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## LACY'S ACTING EDITION.

# BEHIND A MASK.

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# BEHIND A MASK.

10

A Comedy,

IN THREE ACTS.

BY

BERNARD H. DIXON,

AND

ARTHUR WOOD,

(*Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society,*)

AUTHOR OF

"A Winning Card;" "A Romantic Attachment;" "Bilious Attack;"  
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122, NASSAU STREET.

## BEHIND A MASK.

*First performed at the New Royalty Theatre (under the management of Miss Henrietta Hodson), on Wednesday, March 8th, 1871.*

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### Characters.

LORD BEAUMORRIS	...	...	Mr. J. COLLETT.
CAPTAIN CHIFNEY CHALLONER	Mr. O. SUMMERS.		
HON. TOM WHIFFLER	...	...	Mr. A. BISHOP.
EDGAR TRESSILLIAN, Esq.	...	...	Mr. A. WHITBY.
ALGERNON PERCEVAL	...	...	Mr. C. H. FENTON.
MR. BLAND BELLINGHAM	...	...	Mr. A. WOOD.
JOE ATTWOOD	..	...	Mr. C. FLOCKTON.
MR. "SAM" WOPPITS	...	...	Mr. THOMPSON.
CADBY SCRATTLE	...	...	Mr. FRANK SEYMOUR.
BARTON	...	...	Mr. COWDERY.
LADY GARNET	...	...	Miss ISABEL CLIFTON.
LADY CAROLINE BEAUCHAMP	Miss PHILLIPS.		
MISS O'MORRISSEY	...	...	Miss RACHEL SANGER.
MRS. DURDHAM	...	...	Mrs. C. TELLETT.
JOSEPHINE BELLINGHAM	...	...	Miss HENRIETTA HODSON.

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### ACT I. ... PROFESSIONALS.

Behind the Scenes of the T. R., Pevensey-super-Mare.

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A LAPSE OF TWO YEARS.

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### ACT II. ... ... AMATEURS.

Private Theatricals at Feltham Hall.

---

A LAPSE OF SIX MONTHS.

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### ACT III. ... ... ... REALITY.

Belle Vue Villa, Pevensey-super-Mare.

# BEHIND A MASK.

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## ACT I.

### PROFESSIONALS.

*SCENE.—Behind the Scenes at the T. R., Pevensey-super-Mare; wings, R. 1 E., R. 2 E., R. 3 E., obliquely to flat; the back of the wings seen with border-lights attached; door, C., of flat communicating with front of house, backed by wall with gas-globe; two steps leading on the stage; on R. of door is prompter's box with gas apparatus, desk, &c.; between box and wing, R. 3 E., the green curtain and footlights are seen; doorpiece of L. 2 E. leading from theatre; L. 3 E., pieces of scenery leaning against flat, L., as if communicating with scene-dock; in L. corner up the stage, a couch with velvet cover thrown on it; several properties; goblets, helmet, bâton, swords, stile, round table, seats, &c.; before rising of curtain, Josephine is heard singing the last strain of "Ah non guinge;" at conclusion, loud applause behind the scenery.*

*As Curtain rises, several CARPENTERS discovered looking on supposed stage; JOE ATTWOOD in the prompter's box; he rings down the curtain, which is partially seen to descend; applause kept up; he rings up the curtain again, showing one or two of the foot-lights, and rings down again; one or two of the characters in "La Sonnambula" enter from the wings, followed by WOPPITS, dressed as "Alessio."*

**JOE.** (coming forward) Now, quick! Go and change for your next piece, you know. You'll have the governor round in a minute or two.

**WOPPITS.** (on sofa) All right, old man! I saw him just now in Lord Beaumorris's box bobbing his old "Truefitt" in his lordship's face, and I'm blessed if old Buck Bellingham didn't look the better nobleman of the two!

**JOE.** Not quite so much of that "old Buck," if you please, because if "old Buck" happens to hear you, you'll look precious small before "old Buck," I dare swear!

**WOPPITS.** All right, Joe.

**JOE.** No, it's not "all right, Joe." It's anything but "all

right, Joe." A young man like you, commencing your profession ! The next time you go on as "Alessio," be kind enough to remember the scene's not laid in Whitechapel.

WOPPITS. Don't hurt yourself, old boy. I'm not angry with you. *Exit, L. 2 E.*

JOE. Angry with me ! A parcel of people like them.

*Enter BELLINGHAM, from the door, C.*

BELLINGHAM. (*as he passes JOE*) Very smooth, Joe ; don't lose time, we shall be late. *Exit, between the wings.*

JOE. I'm ready when they are.

*One or two ACTORS (in appropriate dresses) pass from the wings, and exeunt, L. 2 E.—BELLINGHAM comes forward through the wings, leading JOSEPHINE, dressed for the last scene as "Amina;" she has two or three bouquets.*

JOSEPHINE. (L.) Are they not beautiful, papa ?

BELL. (*kindly*) Not half good enough for thee, my darling. You never sang better ! You never played better ! His lordship's party are delighted.

JOSEPHINE. Which was Lord Beaumorris ?—the tall one !

BELL. No, no ! Lord Beaumorris was the old fellow on the second bench. The tall one is Captain Chiffney Challoner. The one with the light hair is the Honourable Tom Whiffler—the—eh—the distinguished gentleman amateur, and immensely clever.

JOSEPHINE. Amateurs generally are. You know, papa, what we devote our lives to acquire, they appear to inherit.

BELL. I don't know the young fellow who threw the bouquet, except that he has been in the boxes every night—that is, every night you have played. What's the matter, Josey ? Attwood, who is the young fellow who tried to come behind the other night ?

JOE. I don't know. A good many young fellows tried to pass "the other night." When they've had as much of it as I have they'll know better.

JOSEPHINE. Bless you, dear old Joe, you are as amiable as ever ! (*laughing*)

JOE. Amiable ! How would you be amiable with lumbago in your back, and rheumatics all down one side ? (*returns to prompter's box*)

BELL. Hush, my dear ! It's a good house, and whenever that's the case, you know, Joe has the lumbago. Hush, don't tease him. Quite right, Joe—don't let any young men come behind my scenes—

JOE. I don't mean to.

BELL. Unless attended by their parents or guardians.

LORD BEAUMORRIS. (*without, shaking the door, c.*) Open this door, will you?

BELL. What's that?

LORD B. Open this door, will you? I wish to see Mr. Bellingham.

BELL. All right! Open the door, Joe. (*to JOSEPHINE*) Don't be out of the way, my dear, I wan't to see you presently. *JOSEPHINE retires through the scenes, R.*

LORD B. (*partly entering*) Oh, Bellingham, I hope I am not intruding? One of these ladies has a strong desire to see behind the scenes.

BELL. Pray come in, my lord—pray come in; so liberal a patron as yourself may claim that privilege anywhere.

*Enter LORD BEAUMORRIS, door, c., conducting LADY GARNET, followed by CAPTAIN CHIFFNEY CHALLONER, and MISS O'MORRISSEY, TOM WHIFFLER, and LADY CAROLINE; ALGERNON PERCEVAL follows and remains at back.*

LORD B. I am very glad to have an opportunity of saying how charmed we have been with your daughter's performance. Beautiful, really! so fresh and impulsive! Don't you think so, Lady Garnet?

LADY GARNET. (*using eye-glass and staring about*) Ye-es—ye-es! pretty well—pretty well. I remember Persiani and Jenny Lind in the character.

BELL. Ah, Lady Garnet must not exact too much from my humble establishment. We only profess native merit here; the air of Pevensey-super-Mare is too poor and too thin for exotics to flourish.

MISS O'MORRISSEY. Indeed, and I was never behind the scenes before. It's a droll place to be sure.

CAPTAIN CHALLONER. Yes; and when you come to play before the people in front you can't conceive what a strange sensation it is. Haw, haw!

MISS O'M. Oh, shure, I forgot, Captain Challoner, ye played once with the garrison. Was it frightened ye were?

CAPT. C. I don't know about being frightened exactly, but it was a most peculiar sensation. I couldn't see distinctly, and forgot all I had to say.

TOM. Ha, ha! I remember poor Chiff. You should have seen him, my dear Caroline—there he was, the finest cross-country man in the world (won the military steeple-chase with broken girths, and took the great jump with the saddle half round), looking for all the world as if he wanted to make a bolt through the stage fire-place, or down a trap-door, like the man in "Der Freischütz."

LADY CAROLINE. Ah, he hasn't had your experience as an amateur, remember.

CAPT. C. No, it wasn't in my way, so I resolved to give it up.

ALL. Ha! ha! ha!

BELL. Allow me to say as an old hand, Captain Challoner, that your discrimination does you credit.

LORD B. I liked your scenery too, Mr. Bellingham—much better than one generally sees in the provinces. Who is the artist?

BELL. An old and valued member of my company, my lord, and a self-taught man.

LADY G. Dear me! Another genius! Why really, Mr. —— (*as if forgetting the name*) Bellingham, your theatre is like a wild beast show, and full of the most wonderful animals! (*the COMPANY laugh*)

CAPT. C. Very good, indeed! So it is, egad!

BELL. Very kind of your ladyship to say so. Not so full though of remarkable animals, Captain Challoner, but we have room for a few more. The artist, my lord, is my old prompter and *factotum* there, Mr. Attwood.

LORD B. I must compliment you, Mr. Attwood. (*JOE advances*) Charming landscape! Very bold and effective. A fancy picture, now?

JOE. No, it isn't a fancy picture, now. It's a portrait of the artist—very bold and effective. (*the COMPANY stare at him*)

BELL. Hush, Joe! (*JOE retires*) A valuable servant, my lord, but odd, very odd.

LORD B. Oh, just so, Bellingham. Clever men frequently are.

CAPT. C. (*innocently*) Ah, that reminds me I've been told so myself.

LORD B. Indeed, I have been very pleased with the whole performance. Your *primo tenore* has a very sweet voice! Very melodious, indeed!

CAPT. C. And that buffo man—the Alessio fellow—very droll!

TOM. Yes, he's pretty well; but I've played the part myself as an amateur. I should like to show him what I did. It was very successful.

BELL. As a recognised member of the profession, he will be only too happy, I am sure, to learn from your experience.

LORD B. What was he now, originally?

BELL. A tragedian, my lord. I had the privilege of seeing him play the *Ghost* in "Hamlet," and such a subtle vein of rich humour pervaded the impersonation that I engaged him for principal comedy on the spot.

LORD B. (*referring to bill*) I observe he calls himself "Mr. Sam" in the programme. Why "Sam?"

BELL. It's a custom, my lord, among certain comedians—ladies as well as gentlemen—who seem to think an abbreviated Christian name is necessarily a short cut to popularity.

CAPT. C. By the way, Bellingham, you haven't introduced us to your daughter. I really should like to compliment her.

MISS O'M. Captain Challoner!

TOM. Oh, really she is a charming girl!

LADY G. For shame, Tom! You must not turn the poor little thing's head.

BELL. Why, at this moment I think she has returned to her dressing room.

TOM. No, egad! for there is the fair Amina herself, with Algernon too!

(*the COMPANY turn, and JOSEPHINE is seen between the wings, and ALGERNON about to speak to her—BELLINGHAM goes up between them, and brings down JOSEPHINE, L.*)

LORD B. Ah, pray introduce us! Your father, Miss Bellingham, may well be proud of his charming daughter. One can no longer wonder at Elvino's infatuation!

CAPT. C. Been delighted! Haw, haw!

MISS O'M. Sure, Captain, ye're enthusiastic this evening.

CAPT. C. Not at all. You should hear Whiffler.

TOM. Oh, quite charmed.

LADY C. I don't see the "charm" myself.

LADY G. No dear, she's young, and all that sort of thing, but wants style.

JOSEPHINE. (*aside*) And his voice alone is silent.

LADY G. But Algernon, dear child, have you no pretty speeches to turn the head of this charming and artless young person? Why I declare the dear boy is blushing! Come, come, we have never known you so silent before!

ALGER. (C.) Miss Bellingham will pardon me, I'm sure. With the admiration so fairly won, and so gallantly expressed by these gentlemen, and with the no less genuine tribute to her merit in the singular reticence of the ladies, my poor word of praise, however sincere, can well be spared.

TOM. Don't believe the young hypocrite, Miss Bellingham; a few weeks ago he was raving about you; and, would you believe it, my lord, Chiff and I overheard him practising the serenade from "Don Pasquale," with a view no doubt to the most charming *prima donna* in—

LADY G. (L. C.) Pevensey-super-Mare, of course! My dear Tom, when will you cut your wisdom teeth? (*crosses, L.*)

CAPT. C. (*coming down, C.*) Haw! haw! when, indeed!

TOM. My dear Chiff, that is so complicated a problem, I have thought of applying to her ladyship's dentist to supply me with an entire set.

CAPT. C. Haw! haw! not bad, egad! I think the old girl's jealous of your admiration of the actress.

TOM. Very likely! But the usual allowance for "age" in every handicap! (*they go up*)

LORD B. (R. C.) You sing very nicely, Miss Bellingham; have you studied under Italian masters?

JOSEPHINE. No, my lord, my mother taught me all I know.

LORD B. And she is—

JOSEPHINE. (*quietly*) Dead, my lord—two years ago.

LADY G. Dear me, is it possible! And yet to have seen you to-night so joyous, and—yes, so charming, one would think that you had never known any deeper sorrow than an unappreciative audience or an empty theatre.

JOSEPHINE. Whatever our griefs or our troubles, we must needs lay them aside for a few hours to be resumed with the black dress when the play is over.

LADY G. How strange! She's really a droll little thing, isn't she, Algernon?

ALGER. (R.) It is, indeed, a triumph of your art, Miss Bellingham, when such an acute observer as Lady Garnet wonders there can be true feeling under a fancy dress, or that grief exists without the parade of expensive mourning.

LADY G. (*turning up stage*) Thank you for pleading my cause so handsomely.

ALGER. (*crossing to JOSEPHINE and lowering his voice*) Miss Bellingham will believe, I am sure, that her best friends and truest admirers are not given to vapid compliment or conventional phrases and—

(JOSEPHINE looks down and betrays some emotion—

ALGERNON is about to convey to her a small note, which being observed by BELLINGHAM, who has retired up the stage, he comes quietly down between them and takes it)

BELL. (*significantly*) You are very kind, but you mustn't spoil my little girl.

ALGER. (*aside to him, confusedly*) Mr. Bellingham, it is a mistake.

BELL. (*quietly*) A very great one, believe me. (*a pause—* BELLINGHAM passes JOSEPHINE off, R.) We shall commence the last piece immediately my lord, if you prefer returning to your box.

LADY G. I would prefer returning home; provincial theatricals always bore me.

CAPT. C. Oh! let us see the farce.

LADY. G. You forget—Amina only appears in the Opera.

CAPT. C. Yes, but the funny fellow plays ; I like a good laugh.

TOM. Ha ! to be sure, an old part of mine at the garrison.

MISS O'M. That's lucky, Mr. Tom ; if the poor man forgets, ye can prompt him.

TOM. Why, for the matter of that, I could go on and play it. What d'ye say "Buck?" (*crosses to BELLINGHAM*)

BELL. (*coming forward*) I beg your pardon !

TOM. No ; I beg yours—a "lapsus linguae." But we, always speak of you as "Buck ;" that's your soubriquet.

BELL. (R.) Oh, indeed ?

TOM. Why, of course, you don't mean to say you didn't know that ?

BELL. Well, now you mention it, I believe I was once called so, but as the man was only a fool I overlooked it. *Exit, R. 1 E.*

TOM. Oh, just so—well come along !

LORD BEAUMORRIS and PARTY *exeunt through door*, C.—

ALGERNON is returning R., but meets BELLINGHAM who bows him out.

JOSEPHINE re-enters R., her manner changed from her previous constraint.

JOSEPHINE. Thank goodness, those stupid persons have gone, papa !

BELL. Hush, my child, don't speak so of our patrons and your admirers. (*taking her hands*) My darling never sang so well ! never looked so like her dear mamma ! But why were you not at rehearsal this morning ? Even your old friend and champion, Joe, lost his temper and remarked, truly enough, that when the *prima donna* neglected her business, there was not much to hope from the choristers.

JOSEPHINE. The day was so lovely, papa, I went into the country and—and—

BELL. Well, well, we'll overlook it this time in consideration of your success. His lordship's party were very complimentary.

