

LACY'S ACTING EDITION.

**CUT OFF
WITH A SHILLING.**

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SAMUEL FRENCH,
PUBLISHER,
89, STRAND.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH & SON,
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122, NASSAU STREET.

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CUT OFF WITH A SHILLING. 12

A Comedietta,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

S.^d THEYRE SMITH,

AUTHOR OF

A Happy Pair; Which is Which? My Uncle's Will; &c., &c.

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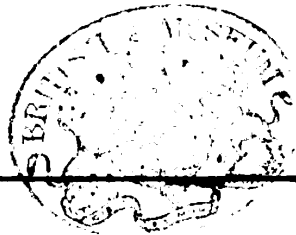
First performed at the Prince of Wales Theatre (under the management of Miss Marie Wilton), on Easter Monday, April 10th, 1871.

Characters.

SAM GAYTHORNE ... **Mr. H. W. MONTGOMERY.**

COLONEL BERNERS ... **Mr. CHARLES COLLETTE.**

KITTY GAYTHORNE ... **Miss CARLOTTA ADDISON.**



TIME IN REPRESENTATION, 45 MINUTES

MODERN COSTUMES

CUT OFF WITH A SHILLING.



SCENE.—*A Breakfast Room in a Sea-side Lodging House. Large window, C., opening on to sea-side view; a door on one side; table with breakfast laid.*

Enter SAM and KITTY arm-in-arm through window.

KITTY. But is my hair dry, Sam, darling?

SAM. (*touching it*) Dry as a bone, Kitty; dry as a mummy, my love, or as Miss Packerton's new novel.

KITTY. Don't compare my hair to that wretched book, sir.

SAM. Hard lines on you certainly, for your hair is all from your own head, and her book is the greater part of it from other people's. Your hair is perfectly original, whereas her novel is a kind of literary chignon, stolen from the dead, worked up into an unnatural shape, and supported by puffs. But still they're alike in both being perfectly dry; so, off with your hat, and, Venus having risen from the sea, let's have some breakfast.

KITTY. (*taking off her hat before glass*) I've had the grandest bathe. Did you see me swim, Sam?

SAM. (*opening newspaper*) Not to my knowledge, Kitty?

KITTY. You didn't! Why I thought you were watching me.

SAM. So I was.

KITTY. And you didn't see me swim! Why, I swam ten strokes.

SAM. With how many feet on the ground? Come, honour bright, now.

KITTY. (*defiantly*) Why not—not—(*coaxingly*)—not more than one, Sam.

SAM. Ah! I thought so. Women were "deceivers ever, one foot in sea, and one on shore, to one thing——" Well, I never! (*starting, and staring at newspaper*)

KITTY. What, Sam? What is it?

SAM. Ha, ha, ha! This is capital! Ha, ha!

KITTY. What is? Tell me, please. (*pettishly*) Now, Sam, tell me.

SAM. Tell you! I can't for laughing. Read that. (*holding out newspaper*)

KITTY. Read what? (*taking paper*)

SAM. Why, that marriage.

KITTY. Which? The top one?

SAM. Yes, the top one: the tip-top one.

KITTY. (*reads*) "On the 15th instant, at St. George's, Hanover Square, by the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Bullock-Smithy, assisted by the Reverend O. Fyddel, D.D., cousin of the bride, Alexander George Pursechoyle, late Captain, Royal Marine Mounted Rifles, to Clementina Belinda Letitia, eldest daughter of Ambrose Cronyon, of Blarney-le-Towers, Esquire, and niece of the Right Honourable the Earl of Chateau-Gammon."

SAM. "Deeply regretted," eh? Do they add that?

KITTY. Of course not. "No cards." But, Sam—

SAM. Ah! "Friends will kindly take this intimation." Ha, ha! I know one friend who won't take it kindly at all; and that's my uncle Joe.

KITTY. What, your uncle, the colonel of volunteers?

SAM. Yes, Colonel Berners, First Diddlesex. Ha, ha! If his conversation is ordinarily all guns and swords, what on earth will it be now? I wonder whether this business has had anything to do with his not answering my letter announcing our marriage. (*aside*) She doesn't know yet how much depends on it.

KITTY. Perhaps your uncle is out of town at present, Sam: gone on some volunteering expedition, very likely.

SAM. Possible. He's mad about volunteers, and seldom misses a review.

KITTY. Or he may be ill, you know, darling; seriously.

SAM. Perhaps. She always looks on the bright side of things, bless her!

KITTY. But, Sam, dear, I hope there was nothing in the tone of your letter to offend him. What did you say to him?

SAM. Everything that was kind and affectionate, my love; addressed him as my very dear uncle; hoped he was quite well; referred to the exceeding kindness which I had always had from him; mentioned that my happiness for life depended on my marrying Miss Kitty Frampton; (*she makes an affectionate demonstration with her hands, and kisses him*) stated that I had the best reasons for supposing that my feelings were reciprocated by the lady in question; (*she kisses him*) as we were to be married two hours after the time of writing, assured him that I could not take such a step without first informing him of it; begged him to direct his reply to my chambers in town, and it would be forwarded to any place.

where we might decide to stop; and concluded by signing myself his most affectionate nephew, Sam—*most* affectionate, you'll observe. Now, after such a letter, could his displeasure continue?

KITTY. But is he displeased, Sam?

SAM. Well, you see he was always impressing upon me that I had a right to look high; and in fact he—he wanted me to marry this very Miss Cronyon, who being over six feet in her stockings, would have necessitated my looking high indeed.

KITTY. Wanted you to marry—oh! (*bashfully playing with the button of his coat*) Was she nice looking, Sam, this tall Miss Cronyon?

SAM. Well Kitty, as well as I could make out at that distance, she rather ran to colour. It was rather the "Gules, two cheek bones rampant" order of countenance to say the truth, and I hate your over-coloured women.

