

THE
FARMER'S DAUGHTER
OF THE SEVERN SIDE;

*OR,

MR. AND MRS. TOODLES

A DOMESTIC DRAMA

IN

TWO ACTS

BY

R. J. RAYMOND.

AUTHOR OF

Mrs. White; Paul the Brazier; Robert the Devil; Discarded Daughter; Old Oak Tree, &c., &c.

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909654

THE FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

First performed at the Royal Coburg Theatre.

CHARACTERS.

Farmer Acorn	-	-	-	-	Mr. SERLE.
George Acorn	(his brother, supposed dead)				Mr. COBHAM.
Fenton	-	(a Farmer)	-	-	Mr. MORTIMER.
Charles Fenton	(a young sailor, Mate of the <i>Albion</i>)	-	.	-	Mr. HARRISON.
Mr. Twinkle Toodles		-	-	-	Mr. DAVIDGE.
Lawyer Glib	-	-	-	-	Mr. ELLIOT.
Harrow	-	-	-	-	Mr. W. H. WILLIAMS.
Ploughwell	-	-	-	-	Mr. KING.
Rustics					
Mary Acorn	(the Farmer's daughter)				Miss WATSON.
Mrs. Tabitha Toodles		-	-	-	Mrs. DAVIDGE.

COSTUMES.

ACORN.—Brown body coat and waistcoat, drab breeches and gaiters, grey hair and broad-brimmed hat.
GEORGE.—Sailor's worn suit.
CHARLES FENTON.—Neat sailor's suit.
TOODLES.—Black body-coat, light waistcoat, nankeen trowsers.
GLIB.—Black suit.
FENTON AND FARMERS.—Country costumes.
MARY.—White muslin dress.
MRS. TOODLES.—Plain silk or merino dress.
FEMALE VILLAGERS.—Pretty light dresses, straw bonnets, &c.

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THE
FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A picturesque view. Substantial farm-house, R. 3 E. In the distance a neat village church, &c. Time, early morning—sun rising over distant hills, &c., &c. A practicable bridge at back, from R. U. E. to L. U. E.; garden chair, R.*

Enter MALE VILLAGERS as Haymakers, R. U. E.

CHORUS.

His race begun,
The rising sun
Now ushers in the day;
Blithe as its ray,
We haste away
To make the new-mown hay.

Enter MARKET GIRLS with baskets, &c., L. U. E.

Gaily tripping to and fro,
We village girls to market go,
And with jest and jocund lay
Oft beguile the tedious way—
Nor stop to make our purpose known,
Till we've reached the wished-for town.

Enter SPORTSMEN, R.

The sportsman's speed,
The neighing steed,
The merry cheerful horn,
The eager hounds
Now scent the grounds,
And hail the jocund morn.

GENERAL CHORUS.

The race begun,
 The rising sun,
 Whose beams the fields adorn,
 Such joys impart,
 As cheers each heart
 That hails this happy morn.

(all go off over bridge, L. to R.)

Enter MARY, from house, R.

MARY. Hail, lovely morn ! How blooming does all nature smile around ! How anxiously have I waited the arrival of this day ! and though come at last, its reality seems to bring with it less of joy than my anticipations had ventured to predict. Ha ! he comes.

Enter CHARLES, L. H.

CHARLES. My dearest Mary ! Pennants and Skyscrapers ! how blooming you look this morning ; and how happy does the prospect of being promoted to the command of so smart a little frigate make me.

MARY. *Command, Charles !* I hope you don't expect to order me about like one of your rough sailors.

CHARLES. No, no, Mary ! but still I must be captain, you know.

MARY. Captain !

CHARLES. But then you shall be admiral over the captain. But what ails you ? why that downcast look ? isn't this our wedding-day ? do not our parents consent to our union ? and as to our hearts, Mary—

MARY. It isn't that, Charles, not that—but—

CHARLES. But what ?

MARY. I know not wherefore, but a sad foreboding of some threatening ill lies heavy on my heart.

CHARLES. Psha ! never give way to the blue devils on our wedding-day. 'Twill be time enough to hang out signals of distress when we suffer from the storm ; but that, I hope, will never darken our matrimonial hemisphere. But here comes your father.

Enter FARMER ACORN from house, R.

ACORN. (c.) Ah ! Charles, my dear boy. Come, Mary, bustle about and get all in readiness. The villagers will be here soon to accompany you to church ; then hey for matrimony, and, I trust, for perfect happiness.

CHARLES. Oh, doubt it not, sir. With Mary for my shipmate, and so kind a father to direct our course—

ACORN. Alas! be not too sanguine, my good lad, lest in the hour of trial you feel more keenly your disappointments: the sad reality of bitter experience too fully justifies the advice I give.

CHARLES. Experience!

ACORN. Ay, experience: listen, my dear boy. 'Tis now twenty years, this very day, since I led her mother to the altar. The sun of happiness that rose upon me that morning shed but a little while its rays of gladness on my heart; for ere a twelve-month had glided almost imperceptibly away, in giving birth to this, my only child, she was torn from me and consigned for ever to an early tomb.

MARY. My dearest father! (*falling on his shoulder.*)

ACORN. My ever loved and dutious child! in giving thee to this young man, I seem to sever the last link that binds me to the world. Charles, to thy keeping I commit the dearest treasure of my heart. Guard her with the tenderest care; comfort her in the hour of trouble: and when this careworn body shall resign its claim to mortality, be thou to her what her father has been, and I shall die contented. (*joins their hands—is overcome by his feelings.*)

(*At this moment the village bells are heard in the distance, and the VILLAGERS are seen crossing the bridge—they enter,*

L. U. E.)

Bless you! bless you!

Exit hastily into farm, R. U. E.

CHORUS.—VILLAGERS.