JOSEPHINE. Yes, but I don't care about that kind of compliment, papa ; I don't know which is the more hard to endure, the fulsome praise of the men, or the well-bred sneers and polite rudeness of the women.

BELL. My dear child, don't let that vex you ; it's the tax you pay for that transitory possession we call popularity. It is yours to-night; but a professional *fiasco*, or a rival's triumph would transfer it to another to-morrow, and your admirers would all vanish like those sagacious vermin that we are told quit a sinking ship or a falling house. So make your professional hay, my Josephine, while the sun shines, and there's

no season for that like the early summer of a woman's life : that's the time when the farmers cut their grass, and if it isn't stacked by the autumn and well thatched in by the winter, the crop's a useless one, believe me. But come, change your dress and away home. I cannot leave yet ; but Mrs. Durdham will take care of you. Durdham ! (*Entr'acte Music played behind scenes, p.*)

*Enter MRS. DURDHAM, a dresser, L. 3 E.*

See Miss Bellingham home to-night, will you ? Take care of yourself, Josey ; don't take cold.

*Exit through the door, L.—JOSEPHINE remains lost in thought—one or two ACTORS enter (dress for the farce), L. 2 E., and pass to stage.*

MRS. D. Come, deary, come ; you'll take cold if you stand in the draughts.

JOSEPHINE. Yes, yes. Oh, I want to speak to Attwood. I'll come directly, Durdham dear.

MRS. D. Yes, dear, yes ; I'll wait for 'ee.

JOSEPHINE. No, Durdham dear, I feel so chilly ; fetch me a shawl—the thick one, please.

MRS. D. Aye, sure.

*Exit, L. 2 E.*

(*JOE rings up the curtain, and the Entr'acte Music stops—Exit JOE, R., between the scenes—a slight pause*)

*Enter ALGERNON, cautiously, from door, C.*

ALGER. (*seeing JOSEPHINE*) At last, Josephine, my darling !

JOSEPHINE. (*running to him*) Algernon !

ALGER. I have scarcely a moment ! To-night—we must go to night ! It is our only chance !

JOSEPHINE. No, no ! Not to-night ! I cannot leave my dear papa—my best, my only friend ! He would never forgive me ; never look on me again. Oh, let me tell him all ! He is always kind and just to me.

ALGER. But not to me ! You know he would put no faith in my assertions. How often have you told me that behind the mask of that bland and courteous manner, lurks a distrust of all who move in the sphere which you, dear girl, I hope will one day share with me. You know, were I to explain to him the stern and proud nature of my own father it would be of no avail. To propose to him the step we contemplate, would be our instant separation and ruin to my fondest hopes. Oh, Josephine, if you have ever loved me as you owned you do, do not hesitate.

JOSEPHINE. To-morrow, Algernon. Give me time to think, until to morrow.

ALGER. To-morrow will be too late. A note which I intended for you he has obtained. My darling, we must decide at once. If you risk danger, so do I. Only a few years! We will live quietly abroad. At Sir Philip's death how gladly I shall proclaim you as Lady Perceval! and will not that be some recompense for a few years of suspense or—

BELL. (*without, L.*) Just follow me this way, will you?

JOSEPHINE. Oh, make haste, go at once, pray go!

ALGER. Remember, our old trysting place at twelve. Bless you my love—my wife! *Exit through door, C.*

*Re-enter BELLINGHAM, he has a printer's proof bill in his hand. on which the title "Faust and Marguerite" is seen, followed by CADBY SCRATTLE, a printer's assistant, about 19 years of age; MRS. DURDHAM at the same time enters with shawl.*

BELL. (*crossing to prompter's table, R. C.*) What, Josey, not gone home yet?

JOSEPHINE. No, papa, I was waiting for my shawl.

MRS. D. (*adjusting the shawl*) Purty dear, see how it's trembling with the cold.

JOSEPHINE. Good night, papa. I shall come and say good night before I go.

BELL. All right, my love, run along; I am busy, and have this bill to correct. (*he sits at table correcting bill—SCRATTLE crosses and stands by his side*)

JOSEPHINE. Durdham, dear, let me wait a little; I want to speak to papa before I go. (*on sofa, L. C., MRS. DURDHAM attending*)

BELL. Who set this bill up? Not the foreman, surely?

SCRAT. No, sir, I did?

BELL. Full of mistakes. Bless my heart alive, my good lad, what have you been about? (*reads*) "Mephistopheles, Mrs. Booth Richardson." Why you've given the devil to my principal old woman! Mephistopheles is not an estimable character, I admit, but with my knowledge of the lady in question, poor devil! he must be blacker than he's painted to deserve a fate like that!

SCRAT. Fact is, sir, the foreman's been out all day, so I assisted.

BELL. I see,—clearly not in your department.

SCRAT. Well, no, sir; fact is, I'm on the staff.

BELL. Oh, I see, literary.

SCRAT. Yes, sir; I hope, sir, you liked that paragraph in the Pevensey Post last Saturday?

BELL. The Pevensey Post?

SCRAT. Yes, sir, that's our paper.

BELL. Has the title of the Post any reference to the quality of the staff?

SCRAT. The paragraph was very complimentary to Miss Bellingham.

BELL. So it ought to be. She's one in a thousand.

SCRAT. Yes, sir; that's the very observation I made.

BELL. You?

SCRAT. Yes, sir, I wrote it. I am learning to report.

BELL. (*still correcting proof*) Oh! what, you go in for the "accidents" and the "devouring element" and the police cases, eh?

SCRAT. (*innocently*) No, sir; the editor says I am not sufficiently advanced for that, so I do the dramatic criticisms.

BELL. (*looks at him, bows politely, and takes his hand*) My dear sir—my very dear sir, allow me in the name of my profession to return to the editor of the Pevensey Post our heartfelt thanks.

SCRAT. Oh, sir, don't name it. Anything I can do I will, I am sure.

BELL. Just so; here is the bill corrected. I have no doubt you have very little time on your hands, so for the future set the bill up correctly and *never mind the critiques*.

(SCRATTLE *retires through R. 1 E.—BELLINGHAM seeing JOSEPHINE, crosses to her*)

BELL. Why, my dear, I thought you had gone home long since.

JOSEPHINE. I staid to say good night, papa.

BELL. Oh, good night, my love, good night. (*going*)

JOSEPHINE. Papa, will you kiss me before you go?

BELL. (*laughing*) Why my little girl, what's all this about?

D'ye take me for "Elvino?" "Ah, embrace me!"

JOSEPHINE. Papa, dearest and kindest papa, ever since a little child you have taken me to your heart and kissed me, and called me your darling! and all those dear kind words seem to be coming back to me to-night. Whatever you may have seemed to others, to me you have always been so patient and so loving, and I want to tell you to-night, dear papa, once more how I have loved and blessed you in my heart, in my prayers, for all your goodness to me.

BELL. Durdham, bring me a chair. (MRS. DURDHAM *brings forward a chair; he sits, and drawing JOSEPHINE to him, she kneels by his side*) My darling, what is all this?

JOSEPHINE. My heart is so full—so full! If I have ever grieved you, dear papa, forgive me! and oh, believe how I do love you!—more than ever, more than ever, to-night! I never knew till now the love I really feel.

BELL. My Josephine, I know it. The love of a good girl

for her father is only surpassed by her devotion to her husband when the time comes—(*JOSEPHINE hiding her face on her father's knee*) and time enough for that. But come, come, the excitement of to-night has been too much for thee! Ah, my little *prima donna*, you must get used to this and learn to take praise and blame with an equal hand. You should take example, my love, from that native gentleman of Africa, called a rhinoceros. He belongs to the highly gifted family of the pachydermatous animals. Nothing hurts him. He doesn't sing so well, perhaps, as my little warbler here; but he's a great philosopher, and regards the odour of a bouquet, and the ball of a musket, with equal indifference.

*JOSEPHINE.* Papa, dear, I have had strange thoughts lately. If I were to die, I know you would grieve after me; but if I ever were so wicked as to leave you—would you forgive me?

*BELL.* (*after a pause, and looking narrowly at her*) My darling, you never have deceived me, and I cannot think you will begin now. Durdham, assist my daughter, she is not well. Now, my darling, gently. Durdham, take care of her.

*JOSEPHINE.* (*going, and returns with strong emotion*) My dear, kind father! once more bless you! Oh! bless you, and thank you!

*Exit, L. 1 E., and MRS. DURDHAM.*

*BELL.* (*thoughtfully*) Humph; hysterical, eh?

*Re-enter SCRATTLE, R. 1 E.*

*SCRAT.* (*modestly*) Sir, Mr. Bellingham—

*BELL.* (*sharply*) Eh? Oh—

*SCRAT.* I—I—sir—sir, will you do me a favour?

*BELL.* Pass you to the front of the house—certainly, this way. (*goes up and opens door, C.*)

*SCRAT.* (*fumbling in his jacket pocket*) No, sir, it's something here; if you will look at it, please, it isn't long.

*BELL.* Eh?

*SCRAT.* (*producing a very large roll of MS.*) It's a little piece I have written.

*BELL.* Oh, lor! Oh—a farce or a burlesque?

*SCRAT.* No, sir, it's an original tragedy.

*BELL.* Ah, it's all the same.

*SCRAT.* (*recovering his nerve*) It's in blank verse. (*gives it*)

*BELL.* (*weighing it in his hand*) Yes, it appears heavy.

*SCRAT.* (*pompously*) I should like it produced next Monday.

*BELL.* (*quietly*) Oh, I am afraid we shouldn't be quite ready by Monday. What is the subject?

*SCRAT.* Beautiful thing. Feudal subject. Scene laid in the Highlands. I should want some good scenery of course. "Margaret Macgregor's Vengeance, or the Flag of Truce."

BELL. (*turning over the MS.*) "Flag of Truce," eh? Better call it an "armistice."

SCRAT. Why, sir?

BELL. Because an armistice means a patched-up peace, and of only short duration.

SCRAT. Well, what do you think of the Monday following?

BELL. Very good—stay, one moment though—ah, that's bad.

SCRAT. What, sir?

BELL. We unfortunately terminate our season the Saturday previous.

SCRAT. Oh, but can't you prolong it?

BELL. I'm afraid not this time. You must prevail on Miss Macgregor to defer her vengeance a little; or have you tried the London Market?

SCRAT. What, the Haymarket?

BELL. No, no! Clare Market, or Newport Market; I'm told they give the best price for all kinds of MS. there.

SCRAT. Well, I'll think it over. By the way, I've got a fashionable comedy at home, I'll let you see it.

BELL. (*dryly*) Thank you.

SCRAT. I've drawn the scene from high life.

BELL. From personal observation?

SCRAT. Not precisely. No chance for the tragedy? Ah, great pity! Capital part for Miss B. Good night, Bellingham.

*Swaggers out, L. 1. E.*

BELL. (*laughs quietly*) That young man will get on: he has all the elements of success in him. "*Possunt quia posse videntur.*"

*Re-enter JOE, R.*

Joe, get on with the performance, I don't want to be late.

*Exit, L. 1 E.*

*Re-enter TOM and CAPTAIN CHALLONER, door, C.*

TOM. Come along, Chiff. It's a relief to get away from those stupid people. Where's the fair Amina got to? By the way, did you ever see any one so sweet as Lady Garnet is on Perceval? Ha! ha! poor Percy! he doesn't know where to go or what to say. The watchful eyes of her ladyship follow him everywhere.

CAPT. C. Haw! haw! When Percy comes to his title if she doesn't share it with him it won't be the old girl's fault.

TOM. Well, Percy's a great flirt himself. Why, last year he was head over years in love with the O'Morrissey.

CAPT. C. No, no, hang it, man! Miss O'Morrissey is too good for him.

TOM. Ah, true! I forgot your *pencent* in that quarter. We can see them in the box from here.

(*looking round the wing on stage*)

JOE. Now then, you mustn't be there, you know, you're in sight of the audience.

TOM. All right.

JOE. No, it's not "all right." I wish you'd go back to your place.

CAPT. C. What's the matter, man? I've been here before.

JOE. Very well, you've seen all you can see for your money; now go back.

TOM. (*who has found a "property" helmet which he puts on*) Look here, Chiff! (*strikes an attitude*) "I am thy father's spirit!"

CAPT. C. (*convulsed with laughter*) Haw, haw, haw! devilish funny fellow you are, Tom!

JOE. Now then, put that down! It isn't made for boys to play with. (*takes the helmet from him*)

TOM. I say, old gentleman, you're rather free and easy!

JOE. Yes, young gentleman, I am free and easy; and what do you think of that?

CAPT. C. Perhaps the old boy's thirsty; tip him, Tom.

TOM. (*offering coin*) Ah,—here!

JOE. What's that for?

TOM. Go and liquor!

JOE. No, thank you—you might want it yourself; there's a sweetstuff shop outside.

CAPT. C. You're a very insolent fellow.

TOM. If he were not so old, I'd—

JOE. Oh, no, you wouldn't; I should do it first.

*Re-enter BELLINGHAM, letter in his hand.*

BELL. What's the matter?

TOM. This fellow's excessively impertinent, he wants to turn us out.

BELL. Pray, make an allowance for my old servant; he's only obeying orders; he's quite right.

TOM. Well, but—

BELL. (*politely opening door, c.*) No, pray pardon me; you pay for the front of the house during the performance. When it's all over I shall be delighted to see you.

*He politely shows them out—his manner then changes to one of deep earnestness—he crosses the stage to and fro, as in doubt.*

Attwood, how long will the piece play, now?

JOE. How long? Why, of course, as long as it always does, five or six minutes.

BELL. Attwood,—here! (*puts the letter into his hand*) Read that.

JOE. (*reading slowly*) "My dearest and best father, can you forgive me?"—

BELL. (*with suppressed emotion*) Not aloud, Joe, not aloud.

JOE. Why, sir, what does it mean? Who is it from? (*looking for signature*) "Josephine." Miss Bellingham? I can't make it out.

BELL. (*giving the note opened, which he had previously taken from ALGERNON*) This may explain.

JOE. Gone! our Josephine gone!

BELL. You see.

JOE. Mr. Bellingham,—sir, I can't believe it. I was with you when the little girl was born; and when—(*with emotion*) when her mother died. I know, sir, how kind a father you have always been, and how fair a master, and what you have done for me, sir, for me! What can I do for you, now? Let me go and ring the curtain down.

BELL. No, Joe, no. The public have paid for the performance, let them have it. What have they to do with our griefs? (*with strong feeling*) Joe, you—you have mentioned her mother. You at least know how proud I have been of our child—you at least know how devotedly I have watched her progress hour by hour, and step by step: you at least know what I feel now at losing her! Joe, I tell you I would rather have seen my little daughter dead, than I would have lived to meet this hour of bitter—bitter grief!

JOE. Mr. Bellingham—governor! I have seen something of the world, and I have come to the conclusion that the female gender is the female gender all the world over; but excuse me if I say I'll be hanged if I believe a word against our Josephine! (BELLINGHAM turning aside, and giving JOE his hand) Mr. Bellingham, my dear governor, you are ill; let me get you—(*knock heard at door, c.*)

BELL. No! hark, they are coming back.

*Enter LORD BEAUMORRIS and PARTY, from door, c.*

LORD B. We'll go out this way, if you please, and avoid the crowd.

BELL. (*recovering his usual manner*) Any way your lordship prefers.

LORD B. Very good performance indeed.

LADY G. Is the playacting over now, Mr. Bellingham?

BELL. Not quite, your ladyship.

LORD B. Your daughter's gone home, I suppose?

BELL. I hope so, my lord. Joe get me a chair.

LADY G. By the way, where can Algernon be?

MISS O'M. Sure, I think he's gone home to write a sonnet on ye.

LORD B. (*crossing to L., with LADY GARNET*) Well, good evening, Bellingham, good evening—very pleased indeed.

*The PARTY cross, L., and exeunt, saying, "Good evening,"*

*BELLINGHAM politely bows them off.*

BELL. (*when all are off*) Ring down the curtain, Joe, the farce is over.

(*he sinks in the chair overcome by grief—JOE is seen to ring down the curtain as the ACTORS of the piece come on and form a picture*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

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## ACT II.

