

-gantian3

CUP OF TEA.

A Comedietta.

“**THE ONE**” **is** **now** **available** **now**
in **the** **U.S.** **and** **internationally**.
and **now** **you** **can** **buy** **it** **now** — **now** **is** **the** **time**.

[View Methods](#) [View Details](#)

THOMAS HAILES LACY.
89. STRAND, LONDON.



A CUP OF TEA.

*As performed at the Royal Princess's Theatre, on Monday,
February 15, 1869.*

CHARACTERS.

SIR CHARLES SEYMOUR	.	.	.	Mr. William Rignold.
SCROGGINS	.	.	.	Mr. Dominick Murrey.
JOSEPH	.	.	.	Mr. R. Cathcart.
SERVANT	.	.	.	Mr. Butler.
LADY CLARA SEYMOUR	.	.	.	Mdlle. Beatrice.

Time—Present day.

Time of representation—30 minutes.

PROPERTIES.

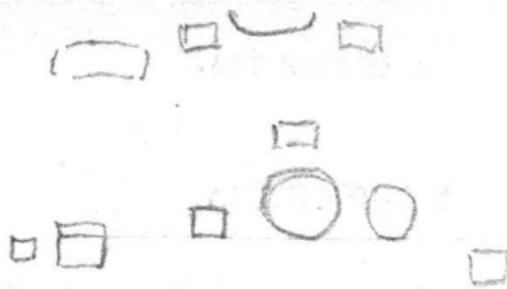
JOSEPH.—A novel. Tea tray, well furnished, three cups and saucers and spoons, tea-pot, cream jug, sugar basin, biscuits, bread and butter, &c.

SCROGGINS.—Written letter, (No. 1), written letter, (No. 2), certificate papers, (No. 3, blank), pair of very large gloves.

SIR CHARLES.—Two dress swords, smelling salts.

I. Shewell
1869

X790 9788



A CUP OF TEA.

SCENE.—*A very Elegant Drawing-room. At back c. fireplace, with fire burning—over mantelpiece a large mirror, timepiece, rich ornaments, and two lamps lighted—in angle, R. 3 E., entrance-door—in angle, L. 3 E., Lady Clara's door—L. 1 E., a small door, leading to the servants' hall—between this door and Lady Clara's a large French window, with balcony—on R. 2 E., opposite the window, Sir Charles' door—all the doors and window (except the servants' door) have elegant double curtains—entrance-door backed by a hall—c. of stage, a round-table, on which a lighted lamp, books, nick-nacks, and hand-bell—on L. of table, an elegant ottoman, a chair R. of table, a chair back of table, higher up, R. of fireplace, a sofa, round which one may turn—in angle, before window, an open piano, with stool—down L., an arm-chair R. 1 E., a table with writing materials, arm-chair before it—on each side of window flower-stands—on each side of fire-place, arm-chairs, small fire-screen, L., chairs and other furniture—carpet down.*

JOSEPH discovered lying on sofa, R., holding a novel in his hand, and looking at clock on mantelpiece.

JOSEPH. Oh dear me! (yawns) Only one o'clock, I declare! and I may consider it lucky if they're at home

by five ! and so it goes on, all through the season, with Sir Charles and my lady. A pleasant life this ! Oh, the good old times, when my master was a bachelor ! I shall never see their like again ! Good pay, and nothing to do ! (*rising, and yawning, pokes the fire, then sits on the ottoman L. of table, begins to read, then yawns, and throws book on table.*) La ! what trash them authors do write to be sure ! (*the noise of a carriage is heard*) Hark ! why I do believe I hear the carriage in the court-yard ! Well, come, they are not so bad to-night, as usual. (*goes towards R. 3 E., and opens it half-way*) Halloa ! who the devil have we here—a strange gentleman ! If they haven't gone and brought home somebody ! I shall never get to bed, I know. Well, hang 'em, if they want anything, they may ring for it.

(*exit JOSEPH (very much bothered) by little door, L. 1 E., which he leaves open.*

SCROGGINS appears at R. 3 E., he appears at door, and advances timidly, bowing—he is neatly dressed, but in an old-fashioned way.

SCROG. I hope I don't intrude—a thousand pardons ! (*looks round the room*) No one to be seen ! A curious predicament I find myself in. All the fault of my blessed landlord. That respectable individual marries his daughter, and does me the honour to invite me to the elegant entertainment which he gives to celebrate the auspicious event. Wishing to keep well with that estimable functionary, and in spite of my retired habits, I obey the summons, when—oh ! fatality ! who should I stumble on, face to face, in this numerous, but ill-chosen assembly, but one of the most importunate of my creditors. The fellow's eye is at once fixed upon me, quick as thought I rush down stairs—he follows on my heels, and would have infallibly overtaken me, had not a sudden thought inspired me. At the door of a large mansion, where a ball was going on, there stood a rank of carriages. I open the door of a chariot, and rush into it, intending to escape by the other side, when, suddenly, the coachman roused from sleep by the

