colour plate of Lord Leighton's "Flaming June."

By courtesy of Arthur Morrison, Esq.

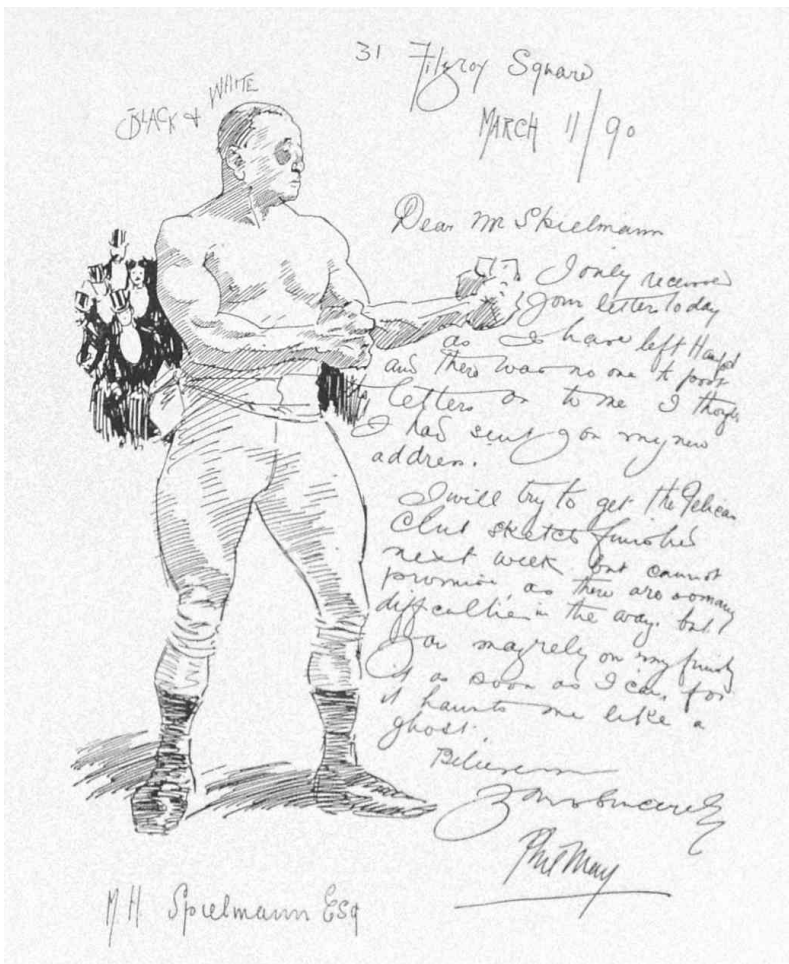


HEAD OF A CHINAMAN

Size of drawing, 16" x 12½"

A masterly drawing in charcoal, one of several preliminary practice drawings done in Dudley Hardy's studio when May was contemplating a lecture tour.

By courtesy of G. L. Stampa, Esq.



BLACK-AND-WHITE: A LETTER

Same size as original

By courtesy of H. Spielmann, Esq.



AN ILLUSTRATED LETTER
Same size as original
Pen-and-ink and colour.
By courtesy of Mrs Ernest Brown



A FRENCH PEASANT

Size of original, 8¾" x 6½"

Pencil on brown paper. The note on the left is interesting

By courtesy of Lawrence Bradbury, Esq.

