

# VANDYKE BROWN

A FARCE

IN

ONE ACT

BY

ADOLPHUS CHARLES TROUGHTON, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

*Living too Fast—Wooing in Jest and Loving in Earnest—  
Leading Strings, &c. &c.*

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THOMAS HAILES LACY,  
89, STRAND,

(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market.)  
LONDON.

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## VANDYKE BROWN.

*First performed at the Royal Strand Theatre,  
March 24th, 1859.*

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### CHARACTERS.

<b>VANDYKE BROWN, a Photographic Artist</b>	Mr. J. CLARKE.
<b>MR. AUGUSTUS BOBBINS, a Retired Tradesman</b>	Mr. TURNER.
<b>MR. FASTMAN, a Law Student</b>	Mr. MOWBRAY.
<b>MRS. BROWN, Vandyke Brown's Wife, living under the name of Duval.</b>	Miss J. WILTON.
<b>MRS. BOBBINS</b>	Miss M. TERNAN.
<b>REBECCA, Mrs. Bobbin's Servant Maid</b>	Miss LAVINE.

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TIME.—One hour.

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COSTUMES.—The present day.

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# VANDYKE BROWN.

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SCENE.—*Mr. Bobbins's Lodgings.* Chamber, c. d., backed by a window—doors, r. and l.—table, r., chairs, books, newspaper—table, arm chair r. of table, chair l.—table against flat, r., with bust of Shakespeare—table against flat, l., with vase of flowers.

MRS. BOBBINS. (*within, r. d.*) It's useless your denying it, Mr. Bobbins! I saw you do it—I saw you do it with my own eyes, sir!

AUGUS. (*within, r. d.*) My dear Constantia!—before the servants!

MRS. BOBBINS. (*within, r. d.*) Leave the room this instant, Rebecca! Leave the room, I say! You'll quit my service this day month.

REBECCA. (*within, r.*) Certainly, ma'am! certainly! with all my heart!

*Enter REBECCA, r. d., slapping the door behind her.*

Was there ever such a temper as missus? I never see such a one—never! If master will keep staring at me, is that my fault, I should like to know?

*Enter FASTMAN, door c. from l.*

FAST. (l.) Rebecca!—just one word!

REBECCA. (r.) Here's that tiresome Mr. Fastman again.

FAST. Well, have you anything to tell me? When is she coming home?

REBECCA. Lor, sir! why should you want to know? Missus has come home—she came home this morning.

FAST. No! you don't say so! Where is she?

REBECCA. Where is she?—why, where should she be? In the next room, at breakfast with her husband, to be sure.

FAST. The deuce she is! Don't talk so loud.

REBECCA. Why not? I'm not ashamed of what I'm saying.

FAST. Come home at last, then. Ah! (*sighs*) your mistress is a beautiful woman, Rebecca.

REBECCA. Beautiful?—that depends upon opinion; for my part, I don't like tall women.

FAST. I admire tall women. It seems to me an age since she has been away.

REBECCA. It may seem so to you, sir, but it hasn't to me, I promise you. I'm sure I wish she had stayed away ten times as long—for the first thing she has done on her return has been to give me warning.

FAST. Give you warning! What for?

REBECCA. Ah! what for, indeed?—you must ask her that. She is jealous of that husband of hers. She surprised him, just now, at breakfast, making eyes at me. How could I help it?

FAST. Oh, fie, Rebecca? What! do you encourage your master in that sort of thing?

REBECCA. I encourage him, indeed?—well I'm sure!—with a twelvemonth's character from my last place.

FAST. I beg your pardon—well I am sorry you are going to leave—you are such a nice obliging young woman, and I was going to ask you if you couldnt manage to—to give this letter.

REBECCA. To my master!

FAST. No, not exactly that, Rebecca, to your mistress.

REBECCA. Indeed, sir! I shall do nothing of the sort, you had better give it her yourself.

FAST. But I should never have the face, I tell you. There is something about Mrs. Bobbins that keeps me so completely at a distance, something so modest, so correct and proper—come, now, you are not going to be illnatured, see here's a queen's head for it. (*showing her half a crown*)

REBECCA. Sir, I'm ashamed of you, I'll have nothing to do with it!

FAST. Only give her the letter, and I'll help you to a place.

REBECCA. No, will you though? (*eyeing the money which he forces on her, with the letter*) No! really I can't! no, no! Well if you insist upon my taking the money—(*aside—taking the money*) But I'll be hanged if I give her the letter.

FAST. Yes, I know of a place that will suit you exactly, without your going out of the house. Mrs. Duval on the second floor here is in want of just such a pretty, clever girl as you are, to help her in her fancy work.

REBECCA. Why how did you come to know her, sir?

FAST. How did I come to know her? why, my sisters buy their wools of her, she embroiders my shirt fronts, marks my

pocket handkerchiefs for me—you can't be in better hands ; she is a most respectable person, and a first rate temper.

MRS. BOBBINS. (*without R.*) No, Augustus ! no, Mr. Bobbins, I say she shall not remain.

AUGUS. (*without*) Nay, but Constantia !

MRS. BOBBINS. Silence, sir, I won't hear a word.

FAST. Why there's your mistress at high words with Mr. Bobbins.

REBECCA. That's nothing new, sir.

FAST. I must beat a retreat ! (*going*) But I'll run up stairs before I go, and speak to Mrs. Duval for you. Don't forget the letter.

*Exit FASTMAN, C, to R.*

*Enter MR. BOBBINS, R., in a dressing gown, followed by*

MRS. BOBBINS.

MRS. BOBBINS. Yes, Augustus ! yes Mr. Bobbins, I repeat it, she shall not remain any longer !

AUGUS. But, my dear, this conduct of yours is downright oriental despotism ; of all the tyrannies, there are none like the domestic.

MRS. BOBBINS. She shall go this very day ! It's most abominable ! I'll pay her wages and send her about her business !

REBECCA. (*coming down, c.*) Oh, very well, ma'am, just as you please about that ! I'm sure I don't want to stay—a month's warning, or a month's wages !

MRS. BOBBINS. Oh, you are there, are you ! Bold faced young woman, take your wages. (*giving her money*) Pack up your things and prepare to leave my service to-night.

REBECCA. (*counting the money*) Sixteen and eightpence, all right, ma'am, and as for my place that is no great loss I'm sure ! I can easily get a better ! I have only to choose. (*aside and tossing her head as she goes out, c. to L.*) Straightlaced crosspatch ; she's more fit for an old maid, than a married woman.

AUGUS. (*in chair, L.*) Another victim to your implacable jealousy, Constantia.

MRS. BOBBINS. (*R.*) Jealous of you ! ha, ha, ha ! Really Augustus, you have a good opinion of yourself.

AUGUS. (*offended, and rising*) Jealous of me, yes to be sure, why not ? You know you are ; we can't keep a servant in the place for it ; we have been married scarcely three years, and this is the nineteenth you have discharged.