KITTY. Then I suppose she was rich, Sam?

SAM. Yes, she'd any quantity of money.

KITTY. And of course the colour of that was quite unexceptionable, eh? (*slyly*)

SAM. Faith, yes! though I am told very few people ever saw the colour of it.

KITTY. And she was highly born too, Sam?

SAM. Yes, there was nothing to object to in her birth except that, as regards her own particular case, it might have been more recent by ten years or so with advantage.

KITTY. (*clapping her hands*) Sam!

SAM. Well?

KITTY. Sam! (*whispering in his ear*)

SAM. Eh! you conceited little witch, you. Fancy your cutting out the niece of an Earl, do you say? Pooh! she didn't care a straw for me, and I—I had other views, which I am sorry to say, my uncle—

KITTY. Never mind, you darling. As long as we love each other like this, what does it matter what your uncle or any one else thinks? We shall still have something to live for.

SAM. Perhaps, but we shall have absolutely nothing to live on.

KITTY. Nothing to live on! (*very seriously*) You're only joking, Sam?

SAM. Of course, my love. (*aside*) No, I daren't tell her yet. (*aloud*) Joking, of course. We can live upon love, can't we? We'll kill Cupid and cook him, and you shall have the liver-wing. (*jumping up*) But, pooh! all this because the postman is late. We shall have the letter directly. My uncle's a brick, and no mistake! The post at Westerton-super-Mare varies with the tides—now forward with the spring, now back-

ward with the neap. All owing to the postman's being more than half an idiot, and of course, liable like the ocean, to lunar influences. Stay! by Jove, there he is now! (*going to window*) Hi!

KITTY. Who, Sam?

SAM. The wandering lunatic attached to the Westerton Post Office. (*calling*) Here, I say! (*standing at window, and calling off*) Postman! (*to her*) Deaf too, this functionary. I said he was short of senses. (*calling*) Here! anything for me? Mr. Gaythorne—(*louder*) Mr. Gaythorne. Is there—? Ah, thanks! You're late this morning, ain't you? A review, eh? What? Oh! volunteers, is it? What time? Twelve o'clock, eh! Thanks! Good morning! (*coming forward*) Twelve! It's not ten yet. Heaps of time. We'll go and have a look at it, eh, Kitty? Ah! (*tearing open cover*) The avuncular fist, by Jove! Here we are, my pet. Why—by George!—why (*feeling letter*) there's money in it. Feel. Don't you feel it? What on earth—

KITTY. But open it, darling; open it.

SAM. Here goes then. (*opening letter—a shilling falls on the floor*) What's that?

KITTY. (*picking it up*) A shilling, Sam. What a funny old gentleman your uncle must be.

SAM. (*uneasily*) So he is—so he is. The playfullest old—old demon. Though why the dickens he's playing tricks with the currency in this fashion, I cannot say.

KITTY. Then why don't you look, Sam? (*jokingly*) Do you think it's right to keep your wife on thorns in this way, sir?

SAM. (*laughing uneasily*) Why, considering we married under the rose, Kitty, it's not so inappropriate. (*glancing at letter*) Gad! I thought as much. (*letting letter fall and throwing himself into chair*)

KITTY. What? (*taking up letter*) May I look, Sam?

SAM. Oh! by all means, though you've (*looking at shilling*) picked up the drift of it already.

KITTY. (*reads*) "Dear Sam, I am a man of my word. I told you that if you married without my consent, you would receive from me the sum of one shilling sterling, and no more."

SAM. Mark the satire in the "sterling!"

KITTY. (*reads*) "Your letter informs me that you have done so. I enclose the shilling, and am, yours truly—Joseph Berners. P.S. The weather is fine but cool."

SAM. Ha, ha! That's his satire again. Didn't I say he was the playfullest old fiend—

KITTY. But what does he mean—if there's any meaning in it?

SAM. Oh, there's meaning enough in it. Never knew three fines and a shilling mean so much in all my life before.

KITTY. (*rather coldly*) Then please explain, Sam.

SAM. (*in an embarrassed way*) Explain! What could be clearer? He tells me distinctly that he cuts me off with a shilling: disinherits me. There you have it in black and white, and here, that there may be no mistake (*tossing shilling on table*) in white alone.

KITTY. Well, it's very cruel of him; but, if he chooses to be offended with you, why should you wish for any more of his money?

SAM. Why!—why because, though no doubt this is a very good shilling as shillings go, yet as they go so fast, it might perhaps be convenient to have a few more of them. Twenty of them go to a pound, you know, and where all the pounds go to I've never for the life of me been able to discover yet.

KITTY. But your own fortune which you told me about, and your town house, and your country house which you described to me?

SAM. Faith, yes. (*shrugging his shoulders*) I'd a very fine property in the air in those days certainly, and as I was making love to a girl next door to an angel, it was scarcely inappropriate to boast of my possessions in that element. (*impatiently*) Hang it, Kitty! Can't you see that all this depended on my uncle's good pleasure?

KITTY. And so, Sam—Mr. Gaythorne—did you not represent yourself to me as a man of fortune?

SAM. I told you that I had expectations; I've been deceived, that's all.

KITTY. No, that is not all, for I have been deceived as well.

SAM. How was I to know that my uncle was such a brute?

KITTY. You ought to have known that he was a brute. Isn't he your own relation? You have deceived me, sir, deceived me from the first. Everything you represented to me, everything you promised me, has turned out false. You promised me that I should have ten bridesmaids when I was married, and I had to put up with an old pew-opener woman of eighty. You promised me that we should run away in a carriage of four with postilions, and after all we went in a hansom to a railway station. You told me that it was your uncle's gout which prevented his seeing me before our marriage; I don't believe that he ever had gout in his life.

