

SUNSHINE THROUGH THE CLOUDS.

A Drama

IN ONE ACT.

ADAPTED FROM "LA JOIE FAIT PEUR,"
BY MADAME DE GIRARDIN.

BY

SLINGSBY LAWRENCE,

Author of The Game of Speculation, The Lawyers, &c., &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

909499

*First Performed at the Theatre Royal Lyceum, on Thursday,
June 15th, 1854.*

CHARACTERS.

LIEUTENANT FRANK CLEVELAND.....	MR. ROSIERE.
JULIAN ESTCOURT	MR. GLADSTONE.
OLD SANDFORD	MR. F. MATTHEWS.
MRS. CLEVELAND	MADAME VESTRIS.
EMILY	MISS F. HUGHES.
HARBIET TREVELYAN	MISS M. OLIVER.

COSTUMES.

Cleveland.—Naval Lieutenant's uniform.

Julian.—Black suit.

Sandford.—Black wide-skirted body coat, waistcoat, and
trowsers, white cravat—grey hair, with bald crown.

The Ladies.—Fashionable dresses of deep mourning.

Time in performance.—One hour and 15 minutes.

✓ No 386644

SUNSHINE THROUGH THE CLOUDS.

SCENE.—*A well-furnished drawing-room. MRS. CLEVELAND in an invalid's chair, R.C., at work. EMILY seated on a stool at her feet, also at work. HARRIET TREVELYAN is drawing at a table, L. JULIAN ESTCOURT seated, R., up stage, holding a book as if reading, but his eyes are fixed on HARRIET. EMILY rises and goes to window, L.H.*

EMILY. The wind increases. How it blew all night! I lay awake thinking of the poor fishermen, who have to brave such weather.

JULIAN. Yet there was no accident. I went on the beach this morning and found all safe.

HARRIET. (*to herself*) There was a time when every wind made me tremble, vaguely thinking of him who was on the seas. Now tempest and sunshine are alike to me—both indifferent.

MRS. CLEVELAND. (*to herself*) All indifferent; we have no longer even the hope hidden in anxiety.

JUL. The storm damaged the hut of poor Mary Wilson, the sailmaker, but not seriously.

EMILY. Hush! she has a son; do not mention Mary Wilson's name before mamma. It is three years since any tidings of the boy reached her. He must have been shipwrecked. But do not allude to it, the very name of Mary Wilson brings fresh tears into mamma's eyes, reminding her of her own irreparable loss.

JUL. I understand. Poor Frank, to die so young.

EMILY. (*goes up to HARRIET, and looks at her picture*) Yes, that is his very look—gentle and yet proud. Be careful not to let mamma see that portrait—it is too like—you love my poor brother still, then?

HAR. Love him. (*looking fixedly at her*) When you are sad you have his eyes. (*kisses her*) This month we were to have been married.

OLD SANDFORD enters c. and beckons to EMILY.

SAND. Emily.

EMILY. Well, Sandford?

SAND. (*looking at Mrs. C.*) Miss Emily, here's the man come about the wall. He wants to speak to your mamma.

EMILY. What does he say about the summer house?

SAND. He says it will cost next to nothing, for all the materials are here. Get your mamma to consent, and then you can bring her to see the men at work; that will force her to take a breath of air, force her to move about a little, which will be something.

EMILY. She won't stir, Sandford, though it would be so good for her. Suppose I were to ask her to let me have a little hothouse for my plants?

SAND. For your three orange trees?

EMILY. If I have a hothouse, I can get more. But no; I mustn't ask her at once, she will see the motive. She must be made to believe it is I who am anxious for it; for nothing but the idea of gratifying some wish of mine can make her take an interest in anything.

SAND. That's true; she only lives now in her affection for you and in remembrance of another.

EMILY. Shall I ask Harriet to speak to her?

SAND. She can do nothing but weep.

EMILY. And write poetry.

SAND. Poetry, indeed! What's the use of poetry? It was all very well when we were happy.

EMILY. Oh, Sandford!

MRS. C. (*awaking from reverie*) What's that?

EMILY. (*goes up to her*) Mamma, Sandford wants you to see the man about the summer-house you talked of six months ago—before our affliction. I told him you couldn't see anybody—that your health would not permit you to think of business. But he won't attend to what I say; he says it will cost next to nothing—

SAND. Nothing, ma'am ; we have all the materials.

EMILY. And he thinks a little hothouse might be added for me—that a few flowers would occupy and amuse me. (SANDFORD nods approvingly to her) Amuse me, indeed ! As if I cared to be amused, or to be occupied. No ; I have lost my love of flowers now !

MRS. C. (*sighing*) Poor child ! Still in tears ? How sad at her *rage* ! (*aloud*) You used to be so fond of flowers, Emily.

EMILY. Yes, once !

MRS. C. When poor Frank was by your side. You must be careful of those he tended—'tis now a sacred duty. Sandford is right—I will go at once. Sandford, take the man into the garden ; I will join you there.

EMILY. (*aside*) Do you hear that ?

SAND. Cunning little puss ! How well she did it ! *Exit c.*

MRS. C. (*rises*) Come, Emily, give me your arm. It is for your sake, dear. (*they go out together, c. and l.*)

JUL. (*rising and shutting the door*) Alone for an instant, at last. (*comes down to HARRIET, who rises and stands motionless*) Harriet, listen to me for one moment. As your cousin, I have a right to speak. I am about to return to London ; may I not promise your father that you will soon be with him ?

HAR. (l. c.) I have already told you I wish to remain here. I ought to remain here.

JUL. (r. c.) You ought to return to your family.

HAR. This is my family ; for it is that of him who would have been my husband.

JUL. I understand your passing here the first weeks of sorrow—but at the end of four months—

HAR. If I were his widow I should have the right of mourning for him all my life.

JUL. But since you were not his wife, the usages of society—

HAR. (*irritated*) What are usages to me ? I weep with those whose grief I share. I know no other usage.

JUL. Believe me, you are wrong thus to wrap yourself up in your affliction—you, whose genius has already gained for you a reputation, which all might envy.

HAR. I shall write no more.

JUL. Nay, seek forgetfulness in work, or you will peril

your own existence. You have no right thus to fling life away, and with it youth and fame.