MRS. BOBBINS. Well, sir, and whose fault is that ? A man without the slightest sense of common propriety ! or what is due to his own dignity as a master of a family !

AUGUS. Go on, my dear, go on !

MRS. BOBBINS. My first husband never treated me so!

AUGUS. Comparisons are odious, Mrs. Bobbins. That first husband of yours was a very remarkable fellow.

MRS. BOBBINS. You needn't think to pass it off so, sir; if this is your behaviour before my face, I tremble to think what your conduct may have been behind my back, during my absence.

AUGUS. Now, Constantia! my dear! Do I everlastingly torment you with inquiries into *your* conduct during *my* absence? Here have you been scouring the country to Salisbury alone, after a legacy, which, for anything I can discover, appears to be all a bam, and do I annoy you on your return with ridiculous jealous fits? On the contrary, don't I promote and fall into all your little plans and amusements?

MRS. BOBBINS. Amusement! Do you think it's any amusement to me to be worried out of my life with lawyers, and business I don't understand? There's a fresh difficulty now about a cousin abroad. If you were like other husbands, you would never suffer a young and pretty wife, more than twenty years your junior, to travel about alone.

AUGUS. Oh, my dear, I have a thorough confidence in you—there's a rigidity of propriety about your deportment, that will always act as an efficient safeguard in the hour of danger.

MRS. BOBBINS. Don't make too sure of that. Don't provoke me by your indifference to retaliate!—I should soon find an opportunity—

AUGUS. Oh, oh, oh, oh!

MRS. BOBBINS. You should have seen the assiduous—the delicate attentions I received in the train, all the way between the Bishopstoke station and town, from an elegant, foreign looking gentleman—such a pair of moustachios!

AUGUS. Oh, oh! really now, Constantia—

MRS. BOBBINS. But you know I'm the most devoted—the most affectionate wife in the world, and have no thoughts but of you, and our dear little boy—and so you abuse the rectitude of my principles—

AUGUS. The little cherub!

MRS. BOBBINS. That reminds me that you wrote me word, that the Highgate air has quite set the darling up again, and that old nurse, Jones, was to bring him home to-day.

AUGUS. Yes, Bobby is coming home to-day.

MRS. BOBBINS. The little pet! He is my only joy—my only hope.

AUGUS. Yes, yes—a remarkably fine little chap—and extremely like his papa! Ahem! can more be said—

MRS. BOBBINS. By the by, how inconvenient his coming back will be just now, that we are without a servant.

AUGUS. You had better let Rebecca stay.

MRS. BOBBINS. Augustus! Mr. Bobbins! What again! You exasperate me! No, sir, she shall not stay another day, if I have to run over half London to find her substitute.

AUGUS. Very well, my dear. You are fond of exercise.

MRS. BOBBINS. This is too much to put up with!—past all bearing! I'll be even with you for this, depend upon it. No, no, you needn't think to gain your ends, Mr. Bobbins—I'll go round to all the tradespeople this very minute. (*putting on her bonnet and shawl, which are upon table, R.*) I'll soon put a stop to this! I'll soon put a stop to this!

*Exit, in a passion, c. to L.*

AUGUS. What a singular woman Constantia is when she once takes an idea into her head. No human argument now would ever persuade her that I am not violently smitten with her own maid. Ridiculous notion! ha, ha! and the best of the joke is—for reasons of a strictly private nature, I rather encourage the idea—commit myself with Rebecca! No, no—I look a little higher than that! The interesting object of my secret intentions, is in no way beneath me—quite the reverse—she is above me by a flight of stairs. It is really quite distressing, to think so charming a woman as Mrs. Duval, should be obliged to occupy a two pair back; but then, how tastefully she sets off her room! Clever creature! she can turn her hand to anything—Berlin wool, potichomania, crotchet, embroidery—By the way, I begin to suspect that name of hers, Duval, is only assumed—she doesn't look to me at all like a Frenchwoman—and the only approach to anything in the shape of a husband I have been able to discover, is this morning gown, which I found one morning over a chair back in her room, and which, in a moment of pecuniary pressure, I induced her to sell me for about four times its value. It shows the fall in my back to some advantage, but it's an uncommonly tight fit, although I have had it let out twice since I bought it. I wonder how she came by it? No matter—I'm convinced I have no rival—she is evidently pleased with my attentions, and if it hadn't been for Mrs. Bobbins's ill-timed return from the country, I should—(*crosses to L., sees MRS. BROWN at C. D.*) By Jove! here she is. It's lucky that my wife's not at home. (*crosses to R.*)

*Enter MRS. BROWN, c. from R., goes down, L.*

MRS. BROWN. (*seeing BOBBINS, R.*) Ah, Mr. Bobbins! Good morning.

AUGUS. (R.) Good morning to you, my dear Mrs. Duval. This is an honour! Dare I venture to hope your visit is to me?

MRS. BROWN. To you—the idea! Hardly.

AUGUS. And why not, Mrs. Duval? Why may I not judge of your feelings by my own?—for as the needle is attracted by the pole—

MRS. BROWN. (*interrupting him*) Oh, dear me! Ha, ha, ha! really, Mr. Bobbins, you'll be a gallant as long as you live. I am sorry to interrupt your ecstacies, but pray can I speak a word to Mrs. Bobbins?

AUGUS. To my wife?

MRS. BROWN. Yes—I understand she has come home?

AUGUS. Alas! yes.

MRS. BROWN. Alas? Why, you ought to be delighted! (*sadly*) How fortunate Mrs. Bobbins is to be happy at home with her husband. Ah, how I envy her.

AUGUS. (*delighted*) Envy her! Mrs. Duval!

MRS. BROWN. I do, indeed, with all my heart.

AUGUS. (*endeavouring to put his arm round her waist*) Dear Mrs. Duval! Oh, these words—this tender confession!

MRS. BROWN. (*retiring, L.*) Why, Mr. Bobbins, are you taking leave of your senses? If you wish me to remain in this room, sir, you must restrain yourself within proper bounds.

AUGUS. Bounds, madam! There are no bounds to the emotions of the heart. (*throwing himself on his knees*)

MRS. BROWN. Oh, my dear sir, do compose yourself—I beg of you. You are *too* poetical, you are, indeed. (*aside*) Ridiculous creature!

AUGUS. Tell me—only tell me—did you receive those two pots of Tom Thumb geraniums—I know your beautiful passion for flowers.

MRS. BROWN. Yes, I thank you—but I can't possibly think of accepting them—in short, I must forbid all further nonsense of the kind. I give you fair warning, that if you persist in it any longer, I shall tell Mrs. Bobbins, I shall, indeed, and be compelled to leave my lodgings.

AUGUS. Oh, don't be so cruel! Don't say that!

MRS. BROWN. Not that I have any great affection for them either, for if it hadn't been for poor Br—(*recollecting herself*) for reasons only interesting to myself, I should have given notice long ago.

