

## Lacy's Acting Edition.

WORLD &  
STAGE.

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PUBLISHER,	PUBLISHERS,
89, STRAND.	122, NASSAU STREET.

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# WORLD AND STAGE.

An Original Comedy. 4

IN THREE ACTS.

BY

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(*Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society*)

AUTHOR OF

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## WORLD AND STAGE.

*First produced at the Royal Haymarket Theatre (under  
the management of Mr. J. B. Buckstone), 12th March,  
1859.*

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### Characters.

SIR NORMAN CASTLECRAG	...	Mr. ROGERS.		
THE HON. HARRY MALPAS	...	Mr. W. FARREN.		
LEONARD ASHTON	...	...	Mr. HOWE.	
BUZZARD	...	...	...	Mr. COMPTON.
DANIEL DEWLAP	...	...	...	Mr. BUCKSTONE.
COLONEL GABBLE	...	...	...	Mr. BRAID.

### Waiters.

LADY CASTLECRAG	...	...	...	Miss E. TERRY.
KATE ROBERTSON	...	...	...	Miss AMY SEDGWICK.
MISS LIPGLUE	...	...	...	Mrs. POYNTER.
HEPZIBAH	...	...	...	Miss WEEKS.
LADY FANNY GABBLE	...	...	...	Mrs. GRIFFITHS.
TRIMMER	...	...	...	Mrs. COE.
MADAME MOREAU	...	...	...	Miss FANNY WRIGHT.

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### COSTUMES—MODERN.

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*Time in Representation—Two Hours.*

*NOTE.—This Comedy is the property of JOHN KNOWLES, Esq. Application for its performance to be made to the Proprietor, Theatre Royal, Manchester, or to the Author, 28, King Street, Covent Garden, London.*

## WORLD AND STAGE.

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### ACT I.

*SCENE.—Park Gates of a wealthy Mansion; park and mansion beyond; R., a villa cottage with bower portico, small garden before it, and railings with gate advancing upon the stage; within the railings, rustic table and garden chairs; L., trees between which a road that crosses the stage, passing before the park gates and behind the little villa.*

*Enter HEPZIBAH from L., carrying a basket, and pursued by BUZZARD, who catches her, out of breath, in the middle of the stage.*

BUZZARD. So I have caught you at last my pretty one! a devilish brisk run you have made of it, though. I have absolutely sacrificed all the properties of my toilet in the chase.

HEPZIBAH. Let me alone, sir—will you? I have been to the village for butter and eggs; and, if you don't let me go, you may stand a chance of having your coat smeared with half a score of new laid eggs, and your whiskers greased with two or three pats of fresh butter.

(puts her hand into basket)

Buz. (*letting her go, alarmed*) My whiskers! my coat! You must be out of your senses. Hold your hands, I say.

HEPZI. Then keep yours to yourself, my obstrepulous gentleman.

Buz. Charming soubrette, you mistake my intentions. I only want to gather from your sweet lips—

HEPZI. There's nothing for your gathering on my lips, I can tell you.

BUZ. Yes, there is—simply a little information about your fair mistress.

HEPZI. Well, what did I say?

BUZ. That there was nothing—oh, pshaw ! you can't refuse to answer a few questions. Who is your mistress ? Why has she left town to inhabit this lonely little house ? In fact, you may as well confess at once. I know it is she.

HEPZI. Do you, now ? Of course she is she ; and she lives in the house because she likes the house to live in. In short, my mistress is—

BUZ. Is—out with it !

HEPZI. Is my mistress.

BUZ. Wonderful ! Yes, a clock is a clock, and a bell is a bell—

HEPZI. And you are—You know the rest of the saying.

(enters garden gate and puts her basket on the table as BUZZARD pulls her back)

BUZ. (pulling her back) No, Miss Pert, I am not the fool you take me for ; I can tell who your mistress is.

HEPZI. Then why do you ask any unnecessary questions ?