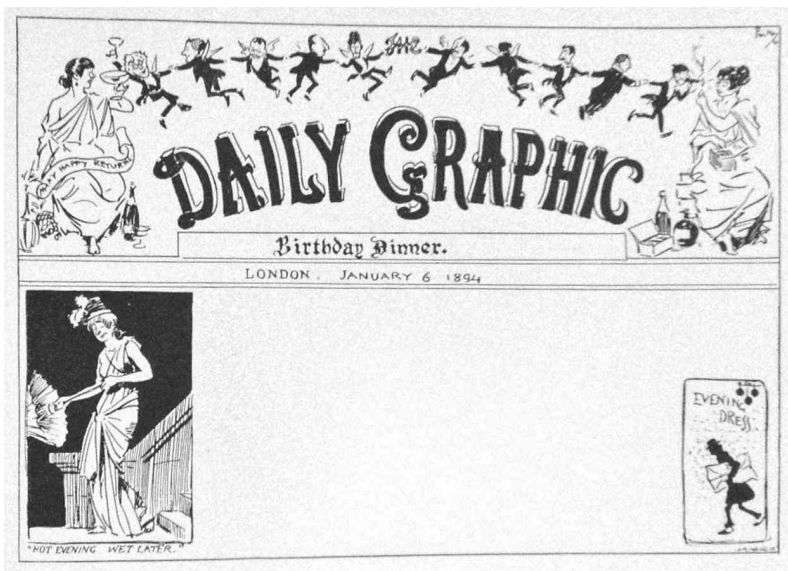


HEADS OF CHINAMEN

Size of drawings, $5\frac{3}{4}$ " x $4\frac{1}{2}$ "; 6" x $3\frac{3}{4}$ "

Pencil (left) and black chalk.

From the author's collection



INVITATION CARD

Size of drawing, $6\frac{5}{8}$ " x $9\frac{1}{2}$ "

A parody of *The Daily Graphic* heading.

The small figures are portraits of the staff: G. K. Jones, A. K. Macpherson, E. S. Grew, H. Johnson, R. B. M. Paxton, — Bogue (Advertisement Manager), —, Hammond Hall (Editor), —, and Phil May.

By courtesy of Carmichael Thomas, Esq.

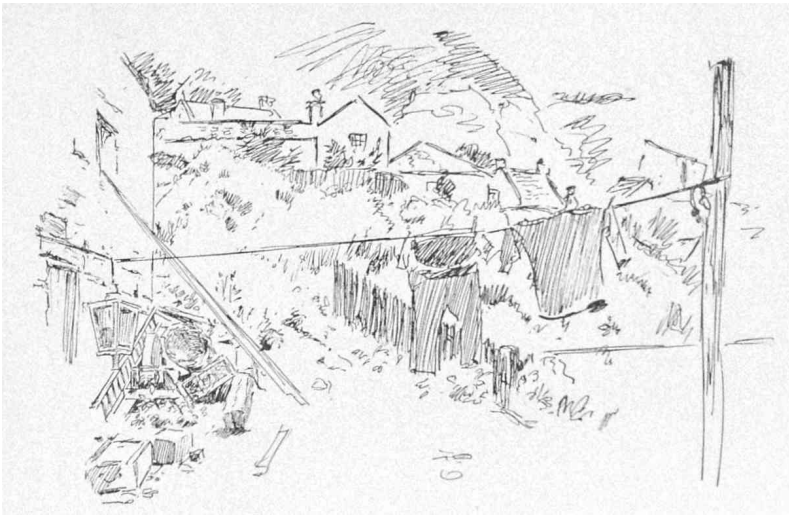


COSTER GIRL'S HEAD

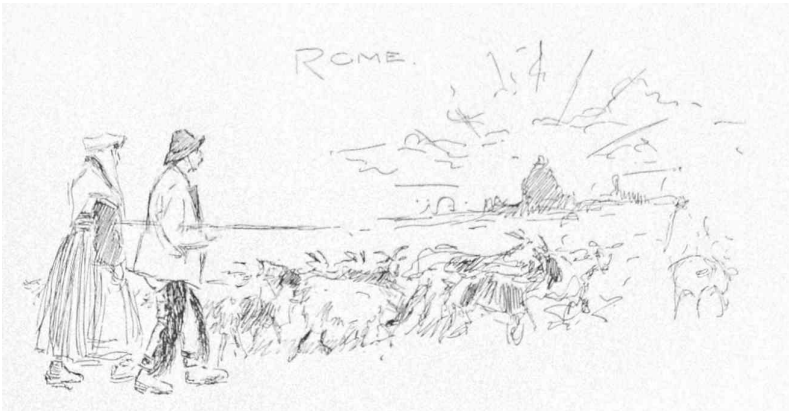
Size of drawing, 22" x 17"

Lightning sketch done in black, blue, and red chalks at a *Daily Graphic* smoking concert. The face has lost something of its delicacy by reproduction in black and white.

By courtesy of Carmichael Thomas Esq.