### AMATEURS.

SCENE.—*A Room in the Country Seat of Lord Beaumorris, arranged for amateur theatricals; a "fit up," or curtains with elevated platform.*

LADY CAROLINE discovered at piano, R. U. E.—TOM and CAPTAIN CHALLONER standing by her—ALGERNON and MISS O'MORRISSEY conversing on sofa, L.—LADY GARNET seated R. on ottoman, observing them—TRESSILLIAN at back talking to LADY

TOM. Excellent! Lady Caroline, you sing divinely; Chiff, don't roll about so in your bass. Now, then, for our last rehearsal. Ah, Lady Garnet, I wish you could have been induced to sustain a character in my comedy. I have a charming love scene.

LADY G. You foolish boy, I cannot simulate affection. Let others play at making love, I prefer to look on. (*glancing at ALGERNON and MISS O'MORRISSEY*)

TOM. And you too, Perceval! What a fellow you are, you ought to have the principal part.

ALGER. Who, I? No thank you, you'll play it much better than I.

MISS O'M. Sure, Mr. Perceval, your wife monopolises all the ability. Truth to say, she seems a born actress!

PERCE. Yes. (*uneasily*) She is very clever!

CAPT. C. Clever, sir, that's not the word, she is a wonder! I wish some one would have my part, I don't think it's in my way.

TOM. Nonsense, man, I wrote it for you; come here and I'll coach you. (*they retire*)

MISS O'M. (*who has seated herself by the side of LADY GARNET*) Have ye any idea, now, where Perceval met his wife?

LADY G. (R.) I believe abroad, about two years ago.

MISS O'M. Have they been married that time?

LADY G. (*drily*) I don't know, they have a child about that age.

MISS O'M. Sure Emily, dear, I shouldn't be surprised if she's just nobody at all! It must have been a love match! And, I assume, his affection is intense?

LADY G. Perceval can console himself in her absence. it seems, my dear.

MISS O'M. Do ye imply, Emily, dear, that the foolish fellow has repented once and for all?

LADY G. Maria, it is not for me to imply anything. If Perceval can find a solace in other persons' society, his wife can at least be equally consoled by attentions of his lordship.

MISS O'M. What is it ye mean?

LADY G. My love, I object to make any personal remarks, but you must observe how assiduously that person since her arrival two days ago has laid herself out to captivate his lordship.

MISS O'M. Emily, ye surprise me! I couldn't have believed it!

LADY G. Maria, don't be absurd, you have believed and observed too as well as I.

TOM. (*coming down*) You're perfect, Chiff. But where is Mrs. Perceval? We cannot commence rehearsal without her.

ALGER. I left her in the library reading to his lordship the report of his speech in the county paper.

LADY G. I never saw Lord Beaumorris so charmed before! And no wonder, Mrs. Perceval is so singularly attractive.

MISS O'M. With such a treasure as ye possess, Mr. Perceval, I wonder ye can live away from her half a moment.

ALGER. The society of Miss O'Morrissey and Lady Garnet would console me under the greatest privation.

LADY G. (*aside*) Fool! you don't blind me.

CAPT. C. But see, here comes our absent one. Enter, enter! an impatient public anxiously awaits you. (*clapping his hands*)

*Enter LORD BEAUMORRIS with newspaper, and JOSEPHINE, brilliantly dressed.*

LORD B. We have not kept your rehearsal waiting, I hope? If so, the fault is entirely mine. Here, Perceval, is the county paper, with a little speech of mine which your charming wife has just done me the honour to read, and has proved how irresistible the homeliest language may become when assisted by the graces of delivery and elocution.

JOSEPHINE. Your lordship has omitted to state how easy is the task when assisted by the indulgence of a generous audience. (*aside*) He was by her side again! (*glancing at Miss O'MORRISSEY*)

LADY G. (*apart*) Maria?

MISS O'M. It's true for you. I'll say something. Mrs. Perceval, have you ever been to Ireland?

JOSEPHINE. Never,—have you?

MISS O'M. Sure I was borrn there! (*with strong accent*)

JOSEPHINE. Dear me! Is it possible!

MISS O'M. I was going to tell you of a wonderful stone, which they call the "Blarney Stone;" probably, they have imported a portion of it into this country.

JOSEPHINE. Probably. We have, I believe, occasional importations from that country which we could very well do without.

MISS O'MORRISSEY looks at her severely and retires.

LADY G. Where have I seen this woman's face? But perhaps Mrs. Perceval has no taste for curiosities? (*using eye-glass*)

JOSEPHINE. (*looking at her steadily*) Not if they are simply antiquities.

LADY GARNET looks severely, and retires.

ALGER. (*who has been up the stage reading the paper*) Very forcibly put indeed, my lord; but see, here we have a paragraph that interests us all!

ALL. Oh, pray read it!

ALGER. (*reads*) "Christmas Festivities at Feltham Hall.—We hear that preparations are on foot at the hospitable seat of Lord Beaumorris for commemorating this festive period in the usual liberal spirit of that distinguished nobleman and enlightened statesman. Among other amusements the amateur theatricals will be enriched by an original comedy from the pen of one of the guests of his lordship, and our subscribers and the literary world generally will be glad to hear that our able collaborateur, Cadby Scrattle, Esq., has supplied an occasional prologue for the purpose."

LORD B. Ah, by the way, a very able young man, I am

told! But is it true, my dear Miss O'Morrissey, that we are to lose your valuable aid this evening?

MISS O'M. Sure, your lordship, it's my duty calls me away! I shall travel by the mail and leave for Cork by to-morrow's boat, and with the poor abilities I possess ye'll never miss me. Mr. Perceval, will ye favour me with your arm? (*ALGERNON crosses to her, and offers arm*)

JOSEPHINE. Algernon!

MISS O'M. Oh, I won't keep him long! Ye don't mind his opening the door for me? *He conducts her to the door.*

JOSEPHINE. (*as he returns, apart*) Algernon, don't speak to that woman.

ALGER. Nonsense, Josephine, nonsense! We must conform to the usages of society!

JOSEPHINE. My heart tells me she is a wicked and dangerous woman!

ALGER. Hush! (*they retire*)

TOM. Well, let us begin our rehearsal. Oh! my lord, I omitted to tell you—(*seating himself by LORD BEAUMORRIS, and speaking apart, unheard by JOSEPHINE and ALGERNON*) That I have asked old Bellingham—you remember him?—old Bland Bellingham had the Pevensey place two years ago—to look in, and put us through our facings; very good fellow, you know—had some domestic trouble I am told—very much changed—has even left off his wig!

LORD B. Oh, yes, I remember—quite right; but I presume as proprietor of the establishment I may claim the privilege of witnessing the rehearsals. Whose play is it? Shakespeare's?

TOM. Oh, no. I wrote it.

LORD B. Oh, come then, suppose you begin. Mrs. Perceval, you have a part of course, but until you are required sit by me and explain as they go on. (*they sit\**) What do you call the play, Tom?

TOM. At present I haven't thought of a name-

LADY G. (R.) Ah, that is a good oversight. A "title" is often a great attraction, don't you think so, Mrs. Perceval?

JOSEPHINE. Sometimes it is the *only* one, "Lady" Garnet.

TOM. Now, then, I'll be manager. Places, places!

*Enter BARTON (servant) with card to LORD BEAUMORRIS, door, L. 2 E.*

LORD B. "Cadby Scrattle, with compliments and prologue." Oh, he had better come in, I think, eh?

TOM. Oh, let him wait, my lord. Barton!

BARTON. Sir!

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\* LORD BEAUMORRIS, L.    JOSEPHINE, L. L. C.    ALGERNON, L. C.

TOM. (*apart*) Has Mr. Bellingham called?

BART. No, sir.

TOM. Or his assistant?

BART. No, sir.

TOM. Then I shall want you to pull up the curtains, so go behind and be ready.

BART. Yes, sir.

*Exit, door L.*

TOM. I was speaking of the painting fellow, my lord, who did some of the scenery.

LORD. B. I thought, Tom, you had undertaken that?

TOM. So I have: one scene which you shall see. Well, now, I propose that we begin where we left off last time.

CAPT. C. Very good: what's my dress to be? Will it fit me?

TOM. Let me see, you are "Don Lorenzo," a Spanish nobleman; it's sure to fit you; it's been sent from London! Now then, Challoner, "Don Lorenzo," and you Tressillian, "Guzman," get to your places—you begin. Barton, are you ready?

BART. (*behind the curtain*) Yes, sir.

TOM. The first scene is my painting, "An exterior of a Spanish mansion, with garden and terrace." Now then, Barton, when I strike the bell, go! (*he strikes a gong-bell, the curtains are drawn aside; and discover a perfectly white scene, with one or two red marks*) Hollo, what's that? Don't come on yet, Chiff. It's some mistake. (*he steps on the stage to examine*).

LORD B. It has a very strange effect! What is it meant to represent? a fog?

JOSEPHINE. The distemper appears to have been prevalent in the locality, and the Spanish mansion has shared in the epidemic.

ALGER. Or in anticipation of the calamity, the noble proprietor has taken a hint from our sanitary commissioners, and has whitewashed the building.

TOM. (*returns*) I see the water colour has dried in—that's all. Well, go on. Now, Chiff, you open the scene.

CAPT. C. (*putting his head round proscenium, L.*) Where do I come from?

TOM. Eh? don't come from there, or you'll meet "Don Guzman."

CAPT. C. Well, why shouldn't I meet "Don Guzman?" It's quite probable!

TOM. Yes, but wait a moment, he must follow you—of course he is pursuing you—what must we do? "Don Guzman," you come—no, I mean "Lorenzo," you come—let me see.

JOSEPHINE. Algernon, are these "diversions" usual in good society?

ALGER. Sometimes. Why?

JOSEPHINE. Society is more really diverting than I had supposed.

CAPT. C. What does the book say?

TOM. (*referring to MS.*) "Enter Don Lorenzo, wounded by a shot from Don Guzman's pistol."

CAPT. C. How are they to know I am wounded by a shot from 'Guzman's' pistol?

TOM. I didn't think of that. Couldn't you say you saw the miscreant lurking behind the trees?

CAPT. C. I can say so, you know, but it won't prove the fellow hit me, you know.

TOM. Ah, true!

ALGER. Allow me! Couldn't you, "Lorenzo," have received a threatening letter, saying, that unless reparation were instantly made—or your rent immediately paid--or whatever it is—death would be your inevitable doom?

CAPT. C. That's nonsense, because, I take it, death is the inevitable doom of everybody.

JOSEPHINE. I have it! You, Lorenzo, want to prove you've been wounded by a shot from Guzman's pistol?

TOM.

CAPT. C. } Yes, yes.

JOSEPHINE. Very well, show them the bullet.

ALL. Ah, very good, very good!

LORD B. Ha, ha! capital! You had better let Mrs. Perceval direct your stage; she knows more about it than all you fellows put together.

TOM. Ah, if Mrs. Perceval only would!

JOSEPHINE. (*jumping up*) Who? I? With pleasure!

ALGER. Josephine! what are you about?

JOSEPHINE. Oh, Algernon, it's my native air! I must breathe it. (*takes MS. from TOM, seats herself in c. of stage, back to audience, and directs*) Now, then, "Enter Lorenzo, wounded."

*CAPTAIN CHALLONER comes on L., walking easily, and swinging his arms, and carefully disregarding emphasis and punctuation.*

CAPT. C. "I am wounded severely could I but see my Leonora once again!"

JOSEPHINE. Yes, but you are not wounded severely, you seem to be in robust health.

CAPT. C. But I've told 'em I'm wounded severely, what more can I do?

TOM. Mrs. Perceval is quite right. You ought to stagger and totter. (*illustrating by action, extremely grotesque*)

CAPT. C. I can't stagger and totter—I never could.

JOSEPHINE. Then there's an end of the matter. You can't teach a man to stagger and totter in half-an-hour. Let's see, where's the scene laid?

TOM. In Spain.

JOSEPHINE. Well, perhaps persons wounded in Spain don't stagger and totter ; go on, Lorenzo.

LORD B. I beg your pardon, but where I sit I can't hear a word Challoner says.

JOSEPHINE. Probably your lordship is to be congratulated. Go on, Lorenzo.

CAPT. C. "Some one approaches, let me die and retire."

*Turns round one or twice in indecision as to where to go off, with back, L., audience, and strolls off easily, R.*

JOSEPHINE. Here, stop, stop ! Come back.

CAPT. C. (*looking round, R. of proscenium*) Do you mean me ? What for ?

JOSEPHINE. You mustn't die and retire yet ! You've cut an entire scene out.

CAPT. C. Eh ? I believe I have.

JOSEPHINE. And for the future you'll find it easier to retire first and die afterwards.

CAPT. C. Ah, yes, thank you.

*He retires and noise of falling heard—all start up—he puts his head round wing.*

It's all right ! I'm not hurt !

*Retires, R.*

JOSEPHINE. Now, enter "Donna Inez." Who plays "Donna Inez?"

TOM. Ah, there I pull up. It was to have been played by Miss O'Morrissey. What are we to do ? It's an admirable part.

JOSEPHINE. An Irish girl ?

TOM. No, Spanish. Donna Inez, my lord, is in love with the hero—that's the part Perceval should have played—he deeply admires "Floranthe" (Mrs. Perceval's character). Inez, a jealous and unprincipled woman, strives to part them.

JOSEPHINE. (*with meaning*) Miss O'Morrissey would have played the part to perfection. Perhaps in her absence Lady Garnet will kindly undertake the character ?

LADY G. No, thank you. I have no theatrical sympathies whatever. (*a slight pause—LADY GARNET and JOSEPHINE looking narrowly at each other*)

JOSEPHINE. Pardon me. Your ladyship's perfect control of emotion is ev'dence to the contrary.

LADY G. You are complimentary. (*aside*) I will find out who this woman is.

TOM. Well, pass over "Donna Inez," I say, Chiff—

CAPT. C. (*reappears*) Eh?

TOM. Don't turn your back when you go off.

CAPT. C. My dear fellow, I couldn't help it.

TOM. He mustn't turn his back, must he, Mrs. Perceval?

JOSEPHINE. Certainly he may if he likes! (*half aside*)

They'll have seen his face long enough by this time!

ALGER. Josephine!

LORD B. Be quiet, my dear boy! This is perfectly charming! Say whatever you like, my dear madam, say whatever you like.

JOSEPHINE. Certainly, as stage directress it's my privilege.

*Enter BARTON, door, L., showing in SCRATTLE—he is in elaborate evening dress—his manner assertive and bumptious—he bows profusely, the COMPANY treating him superciliously.*

SCRAT. Good evening to your lordship—good evening! I ventured to call, my lord—(*to LADIES*) good evening—with the trifles—(*to TOM*) good evening—the prologue—(*to TRESSILLIAN*) good evening! I think it's about the thing. Shall I read it? (*takes printed slip from pocket—all stare at him*) "When learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes—"

TOM. No, we don't want the prologue thing now!

SCRATTLE. It isn't long—"When learning's triumph—"

CAPT. C. (*on the stage*) No, do be quiet!

SCRAT. (*turning and seeing him*) Oh, good evening! By the way, I have prepared a short account of the performances if you would like to peruse it. I think it will do.

TOM. Why, man, alive, you have never given us a critique before the performance has taken place?

SCRAT. Humph! Oh, yes, we do these things sometimes.

TOM. Oh, well, let's get on to my scene.

JOSEPHINE. Let's see, what are you?

TOM. I'm Leporello, the comic servant—you know.

JOSEPHINE. Oh yes! I never knew a Spanish comedy without a comic servant; and of course your master beats you?

TOM. Yes! how did you know?

JOSEPHINE. Masters always do beat comic servants in Spanish comedies. Now, "Leporello," ready.

*Exit TOM WHIFFLER, door L.*

Now, Don Guzman!

TRESSILLIAN as "Don Guzman," a "gentlemanly creature," enters and speaks as he crosses from L. to R.

TRES. "My rival is wounded severely, but I will follow him to his grave."

*Exit, R.*

ALGER. That's a fellow of very few words.

LORD B. Who is he now?

JOSEPHINE. I am not quite sure. (*refers to MS. and adopts TRESSILLIAN's voice*) "I will follow him to his grave." Oh, probably the undertaker, or, to judge from his reticence, one of the mutes.