*Enter DANIEL DEWLAP from behind villa, R.*

BUZ. Spite of the thick veil with which she covers herself—I have discovered in your mysterious lady, the famous Kate Robertson, the celebrated actress, the admired of the stalls, and the applauded of the pit ; and to punish you for your want of confidence, now you have none of your oleaginous weapons at hand, I have a good mind to inflict a kiss upon those pouting lips, (he tries to kiss HEPZIBAH, who struggles—DANIEL comes L. of BUZZARD, and flings him rudely on one side, L., HEPZIBAH leans on railing)

DAN. You come out of that, you gay-coated hornet.

BUZ. Halloa, rustic !

DAN. (in a fighting attitude) Halloa, fine gentleman !

BUZ. You have the audacity to derange the set of my coat, sir ?

DAN. Well! and ain't you the audacity to try and derange a young woman?

BUZ. But I'll soon settle your business, you vagabond.

DAN. (*in fighting attitude again*) Just you come on, then, and try!

BUZ. I'll take out a justice's warrant for the assault!

DAN. And I'll take out a warrant o' my own, to tell you another small piece o' my mind—and that is you're a darned liar!

BUZ. Fellow! (*changing his tone*) Ha, ha, ha! Upon my soul, the clodhopper is quite amusing—ha, ha, ha!

DAN. Ain't he? Yes, snigger away. (*mimicking*) Ha, ha, ha!—but I tell you I have known this young woman's mistress ever since she were a wee little lass, no higher than that, when I was gardener's boy at Westland Manor there, in her poor father's time; and she is a good and virtuous young woman; and if I catch you coming here with a foul pack of lies in your ugly mouth again, I may chance to dust your coat for you in another fashion.

BUZ. My coat again! These ignoramuses have no notion of the value of such a work of art. (*to DANIEL*) Doubtless, most enthusiastic rustic, you have golden reasons for your deliberate assertions. But I am not paid for *my* convictions. (*DANIEL, who only half understands, threatens, restrained by HEPZIBAH*)

*Enter LEONARD ASHTON, L., looks about him, and goes up to c. gate, observing.*

Spare yourself any future sportive and sparring exercise, my good friend! Have it all your own way. The lady is of course a model of virtue. Ta, ta! (*to HEPZIBAH*) My compliments to the fair Kate, my recalcitrant.

LEONARD. (*aside, behind*) Yes, I was right in the house.

BUZ. And tell her, however closely the flimsy cover may be tied down, the flies are sure to swarm about the honey pot. (*aloud*) Ta, ta, sportive rustic. *Exit, L.*

DAN. (*whom HEPZIBAH has restrained during the latter speeches, calling after BUZZARD*) Take you care, or I'll show you a little spot with a good crab stick upon the

village green, better than you've seen on any other turf.  
(turning to HEPZIBAH) What did that fellow mean by 'sinivating that she were a play actress woman? Why, you know she ain't! 'Tain't in natur'!

HEPZI. (*confused*) No, 'tisn't in nature, certainly, at least, not in everybody's nature.

DAN. And what the deuce had he got to say with his fair Kate, and his "honey-pot," the sweet-mouthing ugly wasp—(HEPZIBAH *shrugs her shoulders*) Why don't you speak, lass? Why don't you say, like me,—that he's a dommed liar!

HEPZI. Because such language would be rather coarse in a young woman's mouth, and besides——

DAN. Besides what? (HEPZIBAH *as before with a constrained laugh*—LEONARD ASHTON comes forward, L.) Lor, if there beant another fine gentleman!

LEONARD. (*to HEPZIBAH*) I am given to understand that Miss Kate Robertson, from London, is residing for change of air in this retirement—you are probably her lady's maid?

HEPZI. (*hesitating*) Really, sir!

DAN. There be no Kate Robertsons here, sir!

LEONARD. (*to HEPZIBAH*) I am here upon business.

DAN. But ain't I a telling you that there beant no——

LEONARD. Pressing business from the Theatre. I must see your mistress immediately.

DAN. But why don't you tell him, lass——?

HEPZI. (*confused*) Certainly, business is business; and if it is really business you are come upon, sir——

LEONARD. An important communication from the management.

HEPZI. I will tell my mistress, sir. Your name?

LEONARD. No matter—she would not know it.

HEPZI. I will say a gentleman from the theatre.