A BACK GARDEN (PROBABLY AT NEWLYN)
 Size of drawing, 4" x 6¼"
 The original has some blue and black pencil.



ROME
 Size of drawing, 4¼" x 8½"
 A study with a fine pen, used freely, rather in the manner of Vierge.
By courtesy of W. N. Spencer, 27 New Oxford Street, London



SANDWICH

Size of drawing, 5" x 8½"

This was used as a pen-drawing in *The Zigzag Guide: Round and about the Kentish Coast*.

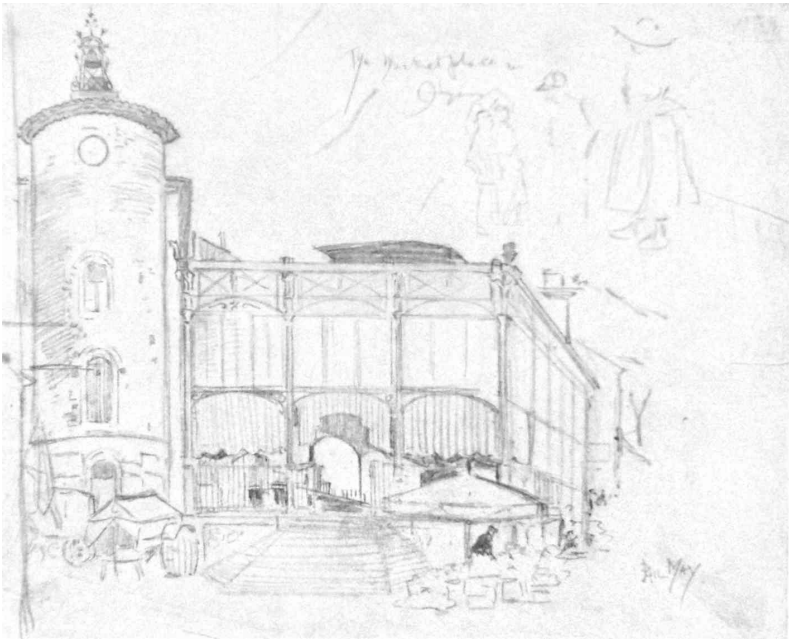


QUAYSIDE (PROBABLY NEWLYN)

Size of drawing, 5½" x 6¾"

The signatures in this drawing and the one above have been added by another hand.

By courtesy of W. T. Spencer, 27 New Oxford Street, London



THE MARKET-PLACE AT HYÈRES

Size of drawing, 7½" x 8½"

This was used as a pen-drawing (coloured) in *The Graphic*, The signature has been added.

By courtesy of W. T. Spencer, 27 New Oxford Street, London



AN INTERIOR

Size of drawing, 11½" x 9½"

Paul Fordyce Maitland was a pupil of Roussel, and worked in Chelsea. His paintings, one of which is in the Tate Gallery, show the influence of Whistler. He died in 1909.

By courtesy of W. T. Spencer, 27 New Oxford Street, London



Exercises with a Pen

Size of drawing, $14\frac{3}{8}" \times 10\frac{3}{8}"$

Note protective inscription in lower right-hand corner by Mrs Phil May, whose portrait in a black hat appears above.

By courtesy of W. T. Spencer, 27 New Oxford Street, London



J. L. TOOLE

Size of drawing, 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

An early drawing (probably about 1881) in watercolour.

By courtesy of W. T. Spencer, 27 New Oxford Street, London



A COSTUME DESIGN

Size of drawing, 11¼" x 8¼"

In watercolour, probably for a pantomime at the Grand Theatre, Leeds, about 1882. The colour shows a strong resemblance to that of a Japanese print.

By courtesy of W. T. Spencer, 27 New Oxford Street, London



SIR HENRY IRVING

Size of drawing, $7\frac{5}{8}$ " x $5\frac{3}{4}$ "

Probably drawn at one of Sir F. C. Burnand's house-parties.

