

OUR CLERKS;

OR,

No. 3, FIG TREE COURT, TEMPLE.

An Original Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

The Author of "*Diogenes and his Lantern*," "*Philosopher's Stone*," "*Vicar of Wakefield*," "*To Parents and Guardians*," "*Prince Dorus*," "*A Trip to Kissingen*," "*Little Red Riding Hood*," &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

909360

*First performed at the Royal Princess's Theatre,
On Saturday, March 6th, 1852.*

CHARACTERS.

JOB MEACOCK, Esq.	{ <i>Barristers-at-Law,</i>	MR. G. EVERETT.
	<i>3, Fig Tree Court,</i>	
RICHARD HAZARD, Esq.	{ <i>Temple</i>	MR. A. WIGAN.
JOHN PUDDICOMBE (<i>Clerk to Meacock</i>)	.....	MR. KEELEY.
EDWARD SHARPUS (<i>Clerk to Hazard</i>)	.....	MRS. KEELEY.
MR. BULPIT	.....	MR. ADDISON.
MR. DOCKET	.....	MR. J. CHESTER.
MR. LEVI ABRAHAMS (<i>of Cursitor Street</i>)	.....	MR. F. COOKE.
JEREMIAH MOULDICOTT (<i>his Man</i>)	.....	MR. MEADOWS.
MISS EMILY HARDEN	.....	MISS ROBERTSON.
MARY PINNER	{ <i>Nursery Maids</i> }	MISS VIVASH.
JANE BULGIN		MISS DALY.
MRS. CHOWSER	{ <i>Laundress at "No. 3, Fig</i>	MRS. W. DALY.
	<i>Tree Court"</i>	

Time in Representation—One hour and five minutes.

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OUR CLERKS;

OR, No. 3, FIG-TREE-COURT, TEMPLE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A large Sitting Room, No. 3, Fig-tree Court, Temple, solidly furnished. Two bookcases, with law books in flat, and two windows looking on the Temple Gardens. Closets, with folding-doors, practicable from angles R. and L. of the flat. A door, R. U. E., communicating with another room, Crown Office-row, and the gardens. A door, L. U. E., communicating with the clerk's room and Fig-tree Court. Two doors, L. 1 E., and L. S. E., communicating with bed rooms—one occupied by HAZARD, another door R. 1 E., leads to bed room occupied by MEACOCK. A cupboard in the wall between the windows, practicable. A sofa below it. A fireplace, R. S. E. A round table. Two easy chairs. Four common chairs. A large library table with books, law papers, &c. A bust of Lord Bacon on the library table. Busts of Eldon and Stowell on the bookcases. On the round table are a breakfast equipage, a paper of biscuits, a bottle of brandy, a decanter of water, a wine glass, and a tumbler. Law books open on the reading table.*

Mrs. CHOWSER discovered arranging the breakfast things, &c.

Mrs. CHOW. Yes, it's an 'ard case on a lone woman. First to occupy my apartments, and then to win my 'eart; and at last to disappear, after pawning my sheets, and pledging his affections. But I'll have justice agin the wretch. I'll get Mr. Meacock to give me advice about it—he's a steady gentleman, and knows the law. Not like Mr. Hazard—he's a wild gentleman: there's his cigars that he's been a smoking of. Nasty things, (*pockets them*) Biscuits, Eh? I wonder how they can leave things about so? and with them boys here that can't keep their hands off nothing. (*she pockets some cigars, and puts biscuits in a paper, which she pockets.* While she is doing so, EDWARD appears at the door, L. U. E., watching her) That Edward is such a limb! There's nothing he ain't up to, that boy! He'll toss off a glass of spirits (*fills glass from the brandy bottle*) as if he'd been in the habit of drinking all his life. (*drinks*)

EDWARD. (*on chair back, R.*) Olo! Mrs. C.

Mrs. C. (*nearly dropping the glass in her agitation*) Oh, you little wretch! if you didn't a'most bring my heart into my mouth.

Edw. I don't think there was any room for it there, just at that moment, Mrs. C.

Mrs. C. To startle one like that, just as one was a takin' one's drop of peppermint for the wind.

Edw. (*sniffing at the glass*) How uncommon like your peppermint smells to master's best French brandy, Mrs. C.!

Mrs. C. (*bitterly*) You'd better go for to say that I ever touch anything belonging to the gentlemen, you had!

Edw. I'd scorn the action, Mrs. C. But you might just as well tuck in the corner of that paper of biscuits all the same. (*Mrs. C. hastily looks to see if the paper protrudes*) Ah! sold again, Mrs. C.; who boned the biscuits, ah!

Mrs. C. Oh! you young vagabond; if I don't tell your master one of these days who it is that—

Edw. That waters the milk, and melts the butter, and mops up the dripping, and trims the steaks, and buzzes the bottles, and sacks the coals, and cuts away with the wood, and walks into the tea, and cribs the chops, and poaches the eggs. (*she makes blows at him with her broom, which he eludes*) Do, Mrs. C., and I'll patter it all through the Temple—"The awful confession of Mrs. Chowser, laundress, No. 3, Fig-tree-court, showing how she wickedly robbed her master, and accused two innocent clerks of the same—being a warning to all elderly females addicted to peppermint." (*she pursues him, during this speech, with the broom, but he escapes and finishes it just as she aims a final blow, which falls upon*)

JOHN PUDDICOMBE, who enters, R. 2 D., with a large comforter on, very slow and sleepy.

JOHN. Hallo! I say, what's that for?

Mrs. C. Oh! it's you, is it? Well, you often escapes it when you've earned it. Now you have got it.

JOHN. (*coming forward, c.*) Hitting a poor fellow like that. I'll tell mother, I will; and she won't have me struck, I know.

Edw. Never mind, Jack. Get out of your comforter, that one may have a look at your lovely countenance this morning.

JOHN. (*going to fire*) I'm so precious cold—all over. (*turning round, so as to warm his nether man*) Has master been calling for us yet, Mrs. C.?

Mrs. C. Ah! that he has. You'll catch it for not waking him at half-past seven.

MEACOCK. (*outside, R. 1 E.*) John.

Mrs. C. There, he's calling you again.

JOHN. There he goes. (*gets blacking brushes and bottle, and takes up the pair of shoes that are at MEACOCK'S door*) Oh! they'll do well enough. He ain't particular.

MEACOCK. (*outside*) What are you about all this time, John?

JOHN. Blacking your shoes, sir. (*takes shoes and exits, R. 1 E.*)

MEACOCK. (*outside*) Thank you. And now if you will have the

kindness to brush my clothes, and bring me my hot water, if you please.

Re-enter JOHN, R. 1 D., with clothes, which, instead of brushing, he tosses down on a chair, and begins to warm his hands at the fire.

HAZARD. (*heard calling, L. 2 D.*) Edward: confound you! Ed—ward.

EDW. (*who during the above dialogue of MEACOCK and JOHN, has been rushing about arranging books, &c., and setting breakfast things, which he brings from 3 D. L. with reckless rapidity*) There's Hazard! What can have set him on being called at half-past seven, I wonder?

HAZ. (*calling again*) Ed—ward.

EDW. Yezzir. (*rushes into HAZARD'S door, L.*)

HAZ. (*outside, is heard to yawn violently*) Ah, ah! What o'clock is it?

EDW. (*outside*) Half-past seven, sir. (*clock strikes*)

HAZ. (*outside*) There goes eight. Take that for telling me a lie, you young rascal. (*EDWARD retreats from room as a boot flies out, which hits JOHN, who is contemplating the fire, R. S. E.*)

JOHN. Oh! (*EDWARD begins brushing HAZARD'S clothes*)

HAZ. (*outside*) I'm glad it hit you.

EDW. Please, sir, it didn't hit me, sir; it hit John, sir.

MEA. (*outside, R. 1 E.*) Pray are my clothes brushed yet, John?