SAM. You don't! Why it's in the family. He inherited it from his father. I shall have it some day, I suppose.

Ha, ha! A shilling and the family gout my sole inheritance!
Ha, ha!

KITTY. You're a false, heartless, cruel——

SAM. Bless my soul, Mrs. Gaythorne, this is rather too much! You seem to forget that if my prospects have been ruined, it is you that have ruined them. Before I married you I was a rich man, my uncle's acknowledged heir. I marry you, and, gad! he turns away and hands me a shilling, as if—confound his insolence!—as if I were a beggar!

KITTY. Well, and aren't you?

SAM. Thank you, Mrs. Gaythorne.

KITTY. Not at all. You've only yourself to thank for it. It's shameful! (*as he takes his hat and goes towards door*) Where are you going, Mr. Gaythorne?

SAM. Going to—see the tide come in.

KITTY. The tide come in! Why it was high tide an hour ago. Where are you going? Won't you have any breakfast?

SAM. No, thanks. This morning's experiences have rather put me off my feed.

KITTY. But—but you'll make yourself ill if you don't mind.

SAM. Well, but so long as you don't mind, what does that matter.

KITTY. (*in a vexed tone*) What do you mean? To go out in that way without eating anything, is the way to kill yourself, you——

SAM. Kill myself, ha, ha! Might do worse than that, perhaps. Happy thought,—ha, ha! Kill myself, eh? By gad, ah!

Exit by door.

KITTY. (*uneasily*) No, but—Mr. Gaythorne! (*anxiously*) Sam! (*desperately*) Sam, darling, forgive me! I'm very sorry—I didn't mean—(*with a scream*) Sam! (*as if to follow him, then stopping*) No, it is not I that am wrong—it is I that have been wronged. Let him come to me, I know he can't keep away long. If I was a little put out at learning so suddenly that he was worth nothing at all, instead of having two houses and ever so much a year, wasn't it quite natural? I married him for love, of course; but he might have excused a little impatience when love had the bandage torn so very abruptly from its eyes. But, men are so vain, so selfish. They think that as long as we have them, rich or poor, it's all the same to us; that while they do us the honour of loving us, we don't care for anything else. How absurd! how conceited! how—how true! My darling! I don't care what he's cut off with. I have given him all my heart; but, if ever I meet that dreadful uncle of his, I'll give him—some of my mind.

Enter COLONEL BERNERS, hurriedly, through open window, which he closes hastily, and looks through.

Ah! (*listening without turning round*) I said he'd come back. (*a pause*) Why doesn't he say something? (*turning quickly*) My dar—— (*starting*) Oh! it isn't he.

BERN. (*perceiving her*) I beg ten thousand pardons, ma'am, ten thousand pardons, (*glancing out of window*) for trespassing on your privacy in this way, but—(*looking out*) If strangers are to be hunted through the streets of this town by wild bulls—(*looking out*) Ah! up goes another old woman: that's three—the inhabitants must not be surprised if—(*looking out and then turning*) It's gone to the chemist's—not be surprised if strangers do behave in rather an unceremonious fashion occasionally. (*looking out*) Ha, ha! I knew it would call at the china shop.

KITTY. (*anxiously*) Is there anything the matter? What—what is it?

BERN. A mad bull, ma'am: a prize mad bull I should say, by the size of it.

KITTY. A bull! Where?

BERN. In the china shop at present, ma'am. (*looking out*) Stay! no, it's come out. There! it's gone to the dentist's. I knew it was mad!

KITTY. I really scarcely understand this——

BERN. This intrusion! Surely I've made it clear. I was pursued by an infuriated bull, ma'am. The horns of the enraged beast were on the point of operating on my coat tails—that is, were threatening my rear guard, when I fortunately spied this open window. I made an echelon movement, swung round my right flank, pivoting on my left, and effected a lodgment in your apartment. Regarding it in the light of neutral territory, ma'am, with your permission I will lay down my arms for a moment. (*depositing his umbrella and field glasses on table, and wiping his brow*)

KITTY. Pray rest yourself. Be seated, please; as your flight seems to have——

BERN. Call it a retreat, ma'am—a retreat for strategical reasons. It was merely a retreat, though necessarily a rapid one, as the enemy debouched from a slaughter-house with alarming suddenness.

KITTY. Did everyone else run away—that is, retreat, sir?

BERN. Yes, ma'am; the movement was effected with equal promptness and unanimity.

KITTY. You didn't—you didn't meet a gentleman as you came here, did you? (*anxiously*)

BERN. I met no one, madam, gentle or simple. The entire population was going my way.

KITTY. Then did you see a gentleman just before you took refuge in this house?

BERN. You couldn't describe his back, could you, ma'am?

KITTY. He's tall and very graceful; and his back is a model for a sculptor.

BERN. Ah! Could you be a little more definite? Not being a sculptor, you see, I——

KITTY. Well, he's very graceful, sir——

BERN. (*thoughtfully*) Ah, then I don't think I——

KITTY. And there's a look of coolness and courage about him, that——

BERN. Then I'm certain I didn't see him. If he couldn't adapt himself to circumstances like the rest of us, he certainly was not present.

KITTY. Do you mean by adapting himself to circumstances running away, may I ask?

BERN. I mean—a—retreating, ma'am; with more or less expedition, retreating.

KITTY. Then I agree with you that he can't have been there. He would certainly not have adapted himself to circumstances in that fashion. My husband is a stranger to fear.

BERN. Is he? Gad! he should get a bull to introduce him. Then it is your husband, madam, that you're enquiring after?

KITTY. (*half crying*) Oh! yes, yes. I'm—I'm—I don't know where he's gone, and I'm—I'm very uneasy, sir.

