

# THE TIMES

An Original Drama

IN THREE ACTS

BY

JOHN DALY

*Author of "Married Daughters," "Broken Toys," &c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,  
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,  
LONDON.

TO

WILLIAM FARREN Esq.

THE AUTHOR

RESPECTFULLY AND REGARDFULLY

INSCRIBES

THIS PLAY.

*First performed at the Royal Olympic Theatre,  
on Monday, July 18, 1853.*

### Characters.

SIR ARTHUR FALCONER, BART.	MR. G. COOKE.
SIDNEY FALCONER	MR. H. MARSTON.
SIR WILLIAM BUNGLE, M.P.	MR. W. SHALDERS.
MR. CRAWLEY BYE	MR. T. MEAD.
MR. HOPE TANGIBLE	MR. W. FARREN, Jun.
DAVID EDEN, M.A.	MR. FARREN.
MOSS	MR. CLIFTON.
NUFFIN	MISS E. TURNER.
JEWEL ( <i>a Servant</i> )	MR. LAPORTE.
FRANCES EDEN	MISS ANDERTON.
EM	MISS GORDON.
MRS. FOCUS	MRS. BARTLETT.
MARTHA JUDGE	MISS T. ADAMS.

### Costumes.

SIR ARTHUR.—*First Dress*, morning gown. *Second Dress*, evening dress. *Third Dress*, morning gown.

BUNGLE.—Brown coat, figured vest, white cord breeches, top boots, white hat.

SIDNEY.—Fashionable modern suit.

TANGIBLE.—*First Dress*, light walking suit. *Second Dress*, evening full dress.

BYE.—Fashionable black suit, white cravat.

EDEN.—Plain black suit, knee breeches, stockings, shoes and buckles.

NUFFIN.—*First Dress*, ragged suit, corderoy trousers. *Second Dress*, plain youth's suit of black.

Moss.—Black suit.

JEWEL.—Handsome white liveries.

SERVANTS.—Same as Jewel's.

GENTLEMEN.—Evening dresses.

EM.—White dress, mantle, and bonnet.

FRANCES.—Neat figured muslin dress.

MRS. FOCUS.—Figured delaine, cap and apron.

LADIES.—Full evening dresses.

MARTHA JUDGE.—Figured dress, cap, apron, spectacles.

### Time in Representation—Two Hours.

\* \* \* For permission to perform this Drama, apply to Mr. W. C. Williams, 3, Acton Place, Bagnigge Wells Road.

# THE TIMES.

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## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Room in Sir Arthur Falconer's Villa at Richmond; Moss is seated on sofa, r., reading The Times.*

Moss. "Fashionable arrivals—Lord Figurehead—The Bishop of Butterdsidé—Count Pâletot."—Oh! ah! here we are—"Sir Arthur Falconer, after a lengthened stay on the continent." So! (*in turning the newspaper he conceals himself for a moment*)

*Enter MARTHA JUDGE, l.*

MAR. Welcome back to old England again! Eh? I beg your pardon, sir, I took you for Sir Arthur.

Moss. Don't apologise, ma'am; it might puzzle a wiser head than yours to tell a great man from a little one, when you look at him through the medium of a newspaper. Besides, in one sense I *am* Sir Arthur; I'm his artist.

MAR. His artist?

Moss. Yes. I conceive him over my breakfast, and I execute him at his toilet. To-day he will be affable, dignified, and thirty-five.

MAR. Thirty-five? Fifty-three!

Moss. Pooh! Sir Arthur dresses from twenty-eight to thirty-six: he never exceeds that. Generally speaking, he's too fond of looking young.

MAR. Ah, that's like him; he's all animation.

Moss. By no means; a great deal of him is padding. And now, ma'am, that I have been so candid, pray what are you?

MAR. I'm Martha Judge, nurse in this family near forty years. Latterly Mr. Sidney has called me his house-

keeper; but nursing is my delight: I'm out of my element where there's no babies.

Moss. And have you none of your own?

Mar. Why, what's Mr. Sidney but my boy? who but me, nigh thirty years ago, held him up to the face of his blind father for the first kiss he took in this world? and who had the second kiss of him but me? and hushed his cries from the young mother dying beside him? of course me!

Moss. (*rising*) His blind father?

Mar. Born blind, sir. Poor Mr. Gerald was the twin brother of your master.

Moss. Ahem; you mean Sir Arthur.

Mar. Of course. Being the elder son, (though by all accounts he was born but a few minutes before Mr. Gerald) and so the heir to the baronetcy and estates, Sir Arthur scarce grew past boyhood, before he was flattered and cheated into the thing he now is. How long have you been his valet?

Moss. About two years.

Mar. Then you know his faults?

Moss. Faults? Don't depreciate my property, Mrs. Judge! Vices! fine sturdy vices—and every one them in active play.

Mar. A libertine—a gambler—a man that has gone against nature all his life—

Moss. She'll be even with him in the long run; nature's feminine, and never forgives abuse. Philosophy, Mrs. Judge—

Mar. Pshaw! What's the use of philosophy in service?

Moss. Incalculable. (*a bell rings, R.*) Is that for you?

Mar. No. It's for you.

Moss. Is it? Philosophy, Mrs. Judge—(*bell louder*) philosophy teaches me to answer it. *Exit, R.*

Mar. Ha, ha! So the elderly youth, my old young master, is coming here, is he.

*Enter SIR ARTHUR, leaning upon Moss, R.*

Sir. A. Gently, Moss! my nerves—the sofa. (*sits languidly*) I feel quite renovated already. There is certainly something in the air of one's native land, which—Moss,

there *must* be a window open somewhere. Shut them all !  
*Exit Moss.*

—Ah, Martha, it is quite refreshing to see your old face !

MAR. Thank'ye, Sir Arthur—that's very flattering from you, for you were never fond of *old* faces.

SIR. A. Aha ! what you will never spare me ?

MAR. I beg your pardon, Sir Arthur. I didn't think what I was saying ; but you know you have been such a shocking man—

SIR A. (*with animation*) I have—I have—Ha, ha ! But that's all past now. (*with melancholy*) All past now. Ah, ah !

MAR. (*apart*) The old reprobate !

SIR A. Where's my nephew ?

MAR. Goodness knows ! He came home last night after everybody was gone to bed, and went out this morning before any one had got up.

SIR. A. Still the same ardent, sluggish, heedless odd fellow he was ?

MAR. Not a bit altered. Sometimes reading Greek night and day ; and sometimes playing billiards and smoking cigars with Mr. Tangible, as if he never meant to leave off. One thing only he never varies in. He's always abusing his species, and sneering at the world.

SID. (*without, l.*) Off, Nero ! down, sir !

MAR. There he is ! He calls his animals by the worst names he can think of. He gave ten guineas for that dog, because it saved an infant from drowning.

*Enter SIDNEY, l.*

SID. (*without observing SIR ARTHUR*) Martha !

MAR. Mr. Sidney !

SID. Go to the lodge door ! you'll find there a boy—a thing. His shining sunken eyes, straight hair, and cold damp fingers are so many signs of the consumption, which is born of habitual hunger and drink. His face is ugly with ignorance and cunning—his clothing foul and ragged. Martha, control your loathing of this object ! Think only of the inestimable value of a moment's happiness in a life like his—and give the boy the meal I promised him !

MAR. Some beggarly impostor, I warrant ! *Exit, l.*

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*Exit Moss.*

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MAR. Some beggarly impostor, I warrant! *Exit, L.*

SID. Nay, 'tis we who are the impostors when we mingle such rank stuff as that with the metal nations are made of.

SIR A. (*advancing*) So, Sidney, another whim?

SID. My dear uncle, welcome home again! What brings you back to our dull England, after six years pleasure on the continent? The jealousy of a foreign husband, or the too durable constancy of his wife?

SIR A. Nay! you are yourself the cause of my return. In all these years that I have spent abroad, what have you been doing at home?

SID. Easily answered. Nothing.

SIR A. True. And this is your birthday—you are twenty-nine years old.

SID. Birthdays are the sneers of Time at Life. Twenty-nine!

SIR A. You remember your boyhood?

SID. As I do my tutor—dear old Eden! (*sits on chair, L.*)

SIR A. At school, at college, your youth was one long promise of distinction—a promise your manhood must fulfil. Nothing has deserted you but ambition, and that marriage must revive.

SID. Marriage? You surprise and perplex me. I am not fit for a wife—I am too rash, proud, and wayward.

SIR A. You'll have the wider choice. Women never refuse unmanageable men.

SID. And moreover, I have one fatal fault, I cannot love.

SIR A. How do you know that?

SID. Because I've tried often, and always failed signally. Mine is an impracticable lump of a heart that cannot be won or lost. But, uncle, as you are such an advocate for a wife, why have you never married yourself?

SIR A. Perhaps, Sidney, because I would not have another inherit the title and estates to which you might do such honor.

SID. (*touched*) You are always generous, and, if you think I really ought to marry—

SIR A. Undoubtedly.

SID. (*with a struggle*) Then I'll do it. And now let's change the subject!

SIR A. With all my heart; and this evening I'll present you at Torpor House.

SID. To whom?

SIR A. To Lady Grace Lifeless, only daughter of the Earl, to whom, in implicit reliance on your sense and honor, I have formally proposed you.

SID. But the lady?

SIR A. Congratulate yourself! She has estates in five counties, and her portrait is engraving for the Book of Beauty, in the character of Niobe!

SID. (*retiring to and sitting on sofa*) This is horrible.

*Enter MARTHA JUDGE, L.*

SIR A. Well! Is the boy gone?

MAR. Yes, Sir Arthur. How he did eat to be sure! It might be fancy, but he didn't seem so ugly when he'd finished. Two letters. (*gives SIR ARTHUR a letter*) That's from a lawyer, by the handwriting.

SIR A. For me?

MAR. Yes. Lawyers always write as if they'd a natural leaning to the wrong side;—this is for Mr. Sidney. (*puts another letter on table and exits L.*)

SIR A. (*opening his letter*) Who can be writing to me? Oh! Crawley Bye.

SID. Crawley Bye! a dangerous correspondent,—half attorney and half bill discounter, he lives in the corner house, between Chancery Lane and Portugal Street, where he sells his money and lends his law.

SIR A. A clever man.

SID. Very; they say he can tell anybody's character by the handwriting, if he only sees it on stamped paper.

SIR A. And yet Crawley Bye has managed my affairs with fidelity and zeal; and here writes that he will to day, resign his trust into my hands; and, in spite of my extravagance, will show my fortunes to be thrice as great as when he undertook my stewardship.

SID. You have been a good client.