JOHN. Yes, sir. (*he gets up and takes from the chair the clothes which he has never touched*) *Exit into R. 1 D.*

MEA. (*outside*) And now if you could get me my hot water.

Re-enter JOHN. He re-seats himself at the fire, after pulling the bell. A great splashing is heard, L. 2 D.

EDW. There's Hazard in his shower-bath, Jack.

JOHN. Cold water? (*EDWARD nods*) How people can get into cold water that way, Edward, first thing in the morning—coming out all red, like corned beef.

Enter MRS. CHOWSER, L. 3 D.

MRS. C. Well! who rung the bell?

JOHN. Meacock. He wants his hot water.

MRS. C. Then why don't you come for it, drat your laziness?

JOHN. Mrs. C., I'm a clerk—not a menial domestic.

MRS. C. I declare them boys beats all! *Exit L. 1 D.*

MEA. (*putting his head in R. 1 D.*) John, where is that hot water?

JOHN. (*going for jug*) Please, sir, Mrs. Chowser never will have the kettle a biling in time, sir; she's always so slow.

MEA. Let it be on in future at half-past seven—I insist upon t. You will say I insist upon it, if you please. (*he retires. JOHN sits down and rings the bell again*)

Enter MRS. CHOWSER with the kettle, L. 3 D.

JOHN. You'd better look sharp with that kettle, Mrs. C., or you'll be a catching it.

Edw. (*singing as he brushes*)

Chowser put the kettle on,
Chowser put the kettle on,
Chowser put the kettle on,
And we'll have—

(Mrs. CHOWSER *enraged, makes a dart at him. He escapes, and finishes the air by taking a sight at her, and exclaiming*) Oh!
(JOHN *pours some hot water from the kettle into a mug, and takes it in, R. I D.*)

HAZ. (*puts his head out L. 2 D.*) Edward, why the devil don't you get my things brushed?

Edw. (*violently folding the things up*) 'Ere, sir. (*he rushes off, L. S. D.*)

Enter JOHN.

JOHN. Now, I couldn't abear to wait on a man like Hazard. He's always in an 'urry. What's the use of being in an 'urry? Great men and great things never is in an 'urry—the law's never in an 'urry—Newfoundland dogs is never in an 'urry—Government's never in an 'urry—and I'm never in an 'urry.

EDWARD *rushes on violently, L. 2 D.*

Edw. Look sharp, Jack; here's Hazard. (*He hastily wheels out a dressing table, lifts up the lid in which is a looking glass, puts out brushes, &c., on ledge. JOHN retires, and busies himself about the breakfast table*)

Enter HAZARD, L. 2 D., without his coat and waistcoat. He sits at the dressing table, and surveys himself in the glass. EDWARD attends him.

HAZ. What a last dying speech-and-confession-face for one's wedding day—tweazers! (*EDWARD gives them*) The victims at the Old Bailey generally breakfast heartily the last morning—lavender water! (*EDWARD supplies it*) but I feel as if the first mouthful would render the noose superfluous—Eau-de-Cologne! (*EDWARD gives it*) I wonder if all fellows are in this state before they're turned off. (*brushing his hair violently*) Have you packed up the things as I told you?

Edw. Yezsir. An 'kercher, sir. (*gives him a red one*)

HAZ. Confound you, sir! Red cravat with lavender trowsers! The—

Edw. (*produces it from several he has arranged over the back of a chair*) Studs, sir. (*offering box*)

HAZ. Studs, sir! By Jove! I've a good mind! What studs ought to go with this tie, sir?

Edw. Turkey studs, sir.

HAZ. Then, when you know I ought to wear turquoise, what do you mean by giving me black? Do I look as if I was going to a funeral?

Edw. Not your clothes, sir.

HAZ. But my face, eh? Ah! one can't conquer it. (EDWARD offers him a coloured waistcoat, which HAZARD flings at him violently) A white waistcoat, you young idiot, and the blue coat that came home last night. (he completes his toilet and rises) The unhappy sufferer was neatly and even elegantly dressed. He walked with a firm step, tho' his face betrayed severe emotion. When the clergyman, who attended him, uttered the melancholy formula, "Will you have"—

EDW. Breakfast, sir?

HAZ. Certainly not. Do I look capable of breakfast? A glass of brandy.

EDW. Yezzir. (EDWARD fills, and gives one from r. table. He drinks. HAZ. You may give me another. (EDWARD gives it—he drinks again) And the bore is that unless I lay Emily's purse under contribution, I don't see where we're to go when it's all over. I haven't five pounds ready tin in the world, and I hate asking Meacock—he's such an infernal screw. By Jove, tho', there would be something very original in carrying off his intended by the aid of his own fivers. Poor Job! Ha, ha, here he comes.

Enter MEACOCK, R. 1 D. JOHN makes tea.

MEA. (sits and begins breakfast) Good morning, Hazard.

HAZ. Good morning, old fellow. (to EDWARD) Call a cab, and put in my traps.

EDW. 'Anson, sir—yezzir. (exit into L. 2. D., return with carpet bag, and exit, L. 3 D., in his usual violent manner. HAZARD sits R. at table)

JOHN. And now they're safe at breakfast, I'll go and have a turn at the French grammar, on the Miltonian system. *Exit R. 2 D.*

MEA. Why, Hazard, where are you off to in full term time? You really should stick to business more. You talk about picking up a rich wife. This isn't the way to do it.

HAZ. Well, I'm not quite so sure of that.

MEA. (seated R.) You see my own case. Why is Emily Harden's guardian so anxious I should marry his ward? Because he knows I stick to my profession.

HAZ. (seated L.) I thought it might be from the natural tendency of guardians to thwart their ward's inclinations.

MEA. Why, what do you know of her inclinations, Hazard?

HAZ. Why, one guesses them from what a girl says—tho' I own it's a bad rule.

MEA. And what does she say of me?

HAZ. Why, she says—of course, I mention it to you as a friend—you are such a bore; that's her expression.

MEA. A bore! Now, I put it to you, Hazard, should you say I was a bore?

HAZ. Well, it's certainly not the definition I should give of you, if I were writing a natural history.

MEA. No! I should think not.

HAZ. I should rather say, "spoon," or "muff."

MEA. Oh! you are never serious?

HAZ. My dear Job, you've no notion how serious I am at this moment. I've exactly two pounds ten of available capital in the world; and I'm going—in fact, I've not the slightest notion where I'm going.

EDWARD *rushes in*, L. 3 E.

EDW. Cab, sir—bag's in, sir—a very fast one, sir!

HAZ. All right. (*rising*) By-the-bye, Job, are you in cash?

MEA. (*uneasily*) Eh! Why?

HAZ. Why, if you had ten or twenty pounds to spare for a day or two, I should have rather liked—

MEA. No, no! my balance is low, Hazard, very low.

HAZ. (*aside*) The old snob! that removes my last scruple. But how we're to manage, unless Emily has got some money!

EDW. Where shall he drive to, sir?

HAZ. (*rushing out*) To the devil.

EDW. (*following*) Yezsir. I'll tell him, sir.

MEA. He's off on some mad prank or other. So Emily says I'm a bore! Old Bulpit won't like that, I know; for though we are personally strangers, he has the highest opinion of me, and so he has told my uncle at Coventry. However, its time to be starting for Westminster. (*rises and looks at tie*)

Re-enter EDWARD puts away the dressing table &c. Enter MRS. CHOWSER, she curtseys very low, L. 1 D.

MRS. C. Could I speak a word with you, sir?

MEA. Certainly, Mrs. Chowser. What is it?

MRS. C. A pint o' law, sir, please. In regard of one Jeremiah Mouldicott, sir, which he lodged in my house these six months; and run up a score of twelve pun ten, besides washing, and promised me marriage, sir, and then went off, after pawning his sheets, and has never since been heard of. And what I wants to know, sir, is, what I can do to him, if you please?