shutting of the door, whips on his horses, and starting off at a brisk pace, never stops till he reaches this superb mansion. The chariot is drawn to the great door in the court-yard, which, by good fortune, is left ajar. I get out—mechanically, as it were—a staircase is open before me, which I at once ascend, and here I find myself, alone and unperceived. The position is a curious one! Such things only happen to *me*—I never can get a chance. For six months past I have been running about to try and find a good situation, and I can only succeed in meeting with my creditors. Nor, in my love affairs am I more fortunate. Oh, Euphrasia, false-hearted Euphrasia, since thy elevation from the Alhambra to the Haymarket Theatre, not only hast thou dismissed me, but this scrap of paper, wherein thou returned me my pipe, arouses in my bosom the fatal suspicion that I have a rival in your affections. (*takes letter No. 1 from his pocket and reads*) “Dear and lovely one, I will await you at the stage-door.—Charles.” Tender, but vague! Fortunately, there is a cypher on the seal, which may lead to a discovery of the detested writer. Oh, Euphrasia! (*goes towards door L. 1 E.*) What am I to do? I can’t stay here! Ah, a corridor! (*goes towards it*) Let us see where it leads. (*goes half off then comes back*) Was there ever such an adventure? Oh, Euphrasia, Euphrasia!

(*exit L. 1 E.*)

Enter SIR CHARLES and LADY CLARA, r. 3 E.—her ladyship in ball-dress, SIR CHARLES in evening costume.

LADY C. Well, my dear Charles, after what has occurred to-night I hope you will be at last convinced that your coachman is intolerable. It may be all very excusable to be tipsy occasionally, but, really, to be so intoxicated as not to know whether we are in the carriage or not, and to start off, leaving me to get home as I can—perhaps to walk through the streets in my ball-dress! You will allow this is too bad!

SIR C. (*takes her berious from her and places it on sofa, r.*) Yes, it is too bad. But perhaps the fellow didn’t understand. (SIR CHARLES takes off his overcoat and

throws it on the arm-chair R., then goes up to chimney and places his hat on mantelpiece warms himself at fireplace)

LADY C. Very likely not, he is stupid enough for anything. Besides, he don't understand a word of English. No one but you, who have such a rage for foreign servants, would take a man into his service who don't understand one word he says to him.

SIR C. Oh, you will admit there are no coachmen like the Germans?

LADY C. Oh, I daresay. At all events, when once you take a fancy to anybody, were he a bandit, there's no use in talking about it. (*she sits on ottoman L. of table*)

SIR C. Come, my dear, you are just as bad as I am in this respect. Why do you stand up for that porter of ours, who never does the right thing by any accident, and is always asleep when he should be awake. (*sits on sofa R.*)

LADY C. Thomas! Of course I stand up for him, because he is an old servant of my family.

SIR C. That may be all very true, but, nevertheless, we had nearly to thank him for having to bivouac all night in the street because he chose to imagine we had come home.

LADY C. He was quite right, and it was all the coachman's fault. I certainly shall keep Thomas.

SIR C. Oh, very well, and I shall keep Gogenheim. (*LADY CLARA yawns, SIR CHARLES rises, takes his hat from mantelpiece and goes to LADY CLARA, L.*)

SIR C. It is not my way to bore anybody with my company who does not wish for it, and, as I perceive you are tired, I shall bid you good-night. (*takes her hand and shakes it*)

LADY C. (*retaining him*) Oh, oh, I suppose you are going back to the ball to dance the cotillon with Lady Courtney, notwithstanding the four or five other times you have whirled round with her?

SIR C. How you exaggerate. Four or five times, indeed! I waltzed with her twice. She is the only woman in all London, except yourself, who knows how to dance.

LADY C. Oh, pray go, by all means, don't let me keep you. When one has loved a woman for four years, it is quite natural one should like to meet her again.

SIR C. (*placing his hat on table, c., and sitting next to LADY CLARA, l.*) Now, Clara, you know very well I never loved anyone but you.

LADY C. Then you must be a terrible hypocrite, for your admiration for Lady Courtley was the common talk of the town, long before our marriage. (*SIR CHARLES shows dissent*) Oh, never mind, never mind! I am not jealous of the past; only I think you would have done more wisely, both as regards her and yourself, if you had not married me.

SIR C. You have no right to say so, and you don't think it. Come, now, be a good girl, and beg my pardon. (*tries to put his arm around her*.)

LADY C. Oh, you are quite right to admire her! she is very pretty! and you show your taste—and I advise you to make haste and be off, or you'll be too late for the cotillon.

SIR C. So, then, you have no confidence in me?

LADY C. (*rising, and going, l.*) Confidence! I am not your dupe, that's all!

SIR C. (*rises, and crosses, c.*) Oh! what an odious thing is jealousy! You and I are very different in this respect, for if I were to see a man at your feet, I should merely take it for granted that he was your shoemaker.

LADY C. Ha, ha, ha! Oh, you are capital!

SIR C. No, I am in earnest; the last thing that would occur to me, would be to be jealous.

LADY C. (*going to him, c.*) Take care! you should never defy a woman!

SIR C. No; it really is not in my nature. Now, I'll give you a proof of it. Old Lady Townly, at the ball, an hour ago, not seeing that I was close by, ill-naturedly remarked to the lady sitting by her, that Mr. Howard had passed all the evening in your pocket.