LEONARD. Exactly so. (*retires up a little*)

(DANIEL, who has looked from one to the other in the utmost bewilderment, in vain interrupting each sentence with a "But," which grows fainter and fainter)

DAN. What does this mean? Miss Hepzibah! would you have the gentleman to believe, and me—and me too?

that Miss Mary, really is—is—(*with horror*) a play actress?

HEPZI. (*with pride*) A distinguished dramatic artist.  
(to LEONARD) Will you have the kindness to wait here  
for a moment, sir? *Exit into house, R.*

(LEONARD ASHTON *goes up, and looks around him  
with emotion*)

DAN. Am I asleep or awake? Have I gone to bed  
legs uppermost? And am I in a dream? Miss Mary,  
whom I have known from a child, in her poor old father's  
house yonder, in the good time—so pure—so sweet—so  
true-hearted, gone and become a play actress! Why, I'd  
as soon as believe I were a Jack in the Green. I'll see  
her again—speak to her like a father. But I won't  
believe it yet. I'll go first and dip my head in the horse  
pond, and then I shall know whether I'm asleep or  
awake. *Exit behind villa, R.*

LEONARD. (*coming down*) What a strange fatality has  
brought me down to these scenes of my boyhood, where  
every spot reminds me of early aspirations—of my  
first and only love—of her, between whose hand and  
my felicity, once stood wealth and pride. (*with a sigh*)  
And now what am I? My career as artist flung aside  
to indulge a mania, and become a dramatist. All my  
hopes rest now on the yes or no of one woman—of an  
actress—of a being, vain, frivolous, capricious, as the  
world's experience says they all are. And before this  
princess of paste, I must bow the knee to beg acceptance  
of the toil of many a weary hour of thought. Ah! she  
comes.

*Enter KATE ROBERTSON, from the house, R.*

KATE. Pardon me, sir, if I receive you here—the  
house is small. But those who know the misery of long  
imprisonment from Nature's bounties need no excuse—  
(looking at him) Is it possible! Leonard! Leonard  
Ashton!

LEONARD. You here! you—Mary Somers! You in-  
habiting that house with one who—you—Mary Somers!

KATE. Mary Somers no longer; but Kate Robertson.  
But, yes, to you, Leonard, still Mary Somers. (*offers her  
hand*)

LEONARD. (*pretending not to see the movement*) You! Kate Robertson? Had your most cherished friend told me this, I had said to him that he lied! From your own mouth alone could I have credited it; and even still I hesitate to believe—

KATE. (*deeply wounded, but still with a quiet smile*) Why hesitate? Your words would imply contempt for the actress; and yet I find you here on a visit to Kate Robertson!

LEONARD. (*confused*) I own I have written for the stage. I have sought out the actress whose influence might determine my acceptance. But little did I think—

KATE. You worship the art, but you despise its ministers. Why? (*proudly*) You do not speak. I say in turn—is it possible? Can the youth I have known, so full of truth, of honour, of straightforwardness, have become a mere babbling echo of the world's prejudice—an unjust judge who condemns on hearsay and without evidence? It is for me to cry, “Fie! this is calumny.” You are silent still.

LEONARD. Pardon me the embarrassment, the surprise—

KATE. Pardon! Oh, no! I grieve to find one, in whose good sense I had ever such reliance, victim of a common error. But there is naught to pardon between you and me. (*offers her hand again*)

LEONARD. (*again pretending not to see her hand*) I have been in error—in cruel error—and, if you permit me, I will take my leave. (*bows, going*)

KATE. (*playfully*) And if I don't permit? (LEONARD bows again, going—*proudly*) No, hear me—you must hear me! It is due from you to me that you should hear me. (*changing tone to more playfulness again*) I mean we have not met for years. I cannot part so speedily from one (*with emotion*) whom I have loved—as a brother—formerly. Come, clear that brow, and give to the old friend, Mary Somers, those minutes you had destined to the unknown Kate Robertson. Come, come! (*she leads LEONARD to a seat in the garden—he falls on a chair and buries his face in his hands on the table—she seats herself after a pause—aside*) Still not a word! (*aloud, with con-*

*strained calmness at first, but gradually warming up into a state of almost feverish excitement)* Mr. Ashton!—Leonard! still let me call you so, though earlier ties between us have been long since broken—yet not in hatred. Yes, Leonard! the days are gone when you were a constant inmate in my poor father's house, and I the happy companion of your joys and hopes. But I am not changed—I am the same Mary Somers still. Nay, look not so: I say the same you once esteemed, nay, loved!—I can avow it now—and who once loved you!