AUGUS. For "poor" who, madam? You excite my curiosity. I trust there is no gentleman in the case?

MRS. BROWN. Yes, but there is, though—but I entreat you to ask no questions. (*wiping her eyes*) Ah, Mr. Bobbins, mine is

the most painful, the most trying of positions to an affectionate and faithful disposition—

AUGUS. No scoundrel has dared to neglect—to abandon you? Ah, if you would but accept of the consolation of a discreet friend, and if any little assistance of a different kind—

(*taking out purse.*)

MRS. BROWN. (*offended*) You mistake my meaning, sir, altogether. Assistance! no, sir, I am able to earn quite sufficient for my support, and to afford myself some comforts besides—indeed, the object of this visit, was to inquire of Mrs. Bobbins, Rebecca's character, as I am informed she is about to leave her service.

REBECCA *has entered during this speech, but on seeing them, draws back, L. C. D.*

REBECCA. (*aside*) Ullo! master and Mrs. Duval!

(*listens, c.*)

AUGUS. (*aside*) Rebecca's character! The devil! that will never do—she'll be telling her a pack of lies. (*aloud*) In the absence of my wife, perhaps I shall do as well. I am afraid, ma'am, Rebecca will never suit you.

MRS. BROWN. Pray, may I ask why?

AUGUS. Oh, she's an idle, gossipping, impertinent young hussy, and burns no end of coals.

REBECCA. (*aside*) That's how you speak of me behind my back, is it?

AUGUS. And then, ma'am, her conduct in another respect, to a lady of your extreme propriety, I am quite sure would be highly objectionable. She encourages a great many followers, and with one young man in particular, an articled clerk—she has—

REBECCA. (*coming down, c.*) It isn't true—I haven't—don't believe him, ma'am.

AUGUS. (*aside*) Confound it! Has she overheard me?

REBECCA. Don't believe a word he says, ma'am. It's all through him that I've lost my place.

AUGUS. Silence, Rebecca! Go and fetch my hat, I'm going out.

REBECCA. And as to the young lawyer, if I were the gossip he says I am, I could tell a different story.

AUGUS. Silence, I say, Rebecca! Did you hear me tell you to go and fetch my hat and coat?

REBECCA. (*going, r.*) Well, I'm going for your hat and coat.

*Exit, in a passion, R. D.*

MRS. BROWN. So, sir, I perceive you are a general admirer of the sex.

AUGUS. My dear Mrs. Duval, you surely wouldn't pay any attention to the aspersions of a discharged servant maid. You'll excuse my taking off my morning gown. (*aside, and taking off morning gown, which he hangs on chair L. of R. table*) I wouldn't have lost this opportunity of shewing her the fall in my back for something.

*Re-enter REBECCA, R. D., with hat, &c.*

REBECCA. (*giving him the coat*) Go and take away a poor servant's character like that—I've a good mind—

AUGUS. (*interrupting her*) Rebecca!

MRS. BROWN. (L.) Never mind, Rebecca, I have seen enough of you to think that you will suit me, so I shall take you all the same. When can you come?

REBECCA. Thank you, ma'am—thank you! When you like, ma'am—now, directly.

MRS. BROWN. No, not till to-morrow—not till you have given Mrs. Bobbins proper notice.

REBECCA. Yes, ma'am—thank you, ma'am. (*to BOBBINS*) You ought to be ashamed of yourself, sir, that you ought—an old gentleman like you!

AUGUS. Silence, Rebecca! If any one should call while I am out, tell them to wait—I shan't be long. I have the honour to wish you a good morning, Mrs. Duval.

MRS. BROWN. Good morning, sir.

BOBBINS looks at MRS. BROWN, sighs, and goes out, C. to L. Seductive old gentleman! Very well, then, Rebecca, I shall expect you to-morrow.

REBECCA. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BROWN. (*to herself, as she leaves the stage*) When shall I hear from my poor Vandyke? *Exit, C. to R.*

REBECCA. Oh, that wicked old master of mine! *Exit, R. D.*

*The c. d. opens very quietly, and VANDYKE BROWN enters, stealthily, wearing a Crimean beard and moustachios, his throat bare, and an artist's steeple crowned hat, with a broad brim.*

VAN. There's nobody here! Come, that's lucky—her surprise will be the greater. I've been watching at the corner of the street for the last half hour, and contrived to slip in as the door was ajar, while the servant stepped over the way. My heart beats like one of the drums I left behind me, at the thought of meeting my wife again after the best part of a twelvemonth's chequered absence in the Crimea—driven from my native land and the cultivation of the classic style of art, by the detestable envy of the Royal Academicians, the cupidity of the butcher, and the rapacity of the baker. A pretty life I had of it in the

camp—sometimes photographic artist, sometimes—tell it not ye muses—a mixture of cook, valet, military secretary, and volunteer. However, I should soon have made my fortune, for I took more portraits in the Crimea in a day, than I ever did in London in a year. When one unlucky evening, just as I was going to raise my terms, I ventured too far on the Woronzoff Road for the purpose of making a sketch of some outworks, and all of a sudden, when I least expected it—crack, whiz, crack! half a dozen minie balls whistled about my ears, and a party of Russians sallied out of the flank of the Redan, and succeeded in carrying me into the town—luckily it didn't last long, for at the end of a month, there was an exchange of prisoners, and I had the good fortune to be swopped for the favourite jackass of a Russian officer that had fallen, by accident, into the hands of the allies; so here I am, just arrived from Portsmouth, totally unknown to my wife, once again in my own lodgings. What the deuce! fresh paper—Brussels carpet—and all this French polished mahogany! Upon my word! why, my wife must have gone mad, or else she must be driving a rare trade in the Berlin wool and fancy line. Stay, here she comes! I'll get under the table and give her a surprise. How delighted she'll be to see me! (*goes towards table, L.*) No, it's not my wife. Why, good gracious, she keeps an assistant, I'll be bound.

*Enter REBECCA, R. D.*

REBECCA. (*seeing him*) Who is this?

VAN. Good morning, young woman. You are not a bad-looking girl.

REBECCA. (*aside*) He is mighty familiar. Might I ask how you got in? I didn't hear any one knock.

VAN. No, the door was ajar—not that it would have made any difference if it had been shut; you see I've a latch key.

(*shewing one*.)

REBECCA. A latch key!

VAN. Yes, I took it away with me by mistake in one of my pockets. Go and tell your mistress, a gentleman with dark hair wishes to speak with her.

REBECCA. You'll excuse me, sir, but your hair isn't dark.

VAN. Never mind the colour of my hair—do as I tell you—I want to surprise her.

REBECCA. Missus is not at home, sir. (*aside*) A latch key, and so intimate with Mrs. Bobbins, who the deuce can he be?

VAN. Very well—as your mistress is not at home, you can get me some breakfast; I feel rather sharp set.