LADY C. Indeed! Lady Townly is a very impertinent old woman! (*crosses, r., and sits in arm-chair.*

SIR C. Yes; they say he is a charming fellow! I can't say, as I was playing whist, and did not see him—but I know he has the reputation of being a regular lady-killer. I suppose, now, this should be very alarming, should it not? (*sitting on the arm of her chair*) But it fell quite flat on me, and if you had not begun the subject, I should certainly never have recollect ed the ill-natured remark of the old lady.

LADY C. (*rises, and goes to table, c.*) This confidence is, indeed, admirable, and shows how strong must be your devotion to me.

SIR C. My dear soul, believe me, there's nothing so foolish as jealousy—it must have been invented by some fellow, who, never being able to get anyone to love him, was determined to disturb the tranquil happiness of everyone else.

LADY C. (*with impatience*) I wish you would undo this bracelet. (*SIR CHARLES goes to her, unfastens the bracelet, and places it on table, c.*)

SIR C. And so I repeat, I shall never be jealous.

LADY C. Come, come, you had better go back to your ball, or you will certainly arrive when the cotillon is over.

SIR C. I see you want to get rid of me, so I will leave you. (*takes his hat from table, c.*) Good night!

LADY C. (*in a pet*) Good night!

SIR C. (*going*) Good night!

LADY C. (*as before*) Good night!

(*SIR CHARLES comes back smiling, and tries to take her hand, which she withdraws, he then kisses her forehead against her will, and goes to the door of his room.*)

SIR C. Come, come, you must promise me to be more reasonable. Good night!

(*exit SIR CHARLES into his own room, R. 2 E.*)

LADY C. Good night! I wonder whether he will return to the ball? After all, what need I care? (*takes off her jewels*) Only, I would give all my pearls—my diamonds—I don't know what I would not give, just to be able to put him to the test, and see whether he is so proof against all jealousy as he pretends to be. Am I so

ugly, then, that no one can possibly take a fancy to me? (*walks about*) This is all one gets for being well-behaved. Oh, these men, these men! they are all alike. But I'll turn over a new leaf—I'll sit up all night—I'll have the vapours—I'll paint myself red and white, like Lady Courtley, since he admires her so much—I'll dye my hair the colour of carrots—and then, perhaps, Charles will find out that I am charming. I wonder if he has gone to the ball. (*goes and listens near SIR CHARLES' door, R. 2 E.*) I hear nothing.

SCROGGINS enters, by the same door he went out by.

SCROG. (*speaking to himself, looking towards L., and not seeing LADY CLARA*) All the doors are closed! this house is a labyrinth!

LADY C. (*sighs*) I had better go to my room, and retire to rest. (*goes towards table, to get her jewels, and finds herself face to face with SCROGGINS*) Ah! (*she stops short, from surprise and fright.*)

SCROG. Ah! (*he stops short from surprise and fright—takes off his hat*) Madam! (*aside*) Oh, the lovely creature!

LADY C. I'm sure it is a thief, and here I am, all alone. (*runs round the table, L.*)

SCROG. (*going up towards her*) I was looking—

LADY C. (*in a broken voice*) Oh, sir! here they are! my pearls—my diamonds—take them all—only, don't murder me!

SCROG. I beg your pardon—you are mistaken! (*goes to her to explain*)

LADY C. Ah! (*rushing to the other side of stage, R.*) Oh, sir! I beg of you, take everything, only be off with your accomplices. (*she runs up, c.*)

SCROG. (*very much frightened, runs after her, R., trying to explain*) Accomplices, madam? I have no accomplices! Believe me, I am all alone—a poor, humble individual, who have lost myself in this house.

LADY C. Lost yourself in this house! What do you mean, sir? Who, and what are you, and how dare you present yourself here, at this hour of the night? (*comes down, R. c.*)

SCROG. It was a fatality, madam; all the fault of my landlord.

LADY C. Your landlord? (*he advances, she retreats,*)

SCROG. I am no thief, madam! How can I prove my innocence?

LADY C. But, sir——

SCROG. If you would only permit me to speak, I would tell you all.

LADY C. (*aside*) The man has a stupid sort of air that rather re-assures me! (*to SCROGGINS aloud*) Well, sir, pray speak, only be brief—how came you here?

SCROG. In an elegant chariot, madam—a delicious chariot.

LADY C. A chariot?

SCROG. In which I was transported in a few moments, from Portman-square to your house.

LADY C. In my chariot? how on earth came you to enter it, sir?

SCROG. How I entered it? (*aside*) She is a charming creature! I must conceal the truth, so as to make as good a figure as possible, that I may not fall in her estimation. (*aloud*) A delicate affair, to which you will excuse my further alluding, forced me to avoid a certain person with whom I had an account rather difficult to settle.

LADY C. (*with impatience*) Well, sir, what then?

SCROG. (*calmly*) Allow me to proceed! Finding myself closely pursued, and seeing no other means of escape, I at once opened the door of a chariot, which was standing in the rank, awaiting its owner's orders. I jumped in, with the intention of alighting by the other side, when, suddenly, the coachman, in spite of my cries, beginning him to stop, started off at full trot, answering me in some foreign jargon I could not understand.

LADY C. (*laughing*) Ha, ha, ha! Oh, I see how it was!

SCROG. (*aside*) Clever creature! she sees how it was she is a very fine woman!

LADY C. This serves Charles right; and I hope he will never take Gogenheim's part again.