Come Hymen in thy saffron robe,
With all thy train of laughing loves;
From around the circled globe,
Here let thy torch illumine the groves.
A jocund train of youth and fair
By it's genial light advance,
They bid adieu to fear and care,
And like its flaming brilliance, dance.

Trip it neatly,
Skip it feately,
While love rings his merry peal—

Ding dong, ding dong, ding dong, bell! (*bells.*)

(*during the chorus CHARLES and MARY welcome them. A short characteristic dance, after which—*

ACORN enters from farm, and FENTON from L.

FENTON. (L.) So, so, all in readiness for the wedding, eh? 'Tis hard to be the messenger of ill news, and cast a gloom on so many joyous faces;—but duty calls, and its commands must be obeyed.

CHARLES. Why what foul wind blows now, father? I hope we are not going to be wretched in sight of port? (*points to church.*)

FENTON. This letter has just arrived from Portsmouth. The captain commands your immediate presence on board, but adds you will not be detained there many hours.

CHARLES. Rocks and shoals! the wished for haven in view, and thus to be driven out to sea again!

ACORN. (R.) 'Tis hard, indeed, Charles, but a sailor's first duty is obedience to the commands of his superiors. As to the marriage, 'tis but deferring it one day longer. What says my child?

MARY. (R. C.) Charles, delay not a moment, and believe me, the consciousness of having performed your duty will fully compensate for the disappointment *I* may—*you* may feel, Charles, at this delay.

CHARLES. Well, well—necessity has no law; so I'll e'en get myself in sailing trim and away. One kiss at parting, Mary, and then farewell!

(*Music.—Kisses MARY, shakes hands with ACORN and FENTON, and exits, L., followed by VILLAGERS. ACORN, FENTON and MARY go into farm-house.*)

Music changes.—Enter GEORGE ACORN, on bridge, R. U. E. He crosses to L., and comes down from L. U. E.

GEORGE. Yes, this is the spot. These fields—yon verdant hills—the gentle stream that runs below—the rustic porch, and yonder straw-thatched cottage, beneath whose homely roof my boyish days were past—all, all recall the bitterest recollections, and awaken those feelings of revenge which I once thought the softening hand of time had somewhat dulled. Yonder, too, is the little shrubbery where, after the labours of the day, I have so oft awaited my Mary's return—*my Mary!* Oh, had she been mine, how different had been my lot in life! And so she might have been mine but for *him*—*my brother!* How well do I remember his wily words when last we parted—"George," said he, "thou seest the lass gives me the preference; but let it not breed dissension between us; we may still be happy—still love each other." Villain! hypocrite!—to rob me of that dearer than life itself, and after prate to me of happiness: no! Then I swore by the blue sky above me, that from that moment we were strangers to each other—worse—enemies! Sixteen years are gone by since that oath passed my lips, and the maddening recollection of being betrayed by his deceptive art revives with double force the hate—the lasting hate which then was planted in my breast! Yes, for sixteen years I have been an outcast

from my native land ; for sixteen years have I been a wanderer in foreign climes ; and what has borne me up through every ill—in scorching heat and freezing cold ? why hate—deep, deep and deadly hate. Now, now to seek him.

(*Music.—rushes off, L. 1 E.*

[*The second scene of this drama having been much altered by Mr. Burton, who introduced it to the American stage under a changed name, it has been thought advisable to print the original and the alteration, that managers may select the version they prefer.*]

SCENE II.—A Landscape.

ORIGINAL.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. Toodles,
L. 1 E., wrangling.

TOODLES. It's no use talking, Mrs. Toodles ; I tell you I won't, and that's flat. It's not proper for a wife to carry her husband's money.

MRS. T. I don't care, Mr. Toodles, whether it's proper or not—I know you as well as you know the alehouse ; and I'm the fittest person to take care of you and all that belongs to you. Ain't I your own true and lawfully wedded wife ?

TOODLES. I know you are—to my cost, my dear. Hadn't I scraped together a snug lump of cash for bad weather—an umbrella, as it were, for a rainy day : and haven't you contrived to melt it all away, till you've brought my purse into a galloping consumption ; and all along with your confounded itch for buying bargains—as you call them ? And when I complain of your ridiculous extravagance,

AMERICAN VERSION.

MRS. TOODLES. (*without.*) But, my dear Toodles.

Enter from L. H. 2 E. Mr. Toodles, Mrs. Toodles following him.

TOODLES. Oh, don't dear Toodles me—you'll drive me mad—your conduct is scandalous in the extreme.

MRS. T. My dear Toodles, don't say so.

TOODLES. But I will say so, Mrs. Toodles. What will become of us, with your passion of going to auctions, and buying everything you see, because it's cheap. I say, Mrs. Toodles, where's the money, and echo answers, where.

MRS. T. I'm sure, my dear Toodles, I lay it out to the best advantage.

TOODLES. You shall not squander and waste my means.

MRS. T. My dear, I buy nothing but what's useful.

TOODLES. Useful useless you mean. I won't have my house

you come *carneying* me over with "you know, my dear, though we don't happen to want it at present, we *may* soon, and then how handy it will be."

MRS. T. Well, I own I doat on a bargain.

TOODLES. Oh, yes, you doat on everything you see—except me, and buy everything you doat on. There's not an auction for ten miles but you are sure to be there, buying and buying, until the house is so crammed with rubbish, that I can't stir for fear of breaking my shins.

MRS. T. Well, now, only to think of that—how singular! Do you know, my dear Toodles, it was the fear of such accidents that induced me this very morning to buy such a bargain —what do you think it was?

TOODLES. How should I know: perhaps a second hand pitch plaster.

MRS. T. No!—a pair of crutches.

TOODLES. A what?

MRS. T. A pair of beautiful crutches! You know, my dear, you may chance to break your leg; and then only think how useful they'll be.

TOODLES. There's a careful wife for you! buys a pair of crutches in the hope her husband will break his leg!