MEA. Well you can sue him in the County Court for the debt; and then you can indict him for illegal pawning, or you may have your action for breach, and get damages in money for injury done to your feelings.

MRS. C. But if I got the money for my feelings first, could I marry him afterwards?

MEA. Not compulsorily: the law does not allow both.

MRS. C. Then I think I'd better marry him, sir: you see I want him punished, sir.

MEA. It will serve him quite right, Mrs. Chowser. (*rises*)

EDW. (*aside*) Poor devil! Oh, wouldn't I like to be Mouldicott, just!

Exit EDWARD, L. 3 D.

MEA. There's nine o'clock—I must be off to court—I shall want a biscuit for my lunch (*looking about*.) Did you see that bag of biscuits I brought in yesterday, Mrs. Chowser?

MRS. C. No, sir; I never see 'em, sir. Nothing o' that kind's safe with them boys, sir.

Exit L. 3 D.

MEACOCK rings. Enter EDWARD, violently, L. 3 D.

EDW. Yezzir.

MEA. I wish you would not always rush about like a whirlwind,

Edward. Where is my clerk?

EDW. John, sir? he's there (*pointing to the door, L. U. E.*) studying the French grammar, very hard, sir.

MEA. Send him to me this instant.

EDW. Yezzir. *Exit (very violently as before, R. 2 D.)*

MEA. These boys are a perfect plague. Edward is as much too fast as John is too slow.

Enter JOHN slowly, R. S. D.

MEA. How often must I tell you, sir, that when I ring, it's your duty to answer, and not Edward's?

JOHN (*in a deeply-injured tone*) Please, sir, Edward always runs (c.)

EDWARD (*who has followed and is listening at the door*) Please, sir, it's John, sir; he never—

MEA. Hold your tongue, Edward, (*to JOHN*) I'll thank you to run in future.

JOHN. Please, sir, mother says I mustn't, 'cause I'm a delicate constitution, and liable to palpitations. (*EDWARD explodes with laughter*) I am, then: mother told me so, and the faculty told her. (*EDWARD laughs*)

MEA. Be quiet, boys, this instant. Mind, John, I'm going down to Westminster for the day. If anybody comes with papers, say I shall be back when the court rises. (*going up c., EDWARD rushes up with his hat and gloves*) There you see, sir: Edward again.

JOHN. Please, sir, he always will. Have your umbrella, sir? (*gives him the hearth broom*)

MEA. (*taking it without looking*) I may as well. (*EDWARD explodes again. MEACOCK throws it at him, and hits him over the legs*)

JOHN. Oh, please, sir, it's absence of mind, brought on by study, mother says.

MEA. You are too provoking, sir. Absence of mind will lead to absence of body one of these days, for I certainly will discharge you, with a week's warning. (*Exit MEACOCK, R. 2 D., EDWARD rushes after him, slams the outer door so violently, then rushes back, and executes a dance of derision round JOHN*)

EDW. Ah, you slow coach! serves you right. I should like to see Hazard bully me like that.

JOHN. (*mournfully*) You've got no feeling, you havn't, or you wouldn't go on so taking advantage of one that isn't so quick as yourself. But if I'm slow, mother says she's sure I'm sure; and I do my best to improve myself.

EDW. Well, there's lots o' room for that, old fellow. So now Hazard's off somewhere, and Meacock's safe in court for the day, and old Mother Chowser's gone, let's be jolly—these Cabanas are the genuine article—take a weed, Jack. Oh, I forgot! you can't smoke.

JOHN. Can't I though. You seem to think I can do nothing—I'm in the habit of smoking. (EDWARD lights cigar—JOHN lights his from it)

JOHN. (*puffing*) Oh! I say, if Mother Chowser caught us now.

EDW. No fear o' that, Hazard gave her holiday for the day, when he went out this morning. I should like to know what he's up to, Jack.

JOHN. All hours of the night. He never thinks of improving his mind.

EDW. No, he knows better. He ain't such a spooney as Meacock.

JOHN. Yes, but he's over head and ears in debt.

EDW. Well, and if people didn't get into debt, there'd be no creditors; and if there was no creditors, there'd be no actions; and if there was no actions, there'd be no attorneys; and if there was no attorneys, there'd be no barristers; and if there was no barristers, there'd be no clerks; and then what would become of all the rising young men, like me, Jack.

JOHN. And me, too, Ned; because I consider myself a rising young man too. I've nearly got through all French without a master—and I've 'ad six lessons in Smart's method—and I've tried to read Stephens on Pleading, which I don't understand it now, but I shall some day I hope—perhaps.

EDW. Blow Stephens on Pleading. I say, what fun it must be to be a gentleman, Jack, sitting like this all day.

JOHN. I believe you.

EDW. How prime it would be if we had those pretty nursemaids here that I paid attentions to in the gardens last week.

JOHN. Ah! you only paid attentions; but I paid twopence for a bottle of pop for them at the gate. (*gets uncomfortable*) Oh!

EDW. What's the matter?

JOHN. Nothing, Ned.

EDW. Why, you're as white as the table-cloth.

JOHN. Am I, oh! Well, I do feel—somehow—oh dear! (*tries to rise*) I'm all turning round, and I've a cold sweat. Oh, Ned—I've my palpitations coming on so bad—oh, dear!

EDW. Serves you right, you humbug, for taking a weed under false pretences. Here, where's the brandy? (*fills a glass*) that will set you all right again.

JOHN. Oh! do open the window, please Ned. (EDWARD opens the window) There, I'm better now, Ned. (*goes to L. window*)

EDW. (*looking out*) Oh! Jack, if there ain't Mary Pinner and Jane Bulgin walking in the gardens with the babbies. (*throws his hand to them—JOHN imitates him in a ghastly manner*) Look, Jane's a smiling at us, and Mary's a winking.

JOHN. That's at me, Ned: I winked first.

EDW. I say, let's ask em up to have some pie and things. There's a stunning pie in the cupboard, and some jam—you get them out, while I call them in. (*calls and beckons out of window*) There's nobody here—that staircase—No. 10—first floor. What fun it is having two doors! Here they come—I'll let them in. (*rushes out R. S. E. JOHN gets out pie and jam*)

JOHN. What a boy that is for tearing about! (*advancing*) But he's a low-minded lad—he's content to be a clerk—now I want to be a barrister, and have a clerk of my own, and then won't I bully him.

Re-enter EDWARD, showing in MARY PINNER and JANE BULGIN, each with a baby in her arms, R. 2 D.

EDW. Here you are, ladies. Walk in.

MARY. Oh, la! what a nice room.

JANE. (L. C.) Its beautiful.

EDW. Now, then, if you'll get rid of your bonnets, and babies—
(*busy at table R., brings it more C.*)

JOHN. I'll hang them up.

MARY. (R. C.) Hang up the babies!

JOHN. No, the bonnets.

MARY. No; we really musn't take our things off.

EDW. Now, John, put away the infants.

JANE. Oh, do be careful of them.

JOHN. Bless them little dears! They're fast asleep—I do like babbies so! (*puts them on the sofa*) How innocent they do look!
(*surveys them fondly*)

EDW. There—now, ladies, make yourselves at home. Have some pie? (*helping them*) Like it flaky, Miss P.

MARY. Oh! I dursn't. Oh! but suppose your master was to come home and catch us.

EDW. Oh, stuff! No fear of that. Besides, they always come in by Fig-tree Court, there; (*pointing L.*) and you can always bolt by Crown-office Row, yonder. (R.)

MARY. What! there are two doors, then?

JANE. But if somebody was to come to both at once.

EDW. Ah! people ain't up to that—there's Meacock's name on the Fig-tree-Court door, and Hazard's on the door in Crown-office-Row. We come in just as we like, but the firms is independent—Hazard and Sharpus (that's me), 10, Crown-office-Row, and Meacock and Puddicombe (that's him), 3, Fig-tree Court. It's a beautiful provision of nature.