SCROG. Gogenheim! Ah! I thought as much—a German. (*goes to LADY CLARA*) Now, madam, you may search me, if you like.

LADY C. (*laughing*) Oh dear, no, sir—I believe what you tell me.

SCROG. Well, madam, if that is the case, and that you are satisfied, although far from wishing to break off this delightful interview. (*looks at timepiece on chimney*) Perhaps, as it is near two o'clock, you would kindly show me the way out.

LADY C. (*going to chimney-piece*) Two o'clock! so it is, I declare! Suppose I ring. (*goes to table, c., in order to ring*) But, what on earth am I to say to the servant when he comes? upon my word, it is very embarrassing! Really, sir, you place me in a very awkward dilemma! How am I to account to my servants for your presence here, alone with me, at two o'clock in the morning. You will allow it to be a very delicate matter.

SCROG. Pray, then, madam, point out some means of my departing unseen!

LADY C. I know of none—but the balcony.

SCROG. The balcony! (*crosses, in front, to window, l., and opens it*) Really, madam, it is rather high! (*looks out*.)

LADY C. (*who has crossed, r.*) So much the worse for you. I can't help it; after all, it is only the second floor.

SCROG. Only the second-floor! Very likely not, madam, but I am a very bad jumper, and moreover, I am of a very nervous temperament. (*comes down, l. c., leaving the window open*) And at the least hurt, I invariably cry out so loud, that I should be sure to rouse the whole house; and surely if you were seen helping me to escape by the balcony, you would be doubly compromised.

LADY C. That's very true; shut the window! (*he does not move, LADY CLARA repeats with impatience*) Shut the window! (*SCROGGINS goes and shuts the window quickly, in so doing he shuts his finger in*) We must find some other means. (*walks about, reflecting*) The shortest way,

after all, is to call Charles—yes, I'll call him, and tell him the truth. There can be no risk in that—he is not jealous, at least, so he is always telling me. (*she goes to SIR CHARLES' door to knock*) Charles! Charles! (*reflecting*) Stop! stop! stop! stop! (*aside, and coming down R.*) Now I think of it, he was talking of Mr. Howard just now—he is known to be an eccentric character—Charles does not know him by sight. I've a great mind to pass this man off for him! (*she looks at SCROGGINS*)

SCROG. (*aside, yawning, and coming down, L.*) A quarter past two! I wish I was at home and in bed.

LADY C. (*aside*) Why should I not? Yes, I am determined to see if he is so armed against jealousy as he pretends to be. (*loud, crossing to SCROGGINS*) Sir, I have hit upon a way of arranging everything.

SCROG. Have you, indeed? How can I get out?

(*crosses in front and goes up, c.*)

LADY C. (*pointing to chair on R. of c. table*) No, no, no, no! Have the goodness to sit down there—(*points to chair*)—in that chair.

SCROG. (*astonished*) Sit down there!

LADY C. Yes; if you will be so good. (*she sits on ottoman*—SCROGGINS *sits on the edge of his chair, he is very much embarrassed, does not know what to do with his hat, places it under the table*) I suppose, sir, you have some profession.

SCROG. Yes, madam, I am a clerk in an office.

LADY C. I am looking for a steward—you might, perhaps, suit me.

SCROG. A steward!

LADY C. Two hundred pounds salary, and certain perquisites—might, perhaps, tempt you.

SCROG. (*rising*) Two hundred pounds per ann.! and perquisites!—why, madam, it is a fortune!

LADY C. You accept, then?

SCROG. (*re-seating himself*) Yes, madam, without hesitation.

LADY C. Then let us consider the affair as settled. Pardon me, may I ask your name?

SCROG. (*rising and bowing*) My name, madam, is—
Scroggins.

LADY C. (*laughing*) Oh, what a funny name!—
Scroggins! Would you mind changing it?

SCROG. Not in the least; a rose would smell as sweet,
were it known by any other name. Anything to oblige
you, madam.

LADY C. What should you say to “Howard?” .

SCROG. By all means—Howard.

LADY C. Agreed, then. (*she rises, and comes down, L.*—
SCROGGINS rises, and comes down stage, R., making up his accounts of the £200 and perquisites—counting on his fingers) Mr. Howard, will you allow me to offer you a Cup of Tea? Mr. Howard—(*with impatience*)—Mr. Howard?

SCROG. (*not hearing at first*) Oh, I beg pardon! You called me, I think! A cup of tea, madam—you are too kind—I should enjoy a cup of tea.

LADY C. (*aside*) Charles makes no sign—I’m sure we talk loud enough. I’ll order the tea. (*she rings.*)

Enter JOSEPH, L. 1 e., half asleep, just wakened up by the bell.

JOSEPH. Did your ladyship ring?

SCROG. (*aside*) Ladyship! Bless my heart and soul!
A great lady, I declare, and I have not got my gloves!
(*takes out of his pocket a pair of gloves, much too large for him, and thrusts his hands into them.*)

LADY C. Joseph.

JOSEPH. My lady.

LADY C. Bring some sandwiches, wine, and tea.

JOSEPH. I beg pardon, my lady —

LADY C. Bring some sandwiches, wine, and tea.

JOSEPH. Yes, my lady. (*aside*) Well, I’m sure, this beats everything!