LEONARD. (*gloomily*) Why speak thus of the past? 'tis gone for ever!

KATE. I must; for I would not you should be ignorant of a motive or a thought. My parents looked coldly on our attachment. You could not offer wealth: and when ruined, alas, by his own extravagance, my father sank into the grave, and my poor mother quickly followed him, could I then stretch forth my hand to the once-rejected suitor and say, "Take me now, Leonard, the ruined heiress—the penniless bride?"

LEONARD. You could.

KATE. I could not—would not! Yourself, you had despised me. A kind old relative received into her house my sister Lucy and myself. But she too was poor. I saw the daily struggle for support with aching heart. Westland Manor was sold to a baronet, proud of his wealth, still prouder of his ancient lineage. He saw my pretty sister—admired her—offered her his hand. Lucy thus made a match the world would envy, but not I. Leonard, I could not become the humble dependant on the rich man's bounty. The spirit of independence stirred within me; that spirit was my blessing or my bane, as the world may judge it. Another spirit too was restless within me—the love of art. Chance threw in my way an opening to the stage. I grasped at the prospect of support for the poor old guardian of my days of misery whose health was failing rapidly. Under the name of Kate Robertson, I became an actress, Leonard; and heaven knows how pure, how ennobling, seemed to me the feelings that prompted my resolve.

LEONARD. Go on!

KATE. I would I had no more to say. I *must* go on, Leonard. I had only seen the stage before me with its noble dramas and its noble thoughts. I had not seen its enemy—the world—menacing, accusing, smiting with prejudice. The few friends I had latterly known fell back from me. My sister, my own sister, saw me no more. I will believe she loved me still. But her proud husband forbade her communion with the degraded sister. Was I less pure? Was I less worthy? Was I less estimable, that thus I earned my bread? (*lets falls her head*)

LEONARD. Poor Mary!

KATE. (*looking up suddenly*) Heaven bless you for those words! My old relation died; and then I was alone—indeed alone—alone at heart! When, after a night of triumph I sought my solitary room, who was there to sympathise with my bounding joy? No one! I was alone. When plaudits came from every nook and corner of a brilliant theatre, my eye would but seek one face of sympathy for the woman, not the actress. Not one face of real friendship was there to greet me. I was alone! Wealth flowed in upon me; but who was there to share it, or be proud with me in my honest pride? No one; I was alone! Between me and friendship, sympathy, esteem, sisterly love, there stood that spectre—the world's prejudice! I was alone!

LEONARD. (*holding out his hand*) Mary!

KATE. No! I cannot take it now, unless it offers your esteem.

LEONARD. (*again holding out his hand*) Mary!

KATE. (*after taking his hand*) But, Leonard, though my heart is wounded sorely, there is within it the small still voice of conscience crying, "Heed them not! thou hast done well." At times I have striven to teach my heart to bear its solitude; but it would not be stilled. How often has the yearning to look upon my sister once again shaken me in the stillness of the night until that beloved face seemed to gleam before me in the darkness, and I stretched forth my arms into the void with the cry, "Lucy, Lucy." No! the heart would not be hushed.

During my vacation I came to these old haunts. This house, close by our dear old Westland Manor gates, was to be let ; my sister's absence with her husband favoured my desire ; and here—here, Leonard, I have found peace even in regret. It has been a barren happiness, but yet a happiness.

LEONARD. Have *all* your memories returned to you in this solitude?

KATE. (*with a smile*) Yes, all ; but as in a dream—no, rather say as a presentiment. (*holds out her hand*)

LEONARD. But still you are not happy !

