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ENGLISH MASTERS OF BLACK-AND-WHITE

GENERAL EDITOR: GRAHAM REYNOLDS

Deputy Keeper, Victoria and Albert Museum



1948

GEORGE CRUIKSHANK by Ruari McLean
RICHARD DOYLE by Daria Hambourg
SIR JOHN TENNIEL by Frances Sarzano
E. J. SULLIVAN by James Thorpe
GEORGE DU MAURIER by Derek Pepys Whiteley
PHIL MAY by James Thorpe
THOMAS BEWICK by Graham Reynolds
SIR JOHN MILLAIS by John Gere
AUBREY BEARDSLEY by C. B. Cochran
BARNETT FREEDMAN by Jonathan Mayne
EDWARD BAWDEN by Robert Harling
ERIC FRASER by Alec Davis

1949

HABLÔT K. BROWNE (*Phiz*) by Nicolas Bentley
JAMES GILLRAY by James Laver
JOHN LEECH by June Rose
GEORGE J. PINWELL by Derek Pepys Whiteley
A. BOYD HOUGHTON by Graham Reynolds
ANTHONY GROSS by Jonathan Mayne

PHIL MAY



An Interior. By courtesy of W. T. Spencer

ENGLISH MASTERS OF BLACK-AND-WHITE

Phil May

JAMES THORPE



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THE ILLUSTRATIONS.

The sources from which they are drawn are as follows:

An Interior. By courtesy of W. T. Spencer. *Frontispiece.*

PHIL MAY'S ANNUAL, Summer 1892. *London Central Publishing and Advertising Co.*

A Political Argument. By courtesy of the Committee of the Leeds City Art Gallery.

PHIL MAY'S ANNUAL, Winter 1892. *Walter Haddon*.

PHIL MAY'S A.B.C. *Leadenhall Press* 1897.

PHIL MAY'S ANNUAL, Winter 1893. *Walter Haddon*.

PHIL MAY'S ANNUAL, Winter 1894. *Walter Haddon*.

One of a series of pen-and-ink studies, from the original drawing in the author's collection.

PHIL MAY'S SKETCHBOOK. *Chatto & Windus* 1895.

Studies of 'Drunks': preliminary sketches for a drawing in punch, August 10th, 1895. By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Coster Girl's Head. By courtesy of Carmichael Thomas, Esq.

Skating by Torchlight on the Serpentine. *The Daily Graphic* 1895.

PHIL MAY'S ANNUAL, Winter 1895. *Walter Haddon*.

PHIL MAY'S GUTTERSNIPEs. *Leadenhall Press* 1896.

'The Travel Diary of Toby, MP.' PUNCH, October 17th, 1896.

EAST LONDON by Walter Besant. *Chatto & Windus* 1902.

Petticoat Lane, punch almanack. 1898.

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SKETCHES FROM PUNCH. *Punch Office* 1903.

A Portrait of Himself, 1894. By courtesy of M. H. Spielmann, Esq.



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. There are many hundreds of others which I should like to have printed, but the final selection has been made by the editor and publishers. A select list of works containing illustrations by Phil May will be found in annex. 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.

J. T.

PART I

PHIL MAY: THE MAN

FIFTY YEARS AGO the name of Phil May, like those of Dan Leno and W. G. Grace, was a household word even among those who knew nothing of art and cared less. Artists were generally considered as rather effeminate, perhaps immoral, unnecessary people, but here was a man of the world with similar interests to their own, who could make drawings they could understand easily and whose cheerful humour they could enjoy. So they took him to their hearts and loved him, without knowing anything of his greatness.

Yet in 1932, less than thirty years after his death, when I was collecting material for a short biography, it was necessary to spell his name to make my questions understood. At a well-known London restaurant, where he spent much of his time and income, even this aroused no recollection nor produced any trace or record of his genius. Some years later a member of the Savage Club, who had dictated an article in which he had referred to the humour of Phil May, was surprised to find this translated by his typist into 'Film A'. Although my book should have been made earlier, soon after his death, I was able, even so late, to talk with many of his friends and his elder brother Charles and, with their generous and willing help, to compile some sort of record and appreciation. By the kindness of the publishers, George G. Harrap and Co, I am able to use much of that material in this book.