(*exit JOSEPH, L. 1 e., very much bothered.* 2)

SCROG. (*aside, and giving himself airs*) Nothing like the aristocracy, after all. (*SIR CHARLES appears at the door, and is entering, when he sees SCROGGINS, stops short, and then hides behind the curtains—LADY CLARA has seen him.*)

LADY C. (*with great joy, aside*) Ah, there he is, listen-

ing! Mr. Howard! Mr. Howard! (*makes signs to him to sit on chair n. of table, she sits on ottoman l. of table.*) SCROGGINS gives himself ridiculous airs, thinking she has taken a fancy to him) How fortunate I was, Mr. Howard, to meet you at that ball!

SCROG. (*aside*) Was she at my landlord, Mr. Grumps' ball? I never should have thought it.

LADY C. But, notwithstanding all you say, I cannot agree with you on diplomatic affairs.

SCROG. (*much bothered*) Diplomatic affairs!

LADY C. An embassy is a very serious undertaking.

SCROG. (*aloud*) An embassy! (*aside*) She is a charming woman, but rather confused in her ideas.

LADY C. But, after all, as you were observing, everything depends upon the post to which you are appointed.

SCROG. (*aside*) Now it is the post office! (*aloud*) Certainly, madam, the administration of the post-office is— (*aside*) What the devil am I to say?

LADY C. I maintain, that, at certain appointments, one can but shrug one's shoulders.

SCROG. (*rising and simpering, wishing to pay her a compliment on her shoulders*) The effect of such a manifestation must depend entirely on the shoulders. (*she turns away—aside*) I hope I have not gone too far. (*tries to sit, she interrupts him.*)

LADY C. My estate in Scotland is very pretty, I trust you will be comfortable there.

SCROG. Comfortable! Oh, madam! (*tries to sit—same business.*)

LADY C. How delightful it will be to talk over your exploits in Circassia, and all the wonders you have seen in your many travels.

SCROG. (*astonished*) Circassia—madam? (*tries to sit—she rises, he is forced to rise also.*)

LADY C. Yes, time will fly, in such sweet converse. (*she glances at the curtain, which moves—aside*) I suspect Charles is a little perturbed. As for me, I can no longer keep my countenance. (*aloud*) Will you allow me, while the tea is preparing, to go for a few moments to my dressing-room?

SCROG. Oh, never mind me—pray make yourself at home, madam.

LADY C. I will be with you again directly. (*aside*) I must go and have a good laugh.

(*exit LADY CLARA, door l. 3 e.*

SCROG. Charming creature, indeed! Only I don't understand why she talked to me of Circassia and the post office. (SCROGGINS seats himself on ottoman, L. of table making himself comfortable.)

SIR C. (*advances pale and agitated*) This is too much! But I must be calm, if possible. (SCROGGINS sees SIR CHARLES, who stands opposite to him, with folded arms.)

SCROG. Halloa! who is this fellow, I wonder? (*rises*.)

SIR C. It is I, sir.

SCROG. Indeed! And who is I?

SIR C. Pray, sir, how came I to find you established in my place?

SCROG. (*aside*) His place, indeed! Oh, yes, I understand, of course—he was the last steward—the one she's turned off.

SIR C. Well, sir, do you mean to answer me?

SCROG. Mind your own business, sir, don't bother me! (SCROGGINS crosses R.)

Enter JOSEPH, with tea-tray, furnished, l. 1 e.

SIR C. (*to SCROGGINS*) You are an impudent scoundrel, sir! (*to JOSEPH*) What's all this?

JOSEPH. Tea, sir!

SIR C. For me, sir?

JOSEPH. No, sir, for he!

SIR C. Take it away!

JOSEPH. But, sir —

SIR C. Do you hear what I say? Take it away directly—go, sir!

JOSEPH. Oh, sir!

(*exit JOSEPH, with tray, l. 1 e., in a bad humour.*

SCROG. That tea was for me, sir! (*coming c.*) Now if I were you I'd take things more quietly. I know it is very disagreeable, but you are not the first fellow who loses his place, or to whom such a thing happens. It is not my fault if you don't suit.

SIR C. Don't suit! What the devil do you mean, sir?

SCROG. I mean, you no longer suit her ladyship, that's all ! Women *are* fanciful, you know — I shouldn't wonder if, before long, the same thing were to happen to me.

SIR C. You don't suppose I shall suffer this ?

SCROG. My good man, you can't help yourself—the moment your wages are paid, you know you must decamp.

SIR C. The fellow is mad !

SCROG. No, you can't say *that*, because, if I *were* mad, my lady would not have taken a fancy to me, you know.

SIR C. Come, sir, a truce to all this, and let us understand each other. Lay aside that vulgar demeanour, you have thought fit to assume—don't imagine I am taken in by it.

SCROG. Vulgar demeanour, sir ? I like that ! It is you who are vulgar ! I'm sure I'm only too civil.

SIR C. It's lucky for you I have not my horse-whip at hand, or you would feel it on your back.

SCROG. (*going L., on the other side of the table*) Come, this is beyond a joke ! Fortunately, you have not got your horse-whip.

(SIR CHARLES passes to R. of table, his eyes fixed on SCROGGINS—the table is between them.)

SIR C. You are a coward, sir !

SCROG. Oh, I dare say, because I decline being horse-whipped for nothing ! Coward, indeed ! My good fellow, with such a temper as yours, my only wonder is, you were not dismissed long ago.