By courtesy of Francis Edwards, Ltd., 83 High Street, Marylebone



STUDY OF A SCOTSMAN

Size of drawing, $9\frac{5}{8}$ " x $5\frac{1}{2}$ "

*By courtesy of Francis Edwards, Ltd., 83 High Street,
Marylebone*



STUDY OF A HIRED COACHMAN

Same size as original

By courtesy of Francis Edwards, Ltd., 83 High Street, Marylebone

STUDY OF A HIRED COACHMAN

Same size as original

By courtesy of Francis Edwards, Ltd., 83 High Street, Marylebone

AN ICONOGRAPHY OF PHIL MAY

Reprinted, with additions, from “Phil May in Australia,” by courtesy of the proprietors of “The Sydney Bulletin”

1878

Drawings in *The Yorkshire Gossip* and *The Busy Bee* (Leeds).

1882

Costume designs for Leeds Christmas pantomime.

1883

Wash caricatures of Toole, Irving, and Bancroft (a group), published April 21, 1884; also of Arthur Roberts, W. S. Penley, and Edward Terry. Reproduced about seven years later in *Aunt Maria's Annual*. Theatrical sketches in *Society*.

Illustrated cover and drawings for Christmas Number (*The Coming Paradise*) of *The St Stephen's Review*. Advertisement drawing in issue for December 29. Portrait caricatures in *The Penny Illustrated Paper* and *The Pictorial World*.

1884

Pen-and-ink drawings and cartoons in *The St Stephen's Review* Christmas Number (*Saturnalia*); other drawings and cartoons, mostly political. Several drawings in *The Pictorial World*.

“The Seven Ages of Society,” in *Society* Winter Number (178 portraits).

A sheet of caricatures, “The Worship of Fashion,” in *Society*.

1885

Pen-and-ink drawings and cartoons, political and theatrical, and some fashion drawings in *St Stephen's Review*, including the Christmas Number, “The Great White Spot.”

Designs for the dresses in *Nell Gwynne* for Charles Alias.

“Our Show” in *Society*, Winter Number.

1886

Drawings for *The Sydney Bulletin* (many of the cartoons contain several subjects, but a page or double page is here counted as one drawing). January, seven; February, eight; March, thirteen; April, eight; May, ten; June, twenty-one; July, thirty-one; August, twelve; September, thirty-two; October, thirty-three; November, twenty-three; December, eighteen; total, 216 drawings. And in "A Christmas Supplement" forty little portrait caricatures.

1887

Drawings for *The Sydney Bulletin*. January, twenty-five; February, twenty-two; March, twenty-three; April, twenty-nine; May, twenty-eight; June, twenty-eight; July, thirty-five; August, thirty-four; September, twenty-two; October, twenty-eight; November, twenty-six; December, thirty-two; total, 332. And twenty-nine caricatures in colour in Christmas Number.

1888

Drawings for *The Sydney Bulletin*. January, thirty-two; February, twenty-three; March, thirty-four; April, twenty-one; May, twenty; June, nineteen; July, eight; August, twelve; September, eleven; October, six; November, seven; December, eight; total, 201. Also ten drawings in "The History of Botany Bay" Series, in April; and twenty-one figures in colour for Christmas Number. *The Bulletin Illustrated History of Botany Bay*, eighteen illustrations (including the ten originally published).

1889

Drawings for *The Sydney Bulletin*. January, four; February, four; March, seven; April, four; May, four; June, four; July, four; August, two; September two; October, one; total, 36. Twelve separate drawings, "A Voyage in the *Orizaba*," in Christmas Number Supplement; with a page drawing, "An Australian Tourist," in Christmas Number.

In London *Puck*. October, twelve drawings, "The Astræa Ballet at the Alhambra," reprinted in colour from *The St Stephen's Review*.

The St Stephen's Review. Drawings from Rome and Paris (Exhibition). Pen-drawings for "The Parson and the Painter." Large double-page cartoon and other drawings in Christmas Number, "Crime."

1890

Drawings for *The Sydney Bulletin*. January, four; February, three; March, eight; total, 15. And another page, “A Voyage in the *Orizaba*.”

The St Stephen's Review. “The Parson and the Painter” drawings (continued), and in Christmas Number.

The Daily Graphic. Starting with November 12 (“A Day with a Medicine Man”), seventeen drawings.

1891

The Sydney Bulletin. Sketch at Rome, in Christmas Number.

The Daily Graphic. Sixty-four pen-drawings and cartoons at various dates.