JOHN. Bless you, the chambers is like a rabbit warren! All the doors open into each other, and nobody can't catch anybody, if anybody likes. There was one of Hazard's duns once sat on the Crown-office-Row landing for a week, and had his dinner brought him regular in a basin; and all the time Hazard was a going in and out by Fig-tree Court as innocent as if there wasn't such a thing as a tick in the whole world. (*all laugh*) Oh! we're a rummny lot, I can tell you.

EDW. Allow me to offer you a glass of stout, ladies? Hallo! (*rummaging in cupboard*) I say, Jack, here's Hazard been and drunk all that stout.

JOHN. What a shame!

EDW. Have some cold without, instead?

JOHN. (to JANE) The Temple Gardens is a great comfort, miss, to families with babies.

JANE. Yes; the dear little things can enjoy the fresh air from the river.

JOHN. And never get into no mischief. (*a loud knocking is heard 3 D. L., all jump up but EDWARD*)

JANE. Oh, gracious!

MARY. Here's somebody.

JOHN. Oh, crikey!

EDW. (*sitting down*) What a set of cowards you are; let 'em knock. There's nobody at home—we're all down at Westminster. I shan't stir. (*furiously knocking repeated*)

HAZ. (*without*) Ed—ward.

EDW. (*jumping up*) By Jove, its Hazard come back!

JOHN. Oh! I knew we should get into a scrape having you up. But he would do it.

EDW. Make haste out of Crown-office Row. (*they rush towards door R. 2 D.*)

MARY and JANE. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! (*a violent ringing at door R. 2 D.*)

JOHN. Somebody at that door, too! Now we are in for it.

HAZ. (*without, very impatiently*) Edward. Confound you! Ed—w-a-r-d.

EDW. Hide 'em somewhere, Jack.

JOHN. You get into the bookcase—you get under the sofa.

EDW. No, no; the closets here! (*seizes MARY, and puts her into closet, R.—JOHN does the same with JANE, L.*) Now, Jack, you go to the door. You'll be longest. *Exit JOHN. L. 3 D.*

MARY. (*peeping out, R.*) Oh, lord!

EDW. (*forcing her back*) Be quiet!

JANE. (*peeping, L.*) Oh! please—

EDW. (*shutting the door*) Hold your row.

HAZ. (*heard in passage*) Confound it, sir! how dare you keep us waiting?

MARY and JANE. (*looking out*) The babies!

EDW. By jingo! (*he snatches them up from the sofa; but not having time to carry them to the closets, he is just able to thrust them into the cupboard over the sofa, and to close the door, as*

Enter HAZARD, with EMILY, R. 3 D.

HAZ. Compose yourself, dear. (*to EDWARD*) Now you young rascal, what do you mean by keeping—

EDW. Please, sir, we was so busy putting away the things, we never heard you knock.

JOHN. There's been gentlemen to breakfast, sir. I wonder where the babies is? (*aside*)

HAZ. Don't be frightened, my dear. Here you are in chambers. These are our clerks—as precious a pair of young rascals as ever played pitch and toss on a Blackstone's Commentaries. This is Edward, the Buster—so called from his highly explosive cha-

ractor. This is John, alias Peter Crawley, from his style of locomotion.

EMILY. They look very nice boys, indeed. But I'm so terrified, Richard, when I think of the step I've taken.

HAZ. Come, come! (*soothingly*) After all, it's nothing so very terrible. You've only gone and got married! You'll soon get used to it. Here, let me take your shawl and bonnet! (*assists to unshawl and unbonnet her*)

JOHN. (*aside to EDWARD*) Where's the babies?

EDW. (*aside to him*) In the cupboard.

JOHN. They'll be smothered!

HAZ. There! we'll bonnet Bacon. (*puts bonnet on bust*)

EMILY. (*aside to HAZARD*) But what will these boys think of me?

HAZ. Oh! they're used to see ladies—I mean the wives of my—of my young married friends—constantly come to chambers.

EMILY. But I would rather they knew we were married.

HAZ. Very well. Oh, they are to be trusted—look here, you young rascals—this lady is Mrs. Richard Hazard.

EDW. (*sniggering*) Yes, sir.

HAZ. (*boxes his ears*) My wife—do you understand? You'll have the goodness to remember it; and now be off with you both.

EDW. (*aside*) We must get these girls out somehow. Shall John call a cab, sir?

HAZ. No; we shall stay here all day.

JOHN. (*groans*) We're settled, and the babies too.

EDW. If you'd like to go into your room, sir, while we put these things away. (*during this, removes breakfast things from R. table to L. table.*)

HAZ. No, no, confound it, leave them.

EDW. If anybody comes, sir, I suppose you're down at Westminster? (*the boys linger*)

HAZ. Of course, that will do. Will you go?

EDW. (*aside to JOHN*) I say, if those babies sing out.

JOHN. (*to EDWARD*) Perhaps they'll never sing out again, poor innocents! and then it will be child-murder—and concealment of the bodies. (*Exit the BOYS, L. 3 D.* EMILY looks anxiously about the room. HAZARD puts his arm round her waist) ?

HAZ. Well, how do you like chambers, little wife?

EMILY. Oh, it's very nice, dear.

HAZ. I used to think it the dingiest, smokiest hole in London.

But now the sunshine has got into it, (*kisses her*) it's irradiated, (*crossing from R. and L. together*)

EMILY. I'm not of age for a month yet. I'm sure it was very rash not to leave London.

HAZ. What could we do? when you forgot your carpet bag, and I my purse, (*aside, walking from R. to L. together*).

EMILY. Mr. Bulpit is sure to come here to look for me.

HAZ. No, no, depend upon it he'll never think of seeking you in chambers.

EMILY. You know how he had set his heart on my marrying Mr. Meacock,

HAZ. Ridiculous want of taste! But he doesn't know me.

EMILY. Nor Mr. Meacock either, personally. But he has heard wonderful things from old Meacock, your friend's uncle, at Coventry, of his practice and industry.

HAZ. Well, I've my practice too; to be sure, he might call it mal-practice.

EMILY. But you're going to be steady now, and reform, dear.

HAZ. Reform! The new reform bill is a trifle to the sweeping measure I mean to introduce for my own purification—look—this latch-key (*taking out latch key*) take it, Emily. I forswear its fatal facilities from this moment. This box of cigars, (*looking into it*) Meacock's friends, who breakfasted here, have been walking into them, I see. Thus I give them to be smoked at once, and for ever. (*he is about to hurl the box into the fire, but pauses*) No, one ought to keep a few to give a friend, you know. As for business, I'll stick here all day long, laying in wait for the blue bags, like a large spider on the look out for blue-bottles.

EMILY. (*L.*) And a great deal I shall have of your society.

HAZ. Oh! you shall be always with me; we will sit fondly side by side; and while I work, you shall draw all the forms, look up all the cases, fold all the draft paper, and mend all the pens.

EMILY. How delightful! I declare I begin quite to like the thought of living in chambers.

HAZ. (*aside*) By-the-bye, I don't know that the arrangement will quite suit Meacock. But sufficient for the day, is the evil thereof. I think, my dear, after the emotions of the morning, a glass of sherry, and a biscuit. (*goes to cupboard, and is about to open it. The Boys have peeped in and are watching*)

JOHN. He'll find the babies, or their bodies.

HAZ. Why, what the deuce locked this cupboard?

EDW. (*bursting in, L. 3 D.*) Mr. Meacock, sir; and he's taken the key with him, down to Westminster.

JOHN. (*aside*) Oh! what a whopper.

HAZ. What a bore; there are all sorts of things one is always wanting in that cupboard.

EDW. Yezsir; I told him so, sir; but he would lock it, sir, (*JOHN holds up his hands in amazement at EDWARD'S audacity*)

HAZ. By-the-bye, there ought to be some wine in one of these closets, (*going to L. 4 D. EDWARD rapidly places himself before one, R., JOHN before the other, L.*)

JOHN. There's nothing whatever in here, sir.