SIR C. Not a word more, sir ! Leave the room. I have borne your insolence long enough—leave the room, sir !

(SCROGGINS runs round the table, holding to it, SIR CHARLES dodges him.)

SCROG. That's capital ! leave the room ! (*rushes to the other side of the stage, R.*) If you had asked me to leave an hour ago, I should have desired nothing better ; but now that I have the hope of replacing you—

(SIR CHARLES, *in a fury*, goes up to entrance-door and opens it—SCROGGINS runs, L.)

SIR C. For the last time, sir, I say you had better leave the house, or most certainly I shall throw you out of window.

SCROG. (*aside*) He wants me to go out by the window, now! It is a monomania in this house.

SIR C. (*coming straight to him*) Well, do you hear me, sir?

SCROG. Oh, by Jove! he really is in earnest! Help! murder! fire! thieves!

(he tries to escape from SIR CHARLES, who pursues him —in backing, he falls upon the keys of the piano, which render a plaintive sound—he runs behind piano, then across to R.)

LADY CLARA enters, l. 3 e., coming down, c., near her husband, who is L.

LADY C. (c.) What is all this? what a dreadful noise!

SIR C. (l.) You are come in good time, madam! Perhaps you will be good enough to explain the meaning of all this? How this gentleman, with whom you have held a very edifying conversation, and which I overheard, happens to find himself in this house?

LADY C. Oh, fie, Charles! I do believe you have been listening at the door.

SCROG. (*coming down, r.*) Very indiscreet, I declare! Charles, you ought to be ashamed of yourself.

SIR C. Hold your tongue, sir, on peril of your life!
(crosses R. to him.)

SCROG. (*retiring*) Hasty in temper, I should say!

LADY C. Since you have heard everything, I have nothing more to tell you; and by this time you must be aware, I have engaged this gentleman as my steward.

SIR C. A truce to pleasantries, madam; the facts are too palpable to leave the smallest doubt.

LADY C. Doubt! what do you mean by doubt, pray?

SIR C. I leave it to your own conscience, madam, to interpret my meaning.

LADY C. I am to understand, then, that you venture to entertain the most odious suspicions—

SCROG. I wonder she treats the fellow with so much ceremony. If I were her I should turn him out neck and crop.

(SIR CHARLES makes another movement towards him.)

LADY C. After such an outrage, you must feel, sir, that everything is at an end between us!

SIR C. By all means, madam, you only anticipate my wishes. We must separate, your fortune will be restored to you, and I shall give you the strictest account of it.

return LADY C. To-morrow I shall ~~repair~~ to my mother's roof.

SIR C. By to-morrow I shall have left London, madam.

LADY C. Adieu, sir!

SIR C. Adieu, madam.

LADY C. Adieu, adieu, adieu! (*exeunt hastily LADY CLARA into her room L. 3 E., SIR CHARLES into his R. 2 E.*)

SCROG. Both gone. I must try and get off too. That fellow appears to me rather an ugly customer. No wonder she gets rid of him. Now, what did I do with my hat? (*looks for his hat under the table and as he rises comes face to face with SIR CHARLES, who has re-entered*)

SIR C. You must feel, sir, that after what has occurred there is nothing left for us but this. (*SIR CHARLES shows two swords—SCROGGINS starts*) Not a word, sir, or I slay you like a dog. (*throws a sword at the feet of SCROGGINS*) Now, sir, on guard!

SCROG. (*frightened*) I am not going to play with such toys as those. (*places sword on table and goes towards door of Lady Clara's room*)

SIR C. You suppose, then, Mr. Howard, that you are at liberty to disturb the domestic happiness of a family, and, in order to escape the punishment you deserve, it is enough to pass yourself off for an idiot. You have presented yourself here as a common malefactor, and if you do not think fit to accept my challenge, as a malefactor I shall treat you. (*SIR CHARLES goes up to him with menace SCROGGINS comes down L. and goes up to extreme R.*)

SCROG. I don't understand what you mean, sir. I did not present myself, the coachman brought me here.

SIR C. (*going upon him*) So, then, you bribed my coachman? Worse and worse. Very well, sir, for the last time I say, on guard! It shall never be said that anyone ever insulted Sir Charles Seymour with impunity.

SCROG. (*trying to get out, stops short*) Sir Charles Seymour, are you he?

SIR C. You knew that, I suppose?

SCROG. No, I didn't. I thought you were the steward.

SIR C. Come, let us understand one another.

SCROG. Oh, Sir Charles, I shall never forgive myself for what has happened or for the way I have behaved to you, who are my patron. I have been recommended to you by Lord St. Clair. My name is Scroggins.

SIR C. Scroggins!

SCROG. I've got a letter for you from his lordship which I was to have delivered to you to-morrow. (*gives letter No. 2, SIR CHARLES places sword on table, SCROGGINS takes and places both swords on sofa*)

SIR C. (*reads*) "My dear Seymour. Allow me to recommend to your protection the bearer of this letter. He is a great blockhead, but a good sort of fellow."

SCROG. (*quickly*) Oh, his lordship knows me well. Here are the certificates. (*gives them to SIR CHARLES*)

SIR C. But why did you take the name of Howard?