Philip William May--to use his full name--was born at 66 Wallace Street, New Wortley, a suburb of Leeds, on April 22nd, 1864. Later the family removed to Hanover Terrace, then to Bentinck Street and afterwards to 15 Kendal Lane. He was the seventh child of a family of eight, the second of three sons of Philip May. His mother, Sarah Jane, was a daughter of Eugene Macarthy, a native of Dublin, a graduate of the University and a theatrical manager. His paternal grandfather was Charles Hughes May, a landowner and squire of Whittington near Chesterfield, Derbyshire, who worked the Sneyd Colliery, ran a pack of beagles and amused himself by making caricatures of his neighbours and acquaintances. 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 was the famous engineer George Stephenson, who lived at Tapton House, Chesterfield, and hunted with him. So it came about that the squire's son Philip, brother of the potter and father of Phil, was apprenticed on January 3rd, 1840, at the age of seventeen, to the firm of George and Robert Stephenson and set to work in their drawing office at Newcastle. Philip found the work uncongenial and had little interest in engineering but occupied his leisure in watercolour sketching and reading. He borrowed his books from a lending library and bookshop kept by Eugene Macarthy, then manager of the Theatre Royal at Newcastle, and presided over by his daughter. Thus Philip met Sally Macarthy and when he came out of his apprenticeship they were married. Later Eugene became manager of Drury Lane Theatre, where he formally received Napoleon III and the Empress Eugenie on their state visit. Two of his daughters by his first wife were actresses, Mrs Edward Chamberlain (Ella), wife of a Shakespearian actor, and Agnes, who married Bob Honnor, lessee of Sadler's Wells Theatre. The Honnors were prominent in the theatrical and artistic world of London of 1840-1850 and on friendly relations with Charles Dickens, who gave them an autographed set of his books. Sally lived with this sister for some part 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.

Happy as was the marriage of Philip and Sally, it was the beginning of hard times for the young people. Philip was one of those luckless people for whom nothing goes right. With his share of his father's estate he set up in London with a Mr Hyam a business of a brass-founder. This failed and he began again as an agent, working on commission, for some Sheffield firms. Here again he was unsuccessful and so the sad story continued. One job after another proved his perseverance and his bad fortune; but one of these essays, as assistant-manager of an engineering works at New Wortley, brought him and his family to Leeds. So the devoted but unfortunate couple struggled on until in 1873, at the age of fifty, Philip died in circumstances of much distress. Through all their troubles they remained persistently hopeful and

interested in brighter prospects for their three children, Charles, Philip and Rosie. These facts are of note because they help to explain how the small seeds of the artist's ancestry burgeoned later into a glorious galaxy of blossom. The widow, a devoted and loving 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.

After assisting his elder brother Charles in colouring designs for wall-paper, 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 dusted pianos in Mr Archibald Ramsden's music store for half a crown a week. Next he was appointed time-keeper in an iron-foundry but was discharged because his good nature would not allow him to report unpunctual workmen. He then 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 encouraged to continue to draw. 'I can't remember a time,' May said in later years, 'when I didn't draw.' Familiarity with the theatrical performers gradually led him to make their portraits, which he occasionally sold, at first for a shilling each. As his skill increased his price rose to five shillings, and some of these drawings were exhibited in frames at the entrance to the theatre. They varied in size from quite small sketches to full length portraits about three feet high and are extraordinarily accomplished work for an untrained boy in his early teens.

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. A short time before this, at the age of fourteen, he was invited to do some drawings for a local weekly comic paper called *The Yorkshire Gossip*, which unfortunately lasted only for four numbers. He also did some drawings for another Yorkshire paper, *The Busy Bee*. Both publications have completely disappeared and there are no records in the files of the British Museum.

Another of his boyish interests was a desire to become a jockey. In 1879 May joined a touring theatrical company under Fred Stimpson, and was engaged to play small parts and make six drawings weekly at an inclusive salary of twelve shillings. He was at this time completely stage-struck and used to declaim 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. What his talents may have been as an actor there is now little evidence to show, but his versatility is indicated by the fact that among the parts he played were Jack Sheppard, Simon Tappertit in *Barnaby Rudge*, Francois in *Richelieu* and the cat in *Dick Whittington*. Late in 1882 he was back in Leeds and designed the dresses for the pantomime, *Bo-Peep*, 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 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 suggested or encouraged the idea of going to London, he determined to take the journey 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 and sixpence for his fare.

His immediate ambition 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, who had begun with small parts under Honnor's management and afterwards worked for some years with the Bancrofts in Tom Robertson's plays. Later he was business manager at the Haymarket for J. S. Clarke, the American actor. 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, like a famous exemplar, he 'turned again', left the train at the first stop and with true Yorkshire grit walked 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 seemed that he should have stayed in the 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 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 21st, 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 attracted 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 procured for him an introduction to Mr William Allison, editor of the recently started *St Stephen's Review*. 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 go back to Leeds as best he could.