EDW. Nór in here, sir. Mr. Meacock put all the wine in the cupboard, sir; because there was no key to the closets, and he thought it went, sir.

HAZ. Confound it; (*to EMILY*) you see, Emily, what a shabby, suspicious fellow Meacock is, locking everything up. Now, my rule is, never to lock up anything, and then you'll never be robbed.

EMILY. Well, I don't quite know that, dear.

HAZ. Oh, yes, servants are quite sensible of trust reposed in them. Now, these boys—are you not sensible, boys, of the confidence I put in you, in leaving everything under your charge?

EDW. (R.) Yezzir, both of us.

JOHN. (R.) Very much so, sir. We feel its a great compliment, sir, and act as such. (EDWARD crosses behind to L., and JOHN goes towards C. D.)

HAZ. Oh, yes, you may rely upon it that it is so. Well, as we can't get at the sherry, a very little Cognac mixed in a great deal of water must do instead: (*mixes some*) there, darling, (*to the boys*) that will do, leave the room.

JOHN. (*aside*) Oh, if those babbies have been burked!

HAZ. Will you go? *Exit JOHN and EDWARD, L. 3 D.*

EMILY. How lucky you are, love, to have such very attentive servants.

HAZ. Yes, I never found them so assiduous before, that I remember. I suppose it's because I want to be left tête-à-tête with you, darling. (*sits by her, and puts his arm round her waist*) After all, there is one great comfort in chambers—one is so completely one's own master. None of those interruptions which are such a horrid bore at an hotel. (EDWARD rushes in, JOHN peeps in behind him, L. 3 D.)

HAZ. (*annoyed at being caught with his arm round EMILY's waist*) Hang you, Edward. How dare you come in without knocking?

EDW. Please, sir, there was knocking, sir, at Crown-office-Row door.

HAZ. If anybody wants me, I'm on circuit.

EDW. Yezzir (*rushes out R. 2 D.*)

JOHN. How can they expect us to tell the truth, bouncing like that themselves? (*voices and scuffle heard outside, R. 2 D.*)

HAZ. What the deuce is all this?

EDW. (*outside*) Mr. Hazard's not in, I tell you, (*scuffle renewed, EDWARD is sent in spinning into the room by the door R. 1 D.*)

• Enter MR. LEVI, R. 2 D.

EDW. I told them you were on circuit, sir; but they would come in.

HAZ. Who the devil are you?

LEVI. (*taking out writ*) Excuse me Mr. Hazard, my name's Levi—Abraham Levi—Cursitor-street. I've a little matter against you here—execution against goods and chattels, sir, at the suit of Dabchick and Wattles.

HAZ. My tailors—the inhuman vagabonds!—Men I'd have trusted to any amount!

LEVI. I must leave my man in possession. (*calls*) Here—Mouldicott! (*MOULDICOTT steps in*)

EDW. (*aside*) Mouldicott!

EMILY. Oh! what does it all mean, Richard? This is very dreadful.

HAZ. A man in possession to-day—have one's honeymoon eclipsed in its first quarter by the baleful shadow of a sheriff's officer, (*to LEVI aside*) here, I say, give me a week—a day—a sovereign for every four-and-twenty hours.

LEVI. Couldn't do it, Mr. Hazard—they're werry strict with us,

now. But Mouldicott's my most respectable man. (*introduces him*) Werry clean and pleasant—sorry for it—particularly as there's a lady. (*winks*)

HAZ. No impertinence, sir; this is Mrs. Hazard, my wife.

LEVI. (*winking again*) In course—bless you, I knows.

HAZ. By Jove, sir.

LEVI. There, there—that will do—if you can make arrangements, drop a line to Cursitor-street—he has five shillings a day.

MOULD. And my wittles.

LEVI. Good morning, ma'am.

Exit, L. 2 D.

(*EMILY has sunk into chair, and covers her face with her hands, MOULDICOTT sits respectfully on the edge of his chair, under which he places his hat, after taking out his handkerchief and wiping his face*)

HAZ. Don't cry, Emily, I'll settle the matter in an hour or so—I will, indeed. (*aside*) How infernally humiliating to be sure.

EMILY. I beg your pardon for crying, dear; I don't care about it—indeed I don't.

JOHN. (*to EDWARD*) Perhaps they'll go into the other room, now.

EDW. If you and Mrs. Hazard would like to sit in your room, sir, there is a chair, sir.

JOHN. And only three panes broke.

HAZ. Pleasant bower for one's honeymoon; one chair and three broken panes. However, anything's better than this gentleman's company. So come, Emily; and you boys had better bring in that screen to keep the draught off.

Exit HAZARD with EMILY, R. D. 2 R.

EDW. (*to JOHN*) Smuggle the girls in behind it.

JOHN. And the poor innocents, if they survive. (*EDWARD and JOHN lay hold of screen, and begin to work it over from closet to closet, so as to get the girls behind it—MOULDICOTT observes them,—rises, and stops them, L. U. E.*)

MOULD. There.

EDW. What are you at?

MOULD. Nobody takes no furniture out of here.

HAZ. (*putting his head in R. 2 D.*) Why the deuce don't you bring that screen?

EDW. The man says we mustn't, sir.

Enter HAZARD, R. D. 2 E.

MOULD. Excuse me, sir, but I can't allow the sticks to be moved out of here.

HAZ. But it's to shelter a lady.

EDW. (*aside*) Two!

JOHN. And the innocents.

MOULD. Werry sorry, sir—but dooty is dooty.

HAZ. Confound the old nuisance! Emily will catch her death of cold in that room without it. (*JOHN and EDWARD work THE GIRLS*

back into their respective closets) We must put up with our friend here—perhaps I can tempt him from his post *(to MOULDICOTT)*

You'll take some refreshment, I hope, my worthy friend.

MOULD. You're werry kind, sir. If you had such a thing.

HAZ. Beer, my dear sir? certainly, we've a famous tap. Edward, draw this gentleman a pot of beer directly.

EDW. Yezzir *(aside)* Shall I doctor it, sir?

HAZ. No—no. *(exit EDWARD, 3 D. L.)* My clerks will be dining directly—you'll share their humble meal, I hope?

MOULD. Thank you, sir—with pleasure, sir.

HAZ. *(to JOHN)* John, this gentleman will dine with you.

Re-enter EDWARD, with a pot of beer, which MOULDICOTT takes and puts under his chair.

MOULD. If you'll let them send it in here, sir; 'cause I can't leave the room.

HAZ. Damn him!—he's immoveable!

EDW. *(aside to HAZARD)* If we were to fry a nice bit of steak, sir, in our room, sir, the smell might draw him off.

JOHN. Yes, sir, with an ingan, sir.

HAZ. Not a bad notion. We'll, try. *(EDWARD lingers)* Well?

EDW. If you'd give me the money for the steak, sir.

HAZ. *(gives money—exit EDWARD and JOHN, L. 3 D.)* Meanwhile, Emily can't stay there. *(he goes to L. U. E.)* Come, my love, it's a great bore—but you'll catch a cold from those broken panes.

Enter EMILY, R. D. 2 E.

EMILY. Oh! I don't care at all, dear—I really don't.

HAZ. Upon my word, it's a pleasure to be in such a scrape, for it proves what an angel you are. *(going to put his arm round her waist—she checks him)*

EMILY. *(aside)* No, dear, please—not before the man there. *(HAZ. puts the screen up, and addresses MOULDICOTT)*

HAZ. Sir, have you no sense of propriety? Don't you feel how grossly ill-mannered it is of you to insist on sitting there while there is a lady—who—

MOULD. Well, sir, I must sit here; but I should be happy to make myself pleasant and sociable. I'll take my pot and pipe here, if you like—anything to be agreeable to the lady.

HAZ. Oh! he has no finer feelings. There's nothing for it but force. *(a knock is heard L. 3 D.)*

Enter EDWARD, 3 D. L.