*Enter TOM as "Leporello"—the audience (on the stage) applaud—*

CAPTAIN CHALLONER's hands appear, R., clapping—TOM shuffles his feet about as amateurs do, when he begins to speak.

TOM. "It strikes me my master Don Guzman is a great scamp. I tremble with apprehension."

LORD B. Why does he shuffle his feet about so?

JOSEPHINE. He is trembling with apprehension, my lord.

LORD B. Oh, I see, yes! very good.

SCRAT. (*jumps up*) I beg pardon, I see a good opening here for a comic song. I have the words in my pocket—no, that's the prologue.

TOM. I say, look here, you put me out; I wish you wouldn't (*shuffling his feet*) "with apprehension, but I dare say some fine day I shall square accounts."

CAPTAIN CHALLONER *strolls on easily*, R.

TOM. What do you come on for, Challoner?

CAPT. C. I beg pardon, I thought it was all over.

TOM. Nothing of the kind, I have only just commenced.

TRESSILLIAN *returns*, R.

TRESS. (*crosses to TOM*) Here, I say, how ought I to say this? "It is my father!"

TOM. Throw up your arm with a gesture of astonishment, thus—(*throws up his arm and strikes CAPTAIN CHALLONER, who has his back partly turned*) beg pardon, Chiff!

CAPT. C. All right—confound it. I think I go off here?

TOM. No, you go off there!

TRESS. I go off there!

TOM. No, you go—

TRESS. Well, but— } (altogether)

CAPT. C. But look here!

TOM. Well, I ought to know—I wrote it—(*JOSEPHINE claps her hands to call attention*) It's no use, we can't rehearse, unless we have our dresses on.

ALL. Very true, very true! (*they come from the stage*)

CAPT. C. (*advancing to JOSEPHINE*) Mrs. Perceval, how do I get on? I don't profess this kind of thing.

JOSEPHINE. Quite right. Have you ever played before?

CAPT. C. Once, with the garrison, for charity.

JOSEPHINE. Then, for charity, never play again.

CAPT. C. (*not seeing it*) No, only to please my friends.

LORD B. I think, Mrs. Perceval, after the exertions of your company, I may venture to propose some refreshment.

TOM. Ah, yes ; and then let us put on our dresses, and commence in earnest. (*they retire up the stage conversing*)

ALGER. Josephine—(*she goes to him*) pray be careful, restrain yourself—you will betray our secret.

JOSEPHINE. Ah, Algernon, I feel now how wrong I have been to make my former life a secret at all. Why should I have done so ? Why struggle to sustain the artificial character I cannot act ?

ALGER. My darling, it is for your husband's sake.

JOSEPHINE. My poor dear father ! If you only knew how this miserable diversion has brought me back to him. Oh, when may I write to him, when may I see him ?

ALGER. Be patient, my dear girl, and trust to me.

LORD B. Come, then, Mrs. Perceval, will you do me the honour ?

*Offers arm and leads her out, door R.—SCRATTLE advances and offers arm to LADY CAROLINE—TOM intercepts him—then to the other LADY—same business by TRESSILLIAN—then to CAPTAIN CHALLONER, who does not see him—and last to LADY GARNET, who looks contemptuously at him—ALL exeunt except LADY GARNET and PERCEVAL.*

ALGER. Lady Garnet, may I have the honour ?

LADY G. (*seating herself*) No ; I shall remain here.

ALGER. You seem faint ; may I ring for the servant ?

LADY G. No ; I am quite well.

ALGER. Will you allow me to remain here with you ?

LADY G. (*decidedly*) No ; you had better remain by your wife's side.

ALGER. Oh, his lordship will take care of Josephine !

LADY G. Of whom ?

ALGER. (*looking at her suspiciously*) Of—Mrs. Perceval.

LADY G. Of course ; and his lordship's attentions are by no means unacceptable.

ALGER. Lady Garnet !

LADY G. My poor blind boy, cannot you comprehend ? or has your infatuation for your charming wife destroyed all your perception ?

ALGER. What do you mean ?

LADY G. Good gracious, Perceval ! do you mean to say that the efforts that lady is making to attract Lord Beaumorris—do you mean to tell me that the evident pains she takes to make herself the centre of admiration by all the men are entirely lost upon you ? You are an indulgent husband I

know—very, very indulgent; but I could scarcely have believed you were such a fool. (*crosses*, L.)

ALGER. Lady Garnet! this extraordinary excitement—

LADY G. Remember, Perceval, I knew you when you were little more than a boy! Can I bear to see you hoodwinked in this way?

ALGER. (*aside*) I could almost swear she was jealous of my Josephine. Lady Garnet, you have always been most kind to me. I have not forgotten how, when a schoolboy, I used to pass my holidays at your house in the lifetime of Sir Charles.

LADY G. Sir Charles was much older than I, Algernon.

ALGER. But you must not mistake the frank and ingenuous nature of my wife—or at any rate for the future, Lady Garnet, you must be silent on the subject before her husband.

*Exit door, R.*

LADY. G. (*excitedly*) Her frank and ingenuous nature! Her frank and ingenuous nature!

Enter BARTON (*telegram in his hand*) followed by JOE ATTWOOD.

BART. This way, if you please, old gentleman. Mr. Whiffler has been asking for you.

JOE. Has he? Well, young gentleman, you had better say I'm here.

BART. They'll be back directly. They've been rehearsing.

JOE. (*seeing the scenery*) Hollo, what the deuce is that?

BART. (*seeing LADY GARNET*) Hush!

JOE. Oh! but what the deuce is it?

BART. That's Mr. Whiffler's painting.

JOE. Painting? priming you mean. There must be a very heavy bill for whitening in this establishment, unless you contract for it.

BART. It looked very nice at first, but you see it soon dries up.

JOE. It's a werry common case, young gentleman, with the unpaid element whether as applied to artists or to actors. Tho colours *do* look werry nice when they are first laid on, but at the werry moment when they ought to stand the test of public examination, they dries up; and if the play is as good as the scenery, it must be of a werry refreshing description.

BART. Well, look in at the servants' hall as you come down, and we can have a glass and a little amusement in the shape of a song.

JOE. That will be werry amusing to me, sir. Excuse me, mister, your society is werry inwigorating; but as you have a telegram there, and telegrams weren't invented for ornamental purposes, don't you think you had better deliver it?

BART. Ah, true. It's for Mr. Perceval—perhaps I may as well.  
*Exit door, R.*

LADY G. It's strange how that name lingers in my ear?  
(repeating aloud) "Josephine"—"Josephine!"

JOE. (looking round) I hope ma'am, I'm not intruding? I am here on business.

LADY G. Eh? Oh, I didn't observe you. I suppose you are the manager they expect?

JOE. No, ma'am; I am the manager's man. I'm the "largo al factotum." The manager is Mr. Bellingham.

LADY G. (catching at the name) "Bellingham!"—"Josephine Bellingham," that's the name! (plausibly) My good friend—

JOE. (arranging the curtains of stage) Ma'am!

LADY G. I wish to speak with you. (JOE advances) Hadn't your employer, Mr.—what name?

JOE. Bellingham.

LADY G. Yes—Bellingham; the Pevensey Theatre about two years ago?

JOE. That was his last season; he gave it up, or sub-let it.

LADY G. Indeed! Why?

JOE. (cautiously) I believe he had his reasons.

LADY G. Oh! Heavy losses?

JOE. (after a pause) Werry heavy losses, ma'am.

LADY G. Had he not, about that time, a very promising and accomplished daughter?

JOE. (affecting to consider) Well, about that time, now you mention it, he had a werry promising accomplished daughter.

LADY G. Do you know where she is now? (their eyes meet, and they look at one another without speaking) At this moment, I mean?

JOE. (takes his watch, a large plain one, and looks at it) No, ma'am, I do not.

LADY G. She is not dead?

JOE. Well, ma'am, not being well up in the bills of mortality I can't take upon myself to say.

JOE retires to stage, which he ascends, and exit, L.

LADY G. (alone) But enough for all that! Two years and a half ago—that was the time! Perceval's sudden and mysterious departure; called away, he said, on urgent business. Oh, very urgent! Living abroad, of course! And now the poor fool thinks he can return, and introduce his adventuress of a wife among *our* order! No! They may hoodwink his lordship and the thoughtless persons about him, but the disguise must be more complete before they can deceive the keen eyes of an angry woman. And it was for this bespangled

mountebank—this, this painted puppet, that the boy has sacrificed himself when he might have married—me!

*She retires up stage.*

*Re-enter ALGERNON, with telegram opened, and BARTON.*

ALGER. When do you say it came?

BART. About half-an-hour ago.

ALGER. I shall be too late. (*reads*) "Your father not expected to live the night through. Struck with paralysis. Come at once." What time does the next train pass?

BART. The night mail leaves Chesterton at 10·15.

ALGER. What time now? (*looks at watch*) 9·30. How far to Chesterton?

BART. About three miles. Shall I order a carriage, sir?

ALGER. No, I will not wait. What is the night like?

BART. Cold and frosty, sir.

ALGER. That will do. Get me my overcoat. I cannot miss the way.

BART. I don't know, sir; but I beg pardon——

ALGER. Well?

BART. Miss O'Morrisey has left the hall, scarcely five minutes ago, and by the short cut through the park you might meet the carriage at the cross ways.

ALGER. I see. Thank you, I will go at once—stay—(*takes out note-book, writes hastily, and tears out leaf*) Give this to Mrs. Perceval, and show me the nearest way, my good fellow.

*Exit hastily, door, L.*

BART. Yes, sir! (*going to door, R., intercepted by LADY GARNET*)

LADY G. Don't lose time, show him the nearest way, I'll give the note. (*she takes it*)

BART. Thank you, my lady.

*Hastens out, door, L.*

LADY G. (*glancing at the note*) No, no; this note she shall not see. (*glances hastily around and reads the note*) "I am compelled to leave you this moment, I cannot stay even to say farewell." Ha! (*takes out a pencil*) She shall think he leaves the hall to join that Irish woman. They will travel together. Good! (*writes hastily and reads*) "I dare not stop even to say farewell, for ever!" Yes, this impostor shall be exposed and cast out. She shall be made to feel what it is to have no protector! She shall not have a friend in the world!

*Going out, door, L., meets BELLINGHAM, who enters on the word "friend"—he bows and politely makes way for her—his appearance altered—white hair.*

BELL. I beg your pardon, madam.

*LADY GARNET recovers her self-command, and exits, door L.*

*Joe re-appears on the stage.*

BELL. Well, Joe ?

JOE. Well, governor, things are prosperous. The scenery werry chaste, you see ; no wulgar display of violent colours !

BELL. (*looking at the scene*) What is it, Joe—a view of the Alps ?

JOE. Well, it raly does seem more like Mount Blank than anything else ! You don't look werry well, governor !

BELL. Quite well, Joe ; only as I came through the hall I heard a lady singing, and the voice reminded me so strangely—oh, so strangely—

JOE. I know—I know—don't think about it, governor. Here's the "talent" coming back.

JOE retires and the curtains are lowered.

*Re-enter LORD BEAUMORRIS and the OTHERS, except CAPTAIN CHALLONER and JOSEPHINE.*

LORD B. Ah ! Mr. Bellingham, I heard you had been kind enough to offer our Thespians your valuable experience. (*returns to seat, L.*)

TOM. Ha, Bellingham ! how are you ? We can begin at once, but what are we to do ? Chiff's got stage fright, and says he can't play the "heavy father."

LORD B. Ha, ha ! where is he ?

TOM. Mrs. Perceval has been kindly coaching him, and tells him he'll be quite perfect when he gets his dress on.

SCRAT. (*offering a finger*) How do, Bellingham, how do ?

BELL. I beg your pardon.

SCRAT. Ha ! I see you don't remember me, Cadby Scrattle. Knew you at Pevensey, when I was on the "Post." I've gone over to the "Shingleshire Sentinel"—great county organ, first class ! By the way, Mr. Whiffler, if you have any part wants filling, I don't mind assisting you.

TOM. (*with hauteur*) Thank you, we are quite full.

SCRAT. All right. But I wish the lady would come who is going to speak the prologue. Just look at it, Bellingham ; it's rather a neat thing. (*gives the printed slip*)

BELL. Do you wish me to read this ?

SCRAT. Ah, yes. My lord, ladies, may I claim your polite attention ? The prologue ; I think you'll like it. Hush, for a moment, please. (*the company seat themselves*)\*

BELL. (*reads*) "When learning's triumph o'er her barb'rous foes—"

I think I've heard that line before.

SCRAT. No, I think not, the couplet will tell you.

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\* BELLINGHAM, C., SCRATTLE, L. C.

BELL. (*reads*) "Produced the fine arts, then the drama  
rose—"

No, I have not heard that line before.

"For custom claims, and who denies her sway?"  
(*recognising it*) Hollo!

"A prologue should be spoke before the play.  
And O, ye critics, hear our just appeal—  
Break not a butterfly upon the wheel."

LORD B. (*innocently*) Oh, very good. I always admired that line.

SCRAT. Yes, it's a good line.

LORD B. Pope's, I think?

SCRAT. Oh, dear, no; it occurred to me as I was walking home the other night.

BELL. The fact is, my lord, considering the butterfly is only one of the "ephemera"—the insect in question has done more for the cause of literature than any other member of his family.

(*reads*) "If to our share some trifling errors fall,  
Look in my face, and you'll forget them all—"

Do you speak the prologue, sir?

SCRAT. Oh, no, one of the ladies.

BELL. (*reads*) "And so our *dramatis personæ* wait  
In fond suspense, this crisis of their fate."

LORD B. Is that all? It's rather short.

SCRAT. But very neat.

BELL. And singularly comprehensive. Allow me, sir, to compliment you on your extensive reading.

SCRAT. Like the lines?

BELL. Some of them extremely!

SCRAT. Yes, they have the right smack, I think.

BELL. So much so, they remind me of an abridged edition of Johnson's British Poets, with an introductory line by the editor.

TOM. Now, then, all ready to begin.

*Re-enter CAPTAIN CHALLONER.*

CAPT. C. My dear fellow, I can't play this part; it's not in my way. I should be much better in a frisky part.

TOM. But we haven't got a frisky part.

CAPT. C. Well, look here, Bellingham, will you read it for me?

BELL. Oh certainly.

TOM. Now, then, Tressillian, get ready, and it will be you, Mr. Bellingham, directly.

BELL. One moment. I see the "Floranthe" speaks outside. Is the lady ready for the cue?

TOM. Oh yes, never fear her!

BELL. (*reading the directions*) I see a long speech, then—“Floranthe speaks outside, and rushing on recognises her father; swoons at his feet as he exclaims—‘Thank heaven at last, my child!’”—If the lady is quite ready, I will go on—“Thank heaven, at last my child!”

JOSEPHINE. (*without, L.*) I will not believe it!

(*she rushes with the note in her hand, sees BELLINGHAM, pauses a moment, is about to fall, when he catches her, as LADY GARNET appears at door, L.—the Act drop falls on the picture*)\*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

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A lapse of Six Months.

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### ACT III.

#### REALITY.

*Interior of a Cottage Orné. French window, backed by garden, and view of the sea beyond; flower stand; piano, L. U. E., music book on it; good furniture; sofa, L.; table, R. C.; chairs; the whole to have a bright and cheerful look.*

CAPTAIN CHALLONER discovered seated across a chair, L.; MRS. CHALLONER (*the Miss O'MORRISSEY of the 1st and 2nd Acts*) seated, c.; MRS. DURDHAM stands, R.; JOE ATTWOOD seated at back reading the paper.

MRS. C. Indeed, Chiffney, dear, the apartments would have suited us very well if this good lady could have accommodated us.

CAPT. C. Yes; fact is, I don't mind terms, as we are only here for a week, and my wife prefers the quiet of a cottage to the hotel.

MRS. D. And very comfortable I should have made you, sir, I am sure—but you see, sir, lodgings is not an object, and being as I may say a lone widow—

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\* TOM WHIFFLER.

LADY CAROLINE.

R.

BELLINGHAM.

JOSEPHINE.

LADY G.

SCRATTE.

LORD B.

L.

CAPT. C. (*looking at JOE*) Oh? Who is that, then?

JOE. Well, if it's all the same to you, my lord, I'm an orphan.

CAPT. C. I'm not a lord!

JOE. (*rises*) Oh, I thought you was, perhaps.