There he arrived, 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 Stephen's 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. These were his first drawings published in a London paper. For a short time he was easier; he paid his 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 Stephen's Review* was soon exhausted. Once again he found a friend in the midst of his penury, and, as the Charing Cross photographer had come to his aid before, Fate provided him with another benefactor in the landlord of the hotel, a good fellow who refused to allow him to go or to starve.

With this the last of his bad times passed and the broken dawn began to open into real daylight. Again it was the kindly 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 theatrical illustrations.

This work for Alias being completed, more orders followed. Again he contributed political cartoons to the 1884 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 fine portraiture.

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 circumstances often difficult and trying 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 did his work for *The St Stephen's Review*. Always a hard worker, he was also contributing portrait caricatures to *The Penny Illustrated Paper* and *The Pictorial*

World, edited by that good friend to young artists, John Latey, 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 afterwards reproduced in other papers. For Clement Smith he designed some theatrical posters to advertise 'The Private Secretary' and other plays.

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*, who was 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 connections, and exile himself to the opposite side of the world. The offer was increased to thirty pounds, and this tipped the balance. There is no doubt that considerations of health also 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 11th, 1885.

For the three years of the contract May worked strenuously and exclusively for the *Bulletin*, producing about nine hundred drawings, cartoons, caricatures and jokes. He and Rossi Ashton between them provided practically the whole of the illustrations required. 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!'

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. He formed a friendship with Blamire Young, the Australian artist, and used his studio at Katoomba College, NSW. He was always experimenting with various methods and collecting knowledge and material which he often used in later years. After years of struggle and hardship he began to realize that his talents would now provide him with comfort and security. 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.

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, but living was extravagant, and May's earnings did not provide much more than 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 with a thousand pounds, the Mays set out for Europe in the late autumn of 1888.

May's connection 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 until 1894. 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.

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. Thompson, whose portrait often appears in Phil May's drawings, afterwards edited the last seven of the *Phil May Annuals*. Among his other friends in Paris were William (later Sir William) Rothenstein, Charles Conder, and two Americans, both well-known illustrators, W. T. Smedley and C. S. Reinhardt.

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 cafes, collecting sketches and notes of types, ever improving his native gift of seizing and presenting character.

On his return from Australia May had renewed his connection with *The St Stephen's Review*, to which he sent contributions from Rome and Paris. He soon began making the drawings for *Politics in the Nursery* in the Christmas number of 1889, and *The Parson and the Painter* which first appeared in its pages in 1890. 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. 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. 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. 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.

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*. His first drawings appeared on November 12th, 1890. On October 10th of the following year the weekly *Graphic* printed his first contribution--Arthur Roberts in *Joan of Arc* at the Gaiety Theatre--and thereafter many others, including coloured drawings in its Christmas numbers. 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 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 plan of sending May on a tour round the world in company with E. S. Grew, a member of *The Daily Graphic* literary staff. The resultant text and drawings, which began to appear on April 16th, provided a notable feature of that journal for the duration of the tour. The World's Fair at Chicago became the limit of the journey, for 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 Grew, who was inspired to style himself 'Phil's chaperon', 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 not disposed 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 6th, 1893, the two returned travellers might have been seen mounting the stairs of *The Daily Graphic* office to face the disappointed proprietor. 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 work for *The English Illustrated Magazine* in 1893-94, then under the editorship of C. K. Shorter, consisted of three or four illustrations to a monthly causerie 'The Whirligig of Time'. 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 volumes 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 & Co, who for some reason spoil the uniformity of the set by lengthening the page. 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 14th, 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 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, 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 dinner he generally managed to secure a copy of the menu as 'evidence for Lil'.

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 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. 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. 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. But this easy going generosity, it need hardly be said, attracted a swarm of would-be beneficiaries of a far less worthy type than the newsboy, 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.

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. Nobody, however, could have been more

scrupulously conscientious in ultimately fulfilling his obligations whether he had spent the money or not. Often he had to escape to the country or to France to complete a batch of commissions. 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. Despite all these drawbacks, mostly self-inflicted, the amount of sheer hard work he got through was surprising. Others besides Mr Ernest Brown, editors especially, must have received similar letters, and the cheques they elicited, although often large, usually melted in a few hours. 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. This proved to be a profitable investment, 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. 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.