EDW. Please, sir, it's an old gent, sir—John let him in, sir.

BUL. *(without)* Take in my name—Mr. Bulpit, from Coventry.

HAZ. Bulpit!

EMILY.—My guardian!—he has found us out.

HAZ. No! Meacock's name is on that door—ten to one he comes to see him. He doesn't know him by sight, you say? Yes, it's a desperate move, but it's the best on the board. Edward, go round to the chambers on the staircase, and collect all the fag-

gots, dummies, and old briefs, you can lay your hands on—bring 'em in at intervals—you understand.

EDW. Yezzir—you want to humbug the old gent, sir.

HAZ. Exactly; take care to give me rattling fees and creditable leaders. By the way, though, what's to be done with this infernal man in possession?

EDW. Shall I say you're with a client, sir?

HAZ. Do—a good notion—I have it! When I ring show him in. (*exit EDWARD, 3 D. L.*) You retire to this room, love.

EMILY. But what are you going to do, love?

HAZ. To create a legion of briefs, and an army of clients. Sucking barristers are used to it. (*puts her in D. L. 2*) Look here, you sir. (*to MOULDICOTT*) Just now I was on the point of sending you out of that window. (*he half rises*) Sit still—I have changed my mind—you can be more useful to me inside the room than out of it. (*piles books, papers, &c., around him on the table*) Now, mind, you are no longer Mouldicott, broker's man, but an eminent attorney. Let's see—(*looks at brief*) Mr. Docket, of the respectable firm of Docket and Douser, Chancery-lane, in consultation with me on several heavy cases. Here's half-a-crown—you shall have as much again if you play your part like a sharp practitioner. (*rings*) Now for it.

Enter EDWARD, showing in MR. BULFIT, 3 D. L.

BUL. Ah! my young friend—you don't mind my calling you so, at our first meeting. I promised your uncle to see you the first thing on my coming to town. How d'ye do? Hard at work I see. Don't let me interrupt business, pray.

HAZ. Oh, I'm sure my client—Mr. Bulpit—Mr. Docket (*looks at EDWARD, who has got round R. of MOULDICOTT*) Mr. Docket—Mr. Bulpit—will excuse my interrupting our consultation for a few minutes.

MOULD. Certainly! never mind me, gents. While you chat, I should just like to discuss that other pint. (*steals his hand under the chair for the pot*)

HAZ. (*interposing a brief between BULFIT and the act*) Of law—exactly—Edward you will furnish Mr. Docket with that case in point he asked for.

EDWARD. (*aside*) Case o' pint! He'd like it still better if it was a case o' pot! (*he stealthily possesses himself of the pot and carries it out masked with papers*)

BUL. Delighted to find you so full of business, and with such a client as Mr. Docket, too; I know the name of the firm well. (*aside*) If he sticks to you, you're safe.

HAZ. Yes, and he does stick to me—like wax!

BUL. (*L.*) Why, you dog, you'll have no time to spare for a wife, eh? I suppose your uncle told you of our plans for you and Emily?

HAZ. Why, sir, Emily and I have settled everything already ourselves.

BUL. What, you've seen her since she's been in town?

HAZ. Frequently!

BUL. And she likes it too, eh?

HAZ. I have every reason to think so.

BUL. And so she ought; it's not every girl has such a chance—a young fellow rising in his profession as you are—who knows where you may stop? Why you barristers can do anything.

HAZ. Except be in two places at once, sir, like the birds in Ireland. And just now I ought to be with Mr. Tipper, who is waiting for a consultation with me on a most important case. An issue out of Chancery—magnificent property at stake—tremendous law suit—one of those suits that will cut up into a whole wardrobe for the common lawyers. You see it's a partnership case, junior partners got the head of the firm into Chancery, and of course it's our business to see he doesn't get it out again. (*a ring is heard*)

Enter EDWARD, violently, with paper under which is a pot of beer, L. 3 D.

EDW. A case in pint for Mr. Docket. (*puts beer before him*) A brief, sir, from Honey and Skelton's for you.

HAZ. Ah! a heavy case?

EDW. (R.) Tol, lol, lol, sir! twelve guineas, sir!

HAZ. Who is with me?

EDW. Sergeant Heavysides, sir.

HAZ. Very well, put it down. Say I'll see to it when I have time.

I must speak to Tipper. (*aside*) Emily will be dying for a kiss.

Exit HAZARD, E. L. 2 D.

BUL. He must be overwhelmed with business. So you're his boy, eh?

EDW. His clerk, sir. There's no boys in the Temple, sir.

BUL. The deuce there ain't! Well, and what wages do you get now, eh?

EDW. Five shillings a week—half-a-crown in the pound on all the fees, sir!

BUL. (L.) Why you will be making quite a little fortune!

EDW. (R.) I look forward to making a large one, sir, if I'm steady, and do as master do.

EDW. No, I ain't sir. But half-a-crown's more professional, sir.

BUL. Ah! Mr. Docket, you see the force of example—that's a good boy—here's a shilling. But you're above taking a shilling, I dare say?

Enter JOHN, with another brief, L. 2 D.

BUL. Capital! there—(*gives money*) I like sharpness.

JOHN. Then, perhaps, he'll give me something. Oh! I thought master was here (*puts down his brief*.)

BUL. He'll be here directly. Another brief, eh?

JOHN. Yes, sir; thirty guineas, sir! and with him the Attorney-General (*aside*) Nothing like a good 'un when you are at it, Ned.

BUL. Famous! With the Attorney-General, too! No wonder he keeps two clerks.

JOHN. I'm the consulting clerk, sir; I sees the clients. Mr. Edward goes the errands, sir; that is if he's a good boy, and works hard, he'll be consulting clerk, too, some day, sir.

EDW. (*aside to JOHN*) Come, draw it mild, Jack.

JOHN (*aside to EDWARD*) It's only my fun, Ned.

BUL. What fine steady boys, to be sure! Here my man (*gives him money*) Go on as you've begun, and you'll rise like your master.

JOHN. Thank you, sir. I'll try, sir, like the little busy bee, to improve each shining hour (*going*) Oh! what an old dummy, Ned (*sees the cupboard, his face falls*) But if them babbies is smothered?

EDW. Oh, bother! You be smothered! Come along.

Exit, R. 2 v.

BUL. I declare those boys are treasures! The stouter of the two seems very thoughtful for his age; and the younger is full of energy.

MOULD. Uncommon energy, to be sure! (*aside*) I wonder how long cups and saucers last in this establishment (*a ring heard*.)

Enter JOHN, with an enormous pile of papers, L. 3 v.

JOHN. (*aside*) I daren't keep out of the room, for fear of some awful discovery. All's right as yet. (*comes forward*)

BUL. More business, I declare!

JOHN. Yes, sir; such a heavy case, sir; I can scarcely carry it, sir. It's a case of consultation to advise upon evidence—a hundred guineas, and with you the Lord Chancellor.

BUL. A hundred guineas! bless me! and with the Lord Chancellor!

JOHN. Oh! he often comes here, sir, to have a chat with the master in a morning—the Lord Chancellor does when he's got a difficult case; he says master do give such stunning good opinions.

BUL. Really, Mr. Docket! (*turns and sees DOCKET taking a surreptitious drink of porter from the pot, which he keeps under his chair. Aside to JOHN*) Good gracious! Why Mr. Docket's got a pot of beer there! He's drinking!

JOHN. Yes, sir; he hasn't time to sit down to it regular, sir, and he's obliged to take it promiscuous, over his papers, sir.

BUL. Intense occupation! I see! that accounts, too, for the neglected style of his dress.

JOHN. Hasn't time to shave himself, sir! Except on Sundays. (*JOHN retires; as he goes up, the two GIRLS open the closet doors, and point with attitudes of despair to the cupboards*)

JOHN. (*in a whisper*) Be quiet! I can't.

THE GIRLS. (*in a whisper*) They'll be smothered!

