

it, tied it with twine and laid it on the table. Then, taking a long look into the empty trunk, says she: 'All is gone now.'

Quite another scene was taking place in the old loft. Says Pudden, says he: 'Scratcher, are you game?' 'Is it *me*, Pudden?' replied that worthy with an offended look, for he had had the honor of being up before his Worship at Green street for stealing a canary from a local cobbler and substituting a yellow-hammer in its place. Black Pudden was satisfied when he recalled the credentials of Scratcher and proceeded to unburden himself in *sotto voce* tones of a plan that required Scratcher's co-operation and loyalty. The latter was all attention: never moved a muscle while Pudden explained how the skin of the old bear, head and all, were drying in Buzzenbaum's outhouse; how nothing would be easier than to steal it; how he, Black Pudden, would get into it; how they could pad it with hay to make it life-like; how a piece of whalebone would make the tail stick out; how two glass marbles would do for eyes; how he, Scratcher, could lead him by the chain—Pudden had annexed that already, likewise the little bucket—and how they could both make money. Scratcher never moved, the genius of the project overawed him: it was too magnificent to laugh at yet, so he simply put out a dirty fist, and said: 'Have it there, Pudden,' and neither fist was the dirtier for contact with the other. 'Pudden,' says he, 'You're the —' He didn't complete the sentence, but said, 'You're *himself*,' pointing downwards at the same time.

These preliminary compliments being over and gratefully accepted by Pudden, they dug each other in the ribs, and roared with laughter. Then Scratcher got an old rope, adjusted it round Pudden's neck and led him round the left as Buzzenbaum used to lead the old bear. They could scarcely move, through the thrills of merriment that convulsed them. As for Pudden he was a born bear. Ever since he began to toddle he had followed that celebrity over the city with other urchins and carried little Nanny too. There wasn't an attitude of the bear that he didn't know by heart.

'When?' says Scratcher.

'Be here to-morrow night,' says Pudden. And when that same hour on the following night rang out from St. Catherine's it isn't two human beings you saw in that loft, but one—and a big hairy monster from the forest standing on his hind legs; his glassy eyes glinting with ferocity and his blood-red tongue—a bit of Nanny's flannel—and his flapping ears and springing tail. 'On with the chain now,' says the wild beast in tones somewhat muffled in hair and hay, 'and if we don't feck the makes I'm not Pudden and you're not Scratcher.' Getting down the loft ladder was no easy matter. 'Bad luck from you, get off me tail,' says the wild beast of the forest. It's only the first step, that costs, and before the bear and his keeper had got twenty yards they felt they were on the road to fortune, for dogs and women and children got out of their way. A neighbor's cat that had kittens on the top storey of the old tower of St. Andrew's was just going out for a ramble when she saw the monster and his keeper issuing forth. What did she do? Did she go on? No. Maternal interests rankled in her bosom and she turned back and sprang into the tower off the old wall; jumped on the ladder, then on to a loft, then crawled up the water-pipe and then in to her kittens. Had she an ounce of logic—what feminine has?—she would have known that no mortal bear could climb up to her kittens. When she had seen that they were safe she went over to the window, 119 feet above the level of the road, and watched further developments. But the event is to her credit and shows it isn't fair to the species to call opera-singers and other ladies 'cats.'

Scratcher and the bear went on their way and the bear did a few steps on the flags in front of a pub; then he was led by his keeper into the shop and the half-boozey occupants—who very likely saw twenty bears instead of one—rolled the coppers into the little bucket in the bear's mouth. He ambled out again and way was made for him by shrieking children who kept at a safe distance. It was a triumphal march,

Scratcher kept emptying the bucket of coppers which he stowed away in his illimitable pockets—for it's his father's cut-down pants he was wearing. Ah, but there's always a fly in the amber of life. Prosperity turns all our heads. As the two marched into Bride street they passed a big policeman at the corner. He was near his pension and had bunions, and was given a quiet beat in this locality leading on to the more populous parts where the bear was bent for. As the two passed near the bobby, says the bear in gurgling tones: 'Twig the cop?' at which Scratcher laughed. This set 111Z thinking. It aroused his suspicions. He looked after them. He had never seen a bear in the Zoo with its tail cocked. The mystery thickened when the bear sneezed and then drew his paw across his snout as an urchin would draw his glazed cuff in a like emergency. 111Z said: 'That's the act of a Christian and not of a bear.' He started walking after the two; they increased their speed. So did he in spite of his seventeen stone and his bunions.

'We're diddled,' says the bear. 'Take the bucket and we'll run for it.' Scratcher snatched the bucket and disappeared into a dark hall, and the bear, chain and all, started to run. So did 111Z. Here words fail to describe the pursuit. Go round and interrogate eye-witnesses how there was bedlam in the street—how Dan Carty's cab-horse let a whole maum of oats fall mchewed out of his mouth and ran, ear and all, till his eyes became as big as lemonade bottles—how Mrs. Hogan fell in a heap and lost her conscience as an eye-witness avers—how the cobbler's bull-terrier, whose mouth knew the taste of every dog's blood that dared to pass the door, got a fit of the shivers. The bear thought of none of these things, and with open mouth and lolling tongue and gleaming teeth and cocked tail and dangling, jangling chain he faced for liberty. On came 111Z like fate, blowing his whistle as well as he could and wielding his baton. The chain got between the bear's legs, and he proceeded to buck-jump like a kangaroo. Half the town was behind 111Z—not one *before* him. They might throw bricks at the police, but they won't deny them the honor of grappling with danger. As the bear was turning the corner, making a drive for the Coombe the chain tripped him and he fell head foremost on the road. A scene ensued, which has no parallel in modern history. Several other bobbies attracted by the whistle of 111Z arrived from where they were guarding the rear entrance of a hotel. The crowd roared and surged around at a respectful distance, and the police beat in the bear's head—Pudden had made a ball of himself inside—and in the scrimmage one dirty hand protruded. The jaw of that wild-eyed multitude collectively dropped: there was temporary paralysis on the crowd, immediately followed by a simultaneous yell: 'He's devoured a child! Pull him out—pull him out.' Several pairs of policemen's hands gripped the arm of the victim and nearly pulled it out of him: people turned away in horror and spat out; women fainted, others cried out: 'May the Lord help the mother that owns him.'

While this awful event was unrolling itself in Bride street something else happened in Brodie's lane. A coal-porter was returning home from work and he met Buzzenbaum. 'I'm glad to see that your bear is well again an' able to go about keepin' the roof over yer head,' says he to Buzzenbaum. Arra, man, it nearly knocked him out of his standin'.

'My bear?' said Buzzenbaum, 'he's dead an' skinned a week ago.'

'Don't be coddin' me,' says the coal-porter, 'didn't I meet him down near the Coombe and his little bucket half full of coppers and a boy drivin' him.' A thought suddenly flashed across Buzzenbaum's mind; he remembered Pudden's attempt to steal out the bear when he was away sick at the Richmond. He rushed into his house and out to the shed and he saw the whole situation. Down the street he tore, knocking sparks out of the flags, up lanes, down alleys and short-cuts, until he came to the swaying, screaming, shouting crowd in Bride street, as the police were extracting Pudden from the depths of the bear. Buzzenbaum, being an acrobat, sprang up on a big Guinness man's back yellin'