HAR. What is fame to me now he is not here to glory in it? I ask but one thing of the talents I possess, and that is to be able to produce a good likeness of him. (*goes to table, L.*) Can I but fix here the features which these eyes will never more behold. (*sits down and looks at portrait*)

JUL. What could have induced him to quit you? to love and be beloved, yet to depart for distant lands. Oh! Harriet, had I been loved by you I should never have quitted your side; I should have dreamt of no glory; my sole ambition would have been to see you happy. (*HARRIET raises her head*) Frank loved you, I know; he had a sincere affection for you, but had he loved with a lover's love—(*she rises*)—Be angry with me if you will, I must say it; loving you, he would never have quitted you.

HAR. Then I should not have loved him! It was his free and generous ambition which captivated me, speaking as it did, of a nature free and generous. You will tell me that he preferred encountering the thousand perils of a long voyage, to staying quietly by my side. It is true. His courage proves him worthy of a woman's love. You would have me understand that he did not really love me. You only make me understand the difference between a hero's passion and the selfish, despicable tenderness of men who cannot love grandly, because they cannot feel grandeur. (*crosses to R.*)

JUL. You are unjust, Harriet; your tone is indignant. How have I offended you?

HAR. (*angry*) With your love!

JUL. Is that a crime?

HAR. It is; while I am sorrowing for your friend.

JUL. I loved you, Harriet, before you knew him. You were not angry with my passion then.

HAR. (*insolently*) I laughed at it!

JUL. You are merciless. Do you wish to madden me?

HAR. Do you not wish to console me?

JUL. I confess it.

HAR. And do you not feel an insult of that wish? To talk of love to me in times like this, is to tell me I have no heart, no memory, no modesty. I should despise and hate myself, if I could be consoled. I live but in that memory;

and you dare to say to me "I love you—forget him—we will forget him together," and then you wonder that I am angry.

JUL. I was wrong, but I cannot bear to see you suffer.

HAR. I choose to suffer ! (*goes up c.*)

JUL. I would give my life to rescue you from the despair which is distressing you.

HAR. I will not be rescued, I will not be loved !

JUL. Harriet !

HAR. Leave me—leave me.

Exit c.

Enter SANDFORD, c.

SAND. (R.C.) You should not torment Miss Trevelyan, Mr. Estcourt.

JUL. (L. C.) I wish to comfort her.

SAND. But if she won't be comforted ?

JUL. Don't you perceive the ravages sorrow is making in her ? How changed she is—how pale !

SAND. And what's that to you ? Come, Mr. Estcourt, you must let me talk frankly to you. You are wrong to love Miss Trevelyan—she was the promised wife of your friend, that is one reason, but there is another, and a better one : she is not the sort of woman to suit you. What does a merchant want with a woman of genius ? You were meant to live quietly, commercially happy—your house kept in the strictest order—and your wife devoted to you, instead of writing poems and painting portraits all day long. Poems may be all very fine for those who like them, and portraits too. You want a wife, I tell you, not a Poetess. If you are fond of poetry, why you can buy more at the first book stall than ever she will write, and quite as good, I'll warrant me.

JUL. You don't understand these matters, Sandford.

SAND. Perhaps not. But shall I tell you what I do understand ?—That it's of no use teasing a woman to have you, when she's bent upon another. The more you ask, the more she doesn't want you.

JUL. You are right. I will go back to London to-night.

SAND. (*annoyed*) Go to London ? what for ?

JUL. The sight of me is painful to her.

SAND. The sight of you is not painful to everybody.

JUL. What do you mean ?

SAND. What I say : there are some in this house to whom your presence is agreeable—to me, for example—to Mrs. Cleveland—to Miss Emily, ah ! there's a sweet creature, now ! She's what I call a real English girl ! She doesn't write poems, and read big books, pretending to understand them.

JUL. Yes. I think she will grow into a pretty woman.

SAND. (*aside*) Will grow ! It's quite clear he has no suspicion of her love for him, or his vanity would make him think her charming.

JUL. And she's clever too, I think.

SAND. I should think she was ! And the right sort of cleverness ! Then she is so blithesome—so gay, when she has no cause for sorrow. She is not a girl who would reply in grand phrases to any one trying to console her. (*JULIAN is silent*) (*aside*) He doesn't understand me—he sees nothing—how blind he is !

JUL. Sandford, I shall be in London to-morrow. If Miss Trevelyan should be ill, or if Mrs. Cleveland should have need of me, will you see that I am written to ? I may be of some service, although not one of the family.

SAND. There are more ways than one of belonging to a family.

JUL. There are, and in a certain sense, I may be said to belong to it, from old friendship.

SAND. (*aside*) How stupid he is—stupid, even for a lover !

JUL. Frank and I were almost brothers ; and I feel towards Mrs. Cleveland almost like her son.

SAND. That's the way I mean.

JUL. Well, I must get my things packed, for I shall go this evening.

Exit c.

SAND. Poor fellow ! he does his best, but he's got the idea of another in his head. If he had never seen Emily as a little girl, he would be madly in love with her ; but he's so used to think her a child, that he can't see she's a woman.

(Enter EMILY, c., in tears, and throws herself on a sofa, L. C.)
Tears again !—always in tears ! She'll ruin her complexion ! (*aloud*) Miss Emily, what are you doing ? You promised me you wouldn't cry. (*sits beside her*)

EMILY. Oh, Sandford, I can't help it ! You know the rose trees Frank and I planted by the nursery garden two

years ago? They are now in flower, and look so beautiful!

SAND. (*moved*) I don't see any cause for grief in that—none. Come, come, shake this off.

EMILY. (*crying*) You don't—do you not understand? My poor brother planted them *with* me—and he is *not* with me to see them flower.

SAND. (*quite moved*) I understand perfectly. But, for that matter, everything we see recalls—and this is not more saddening than other things.

EMILY. Only I had forgotten them. (*rises*) I was walking quietly along the path, where I hadn't been for some days—suddenly I came upon the roses, looking so gay, so bright; and, when I recognised them, it overcame me. I thought of him whom we shall never, never see again! (*rises, weeping*)

SAND. (*feigning anger*) This is childish, silly! You ought to have been prepared for it. Such things occur everyday—of course, must occur—it's in the nature of things. We plant a tree with some one we love, and, when the spring comes round, the one we love is not there—we pluck the flowers alone. Everybody has done that—there is nothing in it to make a sensible person cry, you foolish child! (*bursts into tears, struggles with them, and finally conquers, in a sort of rage*) Nothing, nothing at all. Be reasonable, be courageous—for your own sake, for your mamma's sake. You know how delicate her health is. We must not deceive ourselves. If we cannot contrive to wean her from her grief, it will destroy her.