JOHN. It can't be helped (*aside*) I've looked in Archbold's Practice, and I think, as well as I can make out, it's justifiable homicide.

(knock, L. 2 v.)

Enter EDWARD, hastily, with a note, R. 2 d.

EDW. Mr. Hazard!

Enter HAZARD, L. 2 D.

EDW. An old gent left it, sir. He would come in, though I told him there were no end of clients with you. He says if you'll read this, he is sure you will see him. *Exit, R. 2 D.*

HAZ. (*opens and reads*) "Mr. Docket must speak with Mr. Hazard. His liberty may depend on it." The real Docket comes! confound it! I must get Bulpit out of the way, and change this infernal man in possession into somebody else. Mr. Bulpit, it's another client, come for a consultation with Mr. Docket here, by appointment. And, as that room is occupied (*pointing to L. 2 D.*) Will you allow me to shew you in here for a few minutes? (*pointing to L. 1 D.*)

BUL. Anywhere! Use no ceremony with me. (*aside*) What a rush of clients he has got to be sure. (HAZARD *puts him into L. D.*)

Enter JOHN, 2 D. R.

JOHN. Please, sir, the gentleman says he's in an 'urry, sir. (*in D.*)

HAZ. Shew him in. (*exit JOHN*) Whom shall I turn this fellow into, though?

Enter DOCKET, shewn in by JOHN, who waits.

DOCK. Oh, Mr. Hazard, I should not have intruded as you are engaged, but the fact is, my business will not keep. (*taking him forward*) I've a ca. sa. lodged with me against you.

HAZ. (*aside*) Confound it—Meacock's goods' and chattels seized already—and now my body. At whose suit?

DOCK. Trounce and Tickle's!

HAZ. My boot makers!—the brutes!

DOCK. Now I know your family, and I should not like to do anything harsh, so I'll hold it over for a short time, if you can make an arrangement.

HAZ. Thank you—a thousand times—I can make it all right in a day or two; the fact is I'm on the point of being married to an angel—worth £15,000 Miss Emily Harden. That's her guardian come to settle preliminaries—old Bulpit, a timber merchant, at Coventry—enormously wealthy—I'll introduce you—He's asleep!—he's so engrossed! Mr. Bulpit! (*crosses behind to R. of DOCKET, both bow*)

JOHN. (*aside*) Oh, my! if he ain't a passing him off for the other old gent—what a lark! *Exit JOHN, L. 3 D.*

DOCK. (*crosses to MOULDICOTT*) Very happy to know you, sir. As agent for a Coventry firm, your name has long been familiar to me.

MOULD. You don't say so, sir. (*aside*) Which name I wonder?

HAZ. Yes, Mr. Docket has—(*aside*) Oh, by Jove! if I haven't put Mr. Bulpit into the next room to Emily, and the door between them not locked. I must step in to lock it, and then I can whisper a word of comfort to poor Emily. Will you excuse me for one moment—I've a client there I must see.

Exit L. 2 D., slamming the door.

BUL. (*looking out, L. 1 D.*) I heard the door shut—I suppose the client's gone, eh? No, it's Meacock off again. I hope I don't interrupt you, gentlemen,—what a head our young friend must have to get through so much business! He ought to be much obliged to you, Mr. Docket. (*to MOULDICOTT*)

DOCK. Sir!

BUL. Sir!

DOCK. You addressed yourself to me, sir, I think?

BUL. No, sir, I spoke to this gentleman.

DOCK. Oh, to Mr. Bulpit?

BUL. Mr. Bulpit, sir? I'm not in the habit of talking to myself!

No, sir, to Mr. Docket, sir.

DOCK. Well, sir, that's what I said, sir, and then when I asked you if you spoke to me, sir, you say you addressed Mr. Bulpit.

BUL. Are you mad, sir? *(to MOULDICOTT)* Mr. Docket, do you know this gentleman?

DOCK. What do you mean by always addressing Mr. Bulpit here by my name?

BUL. What do you mean, sir, by addressing Mr. Docket here by my name?

DOCK. What the devil is your name, sir?

BUL. And what the devil's yours, if it comes to that?

DOCK. My name's Docket, sir, and this is Mr. Bulpit!

BUL. Nonsense, sir! My name's Bulpit, sir, and this is Mr. Docket.

DOCK. There's an impostor in this room, sir!

BUL. Not a bit of it, sir.

DOCK. I'll soon unmask him, sir. (*rings*)

BUL. With all my heart, sir.

MOULD. Gents, keep your tempers whatever you do.

Enter EDWARD and JOHN, R. and L. D.

BUL. } (*to EDW.*) Now, boy, who is this person? (*pointing to*
DOCK. } MOULD.) What's this individual's name?

EDW. (*to BULPIT*) Mr. Docket, sir!

DOCK. (*seizing him*) You little vagabond!

JOHN. (*aside to EDWARD*) No, Ned, it's changed. Mr. Bulpit, sir.
(*BULPIT seizes him*)

EDW. } Oh!

JOHN. }
EDW. If you ain't satisfied with what's told you, you'd better ask him. (*BULPIT and DOCKET bring MOULDICOTT to C.*)

Enter HAZARD, L. 2 D.

BUL. }
DOCK. } Who is this impostor? (*HAZARD signs to MOULDICOTT*)

MOULD. It ain't no use o' winkin'. My name's Mouldicott—I'll tell the truth—Jeremiah Mouldicott.

ALL. Mouldicott!

EDW. Mrs. Chowser's man!

MOULD. Yes, gents, Jerry Mouldicott is my name—broker's man—

appraiser—and valuer. Chambers took care of, and goods carefully removed—there's my card, gents.

DOCK. Damn your card, sir; (to HAZARD) so sir, pass off a broker's man for an attorney. It's defamation of character, sir.

HAZ. But Mr. Mouldicott had no objection, sir.

DOCK. Sir, sir!

HAZ. Well, sir?

DOCK. I'll serve that ca. sa. within half-an-hour, sir.

Exit in a rage, R. 2 D.

BUL. So, sir, this is your respectable client, sir!

HAZ. Alas, sir, there are circumstances when deception becomes a duty. But I blush, and so does the wretched partner in my strata-gem. I hope you observe we are both blushing?

BUL. I don't observe anything of the kind, sir—a man in possession in Mr. Meacock's chambers.

MOULD. Mr. Hazard's within the same outer door.

HAZ. Alas! sir, the debt is one's, and the furniture the other's; but the law, you are aware, sir, cannot draw such nice distinctions.

BUL. My dear Mr. Hazard!—I see it all; they've seized for his debt; and you didn't like to expose your friend—generous young man, give me your hand. (*shakes him by the hand*) We shall see him Lord Chancellor yet—a second Ba—(*as he turns to the bust, he sees the bonnet left on it by EMILY*) Why, what the devil's that thing on Lord Bacon's head?

HAZ. (*aside*) Emily's bonnet, by Jove!

EDW. Please, sir, it's our laundress's.

JOHN. She wears such plummy bonnets.

BUL. That the bonnet of a laundress! No, sir, the ready wit of your clerks shall not save you. The presence of that bonnet, proves the presence of a female.

HAZ. Upon my honour, Mr Bulpit, there is no female in this room. (*aside*) Emily's in the other; and if my assurance is not sufficient, search it, sir—scour the bookcase—rummage the cupboards—open the closets—look everywhere, where a human body can be deposited. (*to EDWARD*) Well, why don't you open the closets?

EDW. There's nothing there, sir, but broken bottles.

JOHN. There's only rubbish here, sir.

HAZ. Now, sir, are you satisfied? (*as the doors are opened, the two girls appear*)

HAZ. Hallo!

BUL. Two of them—unhappy creatures!

JANE. Oh, please, sir.

MARY. Oh, dear, gentlemen.

HAZ. Who the devil brought you here?

BUL. Profligate!—don't add heartlessness to hypocrisy.