SIR A. I was his first patron; but he has always seemed attached to me by something more than interest. When first I saw him, Crawley Bye was drudging at a lawyer's desk, in Glasgow, to save enough to pay the cost

of a wife. He was to marry a lovely girl, a grazier's daughter, whom I met in the Highlands when on a shooting trip. She and I,—you know, Sidney, I was never prudent,—well,—poor Amy—a mock marriage made her mine. She was of a wild hot temper, and we soon parted. But for her wilfulness, Crawley Bye would never have known our connexion. I offered him money, and bade him still make her his wife. With the same cold searching smile he has now, he took the money, and, while he refused marriage, he promised me that *upon her only* should every shilling of my bounty be expended. I know he kept his word; but soon after Amy died. Crawley Bye came to London, married well, speculated luckily, and is now a wealthy man.

SID. If he be not, many a poor gentleman has been ruined to no purpose. I wish you joy of being rid of him.

*Enter Moss, L.*

Moss. Sir William Bungle.

SIR A. Admit him.

*Enter SIR WILLIAM BUNGLE, L.*

Sir William I congratulate you—I see by the papers you are a Member of Parliament.

BUN. Yes, Sir Arthur, the family mantle has descended on me. You know the Bungles have always taken an active part in the political history of this country.

SID. They have indeed.

BUN. So, as soon as I heard of the vacancy for Puddlesborough, I took it into my head—

SIR A. What—the vacancy?

BUN. Just so. I was elected in the most gratifying manner, with bands of music and banners—you should have seen them,—one was “Bungle, the Poor Man’s tried Friend.”—another, “Our Ancient Institutions, and Bungle for ever.” But I have come to ask you a favor.

SIR A. ’Tis granted. What is it?

BUN. The use of your grounds and park for a fancy fair, and fête champêtre, in aid of the funds for teaching the Caffres the first four rules of arithmetic on the Bunhillrow-nian principle.

SID. What principle?

BUN. The Bunhillbrownian, the newest invention of the great Doctor Papeworthy. I'm sure I may count on you in such a cause?

SIR A. The Caffres? Pooh! Charity begins at home.

BUN. I believe it did begin at home originally, but that was very long ago; and by this time charity has got so very much abroad—

SID. That perhaps it had better begin again.

MOSS. (*entering, l., announcing*) Mr. Crawley Bye.

SIR A. Show him in. (*to BUNGLE*) Do you know him?

BUN. Yes; he applied to me last week to become Chairman of a new Patent Pavement Company.

SID. Aha! beware of him—he's here.

*Enter CRAWLEY BYE, L.*

BYE. Sir Arthur, your humble servant. Gentlemen, yours. I'm intruding on good company—but business—

SIR A. Ah, Mr. Bye! you are still as persevering in the pursuit of money—

BYE. As you have been in the pursuit of pleasure, I hope you have been as successful in your object as I have in mine.

SIR A. (*aside*) Curse his sneering! (*sits on sofa, r.*)

BUN. (L. C. to BYE, L.) I've been thinking of your proposal about the Pavement Company, Mr. Bye—

BYE. Too late, Sir William. That was ten days ago.

BUN. Why the pavement isn't laid down is it?

BYE. No, sir, but the Company is. Ah, Mr. Sidney, an old friend of yours is lodging in one of my houses.

SID. Indeed, sir.

BYE. Yes; he arrived in London yesterday with his daughter. His name is—let me see, Eden—The Reverend David Eden!

SID. Good Heavens! he in London? (*rises, comes to c.*)

BYE. In a furnished first floor in the house of Mr. Focus, my common-law clerk. I'm surprised you haven't heard from him, for he was writing to you this morning.

SID. Indeed! this letter then is from him. (*reading*) "If I have not quite forgotten him—wishes to see me."—My dear old tutor! It is twelve years since we parted at the gate of his little parsonage in Devonshire; he is not fit to be in London,—his age—his simplicity—

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BYE. Just so. They charged him sixteen shillings for a cab from the railway station.

SIR A. (*rises, r.*) And yet I can remember this same Eden as wild a young scamp as ever trod St. James's Street.

BUN. (*l. c.*) And so can I. (*apart*) Egad! I'd better say nothing about it, or they'll find out he's a poor relation of mine.

SID. Surely he's in no distress!

SIR A. His daughter comes with him, you say. A pretty girl?

BYE. (*pointedly*) Sir Arthur, I have not presumed an opinion upon female beauty for many years.

SID. I must see him at once. Good bye, uncle!

(*retiring up stage*)

BUN. (*r. c.*) Stay, Sidney, I want to speak to you—my horses are at the door.

SID. And will you let me drive?

BUN. Certainly. Good bye, Sir Arthur. I may say you agree to the Caffres? Thank'ye. It will be a most interesting thing. Colonel Dummy has promised us the band of the Heavy Indefatigables, and Lady Hobbyfond's four unmarried daughters will keep the principal stall—"Fancy stationery—real objects of charity."

SID. Get on, Bungle, and look out for the turnpikes! Old Eden in London! Damme, my veins run rockets!

*Exit with BUNGLE, l.*

SIR A. (*looking after him*) Enthusiast! He is very like his father.

BYE. It is a pity, Sir Arthur, you have no son of your own.

SIR A. I rejoice at it. If I had an heir, Sidney would be a beggar.

BYE. Just so. (*an awkward pause*) Shall we proceed to business?

SIR A. If you please. What we have to do will not take long.

BYE. Longer than you imagine. There is much to be adjusted before we are quits. (*a pause*) Twenty years is a long time; and old deeds—(*taking up parchment*)—are apt to be troublesome.

SIR A. Come, then, to the library.

BYE. After you, Sir Arthur. (*they go out together, r.*)

SCENE II.—*Furnished Lodgings in London.* FRANCES EDEN kneeling before an open trunk, l.; MRS. FOCUS beside her; and EDEN looking out of the window, r.

FRAN. So, now everything's in its place, I declare this room does not look so very unlike home after all.

EDEN. Ah, my child, yesterday our prospect was a garden, a meadow, and, beyond, my little gray old church. Here the principal object is a young man over the way, smoking a cigar, in a most extraordinary cap, with his boots sticking out of the drawing-room window.

MRS. F. (c.) It's Mr. Ferguson, sir. These were his apartments, but his habits didn't suit. Focus is very particular with his lodgers; and we used to be regularly knocked up at three o'clock every morning on account of Mr. Ferguson being in that state that he couldn't make use of his latch key.

FRAN. (l.) What is a latch key?

MRS. F. (c.) Don't you know, miss? Well, I should say that is just the sort of ignorance that is bliss. It's difficult to explain to a lady what a latch key is. There's nothing female that corresponds with it, except—ah!—except the "sundries" in a young wife's housekeeping book.

EDEN. (r.) Have you any more lodgers, ma'am?

MRS. F. Oh, yes, sir, we're quite a happy family. The second floor keeps his cab—such an image of a man—and not proud; he milk-and-waters his own patent boots like a lamb, and never takes his meals at home.

EDEN. Ah. What is his profession?

MRS. F. Oh, sir, he's a gentleman—that is, he's nothing.

FRAN. (l.) And the poor lad you sent with our letter, is he a lodger? How does he live?

MRS. F. (l. c.) Oh, what Nuffin? Well he don't to call live at all, miss. He's been brought up in a manner between me and the pump; he sleeps in the back attic as near as he can crawl to the chimney for warmth, the highest thing in the scale of animated nature except the cats.

EDEN. (r.) Dear me! What are his parents?

MRS. F. He never had any—he hasn't got so much as a parish even. My landlord, Mr. Crawley Bye, brought him here. He isn't to call a charitable man in general,

isn't Mr. Bye, but he will give me a shilling now and then to keep the lad from starving outright.

EDEN. And this is the home to which we have been driven from the old cottage!

FRAN. (L. to R.) Nay, nay, be comforted; day by day we shall recal with calmer regret the old home which custom made so dear, and which it costs you so much to leave. (*they retire a little*)

MRS. F. Naturally, miss. The good gentleman will find my apartments every bit as dear in time, and it will cost him just as much to leave them.

TANGIBLE, appearing at L. door.

TAN. (*whispering*) Mrs. Focus!

MRS. F. La, sir! Excuse me, miss. It's the second floor. (*goes out with him, L.*)

EDEN. But, my dear, I can't help it. I'm in such an agitation at the thought of seeing Sidney again—after twelve years—the dear boy—

FRAN. Remember, father, he is no longer a boy. He may have forgotten us—he may not choose to remember us.

EDEN. (R.) Now, Frances, I'll not allow you to talk in that way. Sidney forget his old tutor? Nonsense—it's ridiculous—it's wicked— (*affected*) It's very likely though—but not with my boy! No, no! I won't believe it, and you shan't believe it! I know he will be here directly, and I declare the room is not fit to be seen. Come, let's make it tidy.

*Exit, carrying some of the litter, R.*

FRAN. He cannot conceal how anxiously he looks for his old pupil's advice in this emergency. (*a knock at the door*) Ah! the boy returned. (*she opens the door, L.*)

Enter NUFFIN, L.

Well, your answer?

NUF. There aint no answer.

FRAN. No? Did you not see the gentleman?

NUF. Yes, and he see me. Leastways he stared at me, as the nobs do; but he never spoke a word.

FRAN. And you gave him my father's letter?

NUF. I give it to a old woman as took it to him, and afterwards brought me some victuals. I think she was glad to get rid on me.

FRAN. Too plainly ; my father must not know this yet, it would break his heart. There, my boy. (*giving money*) What? is that not enough?

NUF. (*drawing his hand away quickly as she offers more silver*) Enough? yes, and thank you humbly, miss.

*Exit FRANCES, R.*

What a gentle voice hern is. I never was spoke to so kind afore—out of my dreams. Half-a-crown! It's a queer thing is money. There's some people—Mr. Bye's one—I can't bear to take it of, I feel to hate 'em so; and somehow this seems to go agin me too. God bless her! I'll never spend this—never—I'll starve sooner.

*Exit, L., wrapping the money in his handkerchief.*

*Enter MRS. FOCUS and TANGIBLE, L.*

TAN. Five minutes, Mrs. Focus—only five minutes.

MRS. F. It's impossible—I should lose my character.

TAN. Pooh! Characters are like teeth; at your time of life generally artificial. Mrs. Focus, I owe you fifty pounds—now my sentiments—

MRS. F. Oh, never mind sentiments—come to facts!

TAN. Very well. Then I can't pay—I haven't a shilling; and, when I told you so, you said that, being in debt, it was my duty as a man of principle to get married.

MRS. F. And it was the laundress's opinion too—you owe her fifteen pounds.

TAN. Just so: yourself and Mrs. Skinner are my principal creditors, and I placed my affairs in your hands. Mrs. Skinner suggested the rich old maid at the corner house.

MRS. F. Ah! why didn't you find the way to her heart?

TAN. Mrs. Focus, old maids have no hearts—they are all shoulders.