BERN. (*aside*) I say what does this mean? Sounds as if this dauntless husband had run away after all—effecting a retreat, that is, for connubial reasons. H'm! (*looking at her critically*) a remarkably nice-looking girl. Sabre me! if she isn't an extraordinary pretty girl. I'm curious about her. (*aloud*) You appear to be in some distress, ma'am. If I can be of any assistance to you, you may command me: command me as if you were the duke himself. I shall be proud to put all my forces at your disposal: horse, foot, and marines, ma'am: lock, stock and barrel, by gad!

KITTY. You are very good, but——

BERN. Never mind the "but." Come! I don't want to be curious, but you and your husband have had a little tiff, eh?—a mere out-post affair, no doubt; and he's drawn off, isn't it so?—leaving you mistress of the—the *champ de bataille*, eh? Of course, of course. These little things happen every day.

KITTY. You're quite wrong. It never happened before.

BERN. Not with you—of course not—not with you and your husband, because you've only been married a month or so.

KITTY. A month! We've only been married a week.

BERN. (*aside*) I thought as much. The honeymoon in its first quarter, begad! (*aloud*) A week! Then he'll be back in ten minutes, in ten minutes at the outside, and I'd wager anything he'll bring with him the very thing that you had your little argument about, if it is to be bought in the whole town.

KITTY. I didn't want him to buy anything. And he hasn't any money to buy it with if I did.

BERN. (*aside*) Hallo, hallo! (*aloud*) No money! Ah! I dare say you're right. A man who marries an heiress mustn't expect to have it all his own way.

KITTY. An heiress! I! You never were more mistaken. The only portion I brought to my husband was my love.

BERN. Nothing but love—whew! Ah! it's wonderful how soon married people run through that sort of property, when there's nothing more substantial behind.

KITTY. There ought to have been plenty more substantial behind only, only a brute——

BERN. Ay, ay! So you've married a man without a sixpence?

KITTY. Pardon me! I've married a man with two.

BERN. With two!

KITTY. Yes; he's—(*sobs*) he's cut off with them.

BERN. Cut off with them—absconded with your entire fortune! Shameful! You may well call him a brute, my dear young lady.

KITTY. I call him a brute! (*rises*) How dare you say so, sir?

BERN. I beg ten thousand pardons; but I thought you mentioned a brute.

KITTY. Well, if I did! A woman may talk of a brute without meaning her husband, I suppose.

BERN. No doubt, no doubt. Such a case might occur.

KITTY. Am I right in supposing you are an unmarried man, sir?

BERN. (*rising*) We are both right, ma'am; you in supposing me unmarried, and I in being so.

KITTY. Nay, nay; unmarried people are ignorant of what true happiness is.

BERN. Their ignorance is such bliss, ma'am, that it would be folly to be wise.

KITTY. Ah, no! Wisdom is always better than ignorance.

BERN. Pardon my saying, madam, that in my view the wisdom which a man gains by marriage, is the wisdom which showeth him that he is a fool. I refer of course to what are called love-matches: mere matches of sentiment. It is a different thing with marriages where prudence has been first consulted. They are reasonable enough. The relatives of the parties meet, questions of property are considered, settlements drawn up, marriage follows, and——

KITTY. And the love, sir ; where does that come ?

BERN. The love ! Oh ! that comes afterwards.

KITTY. Comes afterwards ! And do you call such love as that legitimate love ?

BERN. Legitimate ! Of course—isn't it born in wedlock ?

KITTY. I am surprised to hear a soldier speak of love in such terms as that.

BERN. (*much flattered*) A soldier ! Bayonet me ! She's a charming woman ! (*aside*)

KITTY. But—(*rising and walking to window*) Pray excuse my uneasiness. I cannot think what has become—Oh ! to whom can I turn for advice ?

BERN. Turn to me, ma'am. (*aside*) A charming woman, as I'm a—a soldier ! (*aloud*) Turn to me. I'm not a married man, certainly, but none the less able perhaps to give advice as to a matrimonial difficulty. A general conducting a battle must keep himself aloof from the strife. Now, ma'am. (*sitting in an attitude of attention*) You speak to sympathising ears, I assure you. Now, ma'am. Forwards !

KITTY. Well, you look so kind and sympathising that—but if you're to understand it properly I must tell you the whole story, and you must fancy yourself in my position from the first, you know.

BERN. I'll do my best, ma'am. Right shoulders forward—march !

KITTY. Fancy yourself, then, a girl at a boarding school.

BERN. (*starting*) Halt ! (*as if after an effort*) Well ?

KITTY. Fancy that you had constantly met, and at last fallen in love with—I mean at first, you know—fallen in love with the dearest, handsomest, charmingest man in the world. Now can you fancy that ?

BERN. Easily ; for it was nothing but fancy.

KITTY. He was, though ! All the girls said so. And he chose me out of them all !

BERN. I can quite fancy that.

KITTY. (*bashfully*) Well, what could I do, you know ? It was so flattering, and he was so attentive, and he went on so with notes and bouquets and all that——

BERN. Ay, ay ! I can fancy all that.

KITTY. Till at last I—I used to meet him just out of bounds, you know, with two girls on the wall, to——

BERN. I know, mounted vedettes ; just so.

KITTY. Yes, and he talked of his love and his property ; and his town house and his country house, and all that, till I—till I consented to run away with him.

BERN. Ay, ay ! the old story, "So runs the world away."

KITTY. So early one morning I stole out of my room, and

out of the house, while all the girls were fast asleep, and through the garden, and out at the back gate, and—and found myself in his arms, you know. Are you attending? Are you fancying yourself in my position?

BERN. H'm! for the moment I was fancying myself in his position. But it comes to the same thing. Go on.

KITTY. Well, we were married that morning, and came on here, and what do you think?

BERN. Why, what?