REBECCA. Breakfast, sir?

VAN. Yes, don't you understand me? B-r-e-a-k, break, f-a-s-t, fast, breakfast—the girl's silly.

REBECCA. But won't you be pleased to tell me—

VAN. (*taking her up*) What I should like to have? Oh, anything—I'm not particular; a steak or a chop.

REBECCA. No, sir, I mean who you are.

VAN. Who I am? True, you don't know me. My name is—(*recollecting himself*) No matter for my name—I rather fancy your mistress will know me when she sees me. I only hope it won't be too much for her.

REBECCA. (*aside*) Oh, he must be some relation. Master said if any one called, they were to wait.

VAN. Come, look alive—be quick.

REBECCA. (*aside*) He's an extraordinary looking fellow! What a beard he has got! I hardly know what to do, as they are neither of them at home; but I suppose there will be no harm in giving him some breakfast.

VAN. Come, I say young woman, are you going to move? You are not aware that I haven't tasted anything to-day.

REBECCA. It will be ready directly, sir. *Exit, C. to L.*

VAN. That girl wouldn't make a bad model; but she don't seem very bright. Egad! I have been so long away in the Crimea, that I feel half inclined to make love to every pretty woman I meet. That was an uncommonly fine creature that got into the train at Bishopstoke; rather stiff though, at first, but before we came to the journey's end I had quite broken the ice with her. By the way, I am afraid I ran away from her rather abruptly this morning—quite forgot to look after her luggage and all that sort of thing. No great wonder either—once arrived in London, how could I think of any one but my dear little wife? How I long to see her. (*going to sit down, sees the morning gown*) What's this? a morning gown. (*examining it*) To be sure—I recollect it. I declare, it gave me, quite a turn! The one I had made just before I went away! Affectionate little soul! hanging over the chair back to keep her company. I dare say she's in the habit of kissing and talking to it every day of her life. I feel rather tired—I'll put it on. (*takes off his coat and puts on the dressing gown*) Home, sweet home! they may well say "there's no place like home." (*wrapping the gown round him*) Ullo! why, it fits me like a sack. How I must have fallen away in the Crimea.

*Enter MRS. BOBBINS, C. from L.*

MRS. BOBBINS. (*speaking as she comes in, without seeing BROWN down L.*) I think, my dear, I have found—(*they stare at each other*)

VAN. (*aside*) Good gracious—I can't be mistaken! My travelling companion.

MRS. BOBBINS. (*aside*) The foreign looking gentleman I met in the train—in my husband's dressing gown! Why, he must have followed me home

VAN. (*aside*) An agreeable predicament this for a married man—very! My wife may return every minute. (*aloud, rising, and confused*) Madam, you'll excuse my being rather laconic, I have no time just now for ceremony—to what am I indebted for the honour of this visit?

MRS. BOBBINS. I feel quite stupefied! what effrontery!

VAN. I have no wish to affront you, ma'am, but as I said before, I have no time for ceremony.

MRS. BOBBINS. Sir, this is monstrous! I took you, by your deportment on the railway, for a gentleman, but I see I was deceived. Your conduct is inconsistent and indelicate in the extreme.

VAN. I know what you allude to, ma'am, and I admit I did run away somewhat abruptly; but if you knew my reasons—

MRS. BOBBINS. I wish to hear nothing further, sir. (*crosses to R.*) Pray let there be an end of this. (*takes off her bonnet and shawl*)

VAN. (*aside*) Why, she's absolutely taking off her things! Does she think she is going to establish herself in the house, under my wife's nose? I must get rid of her somehow or other. (*aloud, and getting impatient*) Madam, as I have already said twice before, I have no time for standing on ceremony—you will therefore excuse my coming to the point at once—anywhere else—*anywhere* else I shall be happy to hear what you have to say—any place you like to appoint—St. James's Park, Kensington Gardens—

MRS. BOBBINS. Sir, I am of a highly excitable, nervous temperament, and if you don't take care, you'll throw me into hysterics.

VAN. (*aside*) Confound it—she's no better than she should be. Oh, I must turn her out. (*aloud*) I tell you what it is, my dear, this won't do, I am a married man.

MRS. BOBBINS. Well, sir, what if you are—that makes your persecution of me the more atrocious!

VAN. Zounds! madam, it is you who persecute me! Haven't you followed me like a greyhound follows a hare—tracked me to my very door? Now for goodness sake don't force me to say anything offensive, but will you go, I say—will you make yourself scarce?

MRS. BOBBINS. This unheard of insolence—

VAN. (*interrupting her*) I tell you I have no time for ceremony. Will you go—will you leave my lodgings?

MRS. BOBBINS. Your lodgings? Good heavens! I hear somebody coming! (*crosses to L.*)

VAN. (*going to door*) It's my wife!—it's my wife, I'll be bound! (*down, r.*) Go—go, I say—be off with you. (*trying to push her off, r.*)

MRS. BOBBINS. (*aside*) Oh, if it should be my husband!

VAN. Here, run in here! quick, quick—hide yourself under the bed! *He pushes her into room r., and locks the door.*

*Enter REBECCA, with a parcel, c. d. from L.*

REBECCA. (*reading the direction*) "For my dear wife." Another sop in the pan for missus.

VAN. What have you there?

REBECCA. (L.) A present for missus.

VAN. (R.—*aside*) My wife receive presents in my absence!

REBECCA. (*peeping into parcel*) What a beauty! all silk! What a lovely dress it will make.

VAN. Who can possibly have given her a silk dress?

REBECCA. What a question! Master, to be sure.

VAN. Master! What do you mean?

REBECCA. Why, sir, you know, when they have a quarrel, that's his way of making it up again. He always gives her a present—sometimes one thing, sometimes another.

VAN. (*dropping into a chair*) What—what's that you say?

REBECCA. You are not taken with a swimming in the head, are you, sir?

VAN. No, no—tell me—what sort of a fellow is he—what's his name?

REBECCA. Lor. sir, I thought you knew him. What, don't you know Mr. Bobbins?

VAN. Bob—Bob—Bob—Bobbins! (*aside*) The name sticks in my throat as if it were a fish bone.

REBECCA. I thought you were old friends, sir!

VAN. (*getting up*) No, I don't know him! He's a friend of my wife's! (*aside*) That explains the French polish mahogany—a damned cabinet maker! (*aloud, violently*) Give me hold of that parcel!

REBECCA. (*moving away with it*) Take care, sir, what do you want with it? (*putting it on table behind her*)

VAN. Bobbins! eh! Bobbins! Do you hear, young woman! Tell me, at what time does he generally come here?

REBECCA. Come here? Who do you mean, sir?

VAN. This Bobbins!

REBECCA. At what time—why, he's here all day.

VAN. What? and goes away at night, I suppose?

REBECCA. No he doesn't—what should he go away at night for?