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. 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; 31 Fitzroy Square (1890); 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). 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 who were privileged to be present. Melba was there more than once, and Agnes Nicholls and Ada Crossley often came and sang.

In appearance May was slightly above average height, perhaps about five feet eight, with a slight figure and something of the appearance of an intellectual 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 21st, 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, he was always reserved and shy with strangers. Conscious of his weakness, his respect for ladies was generally strong enough to restrain him from drinking 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 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. 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. 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 considered 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.

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'.

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.' 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.

He died of phthisis and cirrhosis of the liver on August 5th, 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:

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. 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. It is remarkable that six of the greatest of English draughtsmen--Randolph Caldecott, A. Boyd Houghton, George J. Pinwell, Frederick Walker, Tom Browne and Phil May--all died before reaching the age of forty. So passed a lovable man and a great artist, 'a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy'.

A committee formed in Leeds in October, 1909, was able, after much hard work, to place on the house where he had been 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.

The late Sir Sydney 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 might be none there now. As it is, however, he is represented there by thirty-three drawings mostly the gift in 1920 of Mr Arthur Morrison, and by thirty drawings, many of doubtful origin, at South Kensington. There are ten drawings by May in the National Portrait Gallery. The Tate Gallery has four excellent pen-and-ink drawings, purchased in 1927, and a small watercolour, 'The Drawing Master'. 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. In the secretary's office at the Garrick Club is a watercolour portrait, 18 inches by 12, of Arthur W. Pinero the dramatist, in Georgian costume, made about 1885. The Leeds collection, which is very comprehensive, includes seventy items, most of which are the gift of the Memorial Committee, and a replica of the portrait medallion on May's birthplace.

There were many exhibitions of his drawings during his lifetime. One at the Fine Art Society in May, 1895, contained 165 items. The prefatory note for the catalogue was written by M. H. Spielmann. Two months after his death 168 of his drawings were shown at the Leicester Galleries in October, 1903, and 110 in November, 1908. At the City Art Gallery, Leeds, in September-October, 1913, an exhibition of 118 items was introduced by E. R. Phillips of *The Yorkshire Post*. Another collection at Leeds in March, 1936, organized by the Mayoress, Mrs Percy Leigh, contained 450 exhibits of

various kinds but the authorship of many of these was very obviously doubtful.

PART II

PHIL MAY: THE DRAUGHTSMAN

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 drawing, 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 afterwards 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, 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), and by Mr Forrest Reid in *Illustrators of the 'Sixties'* (Faber and Gwyer, 1928). Most of this work consisted of illustrations for books, stories and poems, and was done by artists who were painters or afterwards became more famous as painters. They were, many of them, not essentially black-and-white artists, but used this method for gaining experience and financial support to enable them to paint. Their drawings were reproduced by wood-engraving, and thus gave employment to a school of very able engravers, who were technically skilled in translating a drawing, made either with a brush, pencil or pen, into a very accurate representation on the printed page. 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 Joseph Swain and much of their work appeared in the three most prominent illustrated magazines of the time, *Once a Week*, *Cornhill* and *Good Words*.

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, 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. Today the pictorial recording 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 today 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 meant as a short cut to public notice.

If Keene, Millais, Foster, Pinwell 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 preeminence, 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, Aubrey Beardsley, Reginald Cleaver, Walter Crane, Maurice Greiffenhagen, Dudley Hardy, A. S. Hartrick, William Hatherell, Bernard Partridge, Joseph Pennell, L. Raven-Hill, Linley Sambourne, J. A. Shepherd, C. A. Shepperson, S. H. Sime, E. J. Sullivan and Hugh Thomson, 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 exuberance and joy of his technique and the assured power of his virile line, and was preeminent in the skill with which he arranged the boldly contrasting masses of black and white, each brilliantly emphasizing the other. No draughtsman has ever exceeded 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 more brilliant 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: 'Keene is the daddy of the lot of us.' 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.

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 recognized as 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 among those who have knowledge and judgment in these matters it is well enough understood that Daumier, Gavarni, Menzel, Vierge, 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.

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, 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 some of the theatrical portraits he made in his youth at Leeds and the group of Henry Irving, John L. Toole and Squire Bancroft, which started his career at the age of nineteen, are almost equal in portraiture and drawing to anything he did in later years. The large drawing, 'The Seven Ages of Society', containing no fewer than 178 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 and contemporaries. The collection of his *Sydney Bulletin* drawings, published after his death under the title of *Phil May in Australia*, is interesting to the student as it indicates the sources of the personal style which he afterwards 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. At first he did not join the lines as skilfully as his master, but 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.'