The Graphic, October 10. Half-page, “*Joan of Arc* at the Gaiety Theatre.”

Black and White. A few carefully drawn racing, boxing, and theatrical subjects: February 14 (No. 2), April 11, May 9, May 16.

Pick-me-up. May 30, many small illustrations to “Our Pepper Box”; a series of pen-portraits, “On the Brain,” beginning June 6.

The Parson and the Painter: their Wanderings and Excursions among Men and Women, written by the Rev. Joseph Slapkins (Alfred Allison), illustrated by Charlie Summers (Phil May). Four double-page illustrations, two page illustrations, and 208 smaller. (Reprinted from *The St Stephen's Review* by the London Central Publishing and Advertising Company, September.)

1892

The Sydney Bulletin. Eight colour drawings (“Measuring the Baby”) in Christmas Number.

The Daily Graphic. Five drawings between January and April.

The Graphic. A few half-pages, and in Christmas Number a page in colour, “The Superiority of Man.”

Pick-me-up. A great number of small illustrations, and further “On the Brain” pen-portraits.

The Illustrated London News. In January pantomime and fancy ball pages. In Christmas Number wash illustrations, “No Reasonable Offer Refused.”

Phil May's Summer Annual (London Central Publishing and Advertising Company). About sixty-five pen-drawings (many of them portraits of sporting celebrities).

Phil Mays Winter Annual (Walter Haddon). About seventy pen-drawings (many of them portraits of well-known politicians).

1893

The Daily Graphic. Pantomime illustrations. And from April to October a series, "Seeing the World," dealing with a visit to the World's Fair at Chicago; letterpress by E. S. Grew.

The Graphic. A few page drawings, including "Winter Bathing in the Serpentine." Seven pages (drawings in colour), "Notes by a Globe-trotter," from February 4 to April 8. In Christmas Number, cover ("Father Christmas"), "A Maltese Tragedy," and "The Rival Mephistopheles."

Pick-me-up. About a dozen drawings to April, and one at Christmas.

The Illustrated London News. Fancy ball and pantomime page illustrations.

Phil May's Winter Annual (Walter Haddon). Fifty-two pen-drawings, including "Gladstone." Eight otherwise.

The Sketch. Starting in the first number (February), thirty-five illustrations, most of them full-page—not all in pen-and-ink.

The Pall Mall Budget, February 23. A double page of wonderful pen sketches drawn for May's own amusement when he was ill.

Punch. A pen-drawing on October 14.

The English Illustrated Magazine. Sixteen little pen-drawings in November and December illustrating "The Whirligig of Time."

1894

The Sydney Bulletin. Christmas Supplement, "In Full Cry."

The Daily Graphic. A few drawings May 15 and 16, Hampstead Heath.

The Graphic. Another page or two of "Globe-trotter" series (Rome). In Christmas Number a page of drawings in colour, "An Androcles of To-day."

Phil Mays Winter Annual (Walter Haddon). Forty-five pen-drawings and twenty-three otherwise (many of them merely heads); total, sixty-eight.

Fun, Frolic, and Fancy (Chatto and Windus), by Byron Webber and Phil May. Three pen-drawings; eight otherwise; total, eleven.

The Sketch. Fifty-nine pen-drawings—two on February 28, May 2, May 26, and October 24; two in Christmas Number, and four on June 6.

The Pall Mall Budget. From June 7 to end of year twenty-seven drawings, many of them not in pen-and-ink. August 30, double page (“Scarborough”). Christmas Number (December 13), colour page. Interview, October 25, with self-portrait in straw hat and riding-costume.

St Paul’s. May 26 (No. 3), interview and chalk drawing, “Choosing a Crucifix”; June 9, page illustration and seven smaller ones for “The Londoner’s Sunday: Petticoat Lane”—the first of a projected series which was never continued.

Punch. January, one; February, one; March, two; June, one; July, two; August, one; September, three; October, two; November, one; December, three; and a page illustration and smaller one in the Almanack.

The English Illustrated Magazine. Thirty-eight little pen-drawings in February, March, May, July, August, October, and December illustrating “The Whirligig of Time.”