CAPT. C. Why?

JOE. Well, you have such an affable way of walking into a person's house, and making yourself at home when you are there, that I nat'rally concluded you couldn't be anything else than a member of the aristocracy, or a commercial traveller in the steel pens line.

MRS. C. Sure, Chiffney, dear, he's a very insolent person!

CAPT. C. Well, now you mention it, I think he is. (*to MRS. DURDHAM*) Fact is, we came here on our return from the Continent to see a friend of my wife's, who is very much invalided, and expected to meet with rural simplicity and civility, and all that sort of thing—and, really, since we arrived yesterday I have had nothing but annoyance. They haven't an hotel worth visiting nearer than Pevensey; they have no billiard room; it isn't the season for hunting; and they appear to do nothing all day but catch shrimps.

MRS. C. Why, Chiffney, dear, what's put ye out to-day?

CAPT. C. Put me out? Look here? (*takes small comic publication from pocket, in size and appearance of the "Paul Pry" class*) I found this among my letters this morning. A scurrilous low paper! "The Sea-side Scorpion and Microscopic Investigator."

MRS. C. What is it, dear?

CAPT. C. Oh, look there. (*gives paper*)

MRS. C. (*reads*) "The 'Scorpion' wants to know why the sentimental old lady who rides in the pony-chaise every morning—"

CAPT. C. No, that's not it, though that evidently refers to Lady Garnet. And she certainly has not changed for the better.

MRS. C. Sure, dear, when the spring and summer are past ye must expect a few autumnal tints.

CAPT. C. It's the next paragraph. You'll see the ruffian has marked the place.

MRS. C. (*reads*) "We hope the tall hee-haw Captain——" The hee-haw Captain—whom does he mean, dear?

CAPT. C. The blackguard means me.

MRS. C. "Who has arrived this morning with his 'emerald bride'——"

CAPT. C. The blackguard means you.

MRS. C. "Has sown his wild oats. We remember him six months ago, and a more successful billiard-player we never

knew. Why not try skittles?" What does he mean by that, dear?"

CAPT. C. Of course, the fellow implies I'm a billiard-sharper!

MRS. C. Sure, Chiffney, dear, treat him with the contempt he deserves. (*throws away the paper, which Mrs. DURDHAM picks up, and goes R.*)

CAPT. C. If I could only catch the fellow that's exactly what I would do. (*crosses, L.*)

MRS. C. But, come, you know we promised to meet Lady Garnet and Sir Algernon on the cliff at eleven.

CAPT. C. Ah, true. Suppose we go through the garden and out by the gate at the end of the path. I suppose this lady has no objection?

MRS. D. Oh, dear no, sir, pray go that way if you prefer it.

JOE. (*intercepting*) Don't do anything of the kind, your worship. The proprietor of the establishment is a shooting of blackbirds in the garden at this moment, and he's of that nasty awk'ard turn of mind that he'd as soon give you and this young lady an ounce of "number six" as look at you.

CAPT. C. (*L.*) Maria!

MRS. C. (*crosses to CAPTAIN*) Chiffney!

CAPT. C. It strikes me we've got into a private lunatic asylum, and that fellow with the paper is one of the keepers. Let us go at once! *Exeunt hastily, door, L.*

MRS. D. Well, really, Mr. Attwood, whatever made you go and tell the gentleman that for?

JOE. What! and have 'em meet the governor and our poor Josephine? Ah, but you don't know. That big chap was one of them who was at the hall that night when our poor girl was deserted by her scoundrel of a husband. I knew him, though he didn't know me.

MRS. D. Lor'a mercy, what a blessing you remembered him!

JOE. Remembered him, ma'am? If you'd ha' seen him a playing as I did, you'd have remembered him. How is she this morning?

MRS. D. Well-a-day; much as usual, Mr. Attwood. Nothing interests her, nothing rouses her. After her illness, the doctor ordered her change of air and scene, rest and quiet, and then poor Mr. Bellingham took this place for her. She is still the same gentle, uncomplaining creature. Sometimes, Mr. Joseph, she do look so quiet and resigned like, that I think she knows she's going to a better place, and has done with all the troubles and trials of earth.

JOE. (*seated, L.*) Mrs. Durdham, those sentiments do you honour, but don't persewere in 'em if you please. Have they tried music?

MRS. D. There's her piano as you see, but she never touches it. She as used to play so pretty! Ah, it's very sad, Mr. Joseph! (*breaking down and beginning to cry*)

JOE. (*crosses L.*) Don't persewerefere ma'am. I suppose she knows her father?

MRS. D. Well, sometimes, perhaps she does. Once or twice I've seen her smile and look at him in such a way. Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

JOE. (*giving a loud sniff*) Mrs. Durdham, ma'am, what did I tell you? Don't persewerefere.

MRS. D. I beg your pardon, sir, but it's sad to think she don't always know her little child; or don't care about it, which is worse! Ah, sir, it's very—(*about to give way, JOE looks at her severely, and she desists*) There's one thing very strange, a bit of paper; I don't know what it is,—that she always keeps in her hand. They say that when she had the fever, nothing could make her give it up. At any rate, I've never seen her without it.

JOE. Oh! I'm just a thinking, ma'am. You've tried music you say—that she don't seem to care about—change of scene, ditto—parent ditto—child ditto, Mrs. Durdham, have you got any of her dresses? her stage dresses I mean?

MRS. D. Well, sir, I was her dresser, and there's a box full in that room. (*points door, R.*)

JOE. Well, ma'am, you take and lay 'em out for her.

MRS. D. What use in that, sir?

JOE. (*earnestly*) Mrs. Durdham, cases have been known of persons who had lost their minds, recovering their senses, by the return of some old memory or other, which, perhaps a sound or a voice, or a tune might serve to bring back what they call the association of ideas.

MRS. D. What's that, sir?

JOE. Well, ma'am, the association of ideas is—it's rather 'an awk'ard subject for you and me to tackle, ma'am. I'll give you an instance instead. The churchwarden of the place where I was organist—

MRS. D. Did you play the organ, Mr. Joseph?

JOE. I blowed it, ma'am—was took very ill, and all he could fancy was a pork chop and apple sauce.

MRS. D. You don't say so, sir?

JOE. I did say so, ma'am. "You'll die if you have it," says the doctor. "I shall go mad if I don't have it, says the churchwarden, and sure enough in less than twelve hours he was clean off his chump.

MRS. D. (*in doubt*) Oh?—off his where, sir?

JOE. Off his head, ma'am. And all he could do was to grunt like a pig and call out for pork. Well, one day, the

clerk, who was a pork butcher in a small way, ran into the house, crying he had found out a way to cure him. "Here's a sucking pig," he says, taking it out of his coat pocket, "roast it with sage and onions and apple sauce," he says, "and then unexpectedly take and shove it afore him," he says, "and if that won't bring him too," he says, "nothing will."

MRS. D. And did it?

JOE. I'm a going to tell you, ma'am. As soon as the churchwarden smelt the gravy of the animal, he fell to, ate it all up, and lived happy ever afterwards.

MRS. D. Why, did he really? I never heard such a thing in all my life.

JOE. No, I don't suppose you ever did, ma'am. Well, that's the association of ideas. (*goes to window and looks out*) But hush, ma'am, our Josephine's coming up the path.

MRS. D. You see, Mr. Joseph, as I told you, quiet and gentle. Ah! it's heart-breaking to look at her.

JOE. Mrs. Durdham, as I have told you, don't persewere. Leave her to me and the governor, while there's life there's hope.

MRS. D. Hope! little hope there indeed!

JOE. Mrs. Durdham, ma'am, remember the churchwarden and the pork. *Exit MRS. DURDHAM, door, R.*

When you've got a limited intelligence like that to deal with, and you can't readily lay your hands upon facts, I'm not aware there's any act of parliament to prevent your drawing on your powers of fiction.

*He stands quietly aside, as JOSEPHINE enters through the French window, very plainly and neatly dressed with garden hat slung over her arms, and carrying some flowers in one hand, and in the other the small note of the Second Act—her manner perfectly quiet, but pre-occupied and absent—she advances slowly, and seats herself L. of table, R. C.—BELLINGHAM follows, and remains at back quietly observing her.*

JOE. (after a pause) Governor, I just called to see if our Josephine—

(*BELLINGHAM stays him by a gesture of the hand, as JOSEPHINE lets fall the flowers from her hand, sighing deeply*)

BELL. Speak to her, Joe, in the old way. See if she remembers your voice.

JOE. (kindly) Well, Josephine, my dear, and how are you to-day?

JOSEPHINE. Joe! (*crosses to him*) Have you been waiting for me? Please, don't scold! I have been into the country. The day was so bright; and, Joe, he's coming back to-day.

He'll be in the box to-night ! He said he would, and he never broke his word with me.

JOE. (*softly to BELLINGHAM*) What does she mean, governor ?

BELL. Speak to her again, Joe ; say anything.

JOE. (*seeing the note*) And what have you got there, my dear ?

JOSEPHINE. (*looking at him quietly, puts the note tenderly in her bosom, then says vacantly*) O, Algernon, my darling ! Let me tell papa all ! He loves me so, and I never deceived him before ! My poor papa ! my poor papa ! Yes, I will, I will write to him, Algernon ! He shall not think I have forgotten him. (*gesture of hands, as if writing*) " My dearest, my kindest father, can you forgive me ? (*BELLINGHAM and JOE exchange glances ; JOSEPHINE makes gesture of folding letter*) I'm going home now. Give that letter to my father. Don't fail to do it ! For heaven's sake don't fail to give it him ; to-night, mind, to-night. Algernon, give me till to-morrow ; give me time to think.

BELL. (*advancing softly*) Josephine ! Josephine, my child !

JOSEPHINE. (*looking up to him*) Papa !

BELL. Yes, come, my darling ; come, give us a little music. (*trying to lead her to the piano*).

JOSEPHINE. (*rises*) Hush, papa ; he's coming back to-day. I knew he would, and then you shall know all. And you'll forgive us, won't you, dear ? For, oh, I did love him so very very dearly ! (*she steals her arm round her father's neck as her head falls forward on his breast*).

BELL. My poor darling ! My poor darling !

JOE. (*at back watching them, then by gesture signifies he has a sudden idea*) Now then, governor, do you know what time it is ? Rehearsal at twelve ! Go and get your things on, miss ! keeping everybody waiting in this way, won't do ! How can you expect the extras to attend when the principals aint punctual ? Eh ! I'm not a going to wait for anybody ; don't care who they are ! (*JOSEPHINE looks up startled—JOE signs to BELLINGHAM, who takes the hint*)

BELL. Joe's quite right, my darling. Don't keep them waiting.

JOE. And you've got the dress to try on next. In the trunk in the room, you know, governor ?

BELL. Yes ! Come, my darling, come !

JOSEPHINE. Yes, papa, yes ! (*nodding kindly to JOE*) I won't be long, Joe ! wait for me, dear papa, please !

*Runs off door, R.*

BELL. What did you mean, Joe ?

JOE. Nothing particular, governor, but if this goes on, we shall have you ill. You go and have a walk in the garden, and keep quiet a bit.

BELL. (*pointing off door, R.*) No, Joe, there, there!  
JOE. Of course you'll do as you like, I know.

BELLINGHAM *going, returns—and quietly and kindly takes Joe's hand—then exit door, R.*

JOE. (*blows his nose*) I never knowed I could play act like that afore! (*a knock heard at door, L.*) Come in! (SCRATTLE *puts his head in*)

SCRAT. I beg your pardon.

*Enter SCRATTLE, he is very seedy, but still retains his bumptious manner.*

The slavey down stairs told me to come up, and here I am.

JOE. And what the devil do you want now you're here?

SCRAT. Excuse me, I am collecting the names of the fashionable visitors to Clifftside for the "Pevensey Post." Will you favour me with the residents of this charming villa? The villa is Belle Vue? (*refers to note book*) Yes, here it is. There's a lady and a gentleman residing here? If you will oblige me with their names for the Fashionable List.

JOE. (*aside*) No, the governor talked about living retired. When in doubt hold your tongue. You are sure it's for the "Fashionable List?"

SCRAT. Yes; the lady's name is—

JOE. The lady, sir, is a widow—Mrs. Durdham.

SCRAT. (*writing*) Thank you; yes, "Durdham." The gent?

JOE. The gent—also a widow. Are you quite ready?

SCRAT. Quite.

JOE. Joseph Attwood, Esquire.

SCRAT. Thank you; "Esquire." From where shall I say?

JOE. Eh?

SCRAT. Originally, I mean?

JOE. Oh! Originally, I don't know.

SCRAT. (*looking at him*) But, I say, haven't I seen you before? Yes, surely! Weren't you at Feltham Hall—Beaumorris's place—last winter? It was there I saw you; don't you remember me?

JOE. Can't say I do.

SCRAT. Is it possible?

JOE. Well, you see, after a man's been in such tip-top society as that 'ere, he doesn't always remember his old acquaintance.

SCRAT. I wrote the prologue for the people there the night of that mysterious elopement,

JOE. Well, now you remind me, I did hear something of a low sort of fellow, who wrote an account of it in the paper, and got his nose pulled ; was that you ?

SCRAT. That's not the fact, sir ! No man ever pulled my nose, sir.

JOE. Oh, perhaps I've made a mistake in the locality. I believe the party in question was kicked—was that it ?

SCRAT. Sir, I was very ill-used in the matter, and I felt greatly hurt. (*wincing*)

JOE. Nat'rally ! A party of your dimensions couldn't feel otherwise.

SCRAT. A big hulking fellow of a guardsman, sir, who had been one of the party. I met him shortly after the night in question at the County Ball, and said, of course, " How do ?" when he told me not to address him in that familiar manner ! " wondered the stewards admitted such a *cad*," as he said, and because I reminded him that the stewards knew better than to interfere with the privileges of our estate, he called me an impertinent interloper, and eventually kicked me downstairs. Lord Beaumorris withdrew his patronage of the paper, other nobs followed his example—and now, all because of an animated and humorous account I wrote of that affair, the " Sentinel " is defunct, and I am hard up.

JOE. Yes, you appear depreciated.

SCRAT. But I've had my revenge, sir ! No man shall injure Cadby Scrattle and live !

JOE. You don't contemplate manslaughter, I hope ?

SCRAT. No, sir, not death ; torture ! torture ! look here—(*takes out copy of comic periodical*) " the Sea-side Scorpion !" The " Hee-haw Captain !" I flatter myself that's biting.

JOE. Oh, you're one of that noble sort, are you ; as writes under other names, and spits their venom from behind a mask ? Well, all I can say, is—

*Enter through French window, ALGERNON, in walking suit of half-mourning—MRS. DURDHAM re-enters door, R.*

ALGER. I really beg your pardon for this intrusion ; but a lady has met with an accident on the Parade, and finding your gate open, I have ventured to ask permission for her to rest here for a few minutes.

MRS. D. To be sure, sir, if the lady will walk in, I will fetch her a glass of water. *Exit door, L.*

SCRAT. Well, I'll say good-day.

JOE. (*who has gone to window*) No, don't go yet for a minute or two. You may find something here worth waiting for.

*Enter through French window SIR ALGERNON, supporting LADY GARNET, followed by CAPTAIN and MRS. CHALLONER; LADY GARNET'S appearance much altered, she has the air of a confirmed invalid; SCRATTLE does not observe the CAPTAIN.*

ALGER. (R.) How do you feel now?

LADY G. Better, much better. It was the sudden fright. The ponies swerved so near the edge of the cliff.

(seated L. of small table, R.C.)

MRS. C. Sure, Emily, dear, ye'd nothing to apprehend with such an accomplished charioteer.

CAPT. C. No, I think Percy knows too much to let your ladyship come to sudden grief.

(SCRATTLE, recognising the voice, makes for the door, but JOE has anticipated, and stands before him, staring stolidly)

MRS. C. Keep near the window, dear, and ye'll soon be better.

ALGER. May we know to whom we are indebted for this kindness?

JOE. Of course; allow me. (crosses to L. C., holding SCRATTLE by the sleeve with his left hand) Mr.—what did you say your name was?—Cadby Scrattle.

CAPT. C. (crosses, R.) Who?

JOE. Cadby Scrattle; those who know him call him "Cad," fashionable intelligerter to the "Pevensey Post," and local contributor to the "Sea-side Scorpion."

