

“What Fools These Mortals Be.”

ACT I.

“From the land called Wayback,” as the Bumble Bee would say, “came a man whose name was Weems.” He was of the class called “Mossbacks,” yet he thought himself a knowing man, and when he first arrived he went about slapping the Seniors on the back and saying: “Old fellow, I’m one of the boys.” “He is a sucker,” was the universal comment, and a worthy successor of the celebrated Arthur McCarrell prevailed on him to join a social club called the “Zeta Chi.” He bit with the alacrity that a duck takes to H₂O, and extensive preparations were made by his fellow students to “do him one.”

The night was fixed, and on the afternoon before groups of boys could be seen standing on the campus discussing some subject with a seriousness which foretold that “Rome was about to howl;” as students would pass to and fro on the campus knowing winks would be passed, significant nods exchanged. Every one appeared to be so absorbed with his own thoughts that nothing could interrupt them. “Old Tub” grinding out, “Look over yonder what I see,” with “Look in my face and pity my case” for variation, was not heeded, and Judge Newsome chanting the “Lone Rock by the Sea” was passed unnoticed by. Quiet reigned supreme, and as friend met friend a look would be given, and you might hear in a whisper, “*Phi Kappa Hall, at 8 o’clock.*”

ACT II.

During the afternoon "things went merry as a marriage bell," but it chanced to happen that about dark the man from Wayback went to the post-office and received a letter from his home, advising him not to join any secret society. He took the advice and the fun for the evening was about to be ended, but Lieut. Harper and Serg't "Poverty Hill" Boston, the handsomest man in college, whose smile so paralyzed the Lucy Cobb maidens, contrived to induce one Donald Frazier to take the place of the aforesaid Weems; he took it.

'Twas 8 o'clock—place, Phi Kappa hall, and a merry group of masqueraders, all clad in the angelic garments of the night, were assembled there. Every face was hidden, no one knew his neighbor, and John Holder might have been called handsome in such a crowd. As the time passed on, by infinitesimal movements, as "Old——" (the Faculty won't allow me to say it) would say, anxious inquiries were made as to the coming of the new brother. At last, three trumpet blasts broke the stillness—the fun was about to begin.

"Let the brother enter," came in sepulchral tones from within, and in he came between his two best men.

He was marched around the room several times to the melancholy accompaniment of "March, brother, march;" from an hundred throats he was started up the "Holy Rod" to the tune of "Climb, brother, climb." The green lane was prepared and "Lord High Cockylorum Polhill," chief cook and bottle washer, thus spoke, as the Xcophyte prepared to enter that dismal place on his knees; *E pluribus unum, multum in parvo, veni, vidi, vici* (crawl, brother, crawl), *le bon garcon, Macenas atavis edite regibus,*" which being

interpreted, means: "Naked thou camest into this world, and naked also shalt thou enter this mystic circle; disrobe thyself, my brother."

"Disrobe, h—l!!!" came in thunder tones from the candidate. "I'll blow the brains out of every man here;" and jerking out a self-acting revolver, he began snapping it in all directions. Then how they scattered! Some went one way, some another, but all bound for the same place—enough room to run. Hope Polhill went under a bench, and an hour afterwards when some fellow went back to get his hat, he poked his head out and whispered: "Is he gone?" Walter Wheatley went out the window with the sash hanging on his shoulders. Allen Johnson jumped into the library and yelled as he shut the door: "For God's sake, somebody come and help me hold it." Dorsey let himself out of the back window by a rope. Fresh Battle—well, Battle said he didn't, but his room-mate swears he did. Fresh Collier forgot to laugh. Col. Avary ran up the steps and stood on the landing, prepared to run down the other side if the terror came up the other. Arkwright paced over the back fence with his gown flying so loose that you might have dealt a poker hand on it; he could not be found until prayers next day. John Little stuck his head between "Baby" Basinger's legs, and like the ostrich thought he was safe. Yancey Harris started home, and Munroe Dearing was about ten yards in his rear, coming at full tilt, and Yancey thought it was the new Zeta Chi man and fairly flew. As he dashed in his front gate and through the open window into his room, he said: "He liked to have caught me." Capt. Willcoxon went straight up the walk towards the Demosthenian hall at a 2:40 gait, and would have run right over it had not Bill Ellis,

coming from an up-town party, called out: "Left face" just as "Cleve" struck the main walk, and, from force of habit, the runner obeyed the command and passed on towards the Yahoo. Bill Ellis smiled and said: "The Phi Kappas are having a night meeting to elect a commencement orator, I guess, and the meeting broke up in a row. I wish I had been there."

After the scare was over a large number collected in front of "Dr." Stillwell's residence to discuss the matter. All with one accord exclaimed: "I knew all about it!" Yet they would turn away sorrowfully to go to their room, kick themselves and say, "damn it." Verily, verily, I say unto you, "What fools these mortals be."

The Babie "Muncher."

There was a certain youth
Who cut a wisdom tooth,
And he felt as if he owned a
World or two.

But his naughty old jaw
Turned red, and got raw,
When he taught the babie muncher
How to chew.

The first thing which he did,
Was try him on a *quid*,
But he soon found that tobacco
Would not do.

Then curses he did fling
At the stubborn young thing,
When he taught the babie muncher
How to chew.

Then he to pulverize
Yahoo cakes vainly tries,
Till his countenance assumes an
Ashy hue.

For this dear infant pet
Continued still to fret,
When he taught the babie muncher
How to chew.

He gave up in despair
And tore his flaxen hair,
Then gave vent to all the bad words
That he knew.

Swore by the distant skies
He'd rather not be wise,
Than to teach the babie muncher
How to chew.