KATE. Who is happy ? Yet, my sister, I would hope—

LEONARD. Then why not fly the life in which you find not hearts content ? Why not quit the stage ?

KATE. And submit to prejudice—bow my head to the world's ignorance and own its right to judge me wrongly ? No !

LEONARD. Is it cowardly to retreat before an enemy too powerful to withstand ?

KATE. Perhaps not ; but it is the better part to brave it to the last.

LEONARD. How brave the blows dealt by a secret hand ?

KATE. By contempt.

LEONARD. Calumny's base weapon may assail you anywhere—even here !

KATE. Even here ?

LEONARD. No, no ! I meant nothing. (*aside*) I wish I had slit that fellow's ears for him.

KATE. (*with sorrow*) Even here. (*proudly again*) But no ! I am not vanquished yet ! (*with enthusiasm*) My noble art shall still sustain my courage ; and in the strength of that I'll battle yet against the world. (*changing tone*) But forgive me ! I appear a sad egotist. I speak but of myself—I was forgetting you. What did you say when you first came ? Did I not hear of something you had written and for my approval ? (*playfully*) How is this ?—You urge me to quit the stage, and you yourself seek its glories ? Does prejudice then teach you that what is degrading for me is in you noble ? But come, enough of this ! we are friends now again, are we not so ?

LEONARD. You have vanquished me; and yet I would—

KATE. No more objections, no more sighs. Where is your work? (LEONARD pulls out a manuscript) But no, I will not even read it. I play in it whatever it may be. Is my part a good one? No, no—do not answer me—I will not know! It is yours; and I will act it with fervour. I will make you famous. Oh, pardon the conceit! You see, I have faults of my profession. We will be famous together, Leonard. I will not hear a word. (crosses, R.) I will go at once, write to my good manager, tell him that I adore the piece, that I will—that I must play it. Yes, I am a little despotic sometimes. Wait for me here. Leonard, you have beamed on me a sunshine of the soul I have not felt for many a long day; may heaven bless you for it!

*Exit into house, R.*

LEONARD. (alone, looking after her) What has passed within me? (seated, R.) I scarce know what I feel. Again I have seen her whom I loved so ardently—seen her, to find her—what? Yet, as she told her simple tale, prejudice was overcome—my spirit was bowed before hers. She spoke of friendship only. Well, I'll strive to cool my heart to friendship: and she, she is the arbitress of my destiny! (sits down before table in garden and looks over manuscript)

*Enter HON. HARRY MALPAS, L. 2 E., followed by BUZZARD.\**

MALPAS, R. Take your word for it, man? who would ever take your word for anything? For my part I would as soon back your money bills as endorse your tittle-tattle. What should our town beauty, the fascinating Kate Robertson, be doing in these country wilds—alone, too, as you say? Pshaw! had there been a lover in the case—

BUZ. (L.) Humph! There may be an heir presumptive to her affections, though not apparent, Malpas.

\* Buzzard is throughout dressed in exact imitation of *Malpas*, but with some exaggeration and caricature. This imitation should be perfect to the form of the hat, the folding of the cravat, the colour of the gloves, and the growth of the whiskers or beard. He ought likewise to imitate the manners and bearing of *Malpas*, and be on the watch to copy him.

**MALPAS.** Bravo, Buzzard! Well, I'll see this beauty, be she who she may. The adorable Lady Castlecrag allows my time to grow heavy on my hands. Here have I hired a shooting box close by, without an acre worth sporting over, at the risk of being ridiculed by all my friends; and she delays her return to Westland Manor, and lets me cool my heels.

**Buz.** Your heels! Good! I always thought the heart had devilish little to do with your passion.

**MALPAS.** And you were mistaken, numskull, as you always are! My heart has more to do with the matter than I care to admit; and this note I have prepared for our first interview breathes the truest feelings.

**LEONARD.** (*aside*) Who are these men hovering about the house? That same fellow again! aye! The flies about the honey-pot!

**MALPAS.** However, I need have no scruple about the attack—

*Enter KATE from the house.*

By Jove, 'tis she herself!