VAN. You don't mean to say that he sleeps here?

REBECCA. Yes, but I do though!

VAN. (*aside*) Under the same roof! Preposterous! I'll bombard the house! Blow it into the air! (*aloud*) Very well, I'll wait for him. (*takes off morning gown, and throws it on table, R.*)

REBECCA. Won't you take your breakfast, sir? it's all getting cold.

VAN. Don't talk to me of breakfast! Stay! on second thoughts I don't know! I must keep up my strength! *Nourish my revenge!* Not eat my breakfast! I'll go into training like a prize fighter! eat raw beef steaks every day for a month, and then come down upon him like the Gladiator! (*striking the attitude*) Or Alcides throwing Lychas into the sea! (*attitude*) Look out for yourself, Bobbins! I feel as if I had the thews of the Farnesian Hercules! Oh! for the apples of the Hesperides, to hit him in the eye, and a club like a weaver's beam to knock his brains out!—my breakfast, I say! my breakfast!

REBECCA. This is the way to the parlour, sir! (*pointing L. D.*)

VAN. (*taking up morning gown and flinging it over his left arm as drapery*) Don't trouble yourself to show me the way to the parlour! (*crosses to D.*) I know the way to the parlour! Look out for yourself Bobbins! *Exit L. D.*

REBECCA. (*R.*) He must be some madman escaped from a lunatic asylum. I don't like being left alone with him in the house—I wish master would come home—oh, here he is!

*Enter BOBBINS, C. D. from L.*

AUGUS. Has there been a parcel left here since I went out?

REBECCA. Yes, sir, there it is on the table. Were you expecting any one to call this morning, sir?

AUGUS. No, no one—(*looking up*) why, has anybody been?

REBECCA. Yes, sir!

AUGUS. Who? a lady?

REBECCA. No, sir, a gentleman.

AUGUS. What name?

REBECCA. He wouldn't give any name, sir. He came in with a latch key, without knocking.

AUGUS. With a latch key? How do you mean? How did he come by it?

REBECCA. I don't know, sir; he appears to be a very extraordinary person, I hardly know what to make of him. He

hadn't been five minutes in the house before he asked me to get him some breakfast.

AUGUS. Some begging imposter, I dare say.

REBECCA. No, sir, I don't think that, he was very well dressed.

AUGUS. That's nothing, he might have been one of the swell mob for anything you know to the contrary—the town swarms with well dressed swindlers now-a-days.

REBECCA. He said he wanted to see mistress.

AUGUS. Well, and how did you get rid of him?

REBECCA. I didn't get rid of him at all, sir; he is in the house now.

AUGUS. Nonsense!

REBECCA. I thought he was some relation or friend of the family—he's taking his breakfast in the parlour.

AUGUS. Taking his breakfast in the parlour! What? alone with the silver spoons!

REBECCA. Good gracious, I never thought of that!

VAN. (*without, L. D.*) I say, what's your name! Young woman! you haven't put any salt upon the table—do you take me for a cannibal?

AUGUS. (*aside, and staring at VANDYKE, who is standing in the door, L.*) Why the fellow has got on my morning gown! Confound his impudence! (*crosses to R.*)

VAN. (*aside*) Who's this, I wonder? He looks like a tailor; he can't be one of my creditors, scented me out already. (*aloud—politely to BOBBINS*) Good morning, sir; did you wish to speak to me? (*to REBECCA*) You needn't remain.

AUGUS. (*alarmed*) No, no, stay where you are.

VAN. (*to REBECCA*) Do you hear? Never mind the salt; I'll finish my breakfast by and by.

AUGUS. (*aside—alarmed*) He's actually sending her out of the way. I'm getting very uneasy.

(BOBBINS *watches, and starts at every action of VANDYKE's, throughout the scene.*

REBECCA. (*aside*) I am glad to get out of the room. I'll go and see if I can find a policeman. *Exit, C. D. to L.*

VAN. (*with marked politeness*) Don't stand—pray be seated.

(*offers BOBBINS a chair, and takes one himself.*

AUGUS. (*alarmed*) You are very kind, sir. (*aside*) I hope he don't see that I'm afraid of him.

(*they sit, BOBBINS R., VANDYKE BROWN L.*

VAN. (*after a pause of confusion on both sides*) You were observing, I think, that you had called to—to—

AUGUS. (*aside*) I must mind what I'm about. I musn't provoke him.

VAN. I believe I understood you to say that you had called to— Sir, will you permit me to ask you one question? I throw myself entirely upon your generosity. Did you—frankly—did you expect to find me here?

AUGUS. No, sir, frankly, I did not—certainly not.

VAN. Sir, I thank you; you have removed a weight from my mind. I could scarcely believe otherwise, only just arrived, as I am, from abroad.

AUGUS. Only just arrived from abroad—oh, indeed, sir. (*aside*) Confound the fellow, I wish I could get rid of him. (*aloud, after a pause of confusion on both sides*) May I inquire what part?

VAN. Oh certainly, sir—certainly. Russia, sir, Russia.

AUGUS. (*aside*) All a lie, I suppose. (*aloud*) Indeed, sir. (*after another pause*) Pray, sir, what may be your opinion of the Russians in general?

VAN. Very nice people, sir—very nice people.

AUGUS. Indeed, sir.

VAN. (*rising, after a long pause, during which they have been staring at each other, not knowing what to say*) Sir, I am very happy to have met you. Your conversation betokens great intelligence, and I regret extremely that I have not more time to improve the acquaintance, but unfortunately an unlucky engagement—

AUGUS. (*taking him up*) Pray don't mention it, sir—pray don't mention it. (*aside*) Thank goodness he is going at last. (*each puts his chair back, and, fancying the other gone, they meet in the centre, and stare at each other*) Well, sir?

VAN. Well, sir, you have the advantage of me. To whom have I the honour of speaking?

AUGUS. Before I answer that question, I must know what right you have to ask it.

VAN. This is mere evasion, sir. I must request the favour of your name. I have no wish to be personal, but, really, there are so many vagabonds going about now—

AUGUS. (*taking him up*) Exactly, that's just it; what you say is so perfectly true, that I don't feel safe with you, although I am in my own lodgings.

VAN. What do you mean by presuming to call these lodgings yours. (*aside*) A horrible suspicion! (*aloud*) Who are you, sir? I insist upon knowing your name this instant!

AUGUS. (*alarmed*) Bobbins, sir, Bobbins!

VAN. (*starting*) Ah, you villain!

AUGUS. Why do you insult me like this?

VAN. (*going close to him*) I'm her husband!

AUGUS. What the devil do you mean? Whose husband?

VAN. Your victim's! you heavy swell, you—you old rascal!

AUGUS. (*aside*) Good gracious! he can't be alluding to Mrs. Duval! Who can have told him? (*aloud*) Do you mean, seriously to say that you are the husband of—

VAN. (*taking him up*) The woman you have so basely turned from the paths of virtue!—of that dear being who, next to myself, I loved best in the whole world.