SCROG. Lord love you, I didn't take it. Lady Clara gave it to me. When she found me here she took me for an assassin, and then she took me for her steward, then she was so condescending as to offer me a cup of tea, which I haven't got, by the bye.

SIR C. (*aside*) I begin to see through all this. Clara has been amusing herself at my expense.

SCROG. If you would only confirm her ladyship's offer and appoint me steward!

SIR C. Well, we'll see. (*goes up a little*)

SCROG. (*following him*) You would confer a great obligation, Sir Charles. I have indeed need for consolation, for I may as well tell you, Sir Charles, you see before you a blighted being. I loved and was to have been united to the object of my passion. Oh, Euphrasia.

SIR C. (*coming down c.*) Euphrasia!

SCROG. Yes, she that danced so divinely at the Alhambra, and is now promoted to the Haymarket, dances fourth in first row, a lovely creature! Did you ever happen to meet her?

SIR C. (*aside*) So, so! This is Euphrasia's intended. Well, I owe him some compensation, poor devil! Ah, Clara, Clara, you have indeed played me a pretty trick, now comes my turn, I have a great mind to frighten her a little. Why not? Her windows look upon the garden. Scroggins, you shall have the place, but you must first do me a little service.

SCROG. Anything you please, Sir Charles.

SIR C. Take these swords, and come down and fight in the garden. (*takes swords.*)

SCROG. Hey! fight! (*starts back.*)

SIR C. That is, pretend to fight. I have certain reasons for wishing it to be supposed a duel is proceeding.

SCROG. Ah, I understand! But, for fear of an accident, and as we are only to make believe to fight, don't you think, Sir Charles, it would be best if I went alone to the garden, and flourished these deadly weapons.

SIR C. Oh, just as you please. (*laughing*) As it is dark, it will serve my purpose—indeed, I prefer it, as I can watch what goes on here. (*he opens door l. 1 e.*) Go down these stairs, and on the left you will find a door leading to the garden.

SCROG. All right!

(*exit SCROGGINS, with swords, l. 1 e.*

SIR C. A pretty trick Clara has played me. I was taken in. I wonder what she thinks of me. (*goes towards Lady Clara's door—looks through keyhole*) Ah! there she is, coming this way! (*he rushes behind window curtain, and when LADY CLARA has entered, he runs behind the door she has left open.*)

Enter LADY CLARA, l. 3 e.

LADY C. What has become of them? I suspect Charles will soon have found out, by his conversation with Mr. Scroggins, the real state of the case, and I hope by this time is cured of his theories. But where can he be? I trust, not angry; and if he is, why doesn't he come and scold me? I begin to be frightened at what I have done! I long to see him, and explain everything.

SIR C. (*aside*) Dear little woman!

SCROGGINS. (*heard without, l.*) Ha, ha! On guard, sir! on guard! (*makes a great noise with the swords.*)

LADY C. I hear voices in the garden. (*goes to window—clashing of swords.*)

SCROG. (*without*) On guard, sir, or I will kill you like a dog!

LADY C. Oh, heavens! what do I hear? (*opens window and looks out—when the window is opened the scene should be very dark outside*) Noise of swords! A duel, and by

my imprudence! Stop! stop! help! oh, help! help!
(she falls fainting on the sofa—SIR CHARLES runs to her.)

SIR C. Clara! Clara! It is nothing, love! She has fainted! help! What a fool I have been!

Enter SCROGGINS, l. 1 E., with the swords on his shoulder.

SCROG. Well, Sir Charles, I hope you are satisfied? I have fought valiantly, and to your heart's content.

SIR C. *(in great alarm)* Too well, for you see she has fainted. Stay here, while I run for salts. *(SIR CHARLES rushes out, into his own room, r. 2 E.—SCROGGINS, still holding the swords, takes LADY CLARA's hand, and beats into it.)*

LADY C. *(coming to himself)* Who is there? Did I not hear Charles' voice?

SCROG. It is I—Scroggins, madam.

LADY C. Ah, miserable assassin, you have killed my husband!

SCROG. *(coming down stage, extreme R.)* No, madam, no, upon my word.

LADY C. But you shall not escape me! *(rings bell)* Joseph! Joseph! help! help! thieves! murder!

SCROG. *(aside)* How fierce she looks! the safest thing is to cut my stick!

(exit SCROGGINS, with swords, by entrance-door, which he finds open.)

LADY C. Joseph! Joseph! help! thieves! murder!

JOSEPH and another SERVANT come on, and rush after SCROGGINS—LADY CLARA rings again, and is hastening after SCROGGINS, when she meets SIR CHARLES, who re-enters, r. 2 E., and falls into his arms.

Ah! Charles! and not wounded?

SCROGGINS enters, r. 3 E., followed by JOSEPH and another SERVANT, struggling with servants, and coming down, r. c.—JOSEPH holds the swords, with which he threatens SCROGGINS.

JOSEPH. *(c.)* Sir Charles, at the very moment the bell rang, we discovered this fellow, armed to the very teeth, trying to escape by the garden.

SIR C. (*laughing*) Joseph, release that gentleman!
(the other SERVANT goes off, r. 3 E., JOSEPH goes down, l. 1 E.)

SCROG. (*arranging himself*) There, haven't I been telling him, for the last five minutes, that I was your steward.