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 strong 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 the delightful freshness and freedom of an original conception. No one has ever drawn better portraits in pen-and-ink. This practice of eliminating the inessentials he applied with equal success to the pen-drawings he made from his own careful pencil studies.

In an interview in *The Sketch* of March 29th, 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 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 George Riches, whom many will remember, dressed in Georgian costume, taking tickets at the old Langham conversaziones. 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 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'.

The apparent simplicity of Phil May's drawings induced a considerable output of imitations and forgeries, which were and are still sold as originals. In a 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 towards the end of his career his drawings were obviously produced much more easily, though with some sacrifice of the old conscientious carefulness.

In all his drawings that I have examined I have found no trace of any alteration or erasure. 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 his 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.

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. Jews of all types also engaged May's artistic interest, with a particularly keen and sympathetic insight into their character. 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. May's people were always different because they were always true, and were not grotesquely nor mechanically exaggerated; they were thus actual 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, his work was never cheapened by the slightest vulgarity and he always maintained instinctively the aesthetic 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*, 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, without a 'tag' or joke below them, they might probably never have appeared elsewhere. 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 noteworthy.

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 afterwards collected in *Phil May's Sketch Book*. Mr Raven-Hill considered 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, acquired by his early bitter experience, adequate presentation and personal enjoyment, introduced an entirely fresh aspect. The *Nation*, in its issue for June 27th, 1910, had an article on May, written in connection 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 19th, 1897), and the 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*.

May's *Gutter-snipes* (1896) and *ABC* (1897) 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. 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. *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*, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, and Thacker and Co. republished selections from his work in *A Phil May Medley*, *A Phil May Picture Book* and *The Phil May Folio*.

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 17th, 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 might 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 of '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'.

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. 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. Hartrick said also that May possessed and studied Charles Darwin's *The expression of the emotions in man and animals*.

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 in *The Graphic* were coloured by another hand. A rough tracing of the line drawings 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. 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 result 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 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 to thirty bob a week but never saw them, and the bibulous gentleman at the railway-station bar when asked whether he wanted tea--the reply, 'Tea!! Me! ! !' is perfect. 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 and underlined, 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 a 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 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 form of art--the art of making people laugh.

BOOKS ILLUSTRATED BY PHIL MAY

1891

THE PARSON AND THE PAINTER: THEIR WANDERINGS AND EXCURSIONS AMONG MEN AND WOMEN by the Rev Joseph Slapkins (William Allisc
Illustrated by Charlie Summers (Phil May). *London Central Publishing and Advertising Co.*

1892

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL . *Walter Haddon.*

PHIL MAY'S SUMMER ANNUAL. *London Central Publishing and Advertising Co.*

1893

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL . *Walter Haddon*

1894

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL . *Walter Haddon*

FUN, FROLIC AND FANCY. Byron Webber and Phil May. *Chatto & Windus*

1895

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL . *Walter Haddon*

THE COMET COACH by Henry H. S. Pearse. *John Haddon & Co.*

PHIL MAY'S SKETCHBOOK . *Chatto & Windus*

THE WITHERED JESTER by Arthur Patchett. *Dent & Sons*

1896

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL . *Neville Beeman*

PHIL MAY'S GUTTERSNIPEs . *Leadenhall Press*

MAYVILLE: ITS ATTRACTIONS AND AIMS. *T. Fisher Unwin*

ISN'T IT WONDERFUL by Charles Bertram. *Swan Sonnenschein*

1897

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL. *Neville Beeman*

PHIL MAY'S GRAPHIC PICTURES. *Routledge & Sons*

PHIL MAY'S A.B.C. *Leadenhall Press*

ZZG. OR ZIGZAG GUIDE: ROUND AND ABOUT THE BEAUTIFUL AND BOLD KENTISH COAST described by F. C. Burnand. *A. & C. Black*

1898

PHIL MAY'S SUMMER ANNUAL. *Thacker & Co.* PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL. *Thacker & Co.*

A Souvenir by Cyril Maude of 'The Little Minister' by J. M. Barrie

SONGS AND THEIR SINGERS. Bradbury, *Agnew & Co.*

1898

GRIEN ON ROUGEMONT, OR THE STORY OF A MODERN ROBINSON CRUSOE by Martin M. Donohoe and Barry Pain. *E. Lloyd Ltd. The Daily Chronicle*

