THE LAWYER AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEeper

A roguish old lawyer was planning new sin,
    As he lay on his bed in a fit of the gout;
The maids and the daylight were just coming in,
    The milkmaids and rush-lights were just going out;

When a chimney-sweep's boy, who had made a mistake,
    Came flop down the flue with a clattering rush,
And bawl'd, as he gave his black muzzle a shake,
    "My master's a-coming to give you a brush."

"If that be the case," said the cunning old elf,
    "There's no time to lose — it is high time to flee —
Ere he gives me a brush, I will brush off myself -
    If I wait for the devil - the devil take me!"

So he limp'd to the door without saying his pray'rs;
    But Old Nick was too deep to be nick'd of his prey;
For the knave broke his neck by a tumble down stairs,
    And thus ran to the devil by running away.

ANON

Illustration by Linley Samboume for The Water Babies, 1898.