MRS. F. Then as I was formerly housekeeper to the walking million, Mr. Crawley Bye—

TAN. You pointed out to me the school at Hammersmith, where his only daughter was being finished. For three

weeks have I every day eaten Bath buns at the nearest confectioner's during the transit of the whole establishment, two and two, on their morning's walk. We have had one interview, arranged by the genius of an old fruit woman. And now, when her father has suddenly removed her from school, and she has written to you appointing to come here at three o'clock— (*a carriage is heard to stop, R.*) There she is, by jingo ! I'm a desperate man ; and if you prevent our meeting in this room, I'll be revenged on the whole sex and marry nobody !

MRS. F. But Miss Bye doesn't expect to see you here —she wrote to me, and there isn't a word of love in the whole letter.

TAN. Wretched evasion ! doesn't she say she's miserable—and besides, isn't she here to a minute—and who ever heard of woman being punctual, excepting to meet a lover ?

MRS. F. There's something in that. Here is the gentleman who has taken the apartments, and, if you can persuade him to lend you the room, I'll coax the young lady upstairs.

*Exit Mrs. Focus, L.*

*Enter EDEN, R.*

TAN. I'll manage him. Good day, sir—the gentleman, I presume, on whose acquisition to our circle we are all congratulating one another ?

EDEN. Sir ?

TAN. (*apart*) Ahem ! that style won't do. (*aloud*) Allow me to introduce myself. I feel that I am confiding to you a delicate secret, when I tell you I am the second floor.

EDEN. Ah !

TAN. I appeal to your feelings. I am here incog. My brother Lord Dunbaffle, a peer, who for political reasons (*apart*)—a writ of outlawry—(*aloud*) is compelled to reside on the continent (*apart*)—at Boulogne—(*aloud*) where I fear the machinations of my persecutors will eventually banish me also. I am every moment expecting a visit from a party who can relieve me of every embarrassment ; but if my real character were only known to

this party, it would be fatal to my hopes. We cannot therefore meet in my room; and, unless you lend me yours—

EDEN. For so laudable an object, I will do so with pleasure. When you want it, say so.

TAN. Oh! there's no hurry of course: only the party's coming up stairs.

EDEN. Then I'll go. I wish you success. (*returning*) Can I be of service here? Perhaps I might plead your cause?

TAN. With this party I'd rather plead it myself

*Exit EDEN, r.*

—though, if all's well, I shall want a gentleman of your profession to finish the business.

MRS. FOCUS *opens the door, and enters with EM., l.*

—My adored!

EM. (*apart*) He is here then! (*aloud*) Mr. Tangible, I'm shocked!

TAN. Mrs. Focus, don't leave the room. A lady's reputation is never safe in these cases, unless one of her own sex is on the right side of the keyhole.

EM. (*particularly innocently*) How ever did you find out I was coming here?

TAN. From Mrs. Focus, my angel: and, as I look at you, I feel how much I owe her.

MRS. F. I feel I am repaid already, miss. Mr. Tangible is not the man to forget his promises—he'd rather renew them.

EM. You have told me that you loved me—

TAN. Over and over again, and you have not bid me despair.

EM. I didn't mean to. But enough. We must forget the past—when I say the past, I mean the last three weeks. I am the destined bride of another! You know my papa is very rich?

TAN. (*carelessly*) Is he?

EM. Immensely. Yet how noble is your contempt for money. You can do without it.

TAN. Without vanity I think I can do without it as well as most men, But about your papa—

EM. This morning at breakfast, he promised to give me fifty thousand pounds on the morning of my marriage—

TAN. Exemplary parent !

EM. Stop a bit ! on the morning of my marriage with Mr. Sidney Falconer.

TAN. What ? You marry Sidney ?

EM. Do you know him ? I suppose he is very rich, like papa.

TAN. Not at all. He has nothing at present but great expectations from his uncle.

EM. Ah, Mr. Tangible, what a pity it is you haven't got an uncle !

TAN. Ahem ! They are convenient relations now and then. And how did you receive your father's communication ?

EM. In silence.

TAN. That's a pity—it looked so very suspicious. Better be natural.

EM. But I was waiting for your advice. How shall I behave when I am introduced to Mr. Falconer ? I think I'd better flirt with him. That would be natural.

TAN. Yes ! But it would be very unpleasant.

EM. (*fondly*) Ah, you have less confidence than I, for I am sure you love me dearly.

TAN. That I do, Em ! I'm a sad fellow, but I love you with all the heart I have—and, sooner than cause you more than a transient pain, hang me if I wouldn't see you married to—

NUF. (*opening the door, l.*) Mr. Sidney Falconer !

SIDNEY entering as TANGIBLE embraces EM.

SID. I beg your pardon. I'm afraid there's some mistake, I thought this was Mr. Eden's room.

MRS. F. Oh, no ! there's no mistake about it : we were merely—

SID. I see you were.

MRS. F. My niece from the country, sir ! (*to EM*) Come, Sarah, you'll be better down stairs. It's so very close here, sir.

SID. Very close indeed !

EM. (*as she goes out with MRS. FOCUS*) So, that's my intended husband ! Oh, what fun !

TAN. (*his back towards SIDNEY*) The worst of women is that they will always be so damned ingenious ! Now for it. (*turns*) Aha ! well Sidney ?

SID. Tangible ! My dear fellow, what do you do here ?

TAN. Do ? all I can. I—live here. You needn't mention my address, because I'm not vain of it.

SID. Live here ? Well, the greatest discoveries are always made by accident. I thought you lived at your club, and slept in your cab.

TAN. Ha ! ha ! very good. (*apart*) Nothing opens a man's heart more than a cruel joke at a friend's expense. I'll pump him. (*aloud*) They tell me you are going to be married ; I give you joy.

SID. Do you know the lady ?

TAN. I—I think so.

SID. Know further that she is my uncle's choice, not mine, and to him your congratulations will be more appropriate than to me. (*turning away up L.*)

TAN. (*apart*) Ha ! ha ! I'm bewildered. Little Em, his uncle's choice ! Then my only chance is to elope with her, as soon as I can knock money enough out of somebody to pay the post-boys. I won't give her up without a struggle I'm determined !

*Exit, L.*

SID. Surely there is some spell about old familiar things that makes manhood boyish again at a glance ! As I stand before this old chair methinks twenty-nine dwindles to fifteen, and I am again a dunce before my tutor.

FRANCES, *entering R., unnoticed.*

FRAN. A stranger ! It must be Sidney. Oh, I could bid him doubly welcome now.

SID. (*still looking at the chair*) I should like to construe a page of Cornelius Nepos.

FRAN. I am ashamed to remember I doubted he would come. (*she moves a chair*) Sir—I—

SID. (*not recognising her*) Mr. Eden, may I see him ? My name is Sidney—

FRAN. (*quickly*) I knew it ! (*checking herself*) What name, sir ?

SID. Sidney Falconer. (*apart*) A charming girl!

FRAN. (*embarrassed*) Mr. Eden will be here directly—pray be seated.

SID. (*takes a chair as she goes*) Thank you. A lovely girl! I wonder what I was thinking of when she came in? Oh! that old chair—A sweet girl! So sincere—so—

*Enter EDEN, R.*

EDEN. Welcome, welcome, my dear Sidney! Eh, how changed you are; and yet I think I should have known you anywhere. Pardon these tears, my good sir!

SID. (L.) Sir to me? You called me Sidney when I was no higher than your heart—let me never outgrow that name.

EDEN. (R.) There he flies out! always such an impetuous boy! I should have known you anywhere by your voice; and, now I look again, you've still the scar you got tumbling over Farmer Wheatley's tombstone—

SID. I must return with you, and re-visit those old scenes.

EDEN. Ah, Sidney, I've had a great affliction. Nobody's to blame; but—but—I've lost my little curacy, Sidney.

SID. Lost your curacy? yours for thirty years? Why surely the rector, who never came near the parish, when I knew you—

EDEN. Oh, no, it was another—a new rector. I've no doubt he's a most excellent man, for he holds four or five very high appointments in the Church, besides ours. But most unfortunately—

SID. What, my good friend?

EDEN. He didn't approve of my method of reading prayers.

SID. For thirty years scarce a man in the parish you hadn't christened, married, or buried!

EDEN. The new rector wanted me to do this, and to do that—strange things, Sidney, that I tried to do one Sunday in church, for my motherless child's sake. But I couldn't do it, Sidney, I couldn't do it! it was a sacred place, and I dare not! I resigned my curacy that day; and as I walked home to my daughter, I felt that if I had made her houseless I had done my duty, and that comforted me!

SID. Be comforted still. Pardon me, but I am rich—

EDEN. Ah, and so am I—very well off indeed. I had sixty pounds a year, and I was never extravagant—that is, never since I was a young man—but don't let me think of that!—it frenzies me. (*recovering himself*) Three hundred pounds, the savings of my life, are in that desk—my poor wife's desk!

*Enter NUFFIN, L.*

NUF. Please, sir, there's a gentleman in a trap—

EDEN. (c.) Good gracious! where?

SID. It's Bungle, by Jove! A friend who drove me here, Sir William Bungle.

EDEN. (r.) No wonder he wouldn't come in. He's my brother-in-law. God forgive me! I fell in love with a baronet's daughter when I was but a poor tutor, and her family disowned us for ever. I'm told Sir William is a Member of Parliament now?

SID. Yes; one of the new school of philanthropists, who fancy they are abolishing national poverty, when they are only extinguishing the national poor. (*turning to NUFFIN*) Ah! a breathing satire on the age we live in. What is your name, boy?

NUF. Nuffin!

EDEN. Strange! How did you get it?

NUF. It come to me natural. I was found in the streets.

SID. (c.) Where were you born.

NUF. Nowheres that I ever knowed on,—I didn't hardly know I was born till I was found of a snowy night by a tipsy gentleman as tumbled over me, "Hullo," says the gentleman, what did you do that for? "Nuffin," says I,—"What name," says a p'lliceman, a-taking me up instead of the gentleman,—"What name," says he?—"Nuffin," says I, very loud, and so I got my name.

SID. And a very good way it is too to get a name in London, to say the same thing very loud. Tell the gentleman I'll come directly,—there's money,—if I like you no worse to-morrow, I'll make a man of you.

*Exit NUFFIN, L.*

*Enter FRANCES, R.*

Ah !

EDEN. My daughter,—you remember her ?

SID. (*embarrassed*) Your daughter!—have I?—could I?

EDEN. There,—there,—no ceremony surely,—shake hands with him !

FRAN. Mr. Falconer and I have met before.

SID. Pray do not let my unlucky dulness then deprive me of your welcome ! (*they shake hands in confusion*)

EDEN. What a difficulty to bring two young people together to be sure ! Met before ? of course you have—Sidney, you recollect her—a little pale girl you know. when she was six years old you tumbled her into my pond out of a tub that you had conceived the happy idea of making a boat of—and then you jumped in after her yourself, and if it hadn't been for old Neptune, the dog, I believe you'd neither of you been here bowing and curtseying,—Frances, let us have a cup of tea. Sidney, you'll stop to tea ?