BOOK OF THE (PRESS) BAZAAR. June

1899

FIFTY HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED PEN-AND-INK SKETCHES. *Leadenhall Press*

PHIL MAY ALBUM collected by Augustus M. Moore. *Methuen & Co.*

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL. *Thacker & Co.*

1900

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL. *Thacker & Co.*

1901

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL. *Thacker & Co.*

1902

PHIL MAY'S SUMMER ANNUAL. *Thacker & Co.*

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL. *Thacker & Co.*

EAST LONDON by Walter Besant. *Chatto & Windus*

1903

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL. *Thacker & Co.*

SKETCHES FROM PUNCH. *Punch Office* A PHIL MAY PICTURE BOOK. *The Pall Mall Magazine Office*

A PHIL MAY MEDLEY. *The Graphic Company*

LITTLEDON CASTLE by Mrs M. H. Spielmann. *Routledge*

1904

PHIL MAY'S WINTER ANNUAL. *Thacker & Co.*

PHIL MAY IN AUSTRALIA. *Sydney, The Bulletin Newspaper Co.*

PHIL MAY FOLIO. *Thacker & Co.*

1907

HUMOROUS MASTERPIECES. *Cowans & Gray*

1908

HUMORISTS OF THE PENCIL: PHIL MAY. *Punch Office*



PERIODICALS TO WHICH PHIL MAY CONTRIBUTED ILLUSTRATIONS

The Yorkshire Gossip

The Busy Bee

Society

St Stephen's Review

The Penny Illustrated Paper

The Pictorial World

The Sydney Bulletin

Puck

The Daily Graphic

The Graphic

Black and White

Pick-me-up

The Illustrated London News

The Sketch

The Pall Mall Budget

Punch

The English Illustrated Magazine

St Paul's

The Magazine of Art

The Strand

The Bohemian Magazine

The Daily Chronicle

The Minute

The Idler

The Savoy

The Mascot

Munsey's Magazine

The Century Magazine

The King

The Tatler

The Pall Mall Magazine

The Studio

The Jewish Chronicle

THE ILLUSTRATIONS

PHIL MAY'S ANNUAL, Summer 1892.
London Central Publishing and Advertising Co.

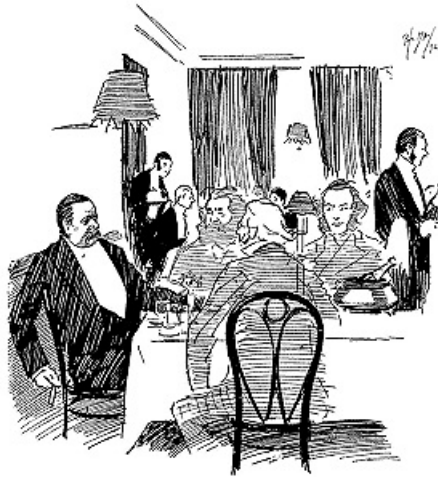


Illustration to 'Charles Dickens at Gadshill'
Portraits of Sala, Mark Lemon, W. M. Thackeray, John Leech
Drawn at Rule's Restaurant.

[Larger size](#)



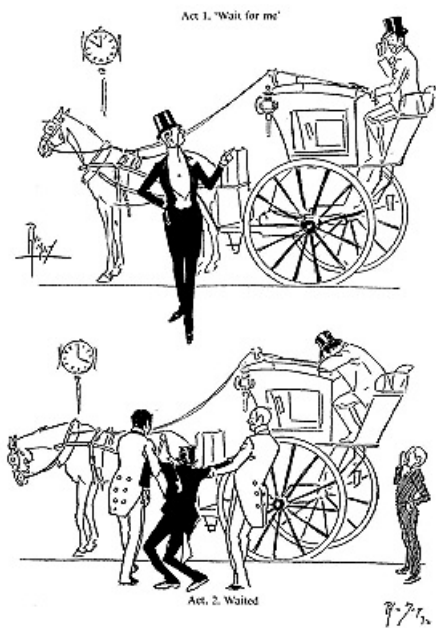
'Wot's the row up de court, Bill?'
'Bob Smith was kissing my wife,
and 'is old woman caught him.'

[Larger size](#)



'Dont't disturb yourself, mum;
there's nothing in it that'll smash.'

[Larger size](#)



[Larger size](#)



A FACT

Welsh Farmer: 'Curate, I suppose?'