KITTY. Why, he's worth nothing at all! (*rising solemnly*)

BERN. Nothing at all! Break my centre! Nothing! Then he deceived you?

KITTY. He! No. He has been himself deceived, grossly deceived by a relative upon whom he had lavished a more than filial affection for years.

BERN. Deceived by a relation! (*rising and taking her hand*) I can sympathise with you, madam; I can sympathise with you and your husband, for I have also been deceived by a relation, a fellow, who, forgetting——

KITTY. Forgetting the tender affection which my husband had always treated him with, which no son, however devoted, could have exceeded; affection such as——

BERN. Such as not one father out of a hundred shows, and not one tithe of which did this ungrateful fellow deserve, he suddenly turned round with the blackest treachery, and without a thought for the grief and disappointment——

KITTY. Oh! With the very intention of inflicting this grief and disappointment—turned round and wrote a letter such as a tiger might have indited——

BERN. Or a hyena, laughing in its sleeve, might have penned, in which, under a thin veil of consideration and good manners——

KITTY. And with an affectation of justice that was simply profane. Oh, it was shameful, wasn't it?

BERN. Shameful! It was worse than shameful. But consider my case——

KITTY. And mustn't the man who could behave so be a brute? Mustn't he now?

BERN. Brute! Brute is too good a name for him. But look at me——

KITTY. And all for what?

BERN. For what, indeed? For a nasty, artful, scheming——

KITTY. All because of me—because he took an unreasoning dislike for me.

BERN. The monster! Dislike for you!

KITTY. (*with a coquettish glance*) Then you don't think I'm so repulsive, do you?

BERN. I? Gad no, ma'am! It is from the other pole of the magnet that I suffer.

KITTY. You are too kind! Believe me, sir, such frank and generous sympathy from a perfect stranger has affected me most sensibly.

BERN. Don't call me a stranger, my dear young lady. Community in suffering makes rapid friendships. I feel as if I had known you for years.

KITTY. And you too have suffered from the ingratitude of a relation.

BERN. I have; from the detestable ingratitude of a fellow who was indebted to me for everything he had in the world; for the very clothes he wore, for his education, for his entrance into life——

KITTY. Entrance into life! Ah! your son. How terrible!

BERN. Son! I've been more than a father to him. And how does he repay me? After my squandering upon him the most lavish kindness, after my giving him all that the most beloved and petted son could expect from the most indulgent father, what does he do? Denies me his confidence in the most interesting event in his life—almost breaks the heart of a rich, well-born and beautiful girl whom I had selected for his wife, and marries a nasty little draggle-tailed chit with no more prospects than a London coal cellar.

Enter SAM, silently, by window, catches sight of BERNERS, and slips behind curtain to listen.

KITTY. Ah, the horrid creature! But she's pretty, I suppose; and a pretty face makes up for everything, you know.

BERN. Not when it's all made up itself, as hers is. Pretty! About as pretty as a Lowther Arcade doll! A little dowdy thing—short, dumpy, vapid! Not that I've ever seen her myself, but——

KITTY. (*surprised*) What! not seen her! How then can you judge of her appearance?

BERN. Oh! I know the sort of girl that would attract him—tell me the fish, I'll tell you the bait for it. He is insensible to true beauty, grossly insensible. When I selected for him a lady with the gait of an empress and the figure of a queen, with the blood of princes in her veins and the fortune of a prince in her pockets, he sneered at her as too tall, and because the blood of all her ancestors mantled in her countenance, ma'am, he compared her with disgusting ribaldry to a railway semaphore with a danger signal at the top.

KITTY. (*earnestly*) Was she so tall then, this lady?

BERN. Nothing to speak of; nothing out of the way. Or if she was rather tall, supposing she was willing to stoop to a

marriage with him, what did her height matter? No: the ungrateful rascal——

KITTY. Your son, do you mean?

BERN. Son! he's no son of mine, nor ever was for that matter. He was only my nephew to begin with, and now——

KITTY. (*uneasily*) Your nephew! Dear me!

BERN. Yes, but he's no nephew of mine for the future. I'll have nothing more to do with him. I've cast him off. I wrote and told him so: told him in so many words.

KITTY. (*with suppressed anxiety*) You wrote to him! Oh, wasn't it a difficult letter to write? What could you say?

BERN. Nothing more easy. I'll tell you what I said; I remember every word of it; it's simplicity itself. I said—now mark—I said, “Dear Sam——”

KITTY. (*with a great start*) “Dear Sam.” (*aside*) There!

BERN. Too affectionate, you think. You think I ought to have said, “Dear Mr. Gaythorne,” perhaps.

KITTY. “Mr. Gaythorne!” (*rising in much agitation*)

BERN. Why, what's the matter, ma'am?

KITTY. I—I'm uneasy about my husband, sir—seriously uneasy. (*aside*) Who could have thought!——

BERN. The normal condition of a wife, ma'am. Pray attend—“Dear Sam,—I am a man of my word.”—So I am. Always mean what I say——

KITTY. (*aside*) And he called me a “draggle-tailed chit.”

BERN. Pray attend, ma'am—“man of my word. I told you that if you married without my consent you should receive from me the sum of one shilling sterling, and no more. Your letter informs me that you have done so”—He had written to me, you understand——

KITTY. Yes; a beautiful letter.

BERN. What, ma'am? Beautiful?

KITTY. Don't I speak distinctly? Undutiful, I say. I suppose it was an undutiful letter.

BERN. Oh! I misunderstood you, ma'am. Undutiful! I should think so, most undutiful.

KITTY. What a dreadful story!

BERN. So it is; so it is. A dreadful story of ingratitude. But I was even with him. Pray attend to what follows—“informs me that you have done so. I enclose”—mark this, ma'am—“I enclose the shilling, and am”——

KITTY. (*losing patience*) A cruel, hard-hearted monster!