MRS. T. At all events, you'll own we got a bargain in our easy chair; for when you grow old, lame, and gouty 'twill be so comfortable for you to sit in it.

TOODLES. Zounds! madam; I never will grow old and gouty.

turned into an hospital for invalid furniture. At the end of the week I ask where's the money—all gone too—spent in d—d nonsense.

MRS. T. My love, although they are of no use to you at present, we may want them, and how useful it will be to have them in the house.

TOODLES. Why, Mrs. T., the house is full already of damaged chairs, and dilapidated tables, sofas with one leg, wash-stands with two legs, chairs with three legs, and some without a leg to stand upon.

MRS. T. I'm sure you can't find fault with the last bargain I bought.

TOODLES. What is it?

MRS. T. A pair of crutches.

TOODLES. A pair of crutches! What use are they to me, Mrs. T.?

MRS. T. No, not at present, but you might meet with an accident, and then, how handy it will be to have them in the house.

TOODLES. Oh! here's a woman goes to an auction and buys a pair of crutches in anticipation that her husband will break his legs. But look what you did the other day, when this railroad was finished out here, why curse me, if you did not buy forty-three wheelbarrows—some with wheels, and some without wheels; and then again, before this new system of police was introduced we had watchmen, and watch-boxes—now our police have stars on their breasts, and the

Curse your easy chair ! the very thought of it makes me uncomfortable.

MRS. T. Ah, you don't deserve so thoughtful a wife.

TOODLES. I know I don't. You're too good for me—so I'm thinking of having a sale of my own live and dead stock ; and lot No. 1 shall be—

MRS. T. What ?

TOODLES. Mrs. Toodles ! There'll be a bargain for somebody !

MRS. T. Oh, you unfeeling monster !

TOODLES. Piano, Mrs. T. : here's company coming.

Enter GEORGE ACORN, l. 1 e.

GEORGE. I beg pardon—but as I'm a stranger here, you can perhaps tell me if one Farmer Acorn lives in these parts ?

TOODLES. Acorn, did you say ?

MRS. T. (*crosses to c.*) Now do you just keep back, or you'll be sure to make some blunder.

TOODLES. I never made but one blunder in my life, Mrs. Toodles—and that was when I married you.

MRS. T. You're made up of blunders. Here have we been married these three years, and I never knew you to do any thing right yet. You mean Frank Acorn, I suppose ?

GEORGE. Yes, young Frank.

MRS. T. Young Frank ! why for the matter of that, he, I think, is as old as yourself, and has a daughter grown up.

GEORGE. True, true ; I had

corporation abolished watch-boxes. They were put up at auction, and I'll be hanged if you didn't buy ninety-three watch-boxes.

MRS. T. Now, my dear Toodles, how unreasonable you are ; you don't know but they will be wanted, and then how handy it will be to have them in the house.

TOODLES. That's your old excuse. We have wheelbarrows in the yard, watch-boxes in the cellar, wheelbarrows and watch-boxes all over the house. The pigs eat out of the wheelbarrows, and the cows sleep in the watch-boxes.

MRS. T. Now, my dear Toodles, don't that prove their utility ?

TOODLES. When I came home the other night, I tumbled into something and broke my shins. I called Jane to bring a light. I found myself in a watch-box. What was your last purchase ? The other day I saw a cart before the door, and two men carrying into the house—a door-plate.

MRS. T. My dear Toodles—

TOODLES. And the name of Thompson upon it. Thompson with a P. Mrs. Toodles, if I were not innately a sober man, you would drive me to an extreme case of drinking. Well, what was your reason for buying the door-plate ? "Toodles, my dear," says you, "we may have a daughter, and that daughter may be a female—and live to the age of maturity—and she *may* marry a man of

forgotten the lapse of years.
(aside.) He had a brother, had he not?

TOODLES. He had.

MRS. T. Now just hold your tongue.

TOODLES. Oh, bother! you want to have all the talk to yourself. (crosses c.) Yes, he had a younger brother, named George—and a wild ungovernable blade he was. Owing to some quarrel between them, he set off to sea, and for many years was never heard of, till at length news arrived that he had joined a crew of pirates, who were at last captured by a king's ship and all hanged.

GEORGE. Hanged!—And the old father?

TOODLES. Oh, he took on sadly when he heard it; for this George, you see, was always the favourite son—and he never again held up his head, but lingered and lingered, till at last, borne down by sorrow and old age, he sank broken-hearted to the grave.

GEORGE. (aside.) Died!—my poor old father—of a broken heart!—and I the cause. Oh, horror! But no, no—it was not I—it was he, the traitor—Frank, who drove me hence, and destroyed us both.

(crosses R.)

TOODLES. Bless us, how wild he looks! His lunatics are somewhat out of repair, I think.

GEORGE. (trying to compose himself.) And so the old man died—but his property?

TOODLES. Why, you see, the

the name of Thompson with a P.—Then, how handy it will be to have it in the house!"

MRS. T. And won't it, dear?

TOODLES. You had it stuck over the mantel-piece, and when I come down to breakfast or home to dinner, there's that odious name of Thompson looking me in the face.—If I had a daughter, and I caught a man of the name of Thompson making love to her, I'd break his head with the door-plate.

MRS. T. But, my dear Toodles.

TOODLES. Yes, Mrs. T., I say religiously, morally, sincerely, and emphatically—damn Thompson!

Enter GEORGE ACORN, L.H. 1 E.

GEORGE. I beg your pardon, but as I'm a stranger in these grounds, perhaps you could inform me if one Farmer Acorn lives in these parts?

TOODLES. Why, yes—there is a Farmer Acorn lives here—one, no more.

GEORGE. Yes, young Frank.

TOODLES. Not so very young either. He has a daughter grown up—quite a young woman.

GEORGE. True, true—I had forgotten the lapse of time. He had a brother, had he not?