SID. Tea ? I!—(*he catches FRANCES' eye as she rings the bell*) Oh ! that settles it,—I haven't dined yet ; but never mind ! I've no appetite. (*this is spoken apart*)

EDEN. Sidney, I hope you have not forgotten your Greek ? (*during the next speeches MRS. FOCUS enters with tea equipage and appears to take directions from FRANCES*) Tell me whose head is this ? (*taking a sketch from an open portfolio*)

FRAN. Nay, father !

SID. Your daughter's ! (*taking it*) Admirable indeed !

EDEN. Yes, but whose likeness is it, eh ? Come ! Come ! you must know.

SID. (*puzzled*) Whose likeness, eh ? Ah !

EDEN. Why you've never forgotten him ? It's Plato.

SID. Plato ! to be sure it is ; but I assure you my thoughts were never further from Plato in my life.

FRAN. In the original the face was turned the contrary way, perhaps the likeness has suffered in being reversed.

EDEN. She means that perhaps she has not been successful in turning the head ?

SID. On the contrary, I think the head is turned perfectly.

*Enter NUFFIN, L.*

NUF. Please, sir, the gentleman in the trap.

SID. Bungle, by Jove! I'd forgotten him again. (Mrs. FOCUS plants a cup of tea in his hand) Tell the gentleman it's a pity to wait. (exit NUFFIN, L.) It's all over with me! Egad, I've forgotten Torpor House too! (he starts up, then sits resignedly) Oh dear, this is awful, but it's very pleasant!

EDEN. (taking tea in a homely way, his handkerchief over his knees) I hope it's to your liking! (FRANCES' and SIDNEY'S eyes meet, the curtain falls on the group.

END OF ACT I.

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## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Grounds of Sir Arthur's Villa arranged for a Fête—Time, evening, which gradually deepens into night—at intervals, throughout the Act, distant music is heard, and visitors pass over the stage—Moss, JEWEL, and others are discovered lighting lamps, carrying refreshments, &c.—MARTHA JUDGE enters with NUFFIN, R., who is cleaner than before.*

MAR. Come along as you say you're hired! What can you do to make yourself useful?

NUF. Anything—that is nothing particular.

Moss. (L.) Hallo! That's my department, and I won't be interrupted with. Where was your last place?

NUF. I never had a place in the world before.

Moss. Eh! independent?

NUF. Yes, starving!

Moss. Ah! I see. An unacknowledged member of the human family.

NUF. The human family? What's that? Is it an easy place?

Moss. Not it, it's find yourself there, and a deal to do for the wages. Come with me. (they retire, R. as SIR ARTHUR and TANGIBLE advance, L.)

SIR A. I have seen enough to arouse my anxiety. My nephew's attentions to Miss Eden are the talk of the whole gardens; to be frank with you, I have myself chosen a wife for Sidney. Is she really pretty, Miss Eden?

TAN. Yes! all girls without property always are. It's a law of nature.

SIR A. And sincerely now, do you think her modest?

TAN. Very. If she were at this moment among Lady Hobbyfond's daughters, the average height of the dresses in the group would rise two inches at least.

SIR A. (R.) And Sidney visits her every day?

TAN. (L.) Every day. That wouldn't so much matter, only he makes such damned frivolous excuses for coming. Besides, he saved her from drowning once; so it's sure to be a match.

SIR A. How so?

TAN. You know that whenever a young man drags a pretty girl out of the water at the risk of his own life, he's sure to marry her afterwards—it's a rule, though it does not sound like one of the Humane Society's.

SIR A. The devil's in these poor pretty girls for upsetting the deepest schemes in the universe. I tell you what, Tangible, you are a most accommodating fellow—you must make love to her yourself, and cut Sidney out.

TAN. Love? My situation in life wouldn't warrant the extravagance. Moss, an ice! (*turning away*)

SIR A. Mr. Eden—the father—is he very poor?

TAN. No, the old boy seems to have money.

SIR A. (*apart*) He must be made poor! (*aloud*) Tangible—in confidence, would a hundred pounds be of service to you?

TAN. Eh! in strict confidence, Sir Arthur, I don't mind owning that it would.

SIR A. Then I'll show you your game. Mr. Eden, sobered as he seems now, was in early life an inveterate gambler. Aha! I read him a lesson there. The fool would ape his betters—in one night he lost his little all to me! 'Tis many years ago, and I believe he has never played since. But the spirit of gaming is not easily subdued. Get him to the table, Tangible—he is out of practice—he has money—you don't seem to like the idea?

TAN. I don't ?

SIR A. Pshaw ! you used not to be so nice—reflect, the money will just pay the last bill you discounted with Crawley Bye.

TAN. True, necessity is the mother of invention—especially the invention of stamps.

SIR A. Do you keep the father out of the way, while I deal with the girl. Ha ! there they are at the end of the long walk, Sidney's arm about her waist, and her face turned fondly towards his.

TAN. A dangerous position, that has played the devil with most men in their time. (*retires*)

*Enter CRAWLEY BYE with EM, L. U. E.*

BYE. My child don't tremble so ! Remember that the next time you enter these gardens it must be as their future mistress. What age are you ?

EM. (L.) Just eighteen, papa, (*apart*) Ah ! goodness ! there's Tangible.

BYE. Then for just eighteen years have I been watching for the one hour's work that must be done to-night. Before that time I had another thought, (*half apart*) but that's a toy to your advancement. Ah ! Sir Arthur !

SIR A. You are welcome, Mr. Bye. (*seeing NUFFIN*) What is this ? Why are you here ?

NUF. Please, sir, I'm come for servant !

BYE. Good !

SIR A. Servant ! whose ?

NUF. Yours, sir, if you please.

SIR A. Mine ? a beggar ! (*to Moss at back, r.*) Put him outside the gates.

BYE. (L.) Good ! you hear your master, Moss ? Why do you not thrust him forth ?

NUF. Oh ! Mr. Bye, sir ! Why you know me.

BYE. I do. He is a beggar, Sir Arthur, a knave !

Moss. (r.) I beg your pardon, sir, but he says Mr. Sidney has hired him to help in the stables.

SIR A. Humph ! 'Tis like one of Sidney's humours ; and I must not thwart him every way. He can groom a horse I suppose ?

BYE. Oh! yes: and hold a stirrup while your nephew mounts.

SIR A. Take him away till I can speak with his master.

MOSS. Come along! you shall help me carry the wine into the supper room. (*apart as he passes* BYE) That old man means mischief as sure as my name's Moss!

*Exeunt* MOSS and NUFFIN, R.

TAN. (R. U., *apart*) There she is still. Pray goodness she has wit enough not to recognize me! (*telegraphing* EM)

EM. (L. U., *apart*) I know what he means,—act strangers. The dear, if he isn't as clever as a girl, every bit.

SIR A. (L.) Mr. Bye, although our business connexion has now ceased, I am sure you will not hesitate to serve me as—

BYE. As a friend, Sir Arthur, always!

SIR A. (*with a struggle*) Exactly, as you say; as a friend, Mr. Bye,—the approaching marriage of my nephew—

BYE. (L.) Marriage? Ah! Sir Arthur! (*presenting* EM) my daughter!

SIR A. (R. bows to her—then apart) His daughter! The coincidence is curious!—but no, no, the old money-lender could not be so insolent. (*advancing*) Miss Bye, permit me to—

EM. Oh, sir!

BYE. (*apart*) Excellent. He will himself conduct her through the gardens.

SIR A. Permit me to present you my excellent friend, Mr. Hope Tangible. (*apart to him*) Tangible, take her away. (*comes R.*, TANGIBLE and EM bow very formally)

BYE. (*apart*) Curse his pride! It will never stoop till it falls. (*music, L. U. E.*)

TAN. Hark! the band commences! May I hope? (*touching the souvenir at her wrist*)

EM. Of course you may; but we must not appear particular.

TAN. Certainly not; put me down for the first two dozen at least! *Exit with* EM, L. U. E.

BYE. (L.) A useful man, Mr. Tangible!

SIR A. (L.) A capital fellow—such an excellent heart.

BYE. Sir Arthur, between friends—

SIR A. Well, sir?

BYE. Between friends, such as we are, perhaps the less said about hearts the better;—it may be habit, but I never hear 'em mentioned that I don't immediately think of business. (*uneasy pause*) Sir Arthur! I know the cause of your anxiety—Sidney would marry the curate's daughter.

SIR A. He must not.

BYE. He shall not. Be secure! there is another bride for him than she whom now his arm encircles. They approach, shall we meet them?

SIR A. No; let us withdraw a little, and choose our opportunity. (*as they are going he stops*) Mr. Bye, the warm interest you take in this affair obliges me deeply.

BYE. Defer your thanks, Sir Arthur? I can oblige you further, *and I will.* (*they retire*)

SIDNEY enters with FRANCES from an avenue, he holds her hands as having just declared his love for her—she turns from him.

SID. Nay, Frances, answer me.

FRAN. (*apart*) My heart's too full.

SID. It cannot be that this avowal surprises you. Since we have met my whole being has been obviously changed: my devotion to you has spoken in every action, in every look. You have seen—have felt—that I loved you.

FRAN. (*apart*) How much happier was I then than now.

SID. But I am wrong to force from you a confession which your own heart has betrayed; this trembling hand—that downcast eye—let me interpret—

FRAN. (*quickly*) No, no! Interpret nothing! I have already been too much to blame. (*a pause*) Oh, Sidney, you—I know you are sincere.

SID. Frances!

FRAN. But you have forgotten the distance between you and me.

SID. There's no poverty like that of the heart which loves in vain. If I were poor now—

FRAN. (*suddenly*) Ah, if you were—

SID. You would no longer dread the world we might encounter together. Frances, thus is pride—if you love me, before heaven, before the world—I claim her for my

wife, to whom, when the dark hour comes—as come it will—I can say, “Dearest, had I woo’d you thus, I had won you more easily !”

FRAN. Sidney, there’s my hand, if you can take it without despising me.

SID. (*seizing her hand*) ‘Tis mine for ever !

*Enter EDEN, L.; SIR ARTHUR advances, followed by BYE, R.*

EDEN. Frances ! I have been looking for you. This scene of gaiety makes me a young man again.

FRAN. Father, dear father ! (*she goes to him in agitation*)

SID. The rapture of this moment must not brook delay. My uncle shall know all—

SIR A. (*meeting him, R.*) He does know all. What, Sidney, you are in love for the first time ; I congratulate you—I—I envy you.

SID. (c.) Uncle !

SIR A. She has youth, beauty, manner, with a little more fashion—

SID. Fashion ? Her soul—

SIR A. Just so. I am glad your taste is so fastidious. Nothing gives a young man a lower tone in society, than when his first *liaison* is with a *danseuse* or a *modiste*.