CAPT. C. What did you say?

SCRAT. It's all a mistake, I assure you. Oh, lor!

(CAPTAIN CHALLONER slowly and majestically advances—  
SCRATTLE makes a bolt, and exits through the window,  
followed by CAPTAIN CHALLONER)

MRS. C. What's the matter?

JOE. I'm afraid, ma'am, the tall gentleman's life's in danger. I never see such a fire-eater as the little chap—a few minutes ago.

MRS. C. Emily, dear, excuse me; I'll be back directly.

*Exit through the window, followed by JOE.*

ALGER. You are better now?

LADY G. Yes, you are very kind to come to this place to see a poor invalid like myself.

ALGER. Your recent illness has left you very weak, I fear?

LADY G. Yes—yes, Algernon, in six short months, I seem to have become an old—old woman; the slightest noise startles—the slightest exertion fatigues me. My life seems a weary burthen, and sometimes I almost wish for death.

ALGER. Oh, come, come, this depression may be removed by society and change. It is not to physical suffering, Lady Garnet, that we succumb; it is for those great, but unseen troubles of our lives that we have nothing but humility and resignation. (*sits, L.*)

LADY G. Algernon, you were selfish in your love, you are selfish in your sorrow. Are you the only one who carries behind a mask a miserable aching heart? If you have the wearying suspense of hope and fear, are there in the world, think you, no bitter pangs of terrible remorse? The girl for whom your life—a life so rich in promise, has been blighted—is at least in her father's care; but you, my poor boy, it is for you I grieve!

ALGER. My Josephine, my poor, my trusting, my innocent wife, where can she be? No, Lady Garnet, there has been deception somewhere. I was summoned to the death-bed of my father. I left hurriedly, I was compelled to do so—thank heaven I was in time to receive his blessing and his sanction to my marriage, for I told him all; and I return to find my wife had gone no one knew whither! I say again there has been treachery somewhere. What is this I heard about some letter she received? The lines I wrote were brief, 'tis true, but easily explained. Her father dare not have forced her off. There is more than I have yet been told. My actress wife was too good, too pure, for those around her! My poor Josephine! (*in deep grief*)

LADY G. (*entreatingly*) Algernon—

ALGER. (*bitterly*) If we have been deceived. (*rises*) Oh may that terrible remorse of which you spoke just now, be their lot who parted us. (*crosses, R.*)

LADY G. (*falling back in her seat*) Algernon!

ALGER. (*going to her*) Lady Garnet, you are ill!

*Re-enter CAPTAIN, MRS. CHALLONER and JOE.*

MRS. C. Emily, dear, are ye no better?

CAPT. C. I couldn't catch the fellow. I had no idea a little man could run so fast.

JOE. (*swinging his foot*) It's quite remarkable, sir, how merry fast we travel, when there's a motive power behind us.

MRS. C. (*to LADY GARNET*) Let me help you, dear!

CAPT. C. Stay, we'll assist you.

*They assist LADY GARNET, and exeunt through window.*

ALGER. (*leaning against the piano, his hand falls on the music book, and he turns over the leaves listlessly as he is speaking*) It is strange, it is more than "strange," how every enquiry I

have set on foot has failed to find a clue ! My Josephine and my little Lilian ! Where can they be ? Can those whom I employed have been tampered with, I wonder ? And yet, why ? Ah, here's a song, a favourite of my poor darling's. Well, if 'tis heaven's will we meet again, heaven will guide me to her. (*turning over the pages till the blank page, when he starts and exclaims*) "Josephine Bellingham!" Her name ! What's this ? She must be here. (*he lets the book fall*)

*Re-enter BELLINGHAM, not seeing ALGERNON, door R.*

BELL. (*as entering*) Hush, hush ! The little child's asleep. (*seeing him, pauses*) May I ask——

ALGER. (L.) Mr. Bellingham ! You must be he, though so strangely altered ! Oh, sir, tell me where she is ? Is she well ? Is she——

BELL. (*with a sudden gesture of passion*) Hah ! You are——

ALGER. Her husband—yes. (*BELLINGHAM by a violent effort restrains himself*) Oh, sir, for mercy's sake tell me—she is not dead ?

BELL. (*quietly*) No.

ALGER. Thank heaven ! I entreat you to let me see her.

BELL. You shall not see her.

ALGER. Sir, no power on earth has the right to prevent me.

BELL. Sir Algernon Perceval—since you are he—as her father, in my own house, I shall assume that right.

ALGER. I insist on seeing her, that I may tell her——

BELL. It would be useless, she would not understand you.

ALGER. What do you mean ?

BELL. You asked me if she were dead ? No ; she still lives—the true and loyal girl she always was ; but the cruel blow you struck at her was more than she could bear, and her reason——

ALGER. Not gone ? Oh ! Not gone ?

BELL. (*coldly*) Yes—gone ! (*PERCEVAL sinks in chair, L.*)

ALGER. Her memory ? No, she would remember me !

BELL. She remembers you, sir, as you were. She loves you far too well, poor girl, to think of you as you are !

ALGER. Mr. Bellingham, I know by my own grief what yours must have been ! Tell me where she is now ?

BELL. (*points to door, R.*) There ! (*PERCEVAL is crossing, but BELLINGHAM stays him, by a gesture of the hand*) I left her there, teaching her little child—your little child—its first and simplest prayer ; praying to the Parent who never forsakes His children to bless the father who deserted his. (*ALGERNON sinks in chair, L.*) I have learnt, Sir Algernon Perceval, that you have attained the position you so ardently desired, and

for which my poor child and I have suffered so deeply—that you have succeeded to your title, and have, I am told, inherited great wealth. I congratulate you, sir; but you have done more—you have shattered the mind of the woman who trusted you, you have broken the heart of a confiding girl, you have poisoned her whole existence; but, you see, you have not corrupted her soul.

ALGER. I can understand your doubts as I can share your griefs ; but these reproaches are undeserved—I am blameless.

BELL. Blameless ! You blameless ! Look at this note, which, in teaching her little one to fold its hands she relinquished to-day for the first time ! Read this note, sir ; the last you wrote to her before leaving her to join another woman ! Read it, I say, and then tell me you are blameless, if you can.

ALGER. (*reading note*) This note, yes ! But these words "for ever !" No, I never wrote those words ! Some cruel enemy has done this ! This is the deepest wound of all.

BELL. No, there is one deeper yet. You have asked to see your wife, you shall do so. What your views in leaving her might be, I cannot tell ; but I'll show you the result. (*goes to door, R.*)

*Re-enter LADY GARNET, MRS. CHALLONER and JOE—JOE and MRS. CHALLONER in earnest conversation—LADY GARNET comes slightly forward to seat, L.*

BELL. (*looking through door*) My poor—poor child ! what strange new fancy's this ? (*he looks round, and by a gesture rejoins silence, then withdraws to back with PERCEVAL*)

*Enter JOSEPHINE, as Amina in last scene of "La Sonnambula," she comes forward making slight movement as if before an audience, then says softly and vacantly.*

JOSEPHINE. Yes, he is there. I will sing my very best. He shall be proud of his wife. For his sake I will be everything he wishes ! Oh, Algernon, my love, my love ! (*her eyes resting for a moment on LADY GARNET, she shrinks back, uttering a low cry of fear*)

JOE. (*to MRS. CHALLONER, who has seated herself at the piano*) Now, now ! (*MRS. CHALLONER strikes a chord pp., JOSEPHINE'S attention arrested*) Now, as I told you.

(*MRS. CHALLONER plays the opening bars of the finale to "La Sonnambula"—JOSEPHINE's manner indicating her association with it, she takes up the voice part singing very softly—the BYSTANDERS perfectly quiet and intent—*

*JOSEPHINE gradually increasing in power and feeling until the bar, "My Elvino, true to love!" when ALGERNON rushes forward)*

**ALGER.** Josephine! my love! my wife!

(she pauses a moment, and recognising him, utters a cry of joy, and falls in his arms as JOE, who has gone to the room, R., returns with the little CHILD, and remains at the door—LADY GARNET falls back in her chair—MRS. CHALLONER goes to her—BELLINGHAM at back.)

### Curtain.

*Second Tableau for call.—JOSEPHINE seated, C., CHILD on her knee—ALGERNON kneels, L.—JOE stands, R.—BELLINGHAM at back of chair, hand on ALGERNON's shoulder—LADY GARNET and MRS. CHALLONER, L.*



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	PAGE.		PAGE.
Amateur Dramas	26	Guide Books	36
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Costumes, Female	31	Lacy's Home Plays	25
Costume Books	36	Lord Lytton's Plays	27
Cumberland's Edition	19	Mrs. Jarley's Wax Works	18
Darkey Dramas	22	Music to Loan	23
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Dramatic Works	2	Parlour Pantomimes	18
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LAMBKIN LOUDER	..	..	W. F. W. IRISH.
LIONEL LONG	...	...	Mr. MARKBY.
SEPTIMUS SKINFLINT	...	...	Mr. COLLETT.
TEDDY	...	...	Mr. L. FREDERICKS.
NABBEM GRABBEM } (Bailiffs)	...	...	Mr. HARWOOD. Mr. FOTHERINGHAM.
MAUD	...	...	MISS ROSE JAMES.
POLLY	...	...	Miss LA FONTAINE.

SCENE.—AN INN AT CROYDON.

Time—THE PRESENT.

Average Time of Performance, 86 minutes.

N.B.—The London right of this Piece is vested in H. L. Bateman, Esq. All applications for its performance in the Country must be made to Thomas Mowbray, 35, Keppel Street, Russell Square.

## SHOULD THIS MEET THE EYE.

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SCENE.—*A Coffee Room at the "Chop and Gridiron," near Croydon. Window in flat, L. c., backed by open Landscape; doors R. and L. 2 E.; locks on doors; tables laid for dinner, R. and L. up and down stage; large racing poster on R. flat; keyboard with keys labelled on flat, behind R. table; newspapers on each table; sideboard up against flat R., on which are a number of bottles of sauce of various kinds; over the door R. is a figure 9, over door L. a figure 6.*

POLLY discovered preparing the tables.

TEDDY. (*off, L.*) Polly, Polly! Where are you?

*Enter TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

Oh! is it there you are? Hard work's a lazy occupation, darlin'.

POLLY. (*over, R.*) Glad you like it, Teddy.

TEDDY. Be aisy. I was spakin' in the abstract.

POLLY. What's that, Teddy?

TEDDY. It's the loop-line of conversation on which all the accidents occur; and it's the longest way round to do the shortest distance. Look at that bill! (*pointing to poster*) What's one cratur's pleasure is another's pain.

POLLY. It's the races you mean, Teddy. I call it cruel, and nothing else.

TEDDY. Get away wid ye; what are ye talkin' about? Sure the bastes enjoy it. And isn't it beautiful to see their delicate legs runnin' away wid their illigant bodies, and the boys on their backs workin' away to keep 'em in the same mind.

POLLY. Yes; and isn't it nice afterwards to see their delicate silken coats and panting sides wailed with lashes and stained with their own blood?

TEDDY. There ye are, talkin' for all the world like Mister O'Callaghan, the pracher, out of his Sunday dictionary. Talkin' of Sunday, darlin, when are we goin' to church on a week day?

POLLY. What's that to you, sir?

TEDDY. A mere thrifle, unless you go wid some other blaggard than meself!

POLLY. Well, I'm sure!

TEDDY. I wish I wor—

SKIN. (*heard without, L. 1 E.*) Waiter! Waiter!

TEDDY. (C.) Whisht, whisht, Polly; here's ould Skinflint—the ould miser.

POLLY. (R.) I wonder what he wants at this time of the day! He doesn't come here now to smoke his pipe.

TEDDY. (L. C.) No; sure he's taken to getting drunk at home; it's much more respectable, and not so dear. Whisht! (*goes C.*)

*Enter SKINFLINT, L. 1 E.*

TEDDY. Fine mornin' to ye, sir.

SKIN. (*pushing TEDDY out of his way and crossing to R. C.*) Ugh!

TEDDY. (L. C.) Is it goin' to the races ye are?

SKIN. (R. C.) No, it isn't. Hate races—hate horses—hate people who keep horses—who go to races. Where is your master?

TEDDY. He's gone—

SKIN. Dead?

TEDDY. To the races, sir.

SKIN. Ugh! calls that attending to his business, eh?

POLLY. (*advancing from table, polishing a glass, to R. of SKINFLINT*) Please, sir, he'll be at home about four; he's churchwarden, and has to attend a meeting at five.

SKIN. (*to POLLY sarcastically*) He's a nice Christian! (*POLLY goes up to R.—to TEDDY*) Have any strangers arrived yet?

TEDDY. (L.) We had a parcel from New Zealand this morning, and—

SKIN. Tut! tut! I mean from London?

TEDDY. There wor five farmers from Cromehurst; a commercial from Carshalton, and a dozen or two swells.

SKIN. Pooh! pooh! Have you noticed a gentleman wearing plaid trowsers, sporting-coat, and a peculiar hat?

TEDDY. (*puzzled*) There wor a gentleman called here a few days agone, wearing trowsers—

SKIN. (*crossing to L., pushing TEDDY out of his way*) Block-head! (*TEDDY goes up to POLLY, and threatens SKINFLINT—SKINFLINT, aside, L.*) I know the fellow is in the town, and unless I use very violent exertions the girl will certainly elope with him; she's half mad after him. Let me see—(*produces a pocket book, from which he takes a slip of paper and reads*) “Private Information.—Medium height—eccentric—trifle deaf—luggage marked ‘L. L.’” (*aloud, as he puts up his book*) Now

look here, you two! (*POLLY and TEDDY advance c.*) If any one comes here with his luggage marked "L. L," send round to my house, without delay.

*TEDDY.* I'm sorry to say, it can't be done, sir. (*to POLLY*) Can it, darlin'? (*aloud*) Sure, we're over the tops of our boots in work this blessed day. (*turns to POLLY—who nods approvingly*)

*SKIN.* (L.) Ugh! The beastly selfishness of the human races—I mean race! Here. (*putting his hand in his pocket, and pulling out some coins, and searching amongst them.*)

*TEDDY.* (*aside to POLLY*) Oh, Tim, what's he doin'?

*SKIN.* (*having found a coin—giving it to TEDDY, R.*) There! Perhaps you can find time now?

*TEDDY.* (*smiling, but without looking at the money*) Oh, I'll thry, sir. Thank ye, sir; more power to ye, sir.

*SKIN.* (*going L., stops*) And, mind—no bribery!

*TEDDY.* (*following him, L.*) Is it me, sir! Surely I'm above it entirely.

*SKIN.* Of course you are! Ugh! *Exit SKINFLINT, L. 1 E.*

*TEDDY.* Oh, Polly, darlin', look here. (*opens his hand, sees coin, looks dismayed*) What is it?

*POLLY.* (C. R., *looking over his shoulder*) Why, it's a four-penny bit! Throw it at him. (*goes R.*)

*TEDDY.* (*goes to L., raises his arm to do so, pauses*) Stay! Sure the mane old skunk would pick it up. I'll be after puttin' it along wid the rest to—

*POLLY.* (R. of R. table) To do what?

*TEDDY.* (L. of R. table) Buy the ring, honey!

*POLLY.* Don't talk nonsense, Teddy: get on with your work.

*TEDDY.* (*placing chair at end of table, and sitting on it, facing, R.*) May be you'd be after givin' me an invigoratur?

*POLLY.* Yes; where will you have it?

*TEDDY.* (*wiping his mouth with sleeve of jacket*) Well, in the usual place, just under the tip of my nose, darlin'.

*POLLY.* (R., *scoops her head in front of TEDDY, as if to kiss him, but gives him a sounding box on the ear with her right hand*) There you are, then.

*TEDDY.* (*starting up*) Och, Murther!

*Enter LIONEL LONG, L. 1 E., dressed in plaid trowsers, walking coat, over which he wears a sporting drab coat, and carrying a portmanteau with "L. L." on it.*

*LONG.* (*as he enters, sees the blow*) Hallo! hallo, young lady, that was no mean punishment. (*places his portmanteau up against the front of table, L., so that the letters on it can be seen*)

*POLLY.* (R.) Well, he deserved it.

LONG. And he got it too.