AUGUS. Interesting traveller! respectable individual! believe me, on my honour, there is not one word of truth in all you have been told.

VAN. It's false, sir!

AUGUS. Sir, you are transported by rage. Your anger won't allow you to listen to reason.

VAN. Rage! anger! I shall suffocate myself! Language falls short—words are too weak—let's come to blows!

(*drives BOBBINS round the stage, until he gets on the left of the table, L.*

AUGUS. Keep your hands to yourself, can't you? Strike me in my own home?

VAN. Ah! again! you dare call this your home, you rascally cabinet maker? Do you think, because you have sent in your goods, you have any right to the premises? What do I care for your mahogany? Look here! D—n your mahogany! (*throws down arm chair*) D—n your mahogany!

(*takes all the furniture in succession, chairs, table, R.—at last takes a bust from R. table, close to scene, and throws it out at back of folding doors—crash is heard, while BOBBINS is speaking.*

AUGUS. Be quiet, I say. Let the furniture alone. You are mad—yes, you are gone out of your senses! Will you hear me?

VAN. (R.) No, I won't! Mark me! I give you one quarter of an hour—one quarter of an hour to take your things away.

AUGUS. (L.) This is beyond all patience! What on earth do you mean?

VAN. Mark me! One quarter of an hour! (*taking out watch*) It now wants exactly fifteen minutes to eleven. If they are not gone as the clock strikes, out they go through the window.

AUGUS. Police! Police!

VAN. Oh! you want the whole thing to get into the papers, do you! To be all over the town! Very well, with all my heart! I'm your man! (*seizing BOBBINS*) Come along, to Bow Street! Come along, come along! (*dragging him to C. D.*)

*Enter REBECCA, C. D. from L.*

REBECCA. Please, sir, the nurse has brought home the baby!

VAN. (*lets BOBBINS go—rushes into R. corner*) The baby! (*during this, REBECCA puts the furniture in its place*) Miserable little wretch! I'll destroy it on the spot! (*rushing to C. D.*)

AUGUS. (*stopping him*) Hold! Hold! (*struggling*) You wouldn't commit a murder in the house! My child! my child!

VAN. Stand off, I say—I'll destroy it on the spot!

AUGUS. (*still struggling with him*) Monster! Rebecca! come and help your master! (*REBECCA seizes BROWN, R.—they struggle round till REBECCA is in left hand corner*)

REBECCA. Murder! murder!

VAN. Stand off, or I shall do you a mischief! (*shaking BOBBINS off, who flies to C. D.*) Do you see this revolver? (*REBECCA screams*) It's a thorough bred Colt! I've used this revolver with deadly effect upon the enemy! I can snuff six candles with it at sixteen paces, without putting them out! (*REBECCA puts her hand upon his arm*) Stand off, I say, or I shall do you an injury!

AUGUS. Hold him fast, Rebecca—hold him fast—don't let him go for the love of goodness! Hold him fast while I run over the way with the baby!

(*BROWN rushes at BOBBINS, who closes the doors upon him, and exits—BROWN sinks into arm chair, L.—REBECCA quietly takes pistol from him and puts it on R. table*)

VAN. Oh, Rebecca—that's your name, isn't it?

REBECCA. (R.) Oh, sir, sir, sir! what does all this mean? You'll frighten us all out of our senses!

VAN. Oh, Rebecca, did you but know the atrocities that have been going on here!

REBECCA. What atrocities?

VAN. What atrocities! They're not fit to be told to a respectable young woman like you. This is the very temple of wickedness. Talk of the horrors of the Reign of Terror, or the Rump Parliament—they're nothing to it.

REBECCA. What horrors, sir?

VAN. What horrors? French polished mahogany—a silk dress—and a child out at nurse.

REBECCA. But what can master's little boy have to do with you, sir?

VAN. Rebecca, he is *not his son*—he's mine.

REBECCA. Your son?

VAN. My son, and yet not my son—he is my father, but I ain not his son. No, no—I am his son, and he is not. No, no, no! my head dances the polka.

REBECCA. I can't understand him.

VAN. What I mean is, I am not his father, but his mother is my wife.

REBECCA. Mrs. Bobbins!

VAN. Bobbins! What, does she openly bear his name? Monstrous! The whole history of crime, from the Heathen Mythology down to the Newgate Calendar, has nothing to equal this!

REBECCA. Do you mean to say, then, that she is not his wife?

VAN. His wife! no more than you are.

REBECCA. What, they are not married?

VAN. Married!

REBECCA. Well, hang me, if I didn't half suspect it! Now it's all out—it's all explained. Oh, sir, how I do pity you! What a shocking bad woman! I never liked her—and since she has behaved so wickedly, I think it becomes my duty to tell you all I know.

VAN. Yes, tell me everything—what is it?

REBECCA. Courage, sir—are you sure you can bear it?

VAN. Out with it!

REBECCA. Well, then, sir, do you know there's another besides Mr. Bobbins.

VAN. Another!

REBECCA. Yes, he's always running after her—isn't it shameful?—a young lawyer.

VAN. What's his name?

REBECCA. Fastman—a very handsome young man. It was only just before you came that he gave me a letter for her.

VAN. Where is it? give it to me.

REBECCA. Here it is in my pocket, sir. (*gives him letter*)

VAN. (*taking it*) Are there any more—half a dozen, I suppose, more or less—(*reading letter*) So, so! A flowery composition—

*Enter FASTMAN, C. D. from L.*

FAST. (*seeing VANDYKE*) Botheration! There's somebody here! (*down, R.*) Well, did you give her my letter?

REBECCA. (c., indignantly) No, sir, I gave it to her husband!

FAST. (*aside*) To Bobbins? No, you can't have played me such a trick!

REBECCA. Don't whisper, Mr. Fastman—I don't want your secrets; I tell you I gave the letter to this gentleman.

(*pointing to VANDYKE, and going up, c.*)

FAST. (*aside*) What could induce you? Who on earth is he?

VAN. (*with forced calmness*) Come here, Fastman. (*they meet in c.*)

FAST. (R., astonished) Fastman!

VAN. (l.) You are a likely looking fellow !

FAST. Return me that letter, sir—this instant.

VAN. Be quiet, Fastman. Don't kick up a row.

FAST. What right have you—

VAN. Be quiet, Fastman. I have every right in the world, to pitch you out of that window, if I think proper.

FAST. Ah, indeed ! (REBECCA gets down, R.)

VAN. But I waive it—I waive it, on the condition of your becoming the instrument of my revenge. I hereby, in the presence of a witness, invest you with full powers to that end.

FAST. I don't understand you !

VAN. Fastman, you are in love with the woman to whom, by a civil contract of society, I am united for life.

REBECCA. (aside to FASTMAN) Yes, it's quite true—he's her husband.