HAZ. I give you my honour, Mr. Bulpit. (*the babies begin to cry in c. cupboard*) Hallo! what the deuce is that squeaking?

JOHN. They ain't dead—oh, Jolly!

EDW. It's the cat, sir.

- HAZ. (to EDWARD) Where's the key?—give me the key, sir.
 EDW. Please, sir, it was John, sir. (*BULPIT opens c. cupboard, and discovers babies*)
 HAZ. Babies!—by Jove!
 BUL. Two of them, too—wretched creatures—take your unhappy offspring.
 HAZ. This revelation of young women and babies, has taken me quite as much by surprise as yourself.
 BUL. (*turning from him*) Don't talk to me, sir. You don't marry my ward, I can tell you. (*walks up and down*)
 HAZ. (*following him*) But you saw how ready I was to open every thing—my unfeigned surprise.
 JOHN. (*aside to GIRLS*) If you say we brought you here, we shall get the sack.
 EDW. Say it was Meacock—he ain't here—he can't deny it.
 HAZ. Satisfy yourself from their own lips, sir: they won't accuse me, sir, I'm sure. Who brought you here?
 EDW. (*aside to MARY*) Now, then.
 JOHN. (*aside to JANE*) Now, then.
 MARY. } Mr. Meacock.
 JANE. }
 BUL. There, sir!
 HAZ. But my name's Hazard.
 BUL. Hazard! why, have I been in a dream all this time? Then it's Meacock's furniture that the man's in possession of?
 HAZ. Yes, sir, every bit of it.
 BUL. (*pointing to GIRLS*) And these are Meacock's—?
 EDW. Some of them, sir.
 BUL. And these are his unhappy offspring?
 JOHN. Both on 'em, sir.
 BUL. Then 'tis he who brought this article? (*sees THE GIRLS with both their bonnets on*) But, no; they've both their bonnets on—there's another hid somewhere.

Enter, EMILY, 2 D. L.

- HAZ. (*aside*) Wrecked in sight of port. She has ruined all!
 BUL. Emily!
 EMILY. Yes, sir! I can submit to concealment no longer. (*the Boys take the GIRLS up to L.*)
 BUL. You here, in Mr. Hazard's chambers!
 HAZ. As my wife, sir; we were married at St. Dunstan's this morning.
 EMILY. I knew you preferred Mr. Meacock, but—
 BUL. Don't mention him—the profligate—better a thousand times as it is—and though I was prejudiced against Mr. Hazard.
 HAZ. Kneel, Emily.
 EDW. (*to JANE*) Bolt!
 JOHN. (*to MARY*) Mizzle!

Exit the GIRLS with their BABIES, through Fig Tree Court, and Crown Office Row, R. 2 D. and L. 3 D.

HAZ. Do not refuse two innocent children the inestimable comfort of your blessing.

BUL. As you're not the scamp I took you for, and as you're rising in your profession, (*aside*) and as the thing's done and can't be helped—there—I forgive you. (*they rise*) And now just get rid of that man in possession, while Emily explains how all this happened.

HAZ. (*aside*) Get rid of him! Easy to say get rid of him! But how am I to get rid of him?

EDW. (*aside to HAZARD*) I think I could manage it, sir.

HAZ. You?

EDW. Just you see, sir. (*to MOULDICOTT*) I say, Mr. Mouldicott, our laundress has been enquiring after you.

MOULD. Your laundress?

EDW. Yes, Mrs. Chowser.

MOULD. Oh, lord a mercy!

EDW. I'll just say you're here. (*calls*) Mrs. Chowser—here she comes.

MOULD. Then here I goes! (*he rushes off, R. 2 D.*)

HAZ. How the devil! (*to BULPIT*) There, sir, I've settled with the man in possession.

BUL. That's right—and now—

Enter MEACOCK, R. 2. D.

JOHN. Meacock, by jingo!

MEA. Ah, Mr. Bulpit here—Miss Emily, too.

BUL. Profligate!

EMILY. Sir!

MEA. Hazard!

HAZ. Oh, Job!

MEA. Edward!

EDW. (*turns away*) Don't, sir!

MEA. John!

JOHN. (*turns away*) I really couldn't do it, sir!

MEA. Hard names—sighs—silence—what is the meaning of all this?

BUL. Explain those young women, sir, and their babies, concealed in your chambers!

MEA. Young women and their babies?

JOHN. It's all up!

EDW. Marrow bones, Jack! (*they kneel*) Mary came to see her cousin, sir. That's me, sir, and Jane came here to show her cousin the baby.

JOHN. That's me, sir,—I don't mean I'm the baby—but I'm her cousin, sir.

EDW. And as we were admiring the babies, sir, you came home, and our cousins were afraid, sir, and ran into the closet suddenly.

JOHN. And the babies locked themselves up in the cupboard.

HAZ. Mr. Bulpit, they shall be discharged on the spot. (*takes each by the ear*) Now, you young scoundrels!

EDW. (*aside*) Remember the dummy briefs, sir!

JOHN. (*aside*) And all the whoppers we've told for you, sir!

HAZ. (*pausing*) On second thoughts, Mr. Bulpit, it is but a boyish folly; we've been young ourselves, Mr. Bulpit, and we ought to overlook the indiscretions of youth. (*crosses to BULPIT*)

EDW. (*aside*) I should think so!

JOHN. (*aside*) Certainly!

BUL. Well, there, I forgive them; and you too, Mr. Meacock.

MEA. But I've not an idea.

HAZ. Of course not! Nobody ever suspected you had. Let me introduce you to Mrs. Hazard.

MEA. Emily Harden!

HAZ. No—Mrs. Hazard—your name's Job—so have a little patience! What, you will have an explanation?—well, then, while you were seeing your clients at the Court of Westminster this morning, I met mine at St. Dunstan's. I began with a declaration, and ended in a marriage settlement; it contains the usual covenant for quiet enjoyment, so don't ask any more questions.

EDW. Please, sir, when you were married did you pay the parson, sir?

HAZ. Certainly—why?

EDW. Because you've forgotten to tip the clerk. (*holding out his hand*)

JOHN. Which there's two on 'em, sir. (*holding out his hand*)

HAZ. (*gives money*) There, you impudent little rascals, and now—

JOHN. Please, sir, do you mean to come to chambers now you're married?

HAZ. More regularly than ever.

JOHN. Then me and Edward will go and tout for you with all the attorneys, sir.

HAZ. Touting, sir, is highly unprofessional!

EDW. But everybody does it.

HAZ. That's true; and if my briefless brethren grumble, I'll say, it's not us, but "Our Clerks!"

EDW. Yes, sir! Oh, won't I puff the concern:—"Mr. Hazard begs to announce——"

JOHN. "To his friends and the public——"

EDW. "That he executes every kind of legal business——"

JOHN. "With neatness, punctuality, and dispatch——"

EDW. "And the more that comes the merrier"—(*aside to the Audience*)—"Cause we gets half-a-crown in the pound on all the fees!"

MEACOCK. JOHN. EDWARD. HAZARD. EMILY. BULPIT.

R.

L.

Curtain.

COSTUMES.

Mr. Meacock.—Black morning dress, white cravat.

Hazard.—Blue surtout, white waistcoat, lavender trowsers.

Abraham Levi.—Flashy suit.

Mouldicott.—Long brown great coat, shabby black under suit, old hat.

Mr. Bulpit.—Green coat, drab waistcoat and breeches, with gaiters.

Mr. Docket.—Black suit.

Edvard Sharpus.—Dark grey coatee, brown waistcoat, drab trowsers, blucher boots, boy's cloth or glazed cap.

John Puddicombe.—Light drab jacket, grey waistcoat, short black trowsers, Kilmarnock cap, coloured comforter.

Emily.—Elegant morning dress, and white bonnet.

Jane Bulgin } Smart print dresses, shawls, bonnets.
Mary Pinner }

Mrs. Chowser.—Cotton dress, apron, cap.