EMILY. How are we to do it?

SAND. In the first place, you must leave off crying and sobbing as you do; in the next, you must force her to interest herself about something or other, no matter what.

EMILY. I had done so, and was quite delighted. She is with the man now, talking over matters; and had it not been for the sight of those roses—

SAND. Again!—I won't have those wretched roses mentioned. Wipe your eyes, and run to your mamma; it will bring some colour into your cheeks. Don't let her see that you have been crying, there's a good child! Try and smile—invent something agreeable to think of. Imagine to yourself that some young gentleman, who seems as if he never thought of you, but who nevertheless does love you, has

been sounding people as to the chance of obtaining your hand.

EMILY. Some young gentleman?

SAND. I'm not speaking of Mr. Julian Esteourt.

EMILY. (*smiling*) Julian!

SAND. There, now!—there's the dear smile I love to see—how long since it has gladdened us! Smile in that way at your mamma—run—there's nothing can do her half so much good.

EMILY. You, dear Sandford!—you always keep up my courage. What should we all have done without you?—what would mamma have done without your constant, watchful care?—you who prepared her so gently for the terrible news, and who have since done everything to comfort her. Dear as you always were to us, affliction has made you dearer still. Why, you now are crying, I vow! Come, you can't scold me for that.

SAND. Yes I can—it is because you say such things to me. (*angrily*) Come, come, you must not rob me of my energy. I won't have you say such things any more.

EMILY. You won't have me tell you how we all love you! Well, then, I'll tell you something else—I'll tell you a discovery I have made, which is, that under your simple quiet manner, there is hidden a great deal of cunning.

SAND. Cunning!—I?

EMILY. Yes. You can read people's thoughts—you know how to discover what no one else ever suspects. I know you, you see, and know all the interest you take about us. And now I'll go to mamma. (*going, and then returns to L. C., and in a low tone says*) You have not mentioned anything to any one, have you?

SAND. About what?

EMILY. About your discovery?

SAND. No, not a word.

EMILY. Then, mind you don't! If mamma were to find it out, she would—besides, I have my own little dignity to keep up.

SAND. Besides, what I have discovered may not be true.

EMILY. (*quickly*) Oh! yes, it is!

SAND. Oh! you confess it then, do you?

EMILY. No—no! Good bye, Sandford! (*runs off c.*)

SAND. (*solas*) The darling! That's the girl for me! I

can't say I like your women of high-flown sentiments, like Miss Trevelyan—they're too imposing. It's all very well to say she's a genius, but what do I care for genius in a woman? Not a pin's point! (*gesture of scorn*) Genius is better left to the men, I say—women were meant for something better. Miss Trevelyan draws nicely, to be sure; and has made a capital portrait of dear Frank; although she has given him a sad look, which I say he had not—which I say he *has* not; for, in spite of all their crying, I can't believe him dead—he's not the man to die in that way! When they tell me about his uniform being found riddled with bullets, and his letters and pocket-book there to identify him, my notion is, that they don't know what they are talking about. The uniform was worn by one who had been dead some time, and the features, they say, were not traceable. That's a proof that it wasn't Frank. As if anything could prevent his manly face from being recognised! He might have lent his uniform to some one else—he may be a captive among the savages—but dead! it's not possible—it's so unlike him to die! When I remember the number of times he has so adroitly escaped what would have killed anyone else, I can't believe it. One day, when he wasn't above six years old, we were playing at wolf together—in running away from me, what must he do but get over the balcony and drop; I thought he was smashed—I rushed shrieking to the window, and there was my young gentleman, not smashed at all, but caught in the Venetian blind of the next story, from which he looked up, shouting gaily “Can't catch me, can't catch me!” Another time—but I might go on all day remembering all the accidents he escaped, as if by miracle; and now they want me to believe that a parcel of wretched ignorant savages, without shoes to their feet, or coats to their backs, can have dared to lay hands on him—it's absurd! There isn't a day but I expect to see him! If he were to come into the room at this very moment, I shouldn't be a bit flustered; I'm always expecting him—always expecting—

(*here the c. door opens, and FRANK appears*)

to hear his merry voice, as of old, “Now, then, Sandford, here I am, hungry as a hunter!”

FRANK. (l. c.) Now, then, Sandford, here I am, hungry as a hunter!

SAND. (*motionless with terror*) Oh !

FRANK. What's the matter with you ? How you tremble ! Didn't you expect me ? (*SANDFORD staggers, FRANK sustains him*) Sandford, don't you know me ? (*SANDFORD looks at him eagerly*) Don't you know your own Frank ?

SAND. (*bursting into hysterical joy, and embracing him*) Oh ! Frank ! Frank ! I'm so happy—I'm so happy !

FRANK. I don't understand this surprise. Did you not get my letter ?

SAND. What letter ?—We have received none.

FRANK. I wrote to announce my coming. On reaching London, I heard that I was supposed to be dead, and instantly sent the letter off. Then isn't my mother prepared to see me ?

SAND. Was I prepared ? But stop—you haven't seen any one, have you ?

FRANK. Not a soul ! In fact, I was rather surprised to find no one at Falmouth to meet me. I thought you all would have been there.

SAND. To meet him ! What an idea ! But this shock is too much—any one else in my place would have been quite upset. Luckily, I am not one of the fainting sort ! Now then, to settle how this must be broken to the women ; they are such nervous creatures, bless you, that it would kill them. We must bring them little by little to the idea. It's such joyful news—it's too joyful, it's alarming ! for you see they haven't my courage, my nerve—they can't support it as I do.

FRANK. Dear old Sandford !

SAND. And then your mother—that's worse than all ! what are we to do with her ?

FRANK. Is she so ill, then ?

SAND. Very ill ! Oh ! but I shan't be anxious about her now. It was grief that was killing her, and now joy will cure her—that is, if the suddenness of the joy does not kill her. The doctor says that any strong excitement would be too much for her, and the result would be fatal. How shall we break the news ? I'm almost as much puzzled how to announce to her your return, as I was to tell her of your death.