BERN. (*staring in astonishment*) Monster! Who?

KITTY. Why you—you—(*a sob*) wick—wick—wicked old man.

BERN. Bless my soul, I—where's my hat? I perceive, madam, that I have trespassed too long upon your kindness;

that I have taxed your—hem!—your politeness too far. Permit me to thank you very much for——

KITTY. No; pray don't go. Forgive me, please, for those hasty words. No! (*getting between him and the door*) I really won't let you go till you—nay, sir, I beg and entreat——

BERN. (*seizing his hat and umbrella, but leaving his glasses*) Good morning, madam; thanking you once more for your kindness. Nay, if a flank movement is necessary—(*turning suddenly towards sash window*) Good morning!

Exit, C. off L.—SAM comes from behind curtain, goes to C. window, and watches BERNERS out of sight.

KITTY. There! he's gone. Oh! my foolish—foolish tongue. And if I had only kept my temper and taken pains, I might perhaps have won him back for Sam, for he was more than half in love with me. I'm certain he was! And oh! what a triumph that would have been. But now—(*SAM comes down*) Oh! Sam, my darling, then you're come back. Oh! I've been so wretched, I could not think what had become of you.

SAM. What will become of me, you mean. There's nothing left for me as far as I can see but to 'list for a soldier, and as I've been cut of *with* one shilling to be cut off *for* another: to take the Queen's handsome offer, and so double our fortune at one stroke.

KITTY. Oh, don't talk in that dreadful way, Sam. If you had to go and fight I should die of terror.

SAM. Fight, Kitty! You don't suppose that being a soldier has anything to do with fighting, do you? Not a bit of it. Women, children and Englishmen are non-combatants now-a-days.

KITTY. Oh, Sam! you don't know what has happened since you went out? Your uncle's been here.

SAM. I know. I saw him.

KITTY. Did you? He said——

SAM. I know. I heard him.

KITTY. And I said——

SAM. Ay—ay—I heard that too.

KITTY. Then—then—oh, Sam, I'm so vexed with myself.

SAM. Are you? Then I never knew a married couple more thoroughly of one mind in my life before.

KITTY. You're vexed with me too, you mean.

SAM. Of course, as a husband, I am bound to share all my wife's vexations.

KITTY. But, my darling, I had no patience with him. (*crosses, R.*)

SAM. I know, my dear, I know. That's just how it struck me.

KITTY. I'm sure for some time I was as patient as a saint.

SAM. So you were, my own, till suddenly you blazed up like a martyr.

KITTY. Then I wish you'd scold me well, Sam.

SAM. Where's the use, Kitty? If there were any chance of his coming back——

KITTY. Why, I declare he is coming back. Look!

SAM. Eh! So he is, what on earth's the meaning of this?

KITTY. I know. See! He's left his glasses. He's coming back for them, no doubt. What shall we do to detain him? Hide again, Sam, hide. I have it. There's nothing else to be done. I'll faint on them. I know how to do it. I have often fainted at Miss Lothrop's, and deceived them all down to the doctor. Run away—quick! (*throws herself on sofa, the glasses under her*)

SAM. By Jove! She's not been to school for nothing. She's had a first-rate female education, evidently. Now then to cover. The enemy is forcing the outworks, as he'd express it himself. (*runs behind curtain*)

Enter COLONEL BERNERS at window, C. from L.

BERN. I deeply regret having to trouble you again, madam, with my—(*looking round*) with my presence; but I've left my—my field glasses. (*catching sight of her*) Bless me! What's the matter? Why she's fainted. Poor child! Madam! Madam! A dead faint, and no mistake. What's occasioned this, now? Can it have been my ill-timed anger that—(*sitting on sofa beside her*) Oh, there are my glasses. But, hang it, I can't leave her in this state. Where's some water? (*taking some and sprinkling it on her face*) Gad, how pretty she is! Looks like an angel reposing, don't she? I wish she were an angel indeed, I'd burn some of her own feathers under her nose, and bring her to in that way. (*letting her hand drop*) I declare this looks serious. I must open a vein.

SAM. (*aside, looking out*) What—what does he say! I'll have no bloodshed!

BERN. (*feeling in breast pocket*) I never stir without a lancet.

SAM. (*aside*) But, hang it, I hope she'll stir without a lancet, or I must interfere.

BERN. (*pulling up sleeve of her dress*) What a lovely arm! Like marble, by Jove!

SAM. (*aside*) Ay, an arm after your own heart, isn't it, you stony-hearted old rascal!

BERN. Well, now for it! (*she sighs and raises her hand to her face*) Eh! Why she's coming to! (*in a tone of some disappointment*)

SAM. (*aside*) And I declare he's disappointed—the blood-thirsty old dog!

KITTY. (*sighing*) Ah! Where am I?

BERN. Don't move; sit still. You'll be much better directly.

KITTY. (*turning her eyes on him in a weary way, and speaking slowly, in a low voice*) I'm afraid I've been very troublesome.

BERN. (*hastily*) Nothing of the sort—nothing of the sort.

KITTY. (*holding out her hand*) And you've been so very kind

BERN. Not a bit—not a bit. (*aside*) I'm rather glad I left my glasses. (*aloud*) How do you feel now, eh? Better, eh?

KITTY. Oh, I'm quite well again, thanks. I shall be none the worse for it. I've had fainting fits of this kind before, and they never do me any harm. (*with a smile as if at her own weakness*) It's not a real faint, you know.

SAM. (*aside*) Frank, by Jove!

BERN. Isn't it? It is, though. And though I hope it's nothing serious, yet I think you should take advice about it.

KITTY. Oh! it's nothing. It is not a case for medicine. I am so sorry for what I said just now. Will you forgive me?

BERN. Pooh—pooh! Of course. Nothing to forgive, my dear—nothing. (*aside*) I'm very glad I left my glasses.