TEDDY. (*crossing to L., rubbing his cheek*) It's just as well, sir, to know how hard your wife can hit, and a mighty pleasant hand it is any way. *Exit TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

LONG. (*going to chair R., left out by TEDDY, and sitting*) Very full, eh?

POLLY. (R.) Me, sir?

LONG. No, the place—lots of people for the races—eh?

POLLY. (R.) We've plenty of room, sir.

LONG. (*taking up the paper*) Ah! races are not what they were; too much a matter of business now. Can I have a bed room?

POLLY. Certainly, sir. (*goes up R. to key rack, takes a key from it, passes behind table down to L. of LONG*) Number nine, sir. (*gives him key*) Shall I take your portmanteau in?

LONG. If you please. (*POLLY takes portmanteau and drags it across in front towards door, R.*) By the way, how far is it to the "Floating Camel?"

POLLY. (*now at door, R.*) About five minutes' walk, sir, straight up the High Street.

*Exit into door, R., with the portmanteau.*

LONG. Thank you. (*reads the paper*)

*Re-enter POLLY from door, R., she looks at LONG significantly as she crosses to L.*

POLLY. (*aside, L.*) "L. L." This is the very man old Skinflint wants. I'll run and tell Teddy directly. *Exit, L. 1 E.*

LONG. (*reading from paper*) "If this should meet the eye of L. L.—C. and G., Croydon, at eleven thirty-five. Let nothing prevent you." This column in the "Times" is splendid; but the unfortunate part of it is, everyone sees it as well as the person for whom it is exclusively intended. (*thoughtfully*) Dearest Maud! I scarcely think I am behaving well to her. Heigho! If I were only out of debt—I'm a large debtist. In something less than two years a capital estate will fall into my hands. In the meantime I am pressed for money. Kind and considerate Jews offer to oblige me at sixty-four per cent. I state the case to my fiancée, she says, "Take me, and with me my fortune." I say, "Noble, generous girl!" Her guardian says, "Don't you come inside my doors again!" I say, "No; but she will come outside." Guardian swears vengeance, I swear fidelity, she swears devotion, and mysteriously whispers, "Keep your eye on the second column of the 'Times.'" I have kept my eye on the second column of the "Times"—in fact I have kept both eyes on the second column of the "Times." The announcement of her readiness appears.

I am here! (*jumps up*) What's the time? Ten forty-five!  
Good.

*Enter POLLY, L. 1 E.*

Come here, young lady. Any one been enquiring for me, eh?  
(*meeting her, L. C.*)

POLLY. (L., *aside*) What shall I say? He seems such a nice gentleman!

LONG. I see they have. Could you tell a fib?

POLLY. (*indignantly*) Certainly not, sir.

LONG. (*placing half-a-crown in her right hand, quietly*) Quite sure you couldn't!

POLLY. (*putting the coin in her left hand, and holding her right hand open for more*) Well—a little one.

LONG. (*giving another half-a-crown*) Let me have the next size larger. Now, if any person comes here enquiring for anyone of my description, say—

POLLY. (*eagerly, jingling money*) I haven't seen any one like you!

LONG. Eh? Thanks, that'll be large enough! Except—mind this—except it's a young lady, and then send her up to the "Floating Camel." You will be here all day, I suppose?

POLLY. (*pointedly*) Me and—Teddy, sir.

LONG. Very well! I'll tip Teddy when I return.

POLLY. (L.) Five shillings! He shall have a good fib for his money, and, if needs be, I'll back it up by a little one in.

LONG. And now to change my dress; if I go to be married in these things, the parson will think I have mistaken the church for the race course. *Exit LONG, door R.*

LOUDER. (*off, L.*) Look here, you Irish potato, if you are not very careful with that bag—

*Enter TEDDY, L. 1 E. backwards, swinging a small leather bag in his hand with "L. L." on it, and followed by LAMBKIN LOUDER, in large check trowsers, showy vest, velvet jacket, and felt hat; and a small stick in his hand.*

I'll have you up for wilful destruction of property. (TEDDY going backwards, knocks the bag against the table, L.) Can't you see where you're driving to? Mind that table. (TEDDY drops the bag) Now then, what are you shying it down like a sack of Wallsend for? Look here—if you've broken that bottle of hair oil, I'll have you up for incendiaryism, if it costs me one and sixpence a day in prosecution.

TEDDY. I ax pardon, sir—the bag's a beautiful bag, sir! It's a nice mornin', sir!

LOUDER. Eh? What's that you say?

TEDDY. It's a nice mornin', sir.

LOUDER. Oh! You call this a nice morning, do you?

TEDDY. Sure it's a healthy one, any way?

LOUDER. Is it? Now, do you call yourself a healthy specimen? As far as I can make out at present, you are a lively bilious lot down here. I said to the man with the omnibus, says I, "Put me down in the middle of the High Street," and sure he did, literally, by landing me in the middle of the street on my back.

TEDDY. (*laughs*) Mighty careless of him, sir.

LOUDER. Oh, you call that careless, do you? I call it next door to wilful murder, and if I could have got on my legs quick enough, I should have had him up for wilful murder, too.

TEDDY. Want a room, sir?

LOUDER. That's my business. Now, just you give me two minutes of your undivided Irish attention. I've come down here on very important business, and if you want me to stop here, and to see the colour of my money, don't let me hear the sound of your tongue. I never talk myself, and I hate to hear other people.

TEDDY. Sure, I'll never spake a word, sir!

LOUDER. And don't answer me; do you understand me?

TEDDY. I do that, sir.

LOUDER. You call that understanding me, do you? Now then, what room can I have?

TEDDY. Oh, the best in the house! (*goes to rack, takes down key, and gives it to LOUDER, then makes a rush at the bag*)

LOUDER. (C.) Will you leave that bag alone! You've broken that bottle of oil, I'm convinced; I can smell it. I shall have to dip my head in the bag to oil it. Now, look here, mind I have a steak and onions ready in about ten minutes from this time.

TEDDY. (*going*) Oh, I'll see to that, sir.

LOUDER. Hi, hi, hi!

TEDDY. (*returns*) Did ye call, sir?

LOUDER. If any one calls to enquire for "L. L.," I'm here! Especially if it happens to be a lady, and then—hem! I'm very much here.

TEDDY. That will I, sir. (*aside, L.*) "L. L." This, sure, is the very blaggard that's wanted. I'll fetch ould Skinflint.

LOUDER. Now then, are you going?

TEDDY. That I am, sir.

LOUDER. (C.) It isn't very often I leave the Goswell Road, but when I do leave the Goswell Road I generally contrive to let people know it. I've spent the best portion of my life in the Goswell Road, amongst candles, soap and starch, and never had such a thing occur to me before. Just as I was

*Exit, L. 1 E.*

SHOULD THIS MEET THE EYE.

9

taking in the oil for the night, old Brisket the butcher, runs across, and says he, "Lambkin, my loved one, your fortune's made." "Brisket, my bloated," answered I, "don't be a hazz!" "Well, chuck your heye over that," says he, giving me the "Times," and there sure enough was the follereng—"If this should meet the eye of L. L.—C. and G., Croydon, eleven thirty-five. Let nothing prevent you.—M." Now, it's a marvellous thing, but the very last time Brisket and I went to the Grecian The-ayter, I met a young and lovely female, who told me she lived at Croydon, her name was Maud, and that she had something in her own right—in fact, as far as I could make out generally, she had several somethings in her own right. Seeing it was the races, said I. "Lambkin, my youth, take a gentle trot down, and combine business with pleasure," so here I am. And now, what's the time? Ten fifty-five. But that blessed C. and G. puzzled me awful; it was a long time before I could make out what it meant, till the man with the bus said it must be the Chop and Gridiron Hotel, Croydon. I think I'll just put some of that oil on—I opened a fresh barrel on purpose—and titivate myself up a bit, for I flatter myself, that when that oil is properly distributed over these flowing locks, there's nothing in the female line can stand unmoved before me. Let me see, (*looks at key*) what's the number—number nine. Now, I hate nines, nines is always unlucky—I like sevens and threes.

*Goes over to and enters door, R., after a short pause a row heard within.*

LONG. (*within, R.*) What do you want in my room? Get out! how dare you?

LOUDER. (*appearing at door, R.*) Pooh! pooh! sir, you've got my room!

(LOUDER and LONG, now appear in altercation at threshold of door, R., with their keys in their hands)

LONG. There's my number. (*shows label of key*)

LOUDER. And there's mine. (*shows his number upside down—they both make an attempt to enter door, but stick on the threshold*)

LONG. (*after a struggle, pushing LOUDER from door*) I call this most ungentlemanly behaviour.

LOUDER. (C.) P'raps you'd be kind enough to give up my room, sir?

LONG. Certainly not, sir.

LOUDER. Very well, then. }

LONG. Very well, then. } (together)

(they rush to door, R., and stick as before—they struggle to C. and LONG throws LOUDER off, L.)

LOUDER. (C.) Will you permit me to look at your number?

LONG. (R. C.) Possibly you'll allow me to look at yours?

LOUDER. Give me yours first.

LONG. You hand me over yours.

LOUDER. Suppose we hand them over at the same time.

LONG. Agreed!

(they each hold out their keys suspiciously towards each other,  
and grab at them, drawing the keys back again—this ad  
lib.—at last they seize the keys and exchange)

LONG. Here, let me see them both together.

LOUDER. Let's change back first. (repeat business of ex-  
changing keys)

LONG. Now, sir. (showing his label) Number nine!

LOUDER. There, sir. (exhibiting his upside down) Number  
nine!

LONG. Why, hang it, you've got yours upside down!

LOUDER. (reversing his label) Eh? Why, I declare, so I  
have! Then here goes for my own room! I prefer my room  
to your company. *Exit, door L.*

LONG. Well, that's a nice gentlemanly fellow! (goes R., pulls  
bell rope—bell rings) Gets number six, turns it upside down,  
and makes nine of it!

*Enter POLLY, L. 1 E.*

Oh, no one called yet, I suppose?

POLLY. No one, sir.

LONG. (who has divested himself of his overcoat when in his  
room) Very good! Now I'm going up to the "Floating  
Camel," and shall return in a few minutes. Have a quiet steak  
ready for me at eleven fifteen. Do you hear?

POLLY. Very well, sir.

LONG. (aside) And now to arrange everything for the  
elopement. *Exit, R. 1 E.*

POLLY. (going over, R.) He's a gentleman, every inch of him!  
I'll just go and straighten his room up a bit. *Exit, door, C.*

LOUDER pops his head from the door of his room, L., without his  
coat, and a towel round his neck, &c., as though dressing.

LOUDER. (looking round for the bell) Now where is that bell?  
I'm blessed if they haven't been and gone and put it on the  
other side! When that bell was put up, the man evidently  
had his eye on me! (getting gradually to C.) I hope "M."  
won't come up and see me like this, or she'll take me for a  
roasted chesnut swaddled up in napkins! (going R.—stops)  
They're burning my steak! I can smell it! I hate a steak  
that's burnt up to cinders, and tastes like a scorched top boot.  
(goes over to R., and hastily pulls the bell rope—bell rings) I hope  
the chambermaid won't come up and see—I'm blest if she  
isn't! (runs up behind table, R., and hides)

*Enter TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

TEDDY. Did you ring, sir? (*looking round*) Why, where the devil is he! Oh, in his room, of course. (*goes to door, L., and peeps in*) Are you out, sir?

LOUDER. (*starts up, and knocks on table with his hair brush*) Hi! Come out! I know your little game.

TEDDY. Oh, sir! Sure there's a beautiful angel in a pink bonnet floatin' up the stairs.

LOUDER. (*coming forward, C.*) I'll bet a sov' its "M.," and I haven't used a drop of that oil yet.

TEDDY. Sir, you wouldn't see her that way?

LOUDER. It doesn't matter how I see her, it's how she sees me.

TEDDY. All right, sir. (*going, L.*)

LOUDER. Here, where are you going?

TEDDY. Sure, I'm going to show the dark-eyed darlin' in here, sir. (*going*)

LOUDER. (*crossing to L.*) Stay! just wait till I have disguised myself in a little of this oil.

TEDDY. All right, sir. (*going*)

LOUDER. I say, Irishman, you just tell that cook if she burns that steak I'll stop it out of her character.

TEDDY. Character! Sure you'd get more out of her wages.

LOUDER. I get more out of you than I bargained for—get out—oh! just you show "M." into the smoke room, and ask her to have a pipe while I do the ile trick will you.

TEDDY. Sure you wouldn't ax a lady into a smoke room?

LOUDER. Why not, I've been in a smoke room lots o' times.

TEDDY. (*looking off*) Oh! she's coming up, sir.

*Exit LOUDER, quickly, door, L.*

This way, madam—this way.

*Enter MAUD, L. 1 E.*

MAUD. Have you any one here with luggage marked "L. L.?"

TEDDY. (C.) Sure, miss, he's in his room, number six, this blessed minute.

MAUD. Will you say "M" is here.

TEDDY. What's the name, m'm?

MAUD. "M."

TEDDY. Hem! right you are. (*goes to door, L., MAUD crosses R., takes out a letter and reads*) Sir!

LOUDER. (*within, L.*) Hallo!

TEDDY. Here's Hem.

LOUDER. Oh! I say, Paddy, I've got a what-you-may-call-it off my thingamy, just ask "M" if she carries a needle, will you.

TEDDY. Oh! is it a needle you want? All right! I'll see to that myself for ye. (*going L.—stops*) Hem! (*MAUD starts and turns towards him—winking*) He'll be wid you in a minute, mum.

*Exit TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

MAUD. It is very evident that I am totally unfit for excitement of any sort. Never mind, to-day over, poor Lionel will be at rest; besides, a woman about to marry ought to make any sacrifice in her power; it's very certain she won't after. (*goes up and sits on chair in front of table, R., her back towards L., reading her letter*)

*Enter LOUDER, door L.—his coat on.*

LOUDER. (*aside*) There she is! But she doesn't look like the girl I met at the Grecian The-ayter. The girl I met at the Grecian The-ayter had a golden chignon, this one has a black one. Never mind, perhaps she's changed her colour, girls do that sort of thing sometimes. (*puts himself in attitude*) Hem! (*pause*) Hem! (*pause—striking table loudly with his stick*) Ahem!

MAUD. (*starting up—sees LOUDER—alarmed*) Ha! a trap!

LOUDER. (*standing in attitude*) Well, she is a spicy-looking girl! (*in an affected drawl*) You knew I should come!

MAUD. (*R.*) You, sir!

LOUDER. Ya-as! Ain't you "M.?"

MAUD. There is some mistake here, I am afraid.

LOUDER. Mistake! Not a bit of it! Do you call me a mistake? (*displaying himself*) There's no mistake about me, I can tell you. Of course! I know all about it—I understand these little things!

MAUD. You know all about it!

LOUDER. Rather! and so do you, you sly one; you are a sly one—you are, and no mistake!

MAUD. (*imploringly*) If you are acting under his instructions, take me to him directly.

LOUDER. Take you to him? Well, that's a good one! Lovely "M.!" Waste not another moment, but fly to him—fly into his arms! (*stands C.—his arms extended in entreaty*) Come on, if you are coming! Hang it all! I can't stand all day, looking like a railway signal in a fog!

MAUD. (*R.*) But you are not "L. L."

LOUDER. Oh! I'm much obliged to you, "M.," but I've been "L. L." ever since I cut my second teeth: and a precious job it was I can tell you. My gums swelled up that much. They had to feed me through a speaking trumpet. But I'll fetch you one of my collars to look at. (*going towards door, L.*)

MAUD. (*enraged*) Sir! you're an impostor!

LOUDER. (*stopping*) Oh! come, I like that.

MAUD. "L. L." is my affianced husband.

LOUDER. (*taken aback*) Then what the brimstone is the use of bringing me all the way from the Goswell Road for? But come, you're only having a lark! (*advances, R.*)

MAUD. (*rushing to R., seizes the bell rope with her right hand, and stands in attitude, her left arm extended threateningly*) Not another step, or I ring!

LOUDER. (*looking at her admiringly*) Aint she splendid! just like Mrs. Macbeth, in a pink bonnet, and a Dolly Varden. (*or describe dress worn by MAUD*) Now that's just what I like, it leads a fellow on a—(*rushes at MAUD, who pulls the bell-rope—bell rings*)

MAUD. Hold, sir! (*as she rings*)

LOUDER. (*stopping*) Well, but look here! Dash it all! you've brought me all the way down here—it's cost me one and sevenpence already. Just give us a kiss.