FRANK. We must call Emily to our aid. How is she ? I do so long to see her !

SAND. Well—quite well, but crying from morning till night about you.

FRANK. Dear Emily! And Harriet?

SAND. Still here.

FRANK. Harriet here—where? Let me go to her at once.

SAND. She has never left us since your death. Your death, eh? How I talk! and there you stand alive and well before me! She has done nothing but cry, and paint portraits of you. How she will shriek when she sees you. We shall have to break it to her too. What am I to do with my three—three women? What shall I tell them? Hush! there's your mother, I declare, and nothing settled! Oh! dear! oh! dear! what shall I do?

FRANK. My mother!

SAND. That is her lingering step, heavy with grief. She has stopped—perhaps she isn't—yes, she is—she is coming here as sure as you're alive! Oh! where shall I hide you?

FRANK. In my own room.

SAND. She has the key—no one is allowed to enter that room.

FRANK. On the balcony (*going towards window*)

SAND. They'll see you outside. If I bolt the door, she will want to know why. Stay, we'll barricade it—help me, quick!—with the sofa and the arm-chair. (FRANK helps him to push the sofa against the door. MRS. CLEVELAND, without, tries to open door)

MRS. C. (*outside*) Sandford!

FRANK. (L., at back) It is my dear mother!

SAND. (*aside to FRANK*) Let her call.

MRS. C. Sandford, are you there?

SAND. Oh, yes!—one moment, ma'am. I thought you were safe in the garden, and so I took the opportunity of just setting the room to rights. Shall I move the sofa back again?

MRS. C. No—never mind. I only came for my book. I left it on the mantelpiece.

SAND. There it is! (*makes sign to FRANK to get it*)

FRANK. (*aside*) Oh! let me give it her. (*passes it through the door to his mother—their hands almost touch*)

MRS. C. Thank you. (*she retires*)

SAND. (*sinking on sofa*) Oh, what a heat I'm in!

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FRANK. (*at window, L.H.*) Sandford!—look at her—how pale and feeble she seems!—how changed!

SAND. (*goes to him, and drags him from the window*) Changed!—I fancy so, indeed! Ain't we all changed? My hair is almost grey. How could we be otherwise?

FRANK. And to think I must not fling myself into her arms!

SAND. Fling yourself into mine, if it will do you any good—it's better than nothing, perhaps. You'll have some one you love better to hug by-and-by; meantime, you must be content with that. Come, we've got over the danger for the present. Keep out of sight. If she should look back and see you—

FRANK. It does me good to look at her. Sandford, you wouldn't believe what a wretch I am; but I positively feel pleased at seeing how people are crying for the loss of me.

SAND. Why, you naughty boy, how dare you say such a thing? But we mustn't lose time, but arrange our plans before some one else comes. Hark!—there is some one already. Who is it? Never mind, lock the door—quick!

EMILY. (*without*) Sandford!

SAND. (*to him*) It's your sister!

FRANK. Emily!

EMILY. Sandford!

SAND. Oh, I'm not afraid of her!—she's young enough to bear any joy. Only just let me break it to her by degrees. Hide behind the curtain.

EMILY. Sandford, why mustn't I come in?

SAND. There, there—come in, Miss! (*draws sofa and chair aside, and begins dusting*)

EMILY. (C.) What did you lock the door for?

SAND, (R.) Only to keep the dust in.

EMILY. The dust?

SAND. No, no—to keep it out, I mean. (*aside*) What a noodle I am!—I don't know what I'm saying.

EMILY. Mamma is taking a stroll with Harriet, and it will do her good, I hope; for I am afraid this deep sorrow will destroy her, unless—

SAND. Destroy—yes, yes—it does sometimes. (*humms a tune and dusts*)

EMILY. Sandford, what's the matter with you?

SAND. Matter? Nothing! What should be the matter with me? (*humming still louder*)

EMILY. I talk of mamma's grief, and you begin humming a tune. Why you are singing still! What do you mean? (*goes up to him*) There is something or other! You are laughing, I declare—positively laughing! You can't disguise it. I'm sure there's some good news!

SAND. No, no, nothing—no news. My head's turned a little, to be sure; but don't be alarmed, no one has proposed marriage to me—no one. I can't quite get over a little surprise I've just had, that's all. It has flustered me a little, you see. (*humming*)

EMILY. A surprise! and a joyful one, too, or you would not look so happy, and sing so.

SAND. Well, it is a joyful one, that's the truth (*crosses to R.*)

EMILY. For you?

SAND. For me—for you—for all of us!

EMILY. For all of us! What is it?

SAND. Guess! (*looks towards curtains*)

EMILY. Not about Frank?

SAND. You burn, you burn!

EMILY. Have you had any news of him?

SAND. You are scorching!

EMILY. He's alive, and at Falmouth.

SAND. How do you know?

EMILY. I dreamt it.

SAND. Now, Miss Emily, don't take on too much; you have plenty of courage, haven't you? and coolness, haven't you?

EMILY. You may tell me all at once—I can bear it—do tell me.

SAND. Can you bear it, really? You won't faint.

EMILY. Faint, nonsense! He is in the house!

SAND. He is!

FRANK. (*coming out from behind window curtains, L.*) As large as life!

EMILY. Oh, come along; I'm not frightened—you may come! (*FRANK clasps her in his arms*) Oh, Frank, what a moment is this! what joy for poor mamma! Another month or two, I doubt if you would have found her alive. And Harriet, too, how she will hold up her head again! Oh, let me look at you!—Yes, it is Frank himself! Oh, Sandford! (*embraces him*) And so the wicked savages killed you, did they?

FRANK. Not quite. I was desperately wounded, though,

and left senseless. They stripped my clothes off, and left me to the wolves and bears. I was only saved by a miracle.

SAND. Of course, as usual. He is always saved, that boy.

FRANK. I was found by one of the women, who took me to her hut, and there tended me, as if I had been a savage, like herself. Her only notion of medical treatment was howling magic words over me.

SAND. Well, and what do our doctors do more? They only talk gibberish, and trust to Nature, after all.

FRANK. Exactly; but it was rather tedious. However, cured I was.

EMILY. But they found your uniform?