The Magazine of Art. Article by M. H. Spielmann in “Our Graphic Artists” series, in August. Four chalk drawings, one wash, two pen.

Interviews, with illustrations, in *The Strand Magazine* (December) and *The Bohemian Magazine*.

1895

The Daily Graphic. Two or three pen-drawings.

The Graphic. Colour series. Another page of “Globe-trotter” series on October 12. Pages, “Western Ways,” June 15, July 27, September 21.

Phil Mays Winter Annual (Walter Haddon). Fifty-one pen-drawings; seventeen otherwise, including “Brother Brushes”; total, sixty-eight.

The Sketch. Thirty drawings, nearly all in pen-and-ink.

The Pall Mall Budget. Sixteen page drawings (mostly pen) to March 28.

Punch. Forty-three drawings. None appearing on January 12, January 19, February 2, February 9, March 23, May 11, July 6, July 20, August 31, October 26, November 9. Two on April 13, and two on December 28. In the Almanack twelve page illustrations, “The Twelve Labours of ’Arry.”

Interviews in *The Westminster Budget* on May 24, and *The Hour* on March 21.

Phil May's Sketch-Book (Chatto and Windus). Fifty page drawings.

The Daily Chronicle. "New London" Special Number (February 19), page drawing, "A Penn'orth of Coal"; April 1, "Portrait of Bismarck"; September 28, three drawings of Jane Cakebread.

Advertisement illustrations of Swan Pen and Geraudel's Pastilles.

Frontispiece, a portrait group of coaching celebrities for *The Comet Coach*, by Henry H. S. Pearse (John Haddon and Co.).

Frontispiece, a poor and slight drawing of a jester. *The Withered Jester*, by Arthur Patchett Martin (Dent and Sons).

Lithograph, "We're a fair old, rare old, rickety rickety crew." His only lithograph, done for an exhibition arranged by Charles Goulding at Dunthorne's Gallery.

1896

The Daily Graphic. July 10, a drawing.

Phil May's Winter Annual (Neville Beeman). Thirty-four pen-drawings; nine otherwise; total, forty-three.

The Sketch. Sixteen drawings.

Punch. Every issue except January 11, February 8, November 7; total, forty-nine, with one page illustration and three smaller ones in the Almanack.

Interviews, with illustrations, in *The Minute* (January 21), *The Idler* (December), *The Illustrated London News* (December 12). In the latter two-page interview by J. M. Price, including nine drawings in pen-and-pencil.

Advertisement drawings of Mazawattee Tea and Poncelet's Pastilles.

Phil May's Gutter-snipes. Fifty original drawings in pen-and-ink (Leadenhall Press). 1050 copies on fine paper as proofs, with a cheap edition following at 3s. 6d.

The Savoy. No. 6, October 1896, p. 9, "Holiday Joys," from a watercolour drawing dated 1883. A poor early effort which should not have been published.

Nine pleasant line drawings of French characters for *Mayville: its Attractions and Aims* (T. Fisher Unwin); one drawing of Gladstone squatting on the floor for *Isn't it Wonderful?* by Charles Bertram (Swan, Sonnenschein).

1897

Pick-me-up. Page drawings on March 13, 20, 27; April 17, 24; and one in July.

The Mascot. January 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; February 6, 27; March 6, 13, 20. Page reproductions of drawings which had appeared on a smaller scale in *Pick-me-up*.

Phil May's Winter Annual (Neville Beeman). Twenty-six pen-drawings; seven otherwise; total, thirty-three.

The Sketch. Fifteen drawings (up to November).

Punch. An illustration every week; total, fifty-two. That for June 19 is a double-page cartoon, "A Diamond Jubilee Dream of Victorian Derby Days." In the Almanack eight illustrations, "From Petticoat Lane to the Lane of the Park."

Phil May's Sketch-Book (Chatto and Windus), cheap edition, 2s. 6d.

Phil May's Graphic Pictures (Routledge and Sons). The coloured drawings from Christmas Numbers 1892-93-94; with "Globe-trotter's Notes" (1893-94-95) and "Western Ways" (1895).

Phil May's ABC. Fifty-two original designs, forming two humorous alphabets from A to Z (Leadenhall Press).