MAUD. (*advances a pace or two to R. C.*) I will prove to you, sir, that I am not to be insulted.

*Enter POLLY, door R., she drops down R. behind MAUD to her side—MAUD goes hastily to POLLY and whispers.*

LOUDER. (*retreats, C., as POLLY enters*) But I don't want to insult you. I want to fondle you, and pet you, and make much of you—I—

MAUD. (*aside to POLLY, R.*) I came here to meet a person who would be known by—

POLLY. (*whispering to her*) "L. L.," Miss?

MAUD. The same.

POLLY. He's not been gone long, Miss. He left word for you to meet him at the "Floating Camel." If you go by that door (*points off, R. 1 E.*) it will take you a pleasant walk through the garden, right up to the back of the Camel, Miss.

MAUD. Thank you. (*crosses to R., turns and addresses LOUDER, in an angry tone*) If you remain here, sir, another half hour, you may depend upon being punished as you deserve.

*Exit MAUD indignantly, door, R. 1 E.—as LOUDER crosses to R., POLLY goes L.*

LOUDER. (*following MAUD to the door, R.*) Well, good morning! Of course I shall wait. (*turns towards C.*) She's a nice party for a Caffre's wife. (*seeing POLLY*) I say you—what's-your-name, just tell that Irishman to bring me my steak, will you?

POLLY. (*as she bounces off*) Well, I'm sure!

*Exit POLLY, L. 1 E.*

LOUDER. I must say this isn't a very encouraging beginning (*sits at L. table, facing R.*) However, I'll just put away that

steak where the flies can't get it; and then, if the races aren't over, I'll toddle down to the course.

*Enter TEDDY, L. 1 E.*

**TEDDY.** Did you want me, sir?

**LOUDER.** (*starts up to him*) Now then, where's that steak and onions?

**TEDDY.** Bedad, sir, they're swearin' away at one another on the top of the gridiron, for all the world like two Kilkenny cats.

**LOUDER.** Then just put a stop to their bad language, and bring them in here. (*goes back to table*)

**TEDDY.** That will I. (*aside*) And some one else wid 'em.

*Exit TEDDY, L. 1 E., shaking his fist at LOUDER as he goes out.*

**LOUDER.** I'll just show these people how to put away a steak in the least possible time. (*sharpens knife, &c.*)

*Enter SKINFLINT, L. 1 E., followed by NABBEM and GRABBEM (two bailiffs).*

**SKIN.** (*aside, up L., rubbing his hands*) Just in time—that's your man. I think he's a little deaf. Let me see—plaid trowsers, luggage marked "L. L."—all right!

**LOUDER.** (*knocking with knife on the table*) Waiter—waiter!

**SKIN.** (*aside to BAILIFFS*) Let's all fall on him together. I'll sit on his head while you handcuff him. No! on second thoughts, I'll go outside and hold the door fast until you have secured him. (*crosses in front to L.*) Besides—(*aside*) It's not such hard work, and less dangerous.

**LOUDER.** (*laughing to himself*) Ha, ha, ha! that girl is about the rummiestys I ever did hear of.

*SKINFLINT shakes his fist at LOUDER—urges the BAILIFFS to proceed in their duty, and sneaks off, L. 1 E.—NABBEM up L., a little behind LOUDER, taps him on the shoulder)*

**LOUDER.** (*without looking round*) Come in.

**NABBEM.** (*quietly*) You're wanted.

**LOUDER.** (*turns slowly round, and stares at them from head to foot*) Er—

**NABBEM.** I arrest you at the suit of Skinflint.

**LOUDER.** (*laughingly turns away, and proceeds with sharpening his knife*) Get out! I never had any of old Skinflint's suits. I don't know him.

**NABBEM.** (*scooping over his shoulder—very quickly*) You are Mr. —?

**LOUDER.** (*quickly, without turning*) Louder

NABBEM. (*a little louder*) What is your name?

LOUDER. (*same tone*) Louder!

NABBEM. (*shouting in his ear*) What is your name?

LOUDER. (*putting down his knife*) Louder!! (*looks at them both—they exchange glances—LOUDER, then in despair, bawls very loud in NABBEM'S ear*) Louder! Louder!! Louder!!!

(*goes angrily and in despair to R. corner—the BAILIFFS follow him closely, a little behind him, as if to prevent his escape, as he turns they keep out of his sight, and follow him in the same manner back to L.—NABBEM on his R.—GRABBEM, L.*

NABBEM. (*aside to GRABBEM, as they cross to R.*) He's as deaf as a quart pot.

LOUDER. (*as he gets to L., faces audience, turns R., encounters NABBEM, in surprise he starts back, and knocks against GRABBEM, L., he then surveys them both*) Now look here; I don't know precisely who you are, and what's more I don't precisely care; but if you particularly wish me to destroy that amiable and classic look on both your physiognomies, you'll continue to annoy me for about two seconds longer.

NABBEM. (*determinedly seizing him by the collar*) No larks, then, come on! (GRABBEM ssizes him, L.)

LOUDER. (*struggling between them*) Now then! Do you know what you're a doing of?

NABBEM. Rather! Come on. (*loudly and using great violence*) No violence! Come on! (*they drag LOUDER off, L. 1 E., struggling desperately and vociferating very loudly at his ill-treatment*)

*Enter LONG, hurriedly, R. 1 E*

LONG. That's all settled! Nothing like being married quietly in the country, after all! Polite parson—courteous clerk—obsequious pew-opener—ceremony, no tears—tableau, no fireworks—cab, no crowd—and all the rest of it. Delight of a few—discontent of an old guardian—quiet steak, another cab, and then to Brighton. (*sits at table, R.*)

*Enter LOUDER, his dress and hair in disorder, L. 1 E.*

LOUDER. (*speaking as he enters—looking off, L.*) Set of infuriated confounded asses! Of course, directly those fools got me outside, some drivelling old idiot said—"Bless me! it's the wrong man!" Very satisfactory for me! Never mind! if I don't make him pay for it I'm—only look at me! (*turns his back, showing his coat slit up the back*) I say, only look at me!

\*

## SHOULD THIS MEET THE EYE.

Enter POLLY with a steak in dish, with tin cover; LOUDER seizes it, she struggles, and at last he takes it from her, and goes with it to his place at L. table.

No, you don't! I've waited for this long enough! (*takes off cover*) And a beastly little one it is too.

POLLY. (R. of L. table) That's not your steak!

LOUDER. Now, don't you come here abusing your master's customers; but go and fetch me a pot of half-and-half.

POLLY. (*going*, L.) They left a cage door open at the Zoo, I should say. (*at him*) Beast! *Exit* POLLY, L. 1 E.

LONG. Now then for my steak. (*going to his seat, L. of R. table, sees LOUDER eating*) I say, sir, that's my steak!

LOUDER. (*his mouth full*) That's quite a matter of opinion.

LONG. I say, sir, that's my steak.

LOUDER. Well, I shall have done with it in about two minutes.

LONG. (*aside*) Upon my life, this is a cool hand. (*aloud*) I don't know, sir, whether you distinctly understood what I said, but—

LOUDER. There's very little of it, and it's deuced tough,

LONG. (*bring his hand down smartly on the table*) Sir, do you hear what I say?

LOUDER. Don't stand there making that noise, with your mouth all on the water. If you want something to do, just run and see after that beer for me. A pot of half and half—make haste.

LONG. Oh! this is a downright insult. Sir, I demand your name.

LOUDER. (*still eating*) Louder!

LONG. (*leans over him*) I say—I demand your name.

LOUDER. (*as before*) Louder!

LONG. (*shouting*) What's your infernal name?

LOUDER. (*puts down his knife and fork, rises, and shouts in LONG's ear*) Louder! You thick-headed idiot! (*LONG jumps away and goes R., his hand on his ear*) Louder! don't I keep on saying, Louder!

LONG. (R.) Really! that's the deafest man I ever met.

LOUDER. (*pushing away his plate*) There, you can have it now; I've done with it. I'll just get my hat and walk off; I've had enough of this. *Exit* LOUDER, door, L.

LONG. Hang me! If he wasn't deaf, I'd kick him.

Enter TEDDY, L. 1 E., with steak on plate and cover; LONG rushes at him and seizes it; TEDDY struggles.

TEDDY. This isn't for you, sir; but for the other blag-gard—

LONG. (forcing it from him, and kicking him) Oh, get out!  
*(takes steak to his own table)*

TEDDY. Och ! Murther !

*Exit TEDDY, L. I E.*

LONG. This isn't mine, but I must have something, I can't go to Brighton on an emp'y stomach. My wife will be here directly, and—By the way, I must not eat these onions, she won't like that. Where's the sauce? *(rises and goes to side-board up R., and begins smelling the various bottles)*

Re-enter LOUDER door L., he sniffs about.

LOUDER. Hallo! there's my steak and onions ! I can smell 'em !

LONG. *(up R.)* Where is that sauce, I wonder ?

LOUDER. *(goes to table R., takes away the steak to his own table)* Not if I know it; the other only gave me an appetite. *(begins to eat)*

LONG. Where is that sauce ? Oh ! here it is. *(returns with sauce to his seat)*

LOUDER. Ah, this is something like a steak !

LONG. Hallo ! why—eh ? hang it ! Where is my steak gone ? This is too bad. *(rises, as if to go L., sees LOUDER eating)* Why—that ruffian has collared my steak ! *(goes opposite to LOUDER) Sir—I—I—I—I—*

LOUDER. What on earth are you making those faces for ?

LONG. How dare you take such a liberty ? I have a deuced good mind to throw you out of that window, you impudent cad !

LOUDER. *(pointing at him with his knife)* Look here, Mr. Thingamy, you don't seem to be aware of it ; but upon my soul you're a confounded nuisance, bothering a fellow in this manner. What on earth do you want ?

LONG. My steak.

LOUDER. *(rises)* Because if you want anything in this way, *(squaring up, and dancing about in a fighting attitude)* I flatter myself Goswell Road can give it you.

LONG. Oh, he's so deaf there's no arguing with him.

*(LONG seizes the steak with a fork, as if to take it away ;*

*LOUDER rushes to table, and sticks another fork in steak ; they struggle with it to C.)*

LONG. Number nine, give way.

LOUDER. Number six, I'll see you hanged first.

LONG. Then take the inevitable consequences. *(they struggle till the steak is torn in half, each retaining a piece on their forks—LONG throwing his half on the table, wiping his hand with a napkin)* Sir, you're a low ruffian ! I'll have you turned out of the house.

LOUDER. Very well, then.

LONG. I'll complain to the landlord. You are not fit for decent society! You are no gentleman!

LOUDER. Very well, then.

LONG. Here, landlord, boots, waiter, chambermaid!

*Exit, shouting, door, R. 1 E.*

LOUDER. Very well, then. Well, of all the beastly places in this beastly universe, I should think this is the most beastliest! I'll complain to the landlord too. I won't submit to. I'll—damme! Hi! Waiter, landlord, boots, chambermaid.

*Exit, L. 1 E.*

*Enter LONG, excitedly, R. 1 E.*

LONG. I can't find the landlord anywhere. Like policemen, they're never to be found when a row's going on! I shan't bother about it any more. I'll go and find my wife, and be off at once—she is downstairs, and—

*Enter MAUD, R. 1 E.*

Oh! here you are. I was coming for you, my dear—

MAUD. Let us hasten from this place at once, my dear Lionel, while the chance is open—

LONG. I was about to propose the same thing, my love. We'll go at once.

MAUD. The luggage is in the cab at the corner of the street.

LONG. I will just give orders that my portmanteau may be forwarded by the next train, and—

(*loud noise without, L., as of a mob of people—voices heard—*

"That's him!" "Pay the man the money!" "Give it him!" "He's a welcher!" &c., &c.—*voice off, L., after the mob subsides,* "Chuck it over him!"—*loud laughter and noise—*"Serve him right; the welcher!"

MAUD. (*going to window*) What noise is that? Come, Lionel, let us go at once.

LONG. Only a row among the betting men. Come along.

(*going off, R. 1 E.*)

*Enter SKINFLINT, hurriedly, L. 1 E.*

SKIN. Stop! stop! stop! Very clever, arn't you!—very sagacious! I've been baulked twice to-day, but I think I have the right man now! So you're the young gentleman that girl's been snivelling after so long?

LONG. (R.) I have that honour, sir, and you—if I understand rightly—are the drivelling old gentleman who is bent upon ruining her happiness.

SKIN. (L.) Pah! I daresay you imagine that's rather clever; but no more humbug. Come, girl—go home!

MAUD. (C.) I—I—cannot now.

**SKIN.** Oh! Cannot! We will see. Come, go home, or I must make you! (*advances, as if to seize her*)

**LONG.** (*passing her in front to his R.*) Pardon me, sir! walking up to SKINFLINT, who backs towards L.) I allow no one to dictate to my wife.

**SKIN.** (*amazed*) Your—wife?

**LONG.** Precisely. (*going back to MAUD, and placing her arm in his arm*)

**SKIN.** (*choking with rage*) Then I forbid either of you to darken my threshold again.

**LONG.** We will not; but we may enlighten it as we return from Brighton.

**SKIN.** Ugh! (*loud laughter, L. 1 E.*)

**Enter LOUDER, L. 1 E., smothered in whitewash, clothes in rags, and followed by POLLY, TEDDY, and four or five BETTING MEN, laughing at him—LOUDER knocks up against SKINFLINT as he enters—SKINFLINT retreats to R.**

**LOUDER.** (c.) Yes. Very funny, isn't it? Hor, hor, hor, hor! You are all deuced waggish down here, arn't you? First of all, I'm arrested for a debt I did not owe, and my clothes are torn off my back, because I expostulated; now I have been nearly drowned in whitewash and half murdered by some ruffians who mistook me for a welcher; and if it had not been for some old lunatic, I should have been entirely made away with, only he discovered that I was the wrong man. Hang it! I'll write to the "Times!" I'll carry it into the House of Lords!

**OMNES.** Ha, ha, ha, ha!

**LONG.** Why, it's the man with the appetite.

**MAUD.** (R. C.) The fellow who insulted me.

**SKIN.** (*up R.*) What! you've been dropping in for it again, eh?

**LOUDER.** (*imitating him*) Yes, I've been dropping in for it again, you demented old last years beanstalk—but I'll make you pay for it.

**MAUD.** (R. C.) What's the matter?

**LOUDER.** (*after looking at her*) Nothing, oh nothing—and she says "What's the matter." Well, I should say it wouldn't much matter what matters, after this matter-matters-mat—but I'm afraid I am wandering. It's all through that beastly "Should this meet the eye!"

**LONG.** I understand, my dear sir. If I can offer you any compensation I—What name may I have the pleasure of—

**LOUDER.** Eh?

**LONG.** What is your name?

**LOUDER.** Louder.

**LONG.** What is your name?

**LOUDER.** Louder.

**MAUD.** (raising her voice) What—is—your—name?

**LOUDER.** Louder.

**OMNES.** (shouting) What's your name?

**LOUDER.** (shouting) Louder! Louder!! Louder!!! you deaf and dumb idiots! If you can't hear, can you read? (shows an envelope with his address on it) Lambkin Louder, Esquire, Oil Merchant, Goswell Road, E.C.

(*OMNES appear surprised and satisfied*)

**LONG.** My dear sir, I beg to apologise—

**LOUDER.** But that won't pay for my clothes!

**SKIN.** (advancing R.) In your distress I find my satisfaction.

**TEDDY.** (L.) For damages, bedad, I'd bring an action!

**POLLY** (L. C.) And very likely lose it.

**LONG.** (R. C.) True, Miss, for

Those right by justice oft are wrong by law!

**MAUD.** (R. C.) I'm sorry, though, to see you thus ill-used.

**LOUDER.** (C.) To some good end perhaps I've been abused!

My day is spoilt—my clothes, and dinner too!

For compensation—(addressing the audience) I must look to you.

To bear my fate, each night I'll gladly try,

If,—with approbation THIS SHOULD MEET THE EYE!

BETTING MEN (*at back*).

**SKINFLINT.** **MAUD.** **LONG.** **LOUDER.** **TEDDY.** **POLLY.**

R.

L.

Curtain.



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