FRANK. Yes. It appears that the man who stole it was shot in his stolen property, and subsequently found by some of our party, who, recognising my uniform and my letters, assumed that the mangled body was that of your humble servant.

SAND. Oh, then we've been doing a pretty thing, after all.

EMILY. What's that?

SAND. Why, for four months we have been crying our eyes out for the thief who robbed you. That's a good joke, lamenting the death of a robber!

EMILY. (*laughing*) And so we have!

SAND. (*laughing*) Ridiculous, wasn't it?

EMILY. (*suddenly*) But we oughtn't to laugh yet; not while mamma and Harriet are still crying.

SAND. True, we mustn't forget them.

SAND. I will tell you my adventures when we are all together.

SAND. Meanwhile, we must hide you somewhere. If we had but the key of your room—

EMILY. Mamma has it. No, stay, I think I saw her put it in this desk. (*goes to desk R. and takes it out*) Here it is!—Now Frank, dear, (*opens door R. U. E.*) into your prison, and don't stir! You will have to remain here till the evening; are you hungry?

FRANK. No, I am too happy to be hungry.

SAND. Nonsense! you must have something to eat. You are at an eating age, and a little luncheon will help to fill up the time.

FRANK. You'll have nothing in the house fit for my appetite. Women don't know how to eat.

EMILY. But we are not all women in the house. There's old Sandford, and your friend, Julian Estcourt.

FRANK. (*quickly*) Julian here? Staying with you?

EMILY. Yes, he has been staying with us a long time.

FRANK. Well, you needn't blush about it, Emily.

EMILY. I didn't blush!

FRANK. She doesn't call that blushing! I say, Emily, is Julian in love with you?

EMILY. No. Come to your room.

SAND. Don't tease her—I'll tell you all, by and bye.

FRANK. I'm just in time to give them my blessing. (*goes into room R.H. SANDFORD locks the door*)

EMILY. There, now—keep quiet, or mamma will hear you.

FRANK. (*within*) You're not locking me in?

EMILY. Yes, and don't stir for your life.

SAND. Well, this is an adventure! I said he wasn't dead! I knew him better than any of you.

EMILY. Oh, how happy we shall be! How we shall enjoy ourselves, and laugh, and sing! Sandford, isn't it charming to be merry again? No more mourning! How I long to get off this odious black, and to night I'll put on my pretty pink silk. (*dances with joy*)

SAND. That's the way I like to see her, capering for joy. But, Miss Emily, you mustn't dance in that way! Suppose your mamma should see you!

EMILY. I can't help it, I am so happy to think that we have got him amongst us again, my own dear brother, whom we have loved and mourned so! (*kisses her hand to him*) And how how handsome he has grown!

SAND. Hasn't he? I should think he has, indeed—so manly—better looking than Mr. Julian, by a good deal.

EMILY. Now, Sandford, don't be spiteful!

SAND. I'm in good spirits, and so I tease you—that's my way of dancing. But now, let us see—how are we to break this to your mamma!

EMILY. Oh! don't let us settle any plan, but leave it all to chance—something will strike us. All that I am afraid of is, that I shan't be able to look sorrowful any longer.

SAND. Nor I, I'm sure. I shall be humming tunes again, and you look as fresh and as bright as a rose.

EMILY. And as for you, any one can see by your eyes—

SAND. Oh! that's nothing ; my eyes are sometimes very dazzling ! (*looking out of window*) Here comes your mamma ! Now what shall we do ?

EMILY. Harriet is with her.

SAND. No, she's leaving her, and is going to her own room. She's coming up stairs. Now, then, be firm. My eyes, as you say, will be sure to betray me—so, as the moment of danger is arrived, I shall run away. *Exit*, c.

EMILY. Sandford ! That's too bad ! How my heart beats ! what shall I do ? Mamma will never be able to bear it, and yet how I long to catch her round the neck, and tell her all at once. No, I mustn't do that, she is so feeble.

Enter Mrs. CLEVELAND, who does not observe EMILY. She seats herself in her chair, and sighs.

MRS. C. Oh, my poor heart ! This can't last much longer. I feel life ebbing like a tide.

EMILY. (*approaching*) There you are, dear mamma ! Your walk has done you good. I'm sure it has.

MRS. C. Were you there, dear ? I did not see you.

EMILY. I was on the balcony, but you've been crying, mamma.

MRS. C. No, Julian joined us in our walk, so that I was unable to speak to Harriet as I wished. I am getting uneasy about her. Don't you think she's very much changed ?

EMILY. Yes, mamma, very much.

MRS. C. I must send her home to her father. I have no right to monopolize her affections in this way. She is young, and must listen to consolation. There is no tie now to bind her here—it is with me that grief must be eternal.

EMILY. Oh, if I dared to speak out !

MRS. C. Emily, what's the matter with you ? you love Harriet still, I hope ?

EMILY. Oh, yes, mamma.

MRS. C. You are not jealous of my walking with her instead of you ?

EMILY. (*quickly*) Jealous, mamma ? what an idea ! On the contrary, you don't know how glad I am I stopped at home.

MRS. C. How oppressive the air is—I can't breathe. Why did you shut the window, dear—open it again.

EMILY. The window, mamma ! Why it is—I shut it

without thinking. (*pretends to open it*) How ill she seems ! I declare I dare not say a word.

MRS. C. There must be a storm in the air, I'm stifled.

EMILY. Oh dear ! oh dear ! and the weather is so beautiful !

MRS. C. Emily, dear ! your walk has done you good, child ; there's quite a glow on your cheek, and you've almost got your old cheerful look. But I don't know why—there's a strange expression in your face.

EMILY. A strange expression ?

MRS. C. Yes, there's a mixture of pleasure and yet of anxiety in it.

EMILY. What a good guesser you are, mamma.

MRS. C. A good guesser am I ? Has anything happened then to please you ?

EMILY. To please me, mamma ? (*aside*) What an idea ! If I only dared—

MRS. C. But why do I ask ? What can happen now that can bring pleasure with it ?

EMILY. (*aside*) I will. It's the very best way.

MRS. C. (*makes a sign for her to sit down near her*) Come and sit down by me, dear, and tell me who it is you are thinking of.

EMILY. Well, then, mamma, you must know I am angry, very angry ; something has happened which has quite upset me.

MRS. C. Emily, what can it be ? You quite alarm me !