MRS. T. Yes, who was—

TOODLES. Allow me, Mrs. Toodles, to inform the gentleman. He had a brother—

MRS. T. Well—say on.

TOODLES. Don't interrupt me, Mrs. T. He had a brother—

MRS. T. You said that before.

eldest son, Frank, being well provided for by his marriage, he left the whole of it to George, in case he should ever return; but that not happening, and the news of his death coming soon after, Frank, who is now called Farmer Acorn, took possession of the new farm which the old man built shortly before his death.

GEORGE. Oh, he took possession of it, did he? I suppose he lives as happily and comfortably as if it was his own?

MRS. T. He does, and is beloved, as he deserves to be, by all that know him.

GEORGE. But his brother may yet return, and drive the spoiler forth.

TOODLES. Return! How the deuce can that be, when I tell you he was hanged? His ghost may perhaps pay him a visit; but then ghosts never eat, nor drink, nor spend money, so that would be no bad bargain, would it, Mrs. T.? However, if you want to see Farmer Acorn, we're going there to a wedding feast, and will show you the way.

MRS. T. You couldn't have come at a better moment.

TOODLES. Yes, just in pudding time—just what Mrs. T. likes.

GEORGE. A wedding, say you?

MRS. T. Yes, his only daughter, Mary—

GEORGE. Mary! (*emphatically*)

MRS. T. Yes, she is to be married to young Fenton—and

TOODLES. Now, Mrs. T., I say it behind — he had a brother—

MRS. T. Well—get on.

TOODLES. Will you be quiet, Mrs. Toodles? I'll say no more. You never let me do anything properly.

MRS. T. Properly, indeed! Here have we been married these three years, and you haven't done anything properly yet.

TOODLES. Thank ye, ma'am. Will you allow me, Mrs. Toodles, to give this individual the required information? (*crosses.*) He had a brother—he went to sea—and then, we didn't hear of him — then we did — then we didn't — then again we did. He turned pirate and was hanged at the foreyardarm of the king's ship, who took him. Yes—sir—hanged.

GEORGE. Hanged—and the old man?

TOODLES. Oh, the father, when he heard of his son's mishap—poor old man—he went broken-hearted to his grave.

GEORGE. Indeed—my old father died of a broken heart, and I the cause! Oh, horror—but no, it was not I, it was the traitor, Frank, who drove me from home, and destroyed us both.

TOODLES. That man must be a married man—he's got a Mrs. Toodles at home—his upper story is a little out of repair, I imagine.

GEORGE. The old man died, and his property—

as handsome a couple they'll be as ever entered Thornton Church.

TOODLES. Yes, she is uncommonly pretty, to be sure.

MRS. T. How do you know?

TOODLES. Why by comparison. Whenever I look at you and her, I say to myself—

MRS. T. What, sir?

TOODLES. What a bargain I have got.

MRS. T. Go along, you brute! *(drives him off, r. h.)*

TOODLES. Why—he did leave every thing to the absent and favourite son, George, in case, by some accident, he might come to life again, as Frank has enough of his own, but has lately been unfortunate, and lives in the old man's house, which he has occupied since just before his death.

GEORGE. Ah, he took possession of it, did he, and I suppose he lives as happy and as comfortable in it as if it was his own.

TOODLES. Why, it is his own. The brother, George is dead, and can't return, and of course don't want to live in it.

GEORGE. But his brother may return and drive the spoiler forth.

TOODLES. What, return again, in personæ propria? Oh, come, you are trying to frighten us with ghosts and spirits, as if we were children, but it won't do. You are not afraid of spirits, are you, Mrs. T?

MRS. T. My dear Toodles, you know I am not.

TOODLES. I thought so, when I saw you empty that black bottle this morning.

MRS. T. Oh, you brute!

TOODLES. Besides, we are going to a wedding here—plenty of dancing—drinking—what Mrs. Toodles likes.

GEORGE. A wedding, said you?

MRS. T. *(crosses to c.)* Yes, a wedding. Young Charles Fenton is to be married to Frank Acorn's only daughter, Mary.

TOODLES. Yes, Mary's a very pretty girl, and Charles a devilish handsome fellow. It is said we are very much alike.

(*walks ostentatiously across the stage.*)

MRS. T. You, indeed. You think so, no doubt, for you fancy every girl that looks at you is in love with you.

TOODLES. I can't help loving the girls, Mrs. Toodles. You must not think I'm a man of no taste because I married you.

MRS. T. Oh, you unfeeling wretch!

TOODLES. Don't say so, Mrs. Toodles. I'm going to have a grand auction, just to please you. I'll sell off the watch-boxes, crutches, and all the rest of the live stock.

MRS. T. Now, that is kind, Toodles dear. You'll let me conduct the whole affair, won't you, my pet?

TOODLES. You shall, my angel, and the first article you knock'd down shall be—

MRS. T. What, my sweet?

TOODLES. Mrs. Toodles!

MRS. T. Mr. Toodles, you wouldn't lose me for the world!

TOODLES. Wouldn't I—try me. I'll knock you down to Thompson with a P.

MRS. T. Perhaps he may buy me.

TOODLES. Will he?—Let him only make a bid and he shall have the door-plate into the bargain.

Exit with MRS. TOODLES,

R. H. 1 E.

GEORGE. Pirate!—Hanged! So, so, 'tis plain—'twas but a plot to rob me of my right; and he—my brother—the cause of

all. The poor old man, too—to die broken-hearted. Oh, blistered be the lying tongue that spoke such falsehoods in his dying ear! But I'll be revenged. Yes—fate, in giving him the object of my love, which he so basely snatched from me, has made him loathsome to my soul; and what I loathe and hate, shall I not destroy? If an adder sting me, or a rat crawl noisome in my path, shall I not crush them?—Yes! Revenge! revenge!

Music.—Exit, L.