SID. Sir !

SIR A. Nay, Sidney, we must speak of this again when you are less ardent.

SID. Less ardent ? Do I know my heart ? Oh, when will that day come ?

SIR A. Ha, ha ! In a month—as soon as possession has made you more vain than fond of those charms which—

SID. Be dumb, sir ! (*checking himself*) Uncle, deceive yourself no longer, I love yonder maiden with my whole soul. Despise me—disinherit me ! but speak respectfully of her !

BYE. (*advancing, R.*) Nay, Mr. Sidney : Sir Arthur—(*apart to him*)—you have been too hasty—this must be repaired.

*Enter BUNGLE.*

BUN. Sidney, what have you been doing ? Everybody is talking secrets about you in a whisper.

SID. True, all must be explained—meanwhile, silence this folly !

BUN. Silence it ! why Lady Hobbyfond has got hold of the story, and with all her daughters is contradicting it everywhere : no one can doubt it after that.

SID. I'll go at once—yet to leave Frances thus ill protected—Ha ! an idea, Bungle !

BUN. I'm tearing myself away. What splendid women you have here ! Do you know that if I was not destined for the political arena, I think I should have made a very good figure in polite society. I say, will you come and hear it ?

SID. Hear what ?

BUN. My speech, my maiden speech—I'm going to the House now.

SID. Excuse me ; I shall see it in the papers you know.

BUN. Egad, so you will—five columns and a half in the debates, and seven lines in the summary. Ha ! the blessing of reporters—nobody, who reads my speech in the newspaper tomorrow, need regret that he wasn't in the house to hear it delivered to-night. Good bye ! (noticing FRANCES) Ah, another charming girl !

SID. (c.) Let me introduce you—'tis Miss Eden !

BUN. (L., embarrassed) How ? My niece ?

SID. No, sir ! My wife ! (presenting FRANCES, R.)

BUN. Good gracious ! Your wife ? Ahem, I said she was a charming girl ! And so you're to marry her ! Well, well, I'm not flint—introduce me, and I—I'll forget the past.

SID. Do, you're a public man now, and can't begin too soon. (he takes BUNGLE to FRANCES, they retire)

Enter TANGIBLE, L.

TAN. (apart) My mind is vividly impressed with one idea, the conviction that I must get fifty pounds out of somebody before I leave this spot. That old gentleman looks promising. Could I but get him to myself in a quiet rubber—and yet—Pshaw ! I can't afford to moralize myself out of a hundred thousand pounds. My choice lays simply between conscience and Camden Town, or ahem ! genius and Belgrave Square. The conclusion is inevitable. My dear sir ! (he advances to EDEN, R.)

SID. (*to Frances*) For a few moments, I commit you to Sir William. (*apart to Sir Arthur passing*) Uncle, we meet again to-night alone.

SIR A. Be it so. I shall expect you here.

*Exit Sidney, l.*

—Sidney is impracticable. We will try the girl. To-night, they must be parted for ever. Ah, Tangible! (*joining him*)

FRAN. (R., *apart*) Oh, this unsupportable tremor of happiness; Why cannot I be alone?

TAN. (R.C.) Sir Arthur, thatragged ruffian we saw here has got into the conservatory in a state of mad drunkenness.

BYE. Nuffin? (*apart*) Good!

TAN. Yes! I found him there just now—(*apart to Sir Arthur*) as I was coaxing the old boy's daughter to elope with me—By-the-bye, she has consented. We are off to-morrow morning—

SIR A. (*apart*) I congratulate you. (*aloud*) But this boy?

TAN. Was lying on his back under the table, pouring Madeira into his mouth from a bottle, with the neck knocked off. I gave an alarm—I'd got one myself—

BYE. (L.) And Nuffin—? (*retires up stage*)

TAN. Escaped through a window; and is now lurking about the grounds, unless the servants have secured him.

SIR A. Ha, ha! Miss Eden. I should apologize for Sidney's absence.

FRAN. Sir—Mr. Falconer— (*greatly confused*)

SIR A. To be frank with you, the summons which so abruptly called him away, is one which no man can disregard. He has gone to his future wife.

FRAN. His wife, sir?

SIR A. (*looking round*) Yes, I know not that it need be any longer concealed from his friends, that Sidney is about to marry.

EDEN. (R.) Eh! what? Sidney marry? I'm delighted.

SIR A. Yes, Mr. Eden, warned by me, a bachelor of—ahem! a bachelor of some years standing, my nephew has offered his hand to a lady whose rank, wealth, beauty—

FRAN. (*apart, l.*) Can this be true—my heart!

EDEN. Bless me! what delightful news! Sidney will make an excellent husband. I shall be quite anxious to see his choice.

TAN. See his choice? I'm getting bothered.

SIR A. I will tell you her name, for since the earl, her father—

BYE. (R.) Perhaps, Sir Arthur, it were scarcely prudent to be so candid yet. (*apart*) The fool will go too far.

BUN. (L.) The earl, her father! Why Sidney told me just now—

FRAN. (*rapidly*) Nothing! nothing! I beseech you nothing. (*she half sinks into BUNGLE's arms through agitation*)

EDEN. (*not noticing her*) I thought when he first came to our house there was something going on in his mind that I couldn't exactly account for. Now I see it all. It was love, the dog! Egad, I'm so happy, I should like to marry that couple myself.

TAN. Do, sir? and marry me first!

EDEN. You, my good friend? do you mean it?

TAN. Inexorably! (*then apart as they stroll away together*) and I mean you,—I wish it was anybody else to pay for my wedding breakfast. (*they go off, L.*)

BUN. (L., *who has supported FRANCES to a seat*) This is unaccountable, but by no means unpleasant.

BYE. (R., *to SIR ARTHUR*) Her pride is wounded, the better she loves, the less she will trust her feelings now.

FRAN. (L., *to BUNGLE*) Sir, I am ill—very ill,—of all the faces around, my father is not here, yours alone looks kindly on me. Pardon me, but you are my mother's brother—you are going to London—you will pass my father's lodgings;—take me! Oh! take me, home! I shall be better when I am alone. Do not refuse me for your sister's sake.

BUN. Refuse you, my dear! I believe I shall enjoy the journey, that is if you will dry your eyes. (*a little affected*) I haven't seen a woman's tears these thirty years, and it requires practice to resist that sort of thing.—Sir Arthur, your servant. Mr. Bye, (*apart*) I hate that man, (*aloud*) yours. I ought to have been in the house an hour ago.

BYE. Oh, sir! we have been robbing the nation.

BUN. Don't apologise, she's used to it.

SIR A. (C., *to FRANCES who has been taking leave of him*) Will you not remain until Sidney returns?

FRAN. Sir Arthur, I cannot. You will account for my absence to my father,—fatigue,—illness—

SIR A. Nothing more easy, what shall I say is the matter with you? (*a short pause of distress*) I will tell him that the company is too much for you.

FRAN. Tell him, Sir Arthur, tell him,—(*her firmness deserts her*)—what you please.

BUN. Come, my dear, (*as they go*) I declare I feel as if I was getting younger every minute. If that rascal, Sidney, has really been trifling with her—but I musn't excite myself, else I shall forget my speech,—let me see.

*Exeunt BUNGLE and FRANCES, l.*

SIR A. (L.) Victory! the enemy surrenders the field, the day's our own.

BYE. (R.) 'Tis our own, Sir Arthur, yours and mine.

SIR A. Mr. Bye, there is an abruptness in your speech, an insolence in your manner which, were I not sure they meant nothing—

BYE. Undeceive yourself, Sir Arthur, and I will tell you what they mean.

SIR A. Excuse me, sir, our acquaintance may be divided without a quarrel.

BYE. Hardly. 'Tis more than twenty years old, and it's root struck in my heart.

SIR A. Then, sir, gratitude—

BYE. How now, Mr. Hamilton?

SIR A. Insolent!

BYE. We had best be plain, Sir Arthur. Confess, now, you never cared to gain my *gratitude* until you saw that the poor clerk who spurned your first dishonourable offer, had discovered in the wild young student, who, under the name of Hamilton, lured almost from the altar his affianced bride, no less a man than the great heir—the future Sir Arthur Falconer!

SIR A. I need not hear this.

BYE. Better you hear it than the idle group, who straight shall hear it if you turn away.

SIR A. Do you threaten me, sir?

BYE. Plainly—yes. (*a pause*) You are not staying here for courtesy?

SIR A. I—I'll hear you out.

BYE. I thought you would : Amy Hamilton——

SIR A. That was not her name.

BYE. As surely as your title is your's now ; as Amy Gray she was my plighted love, as Amy Hamilton your lawful wife.

SIR A. Wife ? Is that your scheme ? Miserable plotter !

BYE. Your lawful wife. The young libertine, when he tempted an honest man's daughter to his arms, and, to gloss over in her eyes the sinful thing he made her, called her for a few hot weeks by his own name, forgot he was in Scotland, were the mere avowal of his marriage made the tie as binding before man as it already was before God.

SIR A. Fortune ! I am not in this toil.

BYE. Sir Arthur, 'tis my turn now. When, twenty years ago, you calmly owned the wrong you had done me, and tempted me with money to wed your cast-off mistress, in that hour the goodness that was in my young heart died—I was no more the lover—I was the lawyer, and I saw the great revenge that was to come ! You acknowledged Amy to be your wife in Perth, in Stirling, in Argyle, I tracked you every step, I secured the deposition of every rustic who had held your horse or tended your companion—I have them all.

SIR A. Where ?

BYE. Safe. With the pride of the voluptuary, who would not endure a reproach even from his own bad conscience : you gave me money, which I promised you to spend for Amy, and for none but her, and when your son came——

*Enter SIDNEY, L. U. E., behind, and stops observing them.*

SIR A. A child ! I never knew of this.

BYE. I never meant you should. When a son was born, and in the throes that gave—mark me !—an heir to your estates, the mother died, there was still some money left——

SIR A. And you expended it for his sake—the boy ? Say so, and I will bless you !

BYE. Father ! I kept my word. A marble monument, nameless—save with the name was given her at the font —rose over her, the child——

SIR A. Go on !

BYE. Was cast into the streets.

SIR A. And lost ?

BYE. Yes ; as a drop of water spilled into a ditch, that, stained and bloated with the foul things about it, still maintains existence. From year to year I've watched him. His food, gin !—his words, curses !—his apparel, rags, sometimes a prison garb !

SIR A. Does he live ?

BYE. He does, and that recalls me. Listen ! To-morrow it shall be proclaimed and proved this outcast is your son, unless, the only way to save his fortune, your nephew Sidney makes my child his wife. (*voices are heard in pursuit at a distance, L. U. E.*)

SID. (*apart*) So, a bold schemer this !