EMILY. To think of such happiness being in store for people who don't deserve it, who don't appreciate it ; while you, with your heavy affliction—you, so good, so generous, so loving, and so beloved, are denied all hope, all consolation.

MRS. C. My lot was too happy. Providence will'd that I should know the depths of sorrow. But of what are you speaking ?

EMILY. Of that unfeeling mother—for unfeeling she was—I mean Mary Wilson, the sailmaker, who forced her son to sea, to prevent his marriage with the girl he loved. It was most cruel of her, and she deserves to lose him.

MRS. C. Well, what of her ?

EMILY. Fancy her having received tidings—

MRS. C. (*rising agitated*) Tidings of her son !

EMILY. He did not perish in the shipwreck, as reported, but is now on his way home.

MRS. C. Did not perish? on his way home! Oh! is such happiness possible! How will his poor mother survive it! What has this woman done to deserve so great a reward?

EMILY. Nothing. She never even expressed a regret at the loss of her son.

MRS. C. My dear, never say that. How can you tell her inward sufferings?

EMILY. She was soon resigned.

MRS. C. For a very simple reason, perhaps—resigned, because she still had hope. Remember, she never received positive intelligence of her son's death—it was only the fact of the wreck, coupled with the absence of any tidings. She could still hope that each day—

EMILY. Yes, that's what I said. She certainly had that hope to support her. The adventures of travellers are so strange, one can't believe everything. And do you know, mamma—it's a foolish fancy, of course—but I can't help indulging a certain feeling of hope, too.

MRS. C. (*mournfully*) Hope!—for us! (*shakes her head*)

EMILY. Oh, mamma! fancy the delight if suddenly we were to hear—

MRS. C. My dear child, hope is not for us. We have had proofs, indisputable proofs, of the terrible reality. My poor boy!

EMILY. Proofs are sometimes too readily accepted. It is true, the body of a man in Frank's uniform was found; but they declared it was only by the uniform they recognised him. Suppose, now—who knows—some one had borrowed that uniform.

MRS. C. An officer never lends his uniform. Besides, Government received official tidings.

EMILY. But Government have been deceived before now, mamma—haven't they?

MRS. C. But there was no other man of the crew missing.

EMILY. Still, there might be some mistake.

MRS. C. Silly child, do you think he would not have written?

EMILY. No letter informed Mary Wilson of her son's existence

MRS. C. Her son was not likely to write—a careless, reckless lad—but my boy, so good, so thoughtful—

EMILY. Well, it's of no use talking; but ever since I heard of it, the hope, the dream of Frank's return, will force itself upon me. Oh, mamma! only think how happy it would make you if some one were to come suddenly to you, and say—

MRS. C. Hush! hush!—not another word—it would kill me. Do not raise such cruel hopes, even for a moment—they only increase my anguish. (*rises*)

EMILY. (*aside, going away*) She won't help me, and I can't do it alone. It's too bad of Sandford not to come to my assistance; and yet some one must break it to her. (*aloud*) Going out again, mamma?

MRS. C. (*agitated*) Yes, I am going to speak to Harriet. She must promise me to return at once to her father. (*comes to EMILY*) You are sure, you say, that Mary Wilson is expecting her son? he is really on his way home?

EMILY. Yes—he may be at Falmouth to-morrow.

MRS. C. Happy mother! How can she bear such happiness! Oh! were I in her place—but I shall never know such bliss—(*a moment's pause*) She must count the hours, the minutes till she sees him! (*hesitates for a moment*) I shall be back immediately.

Exit c. and l.

EMILY. (*solus*) I think I've rather broken the ice, though. The idea of Mary Wilson's good fortune once in her head, will gradually familiarise her with the possibility of Frank's return—that done, I can say boldly to her: "the happy other is not Mary Wilson, it is yourself, mamma!"

Enter SANDFORD, c. with a basket.

SAND. Where is your mamma going?

EMILY. To speak to Harriet.

SAND. No, I saw her leave the house, and go towards the beach.

EMILY. Alone?

SAND. I told Lucy to follow her at a little distance.

EMILY. What can this mean? In her feeble state—

SAND. She seemed to have suddenly shaken off her feebleness, and was hurrying as if to hear some important news. I was in hopes you had told her.

EMILY. Going towards the beach! She is gone to Mary Wilson—I thought she would.

SAND. And what has she gone there for ?

EMILY. To see how a mother bears the news of a son's arrival. I told her a little story of my own invention—told her that Mary Wilson had received news that her son was alive.

SAND. You did ? A pretty thing indeed ! Why, she will discover the story at once !

EMILY. So much the better.

SAND. And there's an end of it.

EMILY. No there isn't.

SAND. She will be sure to sift the mystery now.

EMILY. So much the better. She will find it out so by degrees herself, for I am sure I can't venture to tell her.

SAND. Ah ! I see, you think she will guess it.

EMILY. She will begin to fancy we have had tidings, and at last—But, meanwhile, our poor prisoner must be starved.

SAND. I've brought him something—keep watch while I go to him. (*goes into room R.*)

EMILY. Yes, yes, I'll take care.

SAND. (*coming out alarmed*) Miss Emily, he's not there !

EMILY. Not there ? Didn't you lock the door ?

SAND. I did, but I see now—Love laughs at Locksmiths, and he has escaped to go and see Miss Harriet.

EMILY. But how could he get there ?

SAND. By the way lovers usually go—the window. The chance of breaking his neck only makes it the more captivating.

Enter FRANK at window, L. H.

EMILY. Here he is ! Oh ! Frank ! what a fright your imprudence has given us—mamma might have seen you !

SAND. And you might have fallen from the window.

FRANK. Falling out of window, you know, is one of the things I do best. You ought to know my talent in that way.

SAND. Pretty talent, indeed !

FRANK. How could I help it ? There she was opposite. I saw her in her own room.

EMILY. Well, don't talk now ! In again, Sir, and be quiet. (*pushing him towards the door, R. H.*)

FRANK. I found her crying—crying for me !

SAND. I dare say—she does nothing else. But that's enough, get to your hiding-place.

FRANK. You can't think how pretty she looked in mourning—in mourning for me too, fancy that!

EMILY. Do get in!

FRANK. I tell you what, Emily, if all husbands could just see their widows crying for them, as I have—

EMILY. Well, what would they do then?

FRANK. Why come to life again directly as I have.