Dean (who is about to be made Bishop, but who always travels third class): 'I was once a curate, my friend.'

Welsh Farmer: 'Drink, I suppose?'

[Larger size](#)

A Political Argument.

By courtesy of the Committee of the Leeds City Art Gallery.



[Larger size](#)

PHIL MAY'S ANNUAL, Winter 1892.

Walter Haddon.



'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?')

[Larger size](#)



TYPES I HAVE MET
 Paris Fruit-seller

[Larger size](#)



'Yes, I always keep a good cigar.'
 'Why don't you smoke 'em?'

[Larger size](#)



Count Von Moltke

[Larger size](#)



SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE
'Our Willie's 'ad 'is neck washed.'

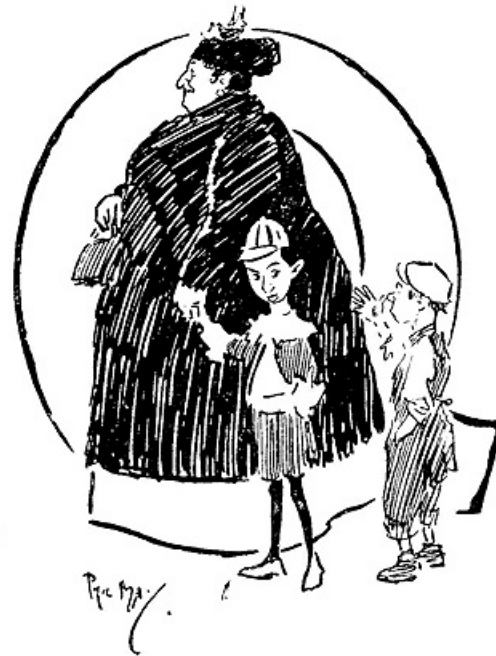
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'Oh, please Sir, will you 'old 'im a minute while I blow my nose?'

[Larger size](#)

PHIL MAY'S A.B.C. *Leadenhall Press 1897.*



Initials from PHIL MAY'S A.B.C. 1897

PHIL MAY'S ANNUAL, Winter 1893. *Walter Haddon.*



Scene: Restaurant in the Strand

The Major (to celebrated music-hall artist): 'By jove, Miss Dashwood, I really believe you could play Ophelia as well as any of 'em.'
C.M.H.A.: 'Yes, and I've got a new reading of *that* part. *She* wasn't mad, you know; *she* was boozed.'

[Larger size](#)



Gladstone

[Larger size](#)



A PLANTATION DANCE
[Larger size](#)



'Mos' 'stornary thing! a'most shertain th' was shome coffee in it.'
[Larger size](#)



A Bit of Newlyn
[Larger size](#)

**PHIL MAY'S ANNUAL,
 Winter 1894. *Walter Haddon.***



GIDDY

'Hang it all; let's be gay. Come and find the phonograph'

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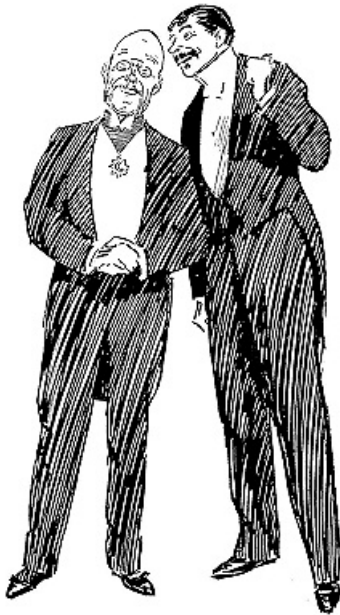
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**One of a series of pen-and-ink studies,
from the original drawing in the author's collection.**



[Larger size](#)

PHIL MAY'S SKETCHBOOK.
Chatto & Windus 1895.



'Deuced Funny!'

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

[Larger size](#)



At 'Appy 'Ampstean on Easter Monday

[Larger size](#)



'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.'

[Larger size](#)

Studies of 'Drunks': preliminary sketches for a drawing in PUNCH,

August 10th, 1895. By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.



[Larger size](#)

Coster Girl's Head. By courtesy of Carmichael Thomas, Esq.