The Z.Z.G., or Zigzag Guide: Round and about the Beautiful and Bold Kentish Coast, described by F. C. Burnand and illustrated by Phil May (A. and C. Black). Folding frontispiece, fourteen page illustrations, and 125 smaller ones in the text.

Interviews in *The Daily Graphic* (on his election to R.I.), January 6, with self-portrait, and *Munsey's Magazine*, June; with illustrations.

Advertisement illustrations for Plimsoll Brothers and Player's Navy Cut.

1898

The Graphic. Page illustrations on September 10, "Edam," and on September 17, "Volendam."

Phil May's Summer Annual (Thacker and Co.). Twenty-three page illustrations, seventeen in pen-and-ink.

Phil May's Winter Annual (Thacker and Co.). Folding frontispiece, "A Procession in Picardy," and forty illustrations, twenty-seven being pen-drawings and twelve full-page illustrations.

The Sketch. Pencil sketch, September 28.

Punch. No week missed; fifty-two illustrations. Those on October 22, "De Rougemont," and December 31, "Two Christmas Eves," are full pages. In the Almanack, the cover and page illustrations, "Looking down on our Friends" and "'Arry at Boulogne." A small illustration in February.

Songs and their Singers (Bradbury, Agnew, and Co.), December. From *Punch*. Japanese paper proofs.

Book of the [Press] Bazaar, June, contains a contribution by May.

Grien on Rougemont, or the Story of a Modern Robinson Crusoe (E. Lloyd, Ltd., *The Daily Chronicle*). Cover in colour, and ten page illustrations.

Drawings for "*The Little Minister*" *Souvenir*.

Pick-me-up. April 9 and 16, and other dates.

The Daily Chronicle. Drawing December 14, "De Rougemont," and some drawings done at the London Hospital.

1899

The Graphic. July 22. "A Globe-trotter's Notes" ("Picardy") in colour.

Phil May's Winter Annual (Thacker and Co.). Twenty-six page illustrations, twenty-three being in pen-and-ink.

The Sketch. One illustration, September 13.

Punch. Cartoon, March 22, and fifty smaller illustrations. Only one date is missed (May 24). In the Almanack a little drawing, "April," and three pages, "'Arry at Monte Carlo," "'Arry at Paris," "'Arry in Holland."

Fifty Hitherto Unpublished Pen-and-ink Sketches (Leadenhall Press).

Phil May Album. Collected by Augustus M. Moore (Methuen and Co.). These are from drawings previously published in *Pick-me-up*.

Advertisement illustration for Pears' Soap.

1900

The Graphic. November 24. "A Globe-trotter's Notes" ("Picardy") in colour.

Phil May's Winter Annual (Thacker and Co.). Twenty-two page drawings, twenty-one in pen-and-ink.

The Sketch. On April 25, a drawing of the Earl of Londesborough. October 10, photograph and criticism.

Punch. Page illustrations on January 3 and 10 and May 2, and forty-four smaller ones; total, forty-seven. None appearing on April 18, October 31, and December 12. In the Almanack two page illustrations ("Show Sunday" and "Children's Fancy Ball").

The Magazine of Art. September. Illustrating his own amusing article, "The Children of Volendam." Seven sketch-book notes in pencil.

The Century Magazine. August and September. Illustrating Sir Walter Besant's "Riverside of East London." Two highly finished pen-drawings.

Advertisement illustration for Player's Navy Cut. In colour.

Advertisement illustration for Pears' Soap. In colour. Many other drawings for these advertisements were made at various dates which cannot be definitely ascertained.

1901

Phil May's Winter Annual (Thacker and Co.). Thirty-one illustrations; twenty-eight in pen-and-ink—not all page drawings.

The Sketch. Page pen-drawings on October 9 and 16 and December 4. (Also on October 30 and December 11; but these had appeared in same paper on February 21 and March 28, 1894.)

Punch. Dates on which no illustrations by May appeared: January 30, April 10, May 29, June 5, 12, 19, 26, July 3, 10, August 14. Page illustrations on January 2, 9, 16, 23, February 6, March 13, 20, 27, April 3; total, nine. And thirty-four smaller illustrations on remaining dates; total forty-three. In the Almanack, cover in colour, with one page illustration and two smaller ones.