**Buz.** What did I say? Am I right now?

**MALPAS.** Exception, that proves your rule of blundering.  
(*they go up a little towards centre gate*)

**KATE.** (*to LEONARD*) Here, my friend, is the letter to the manager. I have stated my determination; it is my first new part or none. Now where is your manuscript?  
(*takes it*) For conscience sake I must read it, and lose no time. (*holds out her hand*)

**LEONARD.** Must I leave you so soon?

**KATE.** I would not keep you longer here. Yourself spoke of the breath of scandal. We shall meet again shortly in Town.

**LEONARD.** But there are men about; should I leave you now?

**KATE.** Oh, mere passers-by. (*laughing*) Oh, I do not fear them.

**LEONARD.** When do you return?

**KATE.** Shortly. Good-bye. (*leaves garden, going, L.*)

**LEONARD.** Farewell! (*kisses her hand—aside*) I cannot bear to part from her, and those fellows still loitering here. The puppies!

*Exit, L.*

BUZ. Look! Look! Is there an heir-apparent now?

MALPAS. No matter; he shall make way for the presumptive.

KATE. (*following LEONARD out of the garden and watching him*) He goes! How my heart beats! I have found a friend! How I shall cherish this new sensation! (*as she goes towards the gate, MALPAS, down R., passes before her*)

MALPAS. Pardon me, madam, if I seize so fortunate a chance to express to you my admiration and regard.

BUZ. Yes, pardon us, madam, if we seize so fortunate a chance—

KATE. Excuse me, sir; you are a stranger to me and—(*offers to pass*)

MALPAS. (*stopping her, but without rudeness*) But you, madam, are no stranger to me. You can be to none who have taste, appreciation, heart to worship, or hand to applaud.

BUZ. To none who have heart, hands, et cetera, et cetera.

KATE. Sir, I am flattered—again excuse me—I am alone.

MALPAS. (*as before*) For that very reason I would speak. Surrounded as is the great artist with her host of adorers—(*movement of KATE*) of fervent appreciators, I should say, surely a man may be pardoned tendering his homage, when his poor voice is no longer lost amidst the crowd.

BUZ. We wouldn't be lost amidst the crowd.

KATE. The homage of every man of taste, is grateful in its right place—at its right time. You will allow me to be the judge of both. (*curtseys, going*)

MALPAS. (*aside*) Bravo! (*aloud*) True, we are exposed here to observation.

BUZ. And of sportive rustics in particular.

MALPAS. (*offering her his arm*) Permit me to conduct you into your lovely retreat here.

BUZ. Permit me then—

KATE. I receive no visits, sir.

MALPAS. Except from the gentleman who just left you—ah!

KATE. Except upon business of importance. (*crosses to gate*)

**MALPAS.** But I too have business of importance. For is it not the business of every man of true gallantry to pay his humble tribute to beauty? (*attempts to take her hand*)

**KATE.** Sir, you are importunate.

**MALPAS.** (*jestingly*) Importunate?

**BUZ.** (*indignantly*) Importunate?—we!

**KATE.** I must request you, sir—

**MALPAS.** Nay, be not so cruel.

**DANIEL** who has entered from behind, r., coming down rapidly between **MALPAS** and **KATE**.

**DAN.** At it again are you? Halloa! it's another. There be two of them. Though one be as like t'other as two goslings in one brood.

**MALPAS.** Who is this fellow?

**BUZ.** My sportive clodhopper again! (*gets away, taking care of his coat*)

**DAN.** I say, shall I pommel them chaps, Miss Mary?

**KATE.** No—no, be calm! These gentlemen will perceive that their visit is untimely. They will take their leave.

**DAN.** Do let me have a go at them—do'e, Miss Mary!

**KATE.** Be quiet, my good friend!

**MALPAS.** My dear madam, if you are engaged with a friend, as you say this—this gentleman is—

**DAN.** Yes, and a stout friend too; but thank my stars no gentleman.

**MALPAS.** I am the last person to desire to interrupt a *tête-à-tête*. I will take a more favorable opportunity to pay you my respects. *Au revoir*, my dear madam, *au revoir!* (*low to BUZZARD*) Does she always keep that bulldog?