SAND. And then the wives would die!

FRANK. I'd no idea people would cry so after me. I'm good for something after all.

EMILY. No, you're good for nothing; to your hiding-place.

FRANK. No, I won't stir till I have seen my dear mother.

EMILY. Oh! do you hear him, Sandford? Why you naughty boy, how dare you—

FRANK. I don't care, I won't stir.

EMILY. You won't? (*crosses her arms*)

FRANK. No!

EMILY. Naughty boy!

SAND. Unfeeling son!

EMILY. Unfeeling brother!

FRANK. Why you treat me worse than the savages.

SAND. Do as you are bid then.

EMILY. Dear, dear Frank, only for a few minutes.

FRANK. Oh! very well then.

EMILY. There's some one coming! Quick! (*pushes him in.*)

SAND. Only just in time!

Enter JULIAN, c.

JUL. Miss Cleveland.

EMILY. (*aside*) What a fright I was in. I quite tremble!

JUL. Do I disturb you? I will retire.

EMILY. No, no, we thought it was mamma—that's all.

SAND. Yes; we thought it was—that's all.

JUL. Why, what's the matter, then?

EMILY. The fact is, we have just heard something, which—that is to say——

SAND. (*to her*) Why you are not going to make a mystery of it to Mr. Estcourt? He won't faint.

JUL. (*aside*) What are they plotting together?

EMILY. (*to SANDFORD*) I am afraid he will regret the return of his old friend, for it may not make him so happy as it ought to do.

SAND. Hum! Perhaps not.

JUL. May I be permitted to ask the nature of this something you have heard?

EMILY. A piece of happiness which falls in the midst of us. You, too, I am sure, will share our joy, for you loved him also.

JUL. Frank!

EMILY. Alive!

JUL. Can it be? Oh, this is glorious news! Dear Frank! Where is he?

EMILY. (*to SANDFORD*) You see, he *is* happy.

SAND. He has a good heart, after all.

EMILY. And I was right to love him.

JUL. But by what miracle? And what does your mother say?

EMILY. She is the only one now who doesn't know it.

JUL. The only one! Has he seen Miss Trevelyan, then?

EMILY. Oh, yes! You can imagine her joy.

JUL. (*agitated*) I can by my own. But let me ask one favour of you; let no one know, for the present, that I am aware of Frank's return. There are reasons for it—reasons which I cannot explain.

EMILY. There, he's jealous; what shall we do now?

SAND. Leave it to me; I'll manage it all.

EMILY. Do not leave us, Julian; I want you to help me break the news to mamma.

JUL. No, no; I had much better—(*going*)

EMILY. Julian, let me beg of you—(*following him*)

Enter MRS. CLEVELAND, who observes EMILY and JULIAN; they are motionless. She looks from one to the other.

MRS. C. (*aside*) Why did she deceive me? She who is truth itself, to tell me such a story; because, perhaps—But I am mad to let these hopes disturb my sad heart. Sandford, leave us. (*Exit SANDFORD, c.*) Emily, I told you I was going to speak to Harriet; but on the way the thought crossed me that I would slip down to Mary Wilson's. You told me she was so happy. I found her sadder than ever. She had heard nothing of her son. I knew it

could not be. Such happiness could not be possible. To weep one's boy through long days and sleepless nights, and then suddenly to see him standing alive before one—to hear once again the voice, believed for ever hushed—to hold in one's fond embrace one's long lost child! (*with great agitation*) No, no, no, such joy is not for this world!

EMILY. (*aside to JULIAN*) How excited she is!

MRS. C. (*aside*) But I am too eager; I must calm myself, or they will tell me nothing. (*sits R.C.*)

EMILY. (*to JULIAN*) You see what caution it requires.

MRS. C. Who told you that foolish story, Emily?

EMILY. Sandford, mamma; a fisherman brought him the news this morning.

MRS. C. But did the man enter into particulars? Did he actually mention the name of Mary Wilson?

EMILY. I don't know whether the actual name was mentioned, but—

MRS. C. No!

JUL. (*to EMILY L.C.*) Take care!

EMILY. Only from the description, I concluded it must be.

JUL. As I leave you this evening, Mrs. Cleveland, perhaps in passing through Falmouth, I might make enquiries—

MRS. C. (*quickly*) You are going to leave us, Julian? (*aside*) How sad he looks. (*aloud*) Have you persuaded Harriet to return with you to her father, then?

JUL. No, she is bent on remaining here.

MRS. C. Ah! and you—you are going.

JUL. This evening, with your permission. But I shall see you again perhaps before I go, and— *Exit c.*

EMILY. (*aside*) Going, is it possible! But it was too much to expect. (*sits on sofa L.C. up stage, and weeps*)

MRS. C. (*aside*) He was embarrassed, almost ashamed—he looked as if he was afraid of showing his joy. Yes it must be so! They are concealing something from me. I will know all—I must know all. They think I cannot bear this delicious burden of happiness; but they are mistaken. It is this racking suspense that tortures me (*sees EMILY in tears*) Emily in tears! have I deceived myself, after all. Why should she cry, if it were true? Oh! no, no, no, my hope is vain! (*sinks into arm chair L.*)

EMILY. (*running up to her*) Mamma, you are ill!—how cold your hands are!

MRS. C. (*with agitation*) Tell me, why are you crying?

EMILY. Mamma, since poor Frank's departure, I can't bid any one good bye without a feeling of—

MRS. C. True, true—I see now—and Julian is going?

EMILY. Yes.

MRS. C. (*aside*) And she loves him—I had forgotten that. Poor child!—he is going to leave her, and she—of course, that explains her tears. (*aloud*) Emily! No—(*aside*) no, I only frighten her—she will tell me nothing. (*rising, and crosses to R.H.*) Let me see once more what the letter says. Can I have overlooked anything? (*goes to desk, R.*) Eh!—where is the key? I put it here yesterday. Emily, have you taken it?

EMILY. Key!—what key, mamma?

MRS. C. The key of that room—your brother's room?

EMILY. The key!—you always kept it yourself, mamma, and I'm sure I—

MRS. C. Sure you what?—why do you make excuses?

* EMILY. Excuses!