SCENE III.—*A churchyard, with side view of the church. A low circular wall enclosing the back. Tomb stones, &c., &c. A stone, L. C., “To the Memory of Francis Acorn, who died,” &c. On R. C., a stone “To the memory of Mary Acorn,” &c. Time—evening. In the wall at the back is the entrance to the churchyard, with turnstile, &c., &c., everything bearing the appearance of the plainest rusticity.*

Enter FARMER ACORN and FENTON, through c.

ACORN. My friend, I have already told you of my brother—of his leaving home and joining a gang of pirates—of his being taken prisoner and his ignominious death: listen further.—In the village, not far from our own cottage, dwelt a young woman named Mary Wharton, to whom both my brother and myself became strongly attached. She was the very pride of the place; and the sweetness of her disposition, and the exercise of her many virtues, gained for her the love of all. Though somewhat partial to my brother, still her gentle spirit ever shrunk from his impetuous temper; and often, as we met him in our evening walk, has she foreboded some fatal consequences to our union—and George's lowering looks but too well warranted her fears. At length we were united: and then the threatening storm burst forth. He accused me of treachery, and loaded me with epithets my heart told me I did not merit.—A quarrel ensued, and soon after he quitted England, and was never heard of till the news came of his captivity and death. The old man, broken-hearted, breathed his last; my wife was snatched from me soon after; my cattle died; my crops failed; from a wealthy farmer, I became reduced almost to beggary, and stood, as it were, alone in the world—a withered tree upon a barren heath.

FENTON. But your father's property?

ACORN. Knowing I was so well provided for, he left it all to George—for he still fondly hoped he yet lived; but as no tidings ever arrived to contradict the report of his decease, I intend to give my daughter the farm as a marriage portion—

nor in this shall I do wrong to any one, as my brother is for ever lost to us—the grave cannot give up its victim.

(during the latter part of this dialogue, GEORGE enters at back, c., recognises his brother—expresses his hatred to him—and, at the conclusion, rushes down centre.—Chord.

GEORGE. (c.) Yes, villain, but it can! Behold the man you have so basely wronged!

ACORN. Can it be? Yes, 'tis he, indeed—'tis my brother! Oh, welcome—welcome!

GEORGE. Off! touch me not—touch me not.

ACORN. What means this violence? hear me, George, as Heaven is my witness, never have I by word or deed—

(FENTON retires a little back, L.

GEORGE. Liar! villain! hypocrite! not wronged—not injured me! 'tis false—throughout my life you have been my evil genius—have stood betwixt me and happiness—but now a gleam of sunshine breaks in upon my blackened fortunes; and vengeance, smiling on my hopes, leads me to triumph—Hence! quit the farm—I now am master!—go—hide your head in a workhouse—starve—rot in prison—die on a dunghill, I care not.

ACORN. George, you are deceived.

GEORGE. I know it, and by thee.

ACORN. Often in our prayers have I and Mary—

GEORGE. Mary! name her not—name her not, I say! lest in the madness of passion and revenge I strike thee to my feet.

ACORN. Speak not thus, George—she the innocent cause of all, lies beneath your feet.

GEORGE. (violently.) I care not—join her there! My hate shall follow you to the very grave.

ACORN. Hold, George—think where you stand, upon this sacred ground—before yon holy edifice—to the grave said you? That should bury every error—cover every defect—extinguish every resentment; who can look down upon the grave, even of an enemy, and not feel a compunctionous throb that he should ever have warred with the poor handful of earth that lies mouldering beneath him—behold, too, the grave of our poor father who in his dying hour—

GEORGE. Ay! I know; loaded me with curses, and all through thee—thee! (crossing L.)

ACORN. (R. C.) No, George, no!

GEORGE. What! did he not curse me then?

ACORN. No, George—his last words implored a blessing on your head.

GEORGE. (*with joy.*) What, on *my* head! the old man—did he? a blessing—a bless—a blessing? Ha, ha, ha!

(*Music.* Overcome by strong sensations, he throws himself frantically on his father's grave.

Act — quickly.

A C T I I.

SCENE I.—*A room at Farmer Acorn's. Chairs on.*

Slow music. ACORN and MARY discovered seated.

MARY. (R. c.) Cheerly, father, cheerly; all may yet be well.

ACORN. (c.) 'Tis not for myself I grieve, but for you, my dear child.

MARY. Fear not for me, father; be happy—the farm is large enough for all—my uncle will yet relent, and—

ACORN. Alas, my child, you know him not—he has hated me for years, and gladly will he seize the present opportunity to gratify his malice.

MARY. Oh, no! impossible—he cannot be so cruel. I will kneel at his feet—my tears, my prayers shall subdue his stubborn heart, and never shall my dearest father quit the roof that has so long sheltered him.

ACORN. Your tears I fear me will avail us nothing—be firm, my child, and trust only to that providence which never deserts the innocent and virtuous—leave me to myself awhile—'tis fit I think of some plan for our future means of subsistence, as we are now, alas, quite destitute.

MARY. Fear not poverty, father; while I have hands and strength never will I leave you—my every study shall be your comfort, my every thought your happiness; I will pray for you, father, I will work for you, and if all avail not, then—yes, then, dearest father, I will beg for you.

(*Music.* he embraces her—she kneels—he blesses and raises her.

ACORN. My good—my darling child! *Exit MARY, R. H.* Poor tender blossom! the dark clouds of misfortune which

hitherto have left thy youthful days serene and bright, now o'ershadow all thy hopes of future happiness—for myself I care not; a few short years, and my earthly pilgrimage will be completed. But for thee, my only child—oh, fearful thought—a boundless sea of troubles rolls before thee, and thy fragile bark will be too weak to weather the rough storm.

Enter GEORGE, L. H.

GEORGE. What, still here?