LADY C. Joseph!

JOSEPH. My lady!

LADY C. Bring the tea!

JOSEPH. (*not hearing*) I beg your pardon?

LADY C. I say, bring the tea.

JOSEPH. Yes, my lady. (*aside*) How long is this to go on, I wonder? *(exit JOSEPH, l. 1 E.)*

SIR C. Scroggins, to make amends to you, for all you have gone through, I confirm Lady Clara's choice of you as steward, and what is more, I should like myself to render you some service.

SCROG. Well, Sir Charles, since you are so kind, there is a service you could render me, and that is to obtain for me some information, on a matter of the highest importance to me.

LADY C. Speak, what is it?

SCROG. Madam, I am a blighted being—I loved a heavenly creature, by name Euphrasia—a votary of Terpsichore, and fondly thought myself the sole object of her affections—when suddenly I found myself supplanted by an unknown, but detested rival! I burn to discover this perfidious being! The only clue I have to the unravelment of this mystery is this letter—the cypher and postmark on which may, perhaps, put us on his trace.

(he goes to give letter, No. 1, to SIR CHARLES, who has been making signs to SCROGGINS, to hold his tongue—SIR CHARLES is about to take the letter, LADY CLARA prevents him.)

LADY C. Allow me! (*takes the letter, and rises*) Yes, I know this cypher—C. and S. It is yours, Sir Charles.

SIR C. (*aside, to SCROGGINS*) Idiot!

SCROG. Eh? La! how—I don't understand.

LADY C. Moreover, the writing is yours, too. (*reads*) "Dear and lovely one,—I will await you at the stage-door Charles." Short, but pithy!

SIR C. Clara, this letter—

LADY C. (*ironically*) Oh, of course, an old one! but look at the date, sir!—four days ago!

SCROG. (*aside*) A pretty kettle of fish I've made of it.

JOSEPH enters, with tea-tray, L. 1 E.

SIR C. Clara!

JOSEPH. Tea, my lady?

LADY C. (*crossing L., and tearing the letter*) Joseph! take away the tea, and order the carriage immediately.

JOSEPH. I beg your pardon?

LADY C. Are you deaf? I say, take away the tea, and order the carriage immediately.

JOSEPH. Yes, my lady! (*aside*) They are all gone mad!

(*exit JOSEPH, with tray, L. 1 E.*

LADY C. You must admit, Sir Charles, that my position here is no longer tenable. I shall repair at once to my mother's protection.

SIR C. (*going after her*) Have you no pity? Can you be so cruel?

SCROG. (*aside—struck by a sudden thought*) Oh, what an idea! Madam, might I be permitted to say two words, which I think would explain everything satisfactorily.
(SCROGGINS crosses, c., SIR CHARLES, R., LADY CLARA, L.)

SIR C. (*aside*) What the devil is the fellow at now?

LADY C. (*comes down*) Speak, sir.

SCROG. (*with insinuation*) Well, then, I'll tell you how it was. You played your little joke on Sir Charles, and to be even with you, he thought he might as well poke his own little fun at you, so whilst you were in your apartment, he wrote this note, and asked me to let it, cunningly, fall into your hands.

SIR C. (*aside to SCROGGINS*) You shall have double pay! (*aloud, crossing to LADY CLARA*) There, love, you see how it was! Every one in turn—

LADY C. But why torment me so, Charles?

Enter JOSEPH, L. 1 E.

JOSEPH. The carriage is ready, my lady.

LADY C. You may tell it to put up.

JOSEPH. (*starts back*) My lady!

LADY C. You may tell it to put up. (*to SIR CHARLES*)

Unless you wish to go and finish the cotillon at Lady Courtley's?

SIR C. Oh, fie, Clara!

LADY C. Joseph!

JOSEPH. My lady?

LADY C. Bring the tea.

JOSEPH. (*starts back*) My lady!

LADY C. I say, bring the tea.

JOSEPH. (*aside*) Oh, they must be mad!

(*exit JOSEPH, L. 1 E.*

SCROG. Your ladyship, as it is rather late, will you permit me to take my leave?

LADY C. What, without your cup of tea?

SCROG. Well, as it is breakfast time, I'll stay and take a cup.

SIR C. And so will I.

Enter JOSEPH with tea tray, L. 1 E.

JOSEPH. Tea, my lady.

LADY C. That's right, Joseph; you are just in time.

JOSEPH. Well, that's a comfort.

LADY C. (*taking up a cup*) Will you allow me, Mr.—

SCROG. (*going to take the cup*) Scroggins—that's me.

SIR C. (*taking the cup*) Permit me—the master first.

SCROG. I'll never get it.

LADY C. Mr. Scroggins, here is your cup of tea. (*he takes the cup*) Does it suit you?

SCROG. At last! (*drinks tea*) Delicious! (SIR CHARLES takes the third cup and gives it to LADY CLARA.)

LADY C. (*to public*)

Our tea is served, and our disputes are ended;

You, upon whom our hopes have all depended—

A Cup of Tea to you we dare to proffer,

And hope you won't refuse our little offer.

We promise ever fresh and strong to make it,

If only you will say you'll come and take it.

SCROGGINS. LADY CLARA. SIR CHARLES. JOSEPH.

R.

L.

CURTAIN.