SIR A. (*L.*) Man, tell me of my son. (*voices heard louder, NUFFIN steals from the back maddened with drink, and brandishing a shivered bottle*) Ha ! interrupted.

NUF. Ha ! ha ! they've missed me. Hurrah ! Hi ! come on, come on ! Here ! ha ! ha ! (*he reels forward and falls senseless at the feet of BYE, R.*)

SIR A. Yet say,—my son ?

BYE. He is here—look at him, father ! Look upon his face !

SIR A. Mercy ! mercy ! (*burying his face in his hands ; the curtain falls on the group*)

END OF ACT II.

### ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Eden's Lodgings as in Act I. ; time, early morning ; the window shutters closed, the candles burnt very low, and the general appearance of the room shows that FRANCES who is alone, has been watching throughout the night ; a round table which stood in the centre before, is now placed at the back of the room, turned perpendicularly, so as to conceal a chair on one side of it.*

FRAN. This weary night, will it never be past ? and yet for what a morrow am I praying ! with morning my father must return. For shame ! to have watched for him

hour by hour—to know it must be trouble or danger that has kept him from me, and now to tremble at his coming? yet how shall I look into his fond eyes and conceal my secret,—I that have looked so proudly to the day when I might tell him of the noble heart that loved and sought his child, for he did—he *does* love me How? The affianced husband of another? I will efface his memory from my heart, and then—oh, the anguish of then!

*Enter Mrs. FOCUS, L.*

MRS. F. La, miss! you've never been a-bed all night. Take my word for it, there's never a man alive it's worth any woman's while to sit up all night for, except that woman's husband. (R.) First, because good looks ain't that object after marriage, which they naturally was before; and, secondly, because red eyes framed in a night-cap is a practical lecture on late hours, which every married man winces at. It's broad day. (*she opens the shutters, extinguishes the candles, and arranges the room*) So, the old gentleman ain't come home yet?

FRAN. And, oh! if any harm has come to him——

MRS. F. Don't alarm yourself, miss! when gentlemen step out like that, they generally go to the harm. Why, la! you're never fretting. I have no doubt he is quite safe; and, oh! do consider your good looks against Mr. Falconer comes!

FRAN. Mr. Falconer? Why should he come?

MRS. F. Why, goodness gracious, miss! What's he always a coming for? And this I will say, that for a young lady to see her lover, with such a pair of eyes as yours are now, is flying in the face of providence.

FRAN. Lover? Mine?

MRS. F. Yes, miss, yours! Do you think I haven't got my eyes—though, I really believe the dear old gentleman has no ideas. Never fear me, miss, I never see a nicer gentleman, or one better managed.

FRAN. (*apart*) Managed? Ah! every one will suspect me of that. I must see him no more—no more.

MRS. F. (*observing her*) Why they've been and quarrelled! and, as sure as I'm a British married woman, I'll make it up between them. (*a knock at the door*)

FRAN. Ah, my father ! (*opens the door and discovers CRAWLEY BYE*) Mr. Bye !

BYE. Your servant, Miss Eden. Mrs. Focus !

MRS. F. Sir ! (*apart*) The old vampire !

BYE. Has Mr. Sidney Falconer been here this morning ?

MRS. F. No, sir, not yet. Perhaps you mightn't like to meet him !—and so—

BYE. Just so. You may go.

MRS. F. (r.) Oh ! if five-and-twenty shillings a week wasn't an object, wouldn't I tell him a bit of my mind ? Miss, if you want me, you've only to ring. *Exit, L. D.*

FRAN. My father is from home, sir.

BYE. I'm glad of it, for my business is with you, may I sit ?

FRAN. (*assenting*) Pray, sir,—and your business ?

BYE. I'm a plain man, Miss Eden, and my errand is not a pleasant one. Mr. Sidney Falconer—

FRAN. Do you come from him ?

BYE. No, from his uncle. Your attachment for Mr. Sidney—

FRAN. Sir !

BYE. I beg your pardon, if you have no such attachment, my business will be less painful. There is no doubt he loves you.

FRAN. (*quickly*) Ah ! (*recovering herself*) Sir !

BYE. I will own that I, myself, believed the attachment mutual. Your visible emotions in the gardens,—the high position which Sidney held in the world until last night—

FRAN. How, sir ?

BYE. You do not know then of how much four-and-twenty hours has robbed him ? The circumstances matter little. Know that his uncle's title and estates must pass away from him, and Mr. Sidney Falconer is now as poor—pardon me—as yourself.

FRAN. Poor ?—ah, and free ! Tell me, sir, is he free ?

BYE. He is the affianced husband of another !

FRAN. True ; and she, (the great lady), how will she bear this reverse of fortune ?

BYE. Miss Eden, constancy in spite of the poets, belongs not to the humble only. The lady loves him ; by a sudden marriage Sidney may retain rank, wealth, and happiness,

and the alternative (you guess it) cannot be delayed.  
To-morrow must see him this fond lady's husband, or—

FRAN. What?

BYE. Your own and poverty's for life.

FRAN. And she, the lady, has sent you to me?

BYE. I come from Sir Arthur, whose friend I am.

FRAN. And you are *his* friend, too?

BYE. Whose friend?

FRAN. Sidney's.

BYE. Surely.

FRAN. You might have spared me this visit, sir, but you shall not doubt me; there is a time in every life when it is needful to make the one great sacrifice that alone can keep life holy. I did not think mine would come so soon—but I will be equal to it. (*rises*) Tell Sir Arthur to dismiss his fears: his nephew and I are separated for ever. Nay, sir, be secure! Mr. Falconer shall never see the struggle you witness—our parting shall be my act, not yours. (BYE, L.)

*Enter SIDNEY, L.*

SID. Frances! (*seeing Bye*) You here, sir?

BYE. I came to seek you.

SID. Doubtless.

BYE. Your uncle, whose will is my law, would see—  
would persuade you.

SID. True. Frances, I have bad news—bad news, to come so quick on the rapture of last night. (*going to her*)

FRAN. (R.) Last night! Oh! name it not—the blame was mine—forget me!

SID. Do you repent your promise?

BYE. (*half apart*) Just so!

FRAN. Oh, Sidney, you have been rash; think how short a time we have known each other.

SID. Frances, say you hate me?

FRAN. Hate you, Sidney?

SID. Say so, and save me from the bad thought that whispers to my heart you know I am a ruined man.

FRAN. I grieve to know it.

SID. And you desert me?

BYE. (*half apart*) Just so!

FRAN. No, not desert—— Oh, Sidney, we must part—but let it be in kindness.

SID. (*going*) Ha, ha! To-night wealth revels in love—to-morrow, poverty is starved with kindness! You are free—farewell.

FRAN. Farewell; one day you will know me better.

BYE. (*apart to her*) Enough! you have saved him.

FRAN. Then I am happy.

*Exit, R.*

BYE. (*R., eyeing SIDNEY*) Ha, ha! In the laboratory of the world acids are the surest tests of the absence of gold. Come, Sidney—remember—one word will save your inheritance.

SID. One word—a lie!

BYE. Granted: and I don't know a more useful contrivance.

SID. Go, man, and carry your conscience with you!

BYE. (*exasperated*) Conscience? That's a brave word for your tongue. You that have never known care or stint, defy temptation hardly now, but once pass the threshold of want, of hunger; and, faith, your conscience will be in dangerous company.

*Enter MRS. FOCUS, L.*

MRS. F. I beg your pardon, sir, but my husband wants to see you on particular business.

BYE. Focus here?

MRS. F. Mister Focus, sir, is in the passage. He has brought you this letter from the office, being very important.

BYE. A letter—(*taking it*)—and to-morrow is the fourth.

MRS. F. And, if I was a letter on particular business, I'd just speak my mind at once, and remain "Yours, sincerely."

*Exit, L.*

BYE. (*crushing the letter*) The worst! the very worst! and so end thirty years! What then? The more need of a clear head and a smooth tongue for twelve hours longer. To-day must make all mine. Pshaw! 'twas but a bridge to bear me to the future—there is still time to cross it; and then—fail all I have succeeded. (*aloud*)

Sidney, be advised! Meet me in an hour at your uncle's mansion, and remember—you choose your destiny!

SID. Never! I have one inheritance you cannot rob me of—an honourable name!

BYE. Mr. Tangible inherited the same thing, and the use he makes of it, all his friends—the curate for instance—can tell you.

SID. Eden? Can Tangible have plundered *him*?

BYE. Just so. Dangerous company sometimes are gentlemen with honourable names.

*Exit* BYE, L.

SID. They are coming—I will observe. (*he sits* R. of table, which conceals him)

*Enter* EDEN and TANGIBLE, L.

EDEN. (*agitated*) Come in, sir. (*apart*) Frances is not here—Thank Heaven for that! (*aloud*) Pray be seated.

TAN. You are very obliging, but the fact is I have a particular engagement—I am going to be married this morning.

EDEN. Married! Ah, you said so—but I forgot.

TAN. Yes, I must just take a bottle of soda water to get the odd trick out of my head, and then fly to my bride, who is waiting in a pastrycook's shop in Bloomsbury.

EDEN. Oh, yes—how much did you say?

TAN. Three hundred pounds—it's a large sum.

EDEN. Sir, 'tis all I have—that is, all I have in that desk.

TAN. 'Tis more than I like to win of you, but you would play so recklessly after your first winnings.

EDEN. Did I? Why surely I've lost my keys. *I must* call her. Frances, Frances!

*Enter* FRANCES, R.

FRAN. Father! dear father! Returned,—then I am happy!

EDEN. Happy? oh, yes! My dear, I want my keys.

FRANCES. Why, you haven't lost them, surely! No; here they are, father. (*taking them from one of his pockets*)

EDEN. (*quite lost*) Eh? Dear me! so they are. Poor thing! (*apart*) a beggar now—(*aloud, fumbling with the bunch*) Which one opens the desk? (*TANGIBLE from L. to R.*)

FRAN. My mother's desk! (*she picks out a key*)—EDEN goes with an effort, opens the desk, L.)

TAN. (*crosses to R.*) Miss Eden, your servant.

FRAN. An early visit from a man of fashion.

TAN. Yes, but fashion sometimes must give way to business. You see—

EDEN. (*coming quickly, R., a roll of bank notes in his hand*) Oh! not a word to her. Here, sir; did you say all?

FRAN. (L.) What is this? (*apart*)

TAN. Three hundred pounds. Look! all down in black and white. (*taking out his pocket book*) There's nothing I'm so particular about as my winnings. (*he sits at the table, and, pressing it down to read his notes on, discovers SIDNEY seated opposite him*)

SID. (R.) You are well met, sir.

EDEN. (*apart, R.*) Sidney here, too! Oh, shame—shame!

SID. Go on, man! What disturbs you? your hand trembles, and you are pale—surprising!

TAN. (L.) What surprises you, sir?