ACORN. Patience, George! I will not trespass long—I but wished to take a long farewell of that roof beneath which I have passed so many happy hours; this was the old man's favourite apartment—often on a fine summer's evening would he sit at the window with our Mary by his side, gazing on the distant hills, sighing forth your name, and in imagination picturing your return, until his eyes grew dim, and the tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks; in that chamber, too, he breathed his last. Oh, George, George, when we last night stood upon the old man's grave, I fondly hoped you would there have buried all resentment.

GEORGE. (*who has been occasionally moved during this recital, at length conquers his feelings, and doggedly sits in a chair up the stage near centre.*) Lawyer!

Enter GLIB, L. H.

Do your duty!

GLIB. Ahem! unfortunate affair, Mr. Acorn—sorry, but can't help it—the law must take its course—ahem! this testament deviseth all the freehold estate called Acorn Farm, and all and every part thereof unto the said George—

ACORN. Pray don't trouble yourself, sir, I am perfectly satisfied as to the justice of my brother's claim.

GLIB. Good! Ahem! and all live and dead stock on said farm, with all agricultural implements, household furniture, linen, plate, glass, &c. &c.; and also all rent, profit and advantages arising from said estate.

GEORGE. Which, of course, you are prepared to account for.

ACORN. George!

GLIB. Good! ahem! I believe, farmer, you have had possession seventeen years and a half, and calculating the rental at forty-five pounds per annum, which you must allow is considerably beneath its value, makes a sum total of seven hundred and eighty seven pounds, ten shillings, and no pence—ahem!

GEORGE. Due to me.

GLIB. And if quite convenient, Mr. Acorn, I will thank you for the same—ahem!

ACORN. This demand is so sudden—so unexpected—

GLIB. Ahem! not prepared to liquidate it—sorry—must do my duty—speak as a professional man only—ahem! (*retires up.*)

GEORGE. (*calmly and firmly.*) Frank Acorn, tis now nearly sixteen years since you and I parted—I need not remind you what passed between us—in that space have I borne an eternity of suffering: and whilst you revelled in luxury; sorrow, penury and slavery have been my bitter portion. Who plunged me into this?

ACORN. What wild delusion's this?

GEORGE. Who, I say, plunged me into this? 'twas yourself, and now comes the just though tardy punishment—you owe me money—pay it to the last farthing, or to-morrow's sun shall set upon you in a jail.

GLIB. (*advancing c.*) Sorry, Mr. Acorn, very sorry, but—

ACORN. Spare your pity, sir, I am prepared to meet the worst.

GLIB. Good—ahem! only act as a professional man. (*retires.*)

ACORN. Enough—perform your duty—lead me to a prison.

Chord. Enter MARY r. h., rushes into her father's arms, GEORGE starts and is agitated.

MARY To prison! my father—to prison! no, no! it cannot be.

GEORGE. Is it a dream? or do I again in truth behold my lost Mary. (*MARY raises her head.*) No—no, I see it all—it's my Mary's child—the very image of herself—come to my arms—for her sake will I love and cherish thee. (*extends his arms, she shrinks away.*) She shrinks from me as from a serpent; and 'tis you who have reared her up to fear and hate me.

MARY. (*crosses to GEORGE.*) No—no, he has ever taught me to pity and to pray for you.

GEORGE. And dost thou, sweet image of her I doated on—wilt thou love thy uncle?

MARY. Will I—oh yes, as my father's brother I will ever be dutiful to you—in sickness and in sorrow I will watch over you, my hand shall smooth your restless pillow, my ready will anticipate your half-formed wish. (*GEORGE somewhat affected.*)

GLIB. (*aside, r. h.*) I calculate this young woman will spoil sport here—ahem! not good. (*retires r. h.*)

MARY. But, dear uncle, you and my father must again be friends—come—let Mary join your hands. (*she leads him unconsciously towards her father.*)

GEORGE. Mary—Mary! (*gazing on her.*)

MARY. Here—here. (*joining their hands.*)

GEORGE. (*recovering from his reverie and snatching his hand away.*) No, no, no! I cannot take him by the hand—'twas he

alone that brought me to this misery ; but for him I might have been blessed with a child lovely and innocent as thyself—a happy home—a doating wife—instead of which I am now a wretched outcast on the earth—childless and forlorn.

MARY. Oh, talk not thus—subdue your resentment, and you may yet be happy—come—come—be reconciled.

GEORGE. Reconciled ? never, never, never !

ACORN. Supplicate him not, my child ; time will soon accustom me to my miseries, and for thy mother's sake he will not see her child destitute.

GEORGE. Ay, for *her* sake I will love and cherish thee—come be a child to thy wretched uncle, and leave thy father to his fate.

MARY. (*starts from him.*) Forsake my father ? never ! rather would I beg, starve, perish, than abandon the dear author of my being.

GEORGE. Then beg, starve, perish ! Lawyer, do your duty.

Exit, R. H.

GLIB. (L.) Hem ! good—sorry, Mr. Acorn—but must do my duty.

MARY. Is there no hope, father ? Oh, sir, you will not surely drag him to prison ?

GLIB. Must do my duty—merely act as a professional man.

Exit, L.

ACORN. Despair not, my child—with thee for a companion, and this inward monitor to remind me I have done no wrong, even the irksome damps of a prison will bring more comfort than can all the luxuries of a palace to tyranny and guilt.

Exeunt, L. H.

SCENE II.—*Same as Scene 1 Act 1.*

HARROW, PLOUGHWELL, RUSTICS, *discovered.*

PLOUGH. (L.) It can't be—it's quite impossible—why how can this Master George turn his brother out o' house and home that he has lived in so many years ?

HARROW. (R.) You'll find it true for all that, take my word on't—they be all gone down to Measter Toodles, who has kindly given the farmer and his daughter shelter till they can turn themselves round like.

PLOUGH. What a blow this will be for Master Charles when he do come back fra' Portsmouth. But I say, how happens it old Fenton didn't offer 'em *his* house.