Advertisement illustration for Pears' Soap in red and black.

The Tatler. Drawings irregularly from September 4 to November 27, 1907.

The King. Page article on May 4 by E. St J. Hart: three photographs and self-portrait.

1902

The Graphic. Double-page in colour, Hampstead Heath, April 5.

Phil May's Summer Annual (Thacker and Co.). Twenty-three pen-drawings.

Phil May's Winter Annual (Thacker and Co.). Twenty-nine illustrations, of which twenty-six were in pen-and-ink.

The Sketch. Page pen-drawings on February 5, April 9, 23, 30, May 7, 14, 28, June 11, August 13, September 17, and two on May 21 and June 4; total, fourteen.

The Tatler. Drawings at various dates.

Punch. A page drawing, "Sketchy Interviews," June 18; three sketches in pencil, "Sketchy Interviews," July 9; a page illustration on December 24; eight sketches in Coronation Number (June 25); seventeen Parliamentary portraits, April 30, May 7, 14, 21. An illustration on every other date except January 1, March 5, July 23, August 6; total, seventy-one. In the Almanack, two page illustrations.

Songs and their Singers (Bradbury, Agnew, and Co.). A cheaper edition at 7s. 6d.

East London, by Walter Besant (Chatto and Windus). Four pen-drawings.

1903

The Graphic. August 15, October 17, October 24, sketches of Volendam. October 31, portrait of W. E. H. Lecky.

Punch. Drawings in first half of year on every date except June 17 and 24. These are in pencil, except on February 4, April 1, April 15, April 29, May 6, June 3, June 10. July 8, pencil; July 22, pen; July 29, pen; August 5, pen; August 19, pen.

The Sketch. August 12. Appreciation by Arthur Goddard, editor of *Society*, with pen-drawing and reduced reproduction of 1885 Christmas cartoon for *Society*, with fifty portraits. August 19, two pen-drawings (one dated 1893).

The Tatler. Drawings at various dates. August 19, a pen-drawing, reproduced from an early number (1901) of this periodical.

The Pall Mall Magazine. October. Several drawings (two in colour), some hitherto unpublished, illustrating article by G. R. Halkett.

Phil May: Sketches from Punch (Punch Office). 112 drawings in pen-and-pencil.

A Phil May Picture Book (Pall Mall Magazine Office). Ninety pages of text (reprinted article by G. R. Halkett) and illustrations, many unpublished, 1s.

A Phil May Medley (the Graphic Company). 1s.

Phil May's Winter Annual (Thacker and Co.). With thirty drawings.

The Studio. September, "Life and Genius of the Late Phil May," seven illustrations; November, "Some Studies in Lead Pencil by Phil May," six excellent full-page drawings.

Full-page drawing for *Littledom Castle*, by Mrs M. H. Spielmann (Routledge).

The Jewish Chronicle. November 13, a note by the Rev. S. Singer, with several pencil drawings of Jews.

The Magazine of Art. November. Obituary article by M. H. Spielmann, with five illustrations.

Innumerable other obituary notices appeared all over the world. One San Francisco paper, in an enthusiastic appreciation, disclosed the startling information that May's real name was J. A. Shepherd, which would surprise no one more than that charming artist himself.

1904

Phil May's Winter Annual (Thacker and Co.). With twenty-six drawings.

Phil May in Australia (Sydney, *The Bulletin* Newspaper Company).

The Phil May Folio (Thacker and Co.). Reproductions of drawings from the *Annals*.

1907

Humorous Masterpieces (Gowans and Gray). Sixty drawings from his *Annals*.

1908

Humorists of the Pencil: Phil May (Punch Office). Eighty drawings from *Punch* and self-portrait.

EXHIBITIONS OF DRAWINGS

FINE ART SOCIETY (Bond Street), 165 items. Preface to catalogue by M. H. Spielmann. May 1895.

LEICESTER GALLERIES, 168 items. October 1903.

LEICESTER GALLERIES, 110 items. November 1908.

CITY ART GALLERY, LEEDS, 118 items. Preface to catalogue by E. R. Phillips. September 21-October 31, 1913.

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Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Page numbers have been removed due to a non-page layout.

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