[Larger size](#)

**Skating by Torchlight on the Serpentine.
The Daily Graphic 1895.**



[Larger size](#)

**PHIL MAY'S ANNUAL,
Winter 1895. *Walter Haddon.***

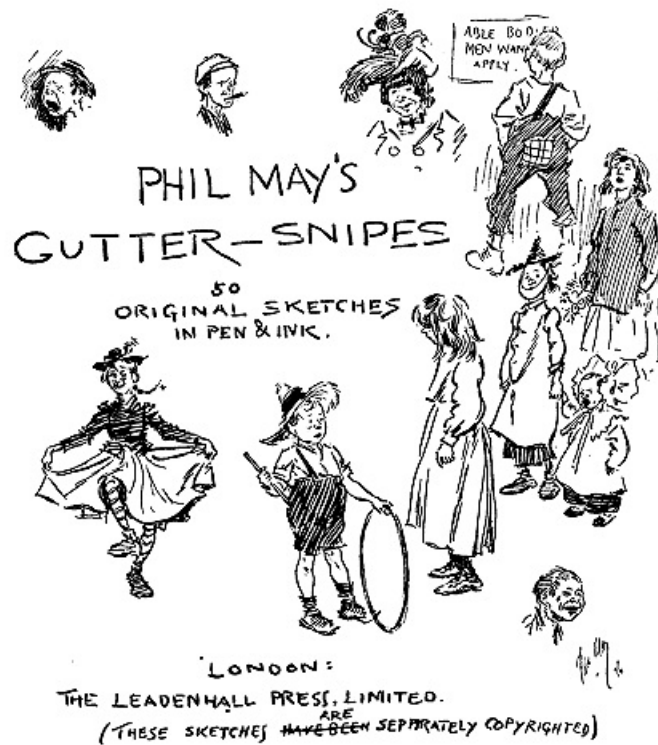
1/12-14/12
1896



Flotsam and Jetsam

[Larger size](#)

PHIL MAY'S GUTTERSNIPEs.
Leadenhall Press 1896.



[Larger size](#)



Honey-pots
[Larger size](#)



Little Mothers
[Larger size](#)



WHAT BETTSY-ANN MAKES OF IT
 Departing guest: 'Will you call me a cab?'
 Betsy-Ann: 'Ansom, Four-Wheeler or Mover, Sir?'
 (A TIMES correspondent suggests that the horseless carriage be called an
 'Auto-Mover')
[Larger size](#)



Whip-Behind

[Larger size](#)



Lost

[Larger size](#)



Boy: 'No? Why don't you *never* treat yourself to no luxuries, Guvner?'

[Larger size](#)



Water-works

[Larger size](#)



[Larger size](#)



Shuttlecock
[Larger size](#)



A Day in the Country
[Larger size](#)

**‘The Travel Diary of Toby, MP.’ PUNCH,
 October 17th, 1896.**



Courtyard of the Hotel de France, Montreuil
[Larger size](#)

EAST LONDON
by Walter Besant. *Chatto & Windus* 1902.



An August Bank-Holiday in the East End

[Larger size](#)

Petticoat Lane, PUNCH ALMANACK. 1898.



[Larger size](#)

**Interior of an Italian Church,
from the original drawing in the author's collection.**



**A French Peasant, 1901,
from the original drawing in the author's collection.**



[Larger size](#)

PUNCH, July 30th, 1902.



'I say, Billy, 'ere's a gipsy! Let's 'ave our fortins telled!'

[Larger size](#)

SKETCHES FROM PUNCH. *Punch Office* 1903.



MALAPROPOS

Mrs Snobson (who is doing a little slumming for the first time and wishes to appear affable, but is at a loss to know how to commence conversation):

'Town very empty!'

[Larger size](#)



FELINE IMPRESSIONS

Chemist (to battered female, who is covered with scratches):

'The cat', I suppose?

Battered Female: 'No. Another Lydy!'

[Larger size](#)

HARD LINES

'Just my luck! This sort of thing always happens *just* when I'm invited to a party!'

[Larger size](#)



A REJOINDER

'Arry (whose 'Old Dutch' has been shopping, and has kept him waiting a considerable time: 'Wot d'yer mean, keepin' me standin' abaat 'ere like a bloomin' fool?'

'Arriet; 'I cant' 'elp the way yer stand, 'Arry!'

[Larger size](#)



NOT WHAT HE MEANT

Superior 'Arry: 'Cabbie! To the--aw--The Prince of Wales's.'
Cabbie: 'Marlbro' 'Ouse, My Lord?'

[Larger size](#)

**A Portrait of Himself, 1894.
By courtesy of M. H. Spielmann, Esq.**



[Larger size](#)

[End of *Phil May* by James Thorpe]