KITTY. But I did pity those two poor things so.

BERN. What poor things?

KITTY. Why your nephew and—and niece, you know.

BERN. (*rising and speaking coldly*) You think I treated them cruelly, ma'am!

KITTY. Now you're getting angry again. Do sit down, and talk quietly. (*supplicatingly*) Now, please. (*he sits again*) It was very wrong of your nephew to treat you as he did, I quite allow.

SAM. (*aside*) That's right, don't spare me. I've got no friends.

BERN. (*angrily*) Wrong of him! why—

KITTY. (*firmly*) Yes, I say it was wrong of him; but, oh! if you would only let me be the peacemaker between you and your nephew, you don't know how much lighter my own sorrow would be.

BERN. For your own matter, my dear, don't let it trouble you. I shall make a point of seeing your relative who has treated you so heartlessly, and hope to bring him to a sense of the atrocity of his conduct. But as to that nephew of mine—think of the feelings of Miss Cronyon.

KITTY. Dear me! (*as if struck by the name*) Miss—Who? (*reaching newspaper*)

BERN. Miss Cronyon: the lady I intended him to marry: one of the Cronyon's, of Blarney-le-Towers. Think of that poor girl, nursing her broken heart, and concealing her lacerated affection in the shady groves of her ancestral home.

KITTY. Ah the Groves of Blarney—what did you say the name was?

BERN. Blarney-le-Towers, County Cork. And you don't appear to sympathise with her at all. You can't feel for a woman, I suppose. Ha, ha! so like your sex, that.

KITTY. I keep my sympathy for those who need it.

BERN. And does not she need it, ma'am?

KITTY. You shall judge for yourself. (*holding out paper*) Look there! In the marriages. Do you see? (*pointing*) "On the 15th, by the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of—, assisted by the Reverend"—do you see? "Alexander George Pursechoyle, late Captain," and so on, "to Clementina Belinda Letitia, eldest daughter of Ambrose Cronyon, of Blarney-le-Towers, Esquire, and niece of the Right Honorable the Earl of Chateau-Gammon." Miss Cronyon, you see, of Blarney-le-Towers, Esquire. (*sweetly*) Is that your Miss Cronyon?

BERN. (*striking his thigh*) Gad! then I've been made a fool of.

KITTY. (*smiling*) Yes: so like your sex, that.

SAM. (*aside*) Ha, ha! that's one for him.

KITTY. But, there! Never mind Mrs. Pursechoyle, *née* Cronyon. She was evidently a deceitful thing, and your nephew is well rid of such a connection. His present wife wouldn't deceive you for the world, I'm sure—(*aside*) except for your good.

BERN. I should like to see her, ma'am. (*wrathfully*)

KITTY. Oh! he'll bring her to see you, of course, directly you send him word of your forgiveness.

BERN. Eh! you misunderstand me. Forgiveness! He gets no forgiveness from me.

KITTY. Not!

BERN. No, ma'am; no.

KITTY. Oh! then I misunderstood you, indeed. What a ridiculous mistake for me to make. I understood you to say that you were a man of your word. Absurd! ha, ha!

BERN. And do you think I am not a man of my word, m'am?

KITTY. How can I think so, when just now you told me that you could forgive your nephew everything except his treatment of that most needlessly pitied Miss Cronyon?

SAM. (*aside*) Well done, our side!

BERN. But I did not tell you that I could forgive the creature he has married—and husband and wife are one!

KITTY. Occasionally. But you own you've never seen her. Is this justice, now, to condemn without seeing?

BERN. Of course it is. Does not every statue of Justice tell you that? Oh! I could forgive *him*, but for that impertinent little flirt whom he has married—that obnoxious, ill-bred, ugly—

KITTY. (*rising angrily*) Ugly, sir! I will not endure—that is, I beg you, out of consideration for me, not to use such terms as those in speaking of one of my sex. A woman cannot bear to hear a woman spoken of in such a way.

SAM. (*aside*) Unless she says it herself, I suppose.

BERN. I beg pardon, madam—I meant nothing offensive, I protest; least of all to you, ma'am. If the creature were anything like you—hem!

KITTY. Like me! Oh, I'm sure Mrs.—what was the name? Ah! Gaythorne, was it not?—Mrs. Gaythorne is quite as pretty as I am. (*leaning back, and smiling at him*) Ah, I wish I were your niece.

BERN. (*glancing at her*) Do you, my dear, do you? (*aside*) I wish to goodness she was.

KITTY. (*smiling*) Yes, I do. (*after a moment's thought*) If I were your niece, and you made yourself disagreeable in this way, I'll tell you what I should do.

BERN. Disagreeable! Dis—— Well, what should you do?

KITTY. I should get an interview with you without your knowing who I was.

BERN. That would be impossible, to start with.

KITTY. Impossible! The easiest thing in the world. I'd be a governess enquiring for a situation, or a housemaid seeking a place; I'd be a lady after a servant's character, or a servant after a lady's; I'd be a Sister of Charity wanting subscriptions for a hospital; I'd be a blind beggar and a dog, but I'd see you somehow.

BERN. Well—well, suppose we grant that. What then?

KITTY. Well, in the first place I should make you look at me a good deal; and really, sir, after my experience of your society for the last half hour, I can't bring myself to believe that to effect that would be a matter of any difficulty.

BERN. (*with some embarrassment*) Well, ha, ha! No, ma'am, no—no, my dear. Ha, ha! perhaps not, my love.

KITTY. Well then, I should talk to you—you know, till you began rather to like me than otherwise. (*quickly*) Perhaps you'll say that's an impossibility.

BERN. By no means, my dear, the very contrary, begad!