SID. That at this moment your face should be pale. Go on. The figures—

EDEN. No, no—spare me! Take the money! Oh, Sidney, my old vice! From my boyhood the sight of gold would make my brain burn, my blood dance. How often in my youth I fell before that tempter—let me not own here! At the same altar where I claimed my wife, I made a vow, never to touch card or dice more. I kept my vow till last night—an old man now, my daughter looking on me with her mother's eyes)—last night I was tempted again, and I fell. I played, but it was for her I hoped to win; and, as I lost again and again, the thought that I was robbing her maddened me, that I could not leave off till all was gone—all gone! Poor child—poor child! (*seats himself in chair, R.*)

SID. (R. C.) Well, sir, why don't you take the money?

TAN. Hang it, Sidney, I'm a damned bad fellow; but I didn't mean this. Hear me, sir! (*to EDEN*) I won your

money fairly ; and, by every law of honour, it is mine. But I won't take it—lend me but fifty pounds, for which I have pressing need ; keep the rest—and, to-morrow, I will pay back *that*, and forswear the four aces for ever !

EDEN. (*at a loss*) Fifty pounds ! What must I do ?

FRAN. Be still yourself, my father. (*taking the notes*) It seems this money was fairly lost—it is much to win of us—(*offering them to TANGIBLE*) but do not think we cannot afford to lose it ! we can even less afford to lose our self-respect. My father's white head has never yet bowed in disgrace ; and, for his child's sake, it never shall ! Take the money, sir !

SID. Stay, Miss Eden ! Keep the notes—you may do so with honor I will tell you why——

TAN. Nay, Sidney, be generous ! there's no need——

SID. There *is* need, sir ! A gambler's blush is cheaply bought to save the conscience of that old man, and the duty of his child. (*to FRANCES*) This is a debt of honour, any man himself a defaulter in the payment of such debts is, by every law in the honourable code he lives by, disqualified from receiving such debts due to him. That gentleman owes me two thousand pounds, which he cannot pay——

TAN. (L.) By heavens, sir, you have paid yourself now, for you have robbed me of a fortune ! With that little sum I might now have been the husband of Crawley Bye's daughter, and heir presumptive to the usurer's money-bags.

SID. What ? Mercury outwit Plutus ? I'll find money for that, to my last sovereign ! (*giving purse*) Take that, and prosper !

TAN. From you—never ! and when we meet again——

SID. But we shan't meet again—or, if we do, you won't see me ; for I shall wear the real invisible garment—a shabby coat.

TAN. What do you mean ?

SID. That this purse in its transit from me to you, makes the last step in my downfall, and the first in your rise. 'Tis the handsel of fortune—take it, man—and, for the past—Pshaw ! marry and repent ! (*half forces him out, L., going to EDEN*) Farewell, sir !

**EDEN.** You'll come again ?

**SID.** Never ! I have learned more than you would teach me. I am not so dull a pupil as to require another lesson.

*Exit, L.*

**FRAN.** (*bursting into tears*) Gone without a word—It is over then—Oh ! father, take me home again—dear father, take me home !

**EDEN.** My child, I have no home—no friends—no hopes—

*Enter JEWEL, L.*

**JEW.** Sir Arthur Falconer sends his carriage, and begs Mr. Eden and his daughter will come to him without a moment's delay.

**EDEN.** Sir Arthur Falconer ! 'Tis long since we spoke as friends, and am I now sunk so low as to be at his bidding ? Yet, for her sake—for her sake—perhaps he will befriend us. (*to JEWELL*) We will accompany you, sir, directly ! (*he leads FRANCES to her chamber, R.*)

*Exit JEWEL at door, L.*

**SCENE II.—A magnificent Apartment in Sir Arthur Falconer's Mansion in Piccadilly.**

*Enter MOSS carrying NUFFIN's clothes, R.*

**Moss.** Corduroy, as I'm a philosopher ! and the tenant of these garments is now fast asleep in a damask bed ! "Put him to bed, Moss," said Mr. Crawley Bye,—"Put him to bed; and in the morning make a gentleman of him." Make a gentleman—what a grand idea ! I've begun with the outside of him—bought a good suit of black—and as for these rags—Ah ! whom have we here ? Mr. Tangible ! (*putting the clothes on a chair*)

*Enter TANGIBLE and EM, L.*

**TAN.** Compose yourself, my love !—take a chair.

**EM.** Oh, Tangible, what have I done ! Why, you are never going to leave me ?

**TAN.** Not an instant. Moss, is Sir Arthur within ?

Moss. Yes, sir, but he has given orders that he will see nobody but Mr. Eden.

TAN. Never mind. There is a coach man at the door, pay him.

Moss. (*pausing*) Pay him?

TAN. (*giving his last sovereign*) Pay him; never mind the change. Moss, do you see anything unusual about me?

Moss. (*glancing at the money*) About you, sir! Oh, no! not now.

TAN. Moss, I'm a new man! yesterday I was a problem; to-day I'm a great fact. In short Moss, I'm married!—that's my wife?

Moss. Miss Bye? Suffer my respectful congratulations! Ah! sir, your wedding ring is really virgin gold.

TAN. (*seeing NUFFIN's rags*) What the deuce have you here?

Moss. That's another new man of Mr. Crawley Bye's making. He's given a new suit of clothes for these this morning! (*eyeing TANGIBLE*) Just like his benevolence.

TAN. Crawley Bye's? then his benevolence must have come up like mustard and cress! Moss! what does it mean?

Moss. Mischief, sir. Mr. Bye has something at heart.

TAN. At heart? then egad, it must be mischief. I'm bewildered. *Exit, Moss, L.*

EM. (L.) Tangible, dear, hadn't you better go and speak to papa?

TAN. (R.) My dear, we must not be too precipitate; the great point in these cases is to choose a happy moment.

EM. Well, Tangible, dear, and isn't this a happy moment? (*caressing TANGIBLE—disappointedly*) Why I thought you were going to kiss me!

TAN. (*with fervour*) My darling girl!—egad, there's somebody coming! (*he wheels away from her rapidly*)

EM. Well, and what if there is? It isn't wrong!

*Enter EDEN, L.*

EDEN. I beg your pardon—I've come to see Sir Arthur—and—I—*(going)*

TAN. Not for the world, my dear sir—

EDEN. I am sure I am disturbing you; the young lady's

quite cross, and you—bless me what a colour you have—quite florid !

TAN. It must be a blush—the first glow of dawning respectability gilding my cheek ! the fact is that as you came in, I was going to take a liberty——

EM. No such thing. You couldn't have attended to the marriage ceremony or you'd know there was no liberty in it.

EDEN. (L.) Marriage ! I declare young people seem to think of nothing else—there's my poor child——

EM. (c.) Is she here ?

EDEN. Yes, in the next room.

EM. Poor dear girl ! I can well understand the delicacy of her position. I'll go and sit with her myself ; (*with immense dignity*) the presence of a married woman sanctions everything.

EDEN. You are very kind.

TAN. Go : and, while you are away, I'll make it up with papa. (*kisses EM who goes out with EDEN, L.*) I'm experiencing the sensations of a very little planet during a total eclipse of the sun : I seem to have come out faintly at the wrong time ; and nobody will condescend to notice me, for watching the greater phenomenon, which is——

*Enter Moss.*

Moss. (*announcing*) Mr. Crawley Bye !      *Exit Moss.*

*Enter BYE, L.*

TAN. Exactly so. Now for it. Mr. Bye, I have been anxiously expecting you. (*apart*) It's of no use hesitating, I'll show him the marriage certificate at once. (*aloud*) If you will look at this paper——

BYE. Mr. Tangible, I have enough of your paper already. I cannot accommodate you ; I have business with Sir Arthur. (*passing*)

TAN. You mistake, sir. This is not a bill, but a document which——

BYE. A document. Aha ! I have expected this : your schedule I suppose ?

TAN. (*apart*) My schedule ! What a damned unlucky beginning ! I must feel my way here. (*aloud*) Mr. Bye, you are a man of the world. (*apart*) That's a good leading remark. (*aloud, after a pause*) Our stations in life are

different. You have wealth, I have rank. (*apart*) Its devilish awkward having all the conversation to oneself in this way; I must come to the point at once. (*aloud*) Mr. Bye, you have a daughter!

BYE. (*quietly*) Ah!

TAN. I love her, sir—I may say idolize her—with a devotion which. (*apart*) What the devil is he grinning at?

BYE. Mr. Tangible, I am a money lender—you're an adventurer. Do you not talk to me of love; I am not to be imposed upon! (*sternly*) and hark ye, sir, my daughter—beware of her! I have bonds of yours—more than one in my strong box; name but my daughter's name—presume to address her—even lift your eyes to her in public, and I'll lodge you in gaol till you rot there!

TAN. You insult me, sir. As my wife——

BYE. Be dumb, sir! I have passed fifty-three years amidst the scorn and derision of my kind, yet in all that time I have not learned humility enough to bear your insolence without anger.

TAN. Then the truth must out at once. Your daughter is my wife—we were married this morning.

BYE. (*vehemently*) Rascal! (*after a pause*) Is this the truth?

TAN. Witness this marriage certificate!

BYE. Give it me! (*takes it, examines it, and overcome with emotion sinks into a chair*) True! 'tis true. Poor girl! poor girl!

TAN. Nay, sir, I hope——

BYE. The only living thing that ever loved me—and I cannot save her! A gambler's wife instead of—and I cannot save her!

TAN. You will not assist us, then?

BYE. I assist you? Ha, ha! Look here! Confidence for confidence. There must be no secrets between—ha, ha!—father and son. Read this (*giving the letter he received in the last scene*)

TAN. (*reads*) "I regret to inform you that my acceptance for twelve thousand pounds, due to-morrow, will not be honoured." Humph! Twelve thousand pounds lost. But what is that to the millionaire?

BYE. The millionaire?—the bankrupt! Ha, ha! We

are well matched. Yours is a house of cards—mine of paper ! Sir, I have been insolvent for years. I have speculated fatally, and lost thrice what I gained. This it was induced me to resign to-day the stewardship of Sir Arthur's estates, which I had schemed to gain another way ; there you have foiled me. To-morrow I must be a bankrupt—my name in the city article in the *Times*, not as a petty defaulter, but one who brings down hundreds in his fall—youself among the number. There are bonds of yours—you know how many—in my strong box ; in a week you will be in the Queen's Bench. (*TANGIBLE terrified, sinks into a chair*) And my daughter—let me not think of that ! There is still time for my revenge. (*going towards a bell*)

TAN. (*earnestly*) Stay, sir ! That I have schemed to outwit you, I cannot deny ; but, believe me, I sincerely love your daughter. To imprison me, will deprive her of her sole protector. Give me up possession of those bills—make me but free to begin the world as an honest man, and I swear to you, I will rack every faculty of brain and heart to maintain and guard my wife !