MRS. C. (*aside*) She has taken it! What for? I was wrong to send Sandford away. Not that he would tell me anything, but I should be able to see. (*aloud*) I must have that key. Go and ask Sandford for it. (*aside*) No, she'll put him on his guard. (*goes up c., and calls*) Sandford!

EMILY. I'll go and call him, mamma.

MRS. C. (*quickly*) No—he has heard me. (*aside*) She wants to warn him. (*aloud*) Go and ask Julian to come to me directly.

EMILY. Yes, mamma.

MRS. C. Directly, do you hear? I want him now. Go and bring him.

EMILY. (*meeting SANDFORD, c., and aside to him quickly*) Mind what you are about. I have said nothing. *Exit, c.*

Enter SANDFORD, c.

MRS. C. Shut the door (*he does so*). So, Sandford, you have had news of Frank.

SAND. (*stupified*) Oh, who could have told you such a thing?

MRS. C. Emily.

SAND. Then Miss Emily is very wrong to tell you anything of the sort—I mean anything positive. It may only be a rumour after all, and perhaps a false one!

MRS. C. What?

SAND. I admit we've heard something. (*she staggers; he helps her to the chair L.*) And if you would be quite calm—I say if you would be *quite* calm, I would tell you all.

MRS. C. There—look—look—you see how calm I am.

SAND. Hum! you nearly fainted at the first word, and you don't seem—

MRS. C. Yes, I am; I am indeed! I know, Sandford, that the hope which has entered my heart is a wild one; but since Emily suggested it to me, I cannot rid myself of it. There may be truth in it, so I have prepared myself to hear it.

SAND. (*with feigned frankness*) If that is the case I see that I may tell you all.

MRS. C. Yes, Sandford—dear old friend—tell me the truth.

SAND. Here it is then. A traveller landed at Falmouth this morning, and this traveller happened to fall in with a young traveller, upon his travels, and this traveller's name was Frank Cleveland. But, said the traveller, he, poor fellow, was killed by the savages; the news has been known here for the last four months. Then, said the traveller, the news is like what such news generally is, totally false. (*MRS. CLEVELAND starts*) For, said the traveller, I only left him a fortnight ago, and the savages had certainly not killed him then.

MRS. C. (*starting up*) Alive! alive! my boy alive!—But where?

SAND. Where?

MRS. C. Yes, where—where—where?

SAND. In—in—(*aside*) Where shall I say?

MRS. C. (*exasperated*) Will you tell me where?

SAND. (*alarmed*) M—Mesopotamia.

MRS. C. (*angrily*) You are mad! In Mesopotamia, and the traveller only left him a fortnight since; you don't know what you are saying. (*crosses to R.*)

SAND. Well, it's your fault, you get angry—agitated—your mind runs rapidly on, to catch at more than is known, and you bewilder me.

MRS. C. Sandford! Oh! what an idea! my heart bounds again at the thought—Sandford, you are expecting him here!

SAND. No, of that I pledge my word—we are not expecting him.

MRS. C. You have had a letter, then ?

SAND. I've had no letter.

MRS. C. I don't believe you.

SAND. Well, I can't say there hasn't been a letter ; but I can't show it you.

MRS. C. Why not ?

SAND. Because I've not received it yet.

MRS. C. (*excited*) You are killing me with this suspense. It is meant kindly—perhaps it is kind—but I cannot bear it.

SAND. Dear Mistress !

MRS. C. Leave me, leave me, I say !

SAND. (*aside*) Dear ! dear ! what can I do ? I had better call them. (*goes to window L. H.*)

MRS. C. But if it should be only a false hope after all, if I should be deceived—the hope but an illusion ! No, no, they would never have gone so far, if they had not had a positive knowledge. Oh ! yes, I will trust to the feelings of a delicious joy which runs through me. If I once more feel life strong within me, it is because my boy still lives !

Enter HARRIET, c. quickly, she stops suddenly.

Harriet ! she will be sure to betray herself—Harriet !

HARRIET. I see you indulge in a fond hope already—calm yourself, I entreat ! I scarcely dare let you believe that this good news is true—

MRS. C. Why do you turn your eyes away from me, if not to hide what I should read in them ! Harriet, I am stronger than you fancy—what is more, I am prepared—you are expecting Frank.

HAR. Expecting him ? No, not yet.

MRS. C. You cannot conceal it from me—there's joy in your eyes. Harriet, those eyes have looked on him—he is here !

HAR. No, no—be calm, pray be calm !

MRS. C. You are deceiving me !

HAR. No, no, no !

MRS. C. You are !

HAR. What makes you think so ?

MRS. C. (*with triumph*) Why, see how radiant you look ! I say you have seen him—you dare not deny it.

HAR. I have, and you shall see him soon—perhaps tomorrow.

MRS. C. To-morrow! At once, at once! (*crosses to L.*)
Enter JULIAN, EMILY, and SANDFORD, c., and try to soothe her.

I will listen to nothing but his voice! Where is he?—oh!
 Frank! my own Frank, where are you?

FRANK. (*without, R.H.*) My dear mother!

MRS. C. Ha!—his voice!

(FRANK enters D.R.U.E., and rushes into her arms, she contemplates him for an instant, and then falls sobbing on his neck)

It is my boy, it is! (*pressing EMILY also to her heart*) I have them both—both my children in my arms once more, and this is not a dream!

JUL. Ah, Frank, my friend, my brother! (*shakes hands heartily*)

SAND. Brother!—well, who knows—some day—

FRANK. I am so glad you're here, Julian, to make the family complete. And so, no doubt, is Emily—although she does blush and look angry with me for saying so. What a time we shall have of it—all five of us! (*seeing SANDFORD*) Five—nay six, for we musn't forget dear old Sandford.

SAND. Thank you—you needn't trouble yourself with my happiness—I know how to take my share of it, without assistance. But this—just at this moment—is a little too much, I don't know very well how to bear it.

MRS. C. I can bear it, you see, Sandford.

SAND. Aye, thanks to us—but, in trying to spare the feelings of others, I have fairly exhausted my own, and (*sinks into a chair, R.H.*)

JUL. (*going to him*) You are not ill?

SAND. Ill?—no, no—not ill; but I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

MRS. C. Sandford, look at me! You see happiness can be borne! The clouds roll away, and reveal a smiling Heaven.

R. SAND. HARRIET. JULIAN. MRS. C. EMILY. FRANK. L.

CURTAIN.