HARROW. He's like the rest o' the world, I reckon. Friendship be somewhat like love—when poverty do stalk in at the door, it do fly out o' the window.

Enter FENTON and TOODLES, from house, L. U. E.

FENTON. I am sorry for Farmer Acorn's misfortunes—very sorry—but what can I do, neighbour Toodles?

TOODLES. (*a little drunk.*) Why your best, to be sure, to prop a falling man. (*staggers.*)

FENTON. Poor Mary! I dare say she'll take on sadly.

TOODLES. So will your son, I warrant.

FENTON Doubtless—doubtless.

TOODLES. That's a lad after my own heart, and when they are married—

FENTON. Ay, ay—that may or may not be now, Mary yesterday was a very fit sort of wife for him; but matters have taken a turn, and it wouldn't be prudent, perhaps.

TOODLES. Eh—what—why you are not going off your word because this stony hearted brother has ruined the farmer—isn't he as good and as honest as ever?

FENTON. Of course he is; still—

TOODLES. Now I'll give him a poser. (*aside.*) Do you know exactly, neighbour Fenton, what an honest man is?

FENTON. An honest man?

TOODLES. Ay, an honest man.

FENTON. Why an honest man is—is—

TOODLES. Ay, I see you don't know—how should you? I'll tell you—an honest man is nature's brightest gem, whether surrounded by the gold and glitter of a palace, or neglected on the straw bed of the cottage! there's a sentiment for you; put that in your pipe and smoke it.

FENTON. You are insolent, neighbour Toodles.

(*crosses and exit, L. H.*)

TOODLES. Ay, truth will sometimes offend; hang all such weather-cock friends, such pounds-shillings-and-pence friends! it reminds me of the man who said to his creditors; it wasn't his interest to pay the principal—nor his principle to pay the interest. Ha, my jolly boys, how are you? (*sits.*)

HARROW. Look—look—hang me if there be'ant that thunder and lightning chap, the farmer's brother.

TOODLES. That fellow's a worse bargain than ever Mrs. Toodles made.

HARROW. Let's after him and tell him what we think of him.

PLough. Ay, and gi' un a taste of our Hampshire cudgels.

Exeunt all but TOODLES, L.

TOODLES. What a rare thin' is a glass of reflection (*empties*

his glass.) My wife's been at her old tricks again—she got out of bed last night when I was asleep and stole my purse out of my boot ; and home comes this morning a patent velocipede, which she insists on my using fourteen hours every morning before breakfast, to reduce, as she says, the redundancy of my corpulence lest I should pop off in a fit of apoplexy like Alderman Gullygut—as a moral man I must cure this folly, and since she's so fond of bargains, I'll send home one that I'm sure will be useful one time or other—yes, this matrimonial revolution must be strangulated in its birth, or we shall be leading the cat and dog life of Will Dobs and his wife.

SONG.—“*Fighting for the breeches.*” *Exit, R. 1 E.*

(*Music.—A noise outside L., shouts of “Down with him, lads!*
Break his head ! Kill him !”

CHARLES. (*speaks off, L.*) Cowardly land lubbers ! to fall foul of a single man. Sheer off, or I'll fire in a volley that will send some of you to old Davy !

Enters supporting GEORGE, L. U. E.

Cheerly, messmate, cheerly ! I'll tow you safe into port, never fear.

GEORGE. Thanks, my brave fellow !

CHARLES. Faith, I just came up in time : in another minute, they'd have stoved in every timber, and shattered your bulk-head. There, sit—sit ; (*places him on bench, L.*) while I reconnoitre the coast. Gad ! so, here's the farm-house—but how's this ? no light—all quiet. What, ho ! Farmer Acorn !—Mary ! are you all asleep ? Do you keep safe anchorage, messmate, while I go and see why the ports are shut so early. *Exit door R.*

Enter TOODLES, R. 1 E., singing.

There war two cats sat on a well,
 And one cat fell therein,
 And the cat what sat by
 Wept most bitterly,
 Because that cat was t'other cat's cousin-germin.

(*not seeing GEORGE, falls over him.*) That's what I call playing at all-fours. Hollo ! is it you ? Well, I thought it was a stone I tumbled over.

GEORGE. Fool !

TOODLES. True : I can't keep out of bad company ; but I am not the only man it has upset.

Enter CHARLES FENTON, from house, R.

CHARLES. (R.) The house empty ! Why what can it mean ? Speak ! (*to TOODLES.*) tell me—where is Mary ?

TOODLES. (C.) She's at Mrs. T's.

CHARLES. And the farmer ?

TOODLES. Oh, he's there, too—but he's going to gaol.

CHARLES. Gaol! Are you mad or drunk?

TOODLES. Mrs. T. says I'm both—but she's a—

CHARLES. Stupid fool! (*crosses to GEORGE.*)

TOODLES. How well he knows her!

CHARLES. (*steadfastly looking at GEORGE.*) Eh—what?—no, it can't be—my old shipmate, George Hayward.

TOODLES. What, do you know him?

CHARLES. I should think so, seeing that I sailed with him two years in the *Inflexible*. Why, Hayward, what wind blew you into this quarter?

TOODLES. (*aside.*) A devilish foul one.

GEORGE. You are deceived—my name's Acorn.

CHARLES. What, the farmer's long-lost brother?

TOODLES. E'en so, Master Charles; and if he'd never been found, 'twould have been no great loss.

CHARLES. Then you've settled all your differences?

GEORGE. We have—we have. (*malignantly.*)

TOODLES. Yes, they're settled, sure enough.

CHARLES. I'm glad to hear it. Well, now to think that the man who taught me to point a gasket, and reef a top-sail, should be my dear Mary's uncle.

GEORGE. *Your* Mary?

CHARLES. Ay, my Mary—haven't they told you of it? But what does all this mean? Why isn't the farmer at home?

GEORGE. 'Tis no longer his—'tis mine.

CHARLES. Yours?