BYE. She will need a protector ! Well, you shall have your will. Go to my house ! These keys—no—not even in this extremity will I part with them. (*writing hurriedly*) Give this paper to my clerk—he will give you a box—Besides the papers you want, it contains the title-deeds of the Falconer property ; they may yet serve me—bring it here—at once—be quick, for my hours in England are numbered !

*Exit TANGIBLE, L.*

—So ! now to be quits with my enemy. (*he rings the bell, r. violently*)

*Enter SIR ARTHUR, at door, r., careworn and ghastly pale.*

—So you are come, sir,—but you are come too late.

*Enter Moss.*

—Well, Moss—your young gentleman—is he ready to receive company ?

Moss. Young gentleman, sir—company ? He seems very bad—he fainted twice while I was dressing him—

BYE. He wants his morning dram—give him brandy—brandy, Moss ! I suppose you don't know what gin is in this fine house yet. (*fiercely to SIR ARTHUR*) Ha, ha ! time will show—take me to him ! Sir Arthur will excuse me. As the guardian of that boy, committed to my care by his mother, I am here to assert his rights in this house, and I will !

*Exits with Moss, r.*

SIR A. I am grown very feeble since last night. Oh, Heaven, if the first prayer an old bad man has prayed for years may avail, spare me life and reason to endure the shame—I must confess for Sidney's sake ! 'Tis my last hope ; but the old curate cannot fail me—no, no, I have him too securely : the happiness of this child, his own necessities, all will make him mine.

*Enter EDEN, l. d.*

—Mr. Eden, I sent for you—

EDEN. (l.) What is the matter, Sir Arthur ? You look—  
—good heavens ! you look—

SIR A. (r.) Never heed me. There is danger—danger on us all—but, chiefly upon Sidney—your old pupil—

EDEN. Danger—Sidney ? Ah ! he spoke of ruin.

SIR A. A crafty man would rob him of his inheritance—you alone can save him.

EDEN. I ? Is he not your nephew ?

SIR A. Hear me in silence ! Your words have a meaning you cannot understand. You would not see Sidney a beggar ? he loves your daughter too—

EDEN. The dear boy !

SIR A. He shall marry her ! There is a rich living in my gift. I will present it to you—you shall reside near your children and share their happiness.

EDEN. But the danger—

SIR A. You can avert it. To save Sidney's fortune 'tis only necessary that you recollect how, in this very room, years ago, you signed your name as witness to a certain paper, the contents of which you never knew.

EDEN. I do remember it. Your father, old Sir Arthur, sitting on that spot where you now stand : yourself beside him, seemingly the only person who knew what he had

written: your blind brother, Gerald, playing with his infant, that's Sidney now. Remember it? I'd swear it!

SIR A. You must also swear to the contents of that paper.

EDEN. I never knew them. Show it me!

SIR A. I cannot show it you. That paper, which would make my fortune Sidney's—mark me!—justly his—hate me, sir, but hear me out—that paper is either lost, or is now in the possession of Crawley Bye.

EDEN. And he—

SIR A. Would destroy it if he knew of its existence. To save Sidney's birthright you must swear that the secret, which my father wrote in your presence, he confided to you in words.

EDEN. But he did not.

SIR A. You must swear it! Mark me, it is the truth you aid—the shame is only mine. You hesitate?

EDEN. Do I? It's wrong—it's wicked—but it's very natural.

SIR A. You consent?

EDEN. No! I daren't do it—I daren't do it! My dear boy, I'd give my life for his sake. I believe my last words will be "God bless him!" but I couldn't speak those words with the lips that had sworn to a lie!

*Enter SIDNEY, c. d.*

SIR A. Interrupted! Ah, Sidney—

EDEN. (*apart, crosses to r.*) I cannot look at him—I feel as if I had wronged him.

SIR A. Nay, sir, you stir not hence. (*stopping EDEN*)

SID. I am come to say farewell.

SIR A. Where are you going?

SID. To the land of gold. I have been taught, somewhat roughly, that England is no home for a poor man who has been rich. (*sits in chair*)

SIR A. (*to EDEN*) You hear him? It is your act makes him an exile.

*Enter BUNGLE leading FRANCES, c. d.*

BUN. (*apart*) There he is! I wish I mayn't spoil this business. (*to FRANCES*) Stay, my dear! (*advancing*) Sidney!

SID. Sir William !

BUN. I've got something to tell you ; you know I'm the head of my family ?

SID. 'Tis likely.

BUN. Yes ! I didn't know it till yesterday that there was anybody in my family besides myself ; and, in that case, of course it had no head. But now, my niece—You love her, Sidney ?

SID. She has rejected me, sir !

BUN. Bless her for it ! She rejected you, because she—that is, she rejected you, because you—I can't exactly express myself, but I can't bear to see you two separated. I like you—I like her—Damme, I believe I am in love with her myself. I've neither chick nor child—Frances shall have every shilling I'm worth when I die, and as much as she likes beforehand. Marry her, Sidney—marry her ! (*leading FRANCES forward—apart to him*) She rejected you, because she was poor as well as you—she makes herself yours now she is rich !

SID. (*apart*) She loves me then ! Oh ! could we recall but yesterday—or might fortune's wheel turn once again, and make me anything but the penniless adventurer I am—with what rapture would I claim this hand, which I must now resign for ever !

BUN. Resign ?

SIR A. It is a promise ! Look up, Sidney, while I reveal the shameful secret of my life ! The rank and wealth I falsely have enjoyed—enjoyed, great God !—were not my birth-right but my brother Gerald's, whose son *yourself*—is now their rightful heir.

EDEN. Sidney ? Good heavens !

BYE appears at the door, c.

SIR A. (*r. c.*) Here is the witness of the truth of what I say. (*EDEN shrinks from him*) What ! Would you beggar Sidney for a scruple ? One word from you and all's secured (*aloud*) Hear me ! Years ago two boys were in the same hour born to the house of old Sir Arthur Falconer. How was the proud father's ambition mocked when he heard that the elder son—his heir—was blind !

SID. (*l. c.*) My father !

SIR A. 'Twas easy to deceive the mother—to bribe the physician—a lie reversed the decree of nature, and I—I was called the heir! The truth was not revealed to me till manhood—in the presence of David Eden—he cannot deny it! and, when I wanted courage to renounce the brilliant future that was not my own, it was my father's voice confirmed my crime. Yet, infamous as I was, I had still some care for Sidney. I resolved never to marry, that no child of mine—

BYE advances with NUFFIN dressed in black and very pale.

BYE. (R. C.) Excellent father that plots against his own son! Observe, boy, your welcome home—that gentleman is your father.

NUF. My father?

SID. Uncle, is this the truth?

SIR A. (R.) I swear it. Here's the witness! (to EDEN, R., who is greatly agitated)

BYE. (coming down, R. C.) Humph! And he'll swear it too, doubtless.

EDEN. (R.) No, no! I cannot—I cannot! Oh! Sidney, 'tis the only thing I dare not do for your sake! My heart tells me your uncle speaks the truth—but I cannot prove it—cannot—dare not—

BYE. Sir Arthur, you must provide yourself with a better confederate. 'Twill take more than the word of so honourable a gentleman as yourself—

EDEN. Yet, it is true! The paper I witnessed—but the contents I knew not.

STD. We are parted then, Frances, and I, for ever—

BYE. Sir Arthur, you've a bad confederate.

SIR A. (to EDEN passionately) Is this your conscience? Hence, sir, and remember that by your act the wrong has triumphed, and Sidney is a beggar!

FRAN. Oh, father!

EDEN. (greatly agitated) Heaven in its own good time will send the proof.

*Enter TANGIBLE, with a deed box, c., places it on table, L.*

BYE. So you are well returned. Here, sir, I will quickly release you from your liabilities.

TAN. Egad, I'd no idea my liabilities were so heavy.

BYE. (*unlocking the box and giving papers to TANGIBLE apart*) Here are your bills: destroy them, and you are a free man. (*aloud to NUFFIN*) What, boy, come from your father, do you not hear he is your enemy?—would strip you of all, and turn you into the streets from whence I snatched you to make you rich? See here (*tossing deeds from the box*)—your father's rent roll—the proof of your birth—see! you may trust me.

NUF. (l. c.) I don't know who to trust. (*to FRANCES*) Oh, lady, tell me! They say I'm rich now, but you was kind when I was starving poor! (*as BYE forces deeds upon him*) Tell me what to do with these. (*NUFFIN holds paper, &c. to her*)

FRAN. (r.) What's this? My father's name? Oh, heaven! perhaps the paper—

SIR A. (r. c.) Secure it! 'tis the proof!

EDEN. (r.) The proof it is. I can swear to it now! (*takes paper*)

BYE. (l.) That paper, boy!—your life upon that paper. (*snatching at it*)

NUF. (*confronting him*) Stand back, Mr. Crawley Bye! I've borne many a blow of yours that my fingers tingle to pay off. Stand back—stand back—I say!

SIR A. Sidney this makes all yours.

SID. All—more than hope—Frances, my wife! Upon my father's hearth I claim your hand.

BYE. (*apart*) 'Tis over. The phantoms that have tempted me fade out, and I am alone—as on that bitter night, yet unforgotten, when the friendless boy, maddened to see the one young heart he loved bought and betrayed for gold, flung down a piece of money on his garret floor, and kneeling vowed his life to that. To-morrow my creditors will clamour at my door—they will demand their due—they will demand it of a corse. The game's played out, and I have lost—lost—lost!

(*he embraces EM, who has entered timidly, puts her into TANGIBLE's arms, and exit slowly, l.*)

BUN. (*clapping TANGIBLE on the back, l.*) Upon my word you are a devilish clever fellow, and must not be forgotten.

EM. And oh, sir, if you would but get him a situation—  
 TAN. (*wincing, L.*) Something light and genteel—

EM. (*L. C.*) Fiddlesticks! Something independent!  
 Sooner than live upon other people, I'd take in clear starching.

TAN. And I'm sure I'm ready to take in anything!

BUN. (*L.*) You shall have the highest stool in the County Bank.

SID. (*R.*) Uncle, my happiness is too complete for resentment. Retain the title you have borne!

SIR A. (*L. C.*) No longer! Henceforth the study of my life is centred *here*. (*taking NUFFIN's hand*) Had I known of this duty earlier—

EDEN. (*R. C.*) Ah, Sir Arthur! 'Tis the bitterest lesson of life that teaches us we have been false to ourselves. (*looking round*) The sated voluptuary—the orphan of society—the money-lender—the adventurer—the pastor, the guide and example of others! The world is a school in which the monitors too often discover how much they have to learn. In the promise of a better future only can we hope for pardon for the faults and follies of the passing Times.

SID., FRAN., EDEN., SIR A., NUF., EM., TAN., BUN.

R.

L.

Curtain.