KITTY. Then—then I should throw off the mask, and I should say:—"I am very sorry, uncle, that Sam married me without your consent, and against your wishes; I never dreamed when I listened to him that he was dependent upon you, and therefore bound to consider you in taking such a step." I should say—"I am a poor motherless girl, uncle, without any one in the world but Sam and—and—you. (*sobs*) Will you still cast off one who is quite innocent of any thought of offending you, and who would be—oh! so glad to love you dearly? (*sobs and sits on sofa with handkerchief to her eyes*)

BERN. By George, madam, (*with great warmth*) if Sam had married you, I'd have—here give me a piece of writing paper—quick! I must give vent to my feelings at once. Quick! A piece of paper and a pen.

KITTY. (*setting writing materials before him*) Oh! how good of you—you will write to your nephew at once.

BERN. To my nephew! no. To that tiger-hearted relation of yours whose unreasonable anger would blast your future life. But I'll make it all right, my dear. You leave it to me. Now then his name and address. Quick! Who is he? Come—the scorpion's address.

KITTY. (*aside*) What shall I say? Oh! (*aloud*) I'll look for the address while you are writing the letter. Thanks, so much for your kindness.

BERN. Not a bit. Be quick! I shan't be long. I shall give it him short and sharp. (*beginning to write*) "Sir"—I'll give it him, front, flank, and rear. (*KITTY steals back to SAM and whispers to him—he to her*) What relation is he to your husband, my dear? (*without turning*)

KITTY. (*with a grimace of apprehension*) Uncle!

BERN. Uncle! The viper! (*writes*) I wonder how he'll like that, ha, ha! (*emphasizing his composition with violent motions of his head*)

KITTY. (*in a whisper to SAM*) I hope he'll put it very plainly, Sam.

SAM. (*to her*) Little doubt of that. A man always tells the whole truth when talking to himself.

BERN. There! Now, my dear, an envelope, please. That's right. Now then, his name and address. (*ready to address envelope*)

KITTY. His name is——

BERN. Well! Out with it.

KITTY. His name is Colonel Berners!

(*a pause—he falls back in his chair, and simply stares—she neither moves nor looks up, but sits with the letter in her hand*)

BERN. (*with a gasp*) Colonel——

KITTY. (*without looking up*) Berners!—B, E, R—(*he rises and dashes the pen on table*) Isn't the pen a good one? (*rallying her courage*) Ah, I see, as a soldier you don't like a quill. Captain Sword of course prefers the steel, and scorns the white feather! (*looking up at last, and speaking firmly*) Try this one, Uncle Joseph.

BERN. So you are Sam's wife, madam!

KITTY. Yes, uncle.

BERN. And dare you look me in the face, ma'am, after—

after playing upon me in this way! Why—why—turn my flank, madam——

KITTY. Well, haven't I, uncle Joseph?

BERN. So you've made a fool of me, have you?

KITTY. No, indeed. That was all your own doing.

BERN. I've made a fool of myself, that's to say. (*aside*) Begad she's right too. (*aloud*) But if you think such deceit as this will prosper, you are mistaken.

KITTY. Do you mean that I deceived you?

BERN. Why, do you deny it?

KITTY. Most certainly.

BERN. What? Did not you behave to me from the time I entered your house as if you'd no connection with me at all?

KITTY. And isn't that exactly the way you've behaved to me, from the time I entered your family?

BERN. (*aside*) Hang it. (*aloud*) Didn't you pretend that this business of my nephew and his wife had nothing whatever to do with you?

KITTY. On the contrary, did I not make their cause my own most warmly?

BERN. Blow me from a gun, ma'am! didn't you try to impose a sham faint upon me for a real one?

KITTY. The very reverse. I told you distinctly that it was not a real one and you wouldn't believe me.

SAM. (*coming forward*) Yes, yes, uncle. I can vouch for that. She certainly did tell you that distinctly.

BERN. Oh! you're there, sir, are you? So you've been behind the scenes all the while of course.

SAM. No, only behind the curtain. How are you, sir?

BERN. (*aside*) I don't know what the dickens to do. She's very pretty, begad. But am I to be trepanned into——

SAM. What have you got there, Kitty?

KITTY. Oh, such a beautiful letter of Uncle Joseph's. You must hear it.

SAM. By all means. I like his letters so much—when he doesn't enclose money.

KITTY. May I read it to him, uncle?

BERN. (*aside*) Oh, confound that letter!

KITTY. Silence gives consent. Now, Sam, (*reads*) "Sir, Pardon the liberty I take in addressing you upon a subject with which you will no doubt consider that a stranger has no right to intermeddle. But I have, by accident, made the acquaintance of a most charming young lady, who, for no other fault than marrying the man she loved, has to her infinite sorrow, brought upon her husband the anger of a relation whose heir he supposed himself to be. That young lady is your connection;

her husband is your nephew; the infuriated relation is—yourself.”

SAM. Hear, hear! Very well put. The infuriated relation is himself. Good!

BERN. There, ma'am, surely that will do.

KITTY. (*reads*) “Now, sir, in the name of common charity——”

BERN. Stop, stop, madam, I can't stand this.

KITTY. (*still reading*) “Of mere justice——”

BERN. May I beg, Mrs. Gaythorne——

KITTY. (*reads*) “Of all the better feelings of our nature——”

BERN. Stop, my dear, for pity's sake. Confound me! I can't stand this. I might have held out but for that pernicious piece of manuscript. But now—hemmed in here, cut off there, I've no resource but unconditional surrender. There! I surrender.

KITTY. You do? Sam, Sam, uncle Joseph surrenders.

SAM. Does he? Then allow me to return you, sir, the—
(*holding out his hand*)

BERN. The what?

KITTY. THE SHILLING.

| | | | | |
|----|------|--------|----------|----|
| | SAM. | KITTY. | COLONEL. | |
| R. | | | | L. |

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