GEORGE. Mine. I came and found another revelling in my birthright, and turn'd the spoiler forth.

CHARLES. Birthright!—spoiler! What does all this mean? But I'll bear away to Mary and learn the whole yarn. If you've made 'em hang out signals of distress, I'll pour such a broadside into your buttock shrouds as will disable you from service for the rest of your life.

Exit, r. h.

TOODLES. (*imitating CHARLES.*) Birthright!—spiler! If you've made signals of your mistress, I'll show you such a back broadside, as will be of service to your buttock shrouds all the rest of your life!

Exit, r. h.

GEORGE. (*after a pause.*) What means this pain that shoots across my heart? Is it not the sting of self-reproach? Does it not tell me that I have used my power like a rod of iron, and made the innocent suffer for the guilty? But there is yet time to retreat. Yes, my brave preserver shall be made happy with the girl of his heart: they shall not be torn asunder. But for my brother—no! no! he merits not that name. And shall I then forgive him—*him*, who made me an outcast and a wanderer on the earth? no, never—never! *Music.*—*Exit, r. l.e.*

SCENE III.—*Room at Toodles'.* Door centre.

Enter CHARLES, MARY, and TOODLES, L.

MARY. 'Tis useless, Charles; he is implacable.

CHARLES. But, dearest Mary, I sailed with him two years. I was the means of saving his life: common gratitude will then—

MARY. Gratitude! Alas, I fear—

TOODLES. She's right, Master Charles: neither gratitude nor eloquence have any effect upon him. I tried the latter myself; but it was like throwing pearls to swine, as I tell Mrs. T. (MARY and CHARLES retire up c.) By-the-bye, I've ordered my new bargain for her: (*to himself.*) such a bargain that she didn't bargain for, I'll be bound.

MRS. TOODLES. (*without, L. H.*) I say you can't come in. Nobody wants you here.

Enter MRS. TOODLES, followed by GEORGE, L. H.

A fine joke, truly! Ain't I mistress of my own house?

TOODLES. (*aside.*) I'll take my oath of it.

GEORGE. Woman, away! I seek not you. (*retires up L.*)

MRS. T. Woman, indeed! Marry, come up—and you to stand by and hear him call me woman.

TOODLES. (R.) Well, you are a woman, ain't you?

MRS. T. And see your poor delicate wife insulted thus.

TOODLES. Why, you see, the fact is, my dear, he is a very strong man. Besides, as I know by experience you can fight your own battles, I'm thinking he can't be in better hands, for you are sure to bring him to the scratch.

MRS. T. Oh, you brute! (*they both retire up R.*)

CHARLES. (*advancing with MARY, c.*) By what right do you intrude here, the only asylum left to the unfortunate victims of your persecution?

GEORGE. (L.) I came not to insult, but to offer your intended wife a dowry and a friend.

CHARLES. Spoken like a true sailor. Do you hear, Mary?

GEORGE. Reflection has restored me to myself; and the innocent must not suffer for the guilty. Half my little wealth shall be yours, Mary—use it as you will—so you'll not hate, but pray for thy poor broken-hearted uncle. (*covers his face.*)

MARY. (*crosses to c. and takes his hand.*) I see a tear glisten in your eye, uncle: you relent—you will not send my father to a prison, and I will ever dearly love you.

GEORGE. Well, well—he is free.

MARY. Blessings on you for that word.

GEORGE. But I cannot, will not see him.

MARY. Yes, yes, you will see him, and embrace him, too, for my sake—for his—for your own—for hers whom you once loved. (GEORGE looks at her earnestly, bursts into tears, and covering his face with his hands, sinks into a chair, L.) Ah, I remember—oh, blessed, blessed thought! (*rushes into room, R. 2 E.*

MRS. T. (*advancing, r. c.*) There, Charles, you see what may be done by the persuasive tongue of woman.

CHARLES. True: 'tis woman alone that can soften man's perverse and rugged nature, and apply the balm of comfort to a bleeding heart.

TOODLES. (*r.*) My sentiments to a T! And, Mrs. T., as every woman should be rewarded according to her deserts, I intend to reward you. (*CHARLES retires back in centre.*)

MRS. T. Indeed, my love.

TOODLES. Yes, my duck. As you have bought so many bargains for me, I've bought one for you.

MRS. T. Have you, though?

TOODLES. Poz!

MRS. T. What is it?

TOODLES. Such a beatiful bran new coffin.

MRS. T. A coffin! Is the man mad?

TOODLES. Why, "you know, my dear, though you don't happen to want it at present, you may soon, and then how handy it will be!"

MRS. T. Oh, you brute! you'll be the death of me.

TOODLES. That's why I bought you the coffin, my dear.

(*they go up stage.*)

Re-enter MARY, with a miniature of her mother, followed by ACORN, who remains at r. 2 e.

GEORGE. (*arousing.*) No, no—'tis impossible. For your sake, Mary, and for that of my preserver, your father is free—but do not ask me to see him.

MARY. Uncle, be yourself. Behold the only treasure I took from the home of my infancy—the portrait of my mother, whose sainted spirit now looks down, and mourns your estrangement from those who should be dearest to your heart.

GEORGE. (*taking the miniature.*) Mary—Mary! (*in tears.*)

MARY. Ah, precious tears! they are the welcome harbingers of peace. Yes, nature prevails—hatred is extinct. Father—uncle! (*joins their hands and passes to l.*)

GEORGE. (*raises his eyes from the picture, and exclaims in a faltering voice.*) Frank!

ACORN. Say brother—brother!

GEORGE. (*after a struggle.*) Brother—brother!

(*Music.—They rush into each other's arms, c.*)

CHARLES. (*l. c.*) Mary! { (*they embrace.*)

MARY. Dear Charles! {

MRS. T. Twinkle!

TOODLES. My Toodles! { (*they embrace, r.*)

CURTAIN.