FAST. (aside) Her husband !

VAN. This woman has destroyed every possible link that bound me to her. Hear me curse her, Fastman ! I repudiate her !—do you understand me, Fastman ?—I repudiate her ! Cut him out, Fastman—go in and win !—Cut him out. I request it of you as a favour—you'll be doing me an immense service.

FAST. Cut who out.

VAN. A perfidious dealer in mahogany ! That rascally interloper, Bobbins.

REBECCA. The good for nothing old fellow !

FAST. You amaze me ! It's incredible !

VAN. If he attempt to expostulate—*mind*, this is your answer—I have the authority of her husband.

FAST. But my dear sir, suppose—

VAN. Now don't suppose, Fastman—I can't bear it. Remember that's your answer—I have the authority of her husband. You shall revenge me ! Cut him out, Fastman ! Spit at him ! kick him ! pull his nose ! while I go into training, in order that I may finish him ! Spifflicate him ! pulverise him ! Don't speak. (crosses to c.) You have your full instructions. Follow me, Rebecca—go to the butcher's and get me a raw beef steak—I am now going to breakfast. (to FASTMAN, as he is leaving the stage) Remember—I have the authority of her husband. Now I'll go into training.

*Exit with REBECCA, C. D. to L.*

FAST. I never was more astonished in my life ! Why, what a greenhorn I have been all this while ! She must have laughed in her sleeve at me finely. Oh, oh ! I must go a different way to work with the lady. (*loud knockings at the door, R., in which MRS. BOBBINS was locked by VANDYKE*)

What's all that knocking? Some one is locked in here. (*he goes to door and unlocks it.*)

*Enter MRS. BOBBINS, r. door.*

MRS. BOBBINS. (R., speaking as she comes down without seeing FASTMAN) I can't bear this any longer. I am determined to know what it all means! (*seeing FASTMAN*) Mr. Fastman!

FAST. (L.) Yes, my charmer, I am here! Don't be afraid!

MRS. BOBBINS. (*astonished*) What do you mean, sir?

FAST. Come, come, don't let there be any more of this prudery. I'm sure you'll give me the preference—you wouldn't make a comparison between a young fellow like me and such an old Guy Fawkes as Bobbins?

MRS. BOBBINS. How dare you, sir, speak of my husband in this disrespectful manner?

FAST. Your husband! Come, come, that's a little too good, Constantia. *I know all about that.*

MRS. BOBBINS. Constantia! You impudent young man!

FAST. Yes, Constantia—*dear Constantia!* I doat upon the very ground you tread upon! Now you shall listen to me—

(*falling on his knees.*)

*Enter BOBBINS, c. from L.*

AUGUS. (C.) What is all this?

MRS. BOBBINS. (*aside*) Good heavens! my husband!

FAST. (*getting up slowly*) Ah, Bobbins, old fellow! how are you? (*go to L.*)

AUGUS. (*in amazement*) Sir, my astonishment knows no bounds.

MRS. BOBBINS. (R.) My dear Augustus, don't for one moment imagine—

AUGUS. Silence, Constantia! (*to FASTMAN*) Will you have the kindness to explain, sir, what the devil you mean by going down upon your knees to my wife?

FAST. (L.) What's that to you?

AUGUS. Sir!

FAST. What's that to you, I say? She is not your wife!

AUGUS. This lady is not my wife?

FAST. You know perfectly well she is not—you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

MRS. BOBBINS. What consummate insolence!

FAST. And I think you are a confoundedly brassy old fellow to attempt to take a high tone with me, after all that has come to light.

MRS. BOBBINS. Do you suffer him to talk to you like this,

Bobbins, without replying? Why don't you speak up, like a man?

AUGUS. Police! It's false! When I married her she was a widow!

FAST. Nonsense, sir, nonsense! Her husband, I tell you, is alive. It was from him that I had the whole of these particulars—the lady herself, I think, will scarcely venture to contradict me.

AUGUS. (*alarmed*) Speak, Constantia—why don't you speak?

MRS. BOBBINS. (*in a state of hysterical excitement*) I shall swoon away! Give me a little air.

AUGUS. Do you suffer him to talk to you like this without replying? Why don't you speak up, like a woman?

MRS. BOBBINS. Call Rebecca—I'm going into hysterics!  
(*takes a chair*.)

AUGUS. She changes colour, and makes no denial! Guilty! guilty! Unhappy bigamist! (*falls into chair, L.*)

MRS. BOBBINS. Oh, oh, oh!  
FAST. (*crossing to c., and going to c. d.*) Rebecca! Rebecca!

AUGUS. Oh, Mr. Fastman, you see before you a blighted wretch, with his household goods—gods shivered around him.  
(*buries his face in his hands*.)

*Enter REBECCA, c. from L.*

REBECCA. What's the matter? (MRS. BOBBINS goes into hysterics)

FAST. Let's take her into her own room, she'll be better there!  
They take her into room, R.

AUGUS. (*rising*) Am I awake, or dreaming? Is this my quiet home, converted into a perfect pandemonium? Constantia, the virtuous Constantia, the wife of two husbands! Indelicate position! (*crosses to R.*)

*Enter MRS. BROWN, c. d. from R.*

MRS. BROWN. (L.) Oh, I beg your pardon—I thought I would just mention to Mrs. Bobbins, that I had engaged—

AUGUS. (*interrupting her*) Fly, Mrs. Duval! Leave me—this is no place for you!

MRS. BROWN. Has anything happened? You appear much disturbed.

AUGUS. Fly, ma'am, fly! Don't aggravate my misfortunes by remaining any longer in this room. (*whispers*) He suspects me—I have had such a scene with him.

MRS. BROWN. With who?

AUGUS. Only think of the consequences if he should surprise us together!

MRS. BROWN. Who are you talking of?

AUGUS. Haven't you seen him, then? Don't you know he's returned?

MRS. BROWN. How am I to understand who it is you mean?

AUGUS. (*whispers*) He is now in the house.

MRS. BROWN. Who—who, I say?

AUGUS. (*whispers*) Your husband!

MRS. BROWN. Vandyke! My dear Vandyke come home—and now in the house—without my having seen him! I can't believe it. (*imploringly*) Don't keep me in suspense—say, what does it all mean?

AUGUS. Goodness only knows. It's all a riddle to me.

(BOBBINS completely overcome, drops his head on MRS. BROWN'S shoulder)

*Enter VANDYKE BROWN, l. c.*

VAN. (c.) Ah, now I have you! (*crossing to l.*) This is ocular proof!

MRS. BROWN. (c., running to VANDYKE) Is this reality? My dear—dear Vandyke come home to me!

VAN. (l., repulsing her) Touch me not—perjured woman!

MRS. BROWN. (amazed) Vandyke!

VAN. Avaunt, I say, abandoned female!

MRS. BROWN. Abandoned!

VAN. To what hast thou fallen! Cleopatra and her aspics, Clytemnestra, and the Queen in Hamlet, are all outdone by thee!

MRS. BROWN. Why, Van, you goose, who can have put this nonsense into your head?

VAN. (*pointing to BOBBINS, r.*) That reverend Antony—that old Ægisthus—that miserable Claudius, King of Denmark, there.

AUGUS. (*aside to MRS. BROWN, getting behind her in a violent fright*) Do try and pacify him—he's foaming at the mouth!

MRS. BROWN. (*aside to VANDYKE*) Van—Van, I'll never forgive you for this. Why, where's your head? Jealous of such an object as that! (*pointing to BOBBINS*) Look at him.

VAN. There's no accounting for taste. Besides, what do you say to your other cavalier, the youthful Fastman?

MRS. BROWN. What now—the youthful Fastman?

AUGUS. Fastman—who I only just this minute discovered on his knees before my wife!

VAN. (*rushing across to BOBBINS, who runs behind table, r.*)

Ah, you dare to call her so to my face! (MRS. BROWN runs after VANDYKE, and holds him)

AUGUS. Police—police!

MRS. BROWN. Now, my dear Van—how can you imagine that your own little Emily—

VAN. (*throwing her off, l.*) Imagine—false woman—imagine! Ha, ha, ha! but don't suppose that I mind it. (*throwing BOBBINS round to l.*) Take your vile cabinet maker—don't think I'm going to commit suicide. No, no—I've a friend in a corner that will console me. She loves me to distraction. She followed me all the way from the Waterloo Station. I'll run off with her before your eyes. Come in, madam, come in—there's no occasion to hide yourself any longer.

*Goes to R. D., and brings out MRS. BOBBINS, who opposes him in confusion.*

AUGUS. My wife!

MRS. BROWN. Mrs. Bobbins!

VAN. Mrs. Bobbins! is he (*pointing to BOBBINS*) your husband?

MRS. BOBBINS. (*aside to VANDYKE*) Hush! hush! don't say a word about having met me on the railway before my husband.

VAN. (*to MRS. BOBBINS*) So you're his wife! So much the better! It's poetical justice! You have overheard all, I suppose? (*pointing to MRS. BROWN*) You see who he has given you up for—my wife!

MRS. BOBBINS. Your wife? (*aside*) This can't be true!

VAN. My wife—my infamous wife, who I resign in your favour.

MRS. BROWN. (*l. crying*) Oh! Vandyke, Vandyke! after all my tried affection for you!

VAN. (*to MRS. BOBBINS*) Come, madam! come with me! (*drawing her towards him*) Let us be revenged upon them both.

MRS. BOBBINS. (*to VANDYKE*) Let me alone, sir! let me alone! Augustus, come to my assistance! Why do you suffer him to treat me like this?

(BOBBINS turns his back to her indignantly.)

VAN. It's all fair! Exchange is no robbery! He takes my wife—I take his. You see your husband does not object.

AUGUS. Not I! As she has two husbands already, she may as well take a third. Clap hands and a bargain—I agree to the chop. (*meets in centre and shake hands*)

MRS. BROWN. BOBBINS. BROWN. MRS. BOBBINS.

R.

C.

**MRS. BOBBINS.** (*crying and crossing to L. C.*) Oh, oh, Augustus ! what, desert me after all my forbearance and exemplary conduct ? Oh, oh, you cruel man !

**MRS. BROWN.** (*crying and crossing to R. C.*) Oh, Vandyke ! Vandyke !

(*Mrs. Bobbins and Mrs. Brown cross at the same time while speaking, and throw themselves into their husbands' arms.* VANDYKE turns up stage, R. indignantly—BOBBINS turns up indignantly.)

*Enter FASTMAN and REBECCA, C.*

**REBECCA.** Oh, come, here they are—that's fortunate !

**FAST.** (*throwing himself at Mrs. Bobbins feet*) Really, Mrs. Bobbins, I am overwhelmed with confusion !

VANDYKE. BOBBINS.

REBECCA.

MRS. BROWN.

FASTMAN. MRS. BOBBINS.

R.

L.

**VAN.** (*taking hold of FASTMAN's right hand, pulls him towards MRS. BROWN*) No, no ! you have mistaken your lady—pay your vows here, sir—here sir !

**AUGUS.** (*taking FASTMAN's left hand*) I say fair play to that. No poaching on my manor. (*pulling him towards MRS. BOBBINS*)

**FAST.** (*shaking them off*) Be off, both of you ! Go to Bath and get your heads shaved. (*throwing himself on his knees to MRS. BOBBINS*) How am I to apologise ? How am I ever to make amends for my outrageous conduct ? I beg your pardon a thousand, and a thousand times ! But it was all this gentleman's fault—(*pointing to VANDYKE*) he told me that you were his wife ! (*rises*)

**VAN.** I ! I told you she was my wife !

**MRS. BOBBINS.** Impossible !

**FAST.** Indeed he did, and I should still have thought so if it hadn't been for the landlady of these apartments, who, on hearing the disturbance just now, and Mrs. Bobbins going into hysterics, slipped into the passage, as I was leaving the house to inquire what was the matter, and I had no sooner begun to explain than she burst into fits of laughter, and in a very few words cleared up the mystery.

**VAN.** No chaffing, young man ! This is some of your humbug !

**FAST.** Only listen to me for one moment and you'll soon be convinced—the whole truth of the matter is simply this—before

you went abroad you and your wife were occupying these rooms—

MRS. BOBBINS. (*interrupting him*) To be sure ! of course—now I see it all ! which we have taken since, and this lady has gone up stairs—he has mistaken the floor! (*FASTMAN goes up to REBECCA, at back*)

VAN. (*to his wife*) What, do you mean to say that you have moved, then ?

MRS. BROWN. I'll explain all that, Vandyke, by and by.

VAN. Oh ! I see—to avoid the creditors, eh !

AUGUS. My dear Constantia ! (*embracing*)

VAN. My dear little Emily ! (*embracing*)

MRS. BROWN. My dear, dear Vandyke !

MRS. BOBBINS. Eh ! what Vandyke ? Vandyke Brown, brought up an artist ? Why, you are my cousin !

VAN. More mystery ! I've no cousin of the name of Bobbins !

MRS. BOBBINS. No, I have married again—but you had a maiden aunt of the name of Tabby ?

VAN. I had ?

MRS. BOBBINS. Your aunt is dead, and left you all her property.

VAN. Nonsense, you don't say so ! Then I'll give up photography, and return again to the grand style of art ! And now, (*to the audience*) if the unravelling of all this mystification has only been as satisfactory to you as it has been to us, I can truly say that nothing is wanting to complete the happiness of VANDYKE BROWN.

FASTMAN. REBECCA.

MRS. BROWN. V. BROWN. MR. BOBBINS. MRS. BOBBINS.

R.

CURTAIN,

L.