**DAN.** Hallo! you said—

**KATE.** Peace!

**MALPAS.** If she does, I hope she sends him to kennel occasionally.

**BUZ.** For the sake of my coat, I wish she'd always have him muzzled.

**MALPAS.** Madam, your most devoted servant!

*Exit, L. 2 E.*

BUZ. (*imitating MALPAS*) Madam, your most humble slave! (*DANIEL makes a threatening movement—aside*) I'll go and have the animal indicted for a nuisance.

*Exit hastily after MALPAS, L.*

DAN. I wish you'd a let me pitch into them fellows, Miss Mary.

KATE. Thanks for your zeal, my good Daniel; but such violence would only serve to compromise me.

DAN. Com—What? Well, I don't quite understand; but I've got a heart in my bosom to love and reverence you, Miss Mary, and to protect you too for the matter o' that.

KATE. Believe me, my honest trusty friend, that I need no protection.

DAN. Oh, but you do though! Those little hands were never made to clapper-claw a damned impudent fellow! Now I can hit out with my left, and—

KATE. (*smiling*) I have a woman's power to repel by cold contempt!

DAN. That's nothing to a warm back-hander. Look ye, Miss Mary, I'm a rough chap, I know; but I've known you from a baby. I may say, I should just like to speak out a bit o' my mind to you without offence.

KATE. Speak, Daniel. I can hear all from you.

DAN. I ain't got much to say; and I can't say that over well. (*with comic embarrassment*) And by jingo, I don't know how to say it at all. Well, here goes! Look ye, Miss Mary, they say as how you act in plays! There, 'tis out now.

KATE. Well, Daniel?

DAN. Now you know, I'ze always heard as how play actresses were no better nor they should be. Granny always said so, though I fancy she'd a notion they somehow growed horns and hoofs, and a what-you-may-call-'em.

KATE. Go on.

DAN. Now when I look at your pretty hands and feet, and as I know that your own pure little heart can't be growed worse, nor your feet and hands—why—I says to myself, that there must be somehow a mistake about grandmother's notions.

KATE. The world is sometimes cruel in its errors, when it mixes all together in one sweeping prejudice.

DAN. All that's rather too foine for me. But I'd put my hand in burning fire for you, Miss Mary—both my hands, though I never held spade or hoe again. Now the thought be come to me that I should like to take service along with you, Miss Mary. I don't want much—I'll serve you for nothing but the bread and cheese; and couldn't I give it those fellows that come after you.

KATE. No; I must not take advantage of a hasty resolution of which you might afterwards repent.

DAN. Never, never! You don't know me. I'd never leave you.

KATE. You mean well, I know. But you might cause me embarrassment.

DAN. Well, if you think I should shame you.

KATE. (*giving her hand*) No, trust me, 'tis no feeling of the kind.

DAN. You hadn't seed me for many a year till you com'd down here again, Miss Mary. But ask my lady if I ain't always been an honest fellow.

KATE. (*with emotion*) My sister? No! Business will take me to town before she returns.

DAN. But the family be come back, miss, to the manor last night.

KATE. My sister arrived—Sir Norman too?

DAN. You didn't know it?

KATE. No! And now I reflect, I cannot remain another hour. I must return to London immediately.

DAN. Without seeing my lady?

KATE. No more of this! You know not how you pain me.

DAN, Pain you; I wouldn't do it for all the gold in Calliforny. But I don't understand.

KATE. (*agitated*) I cannot now explain. I must prepare for my departure. Good-bye, Daniel; mark me, not one word of my presence here to Lady Castlecrag. Good-bye, my friend, I shall not forget your kindness. Do not speak now, my heart is too full to hear words that might make it overflow. Good-bye. (*aside—going through garden towards house*) Would I could look upon that dear

familiar face again, if only for a moment; but no—I would not risk a chance that might cause one murmur of reproach from her proud husband's lips. (*stretching out her arms towards the park gates*) Farewell, scenes of my childhood; I leave you once again in sorrow—farewell; my sister—dearest inmate of our former home—farewell.

*Exit in agitation, into house, R.*

DAN. Dang it, she might a' let a poor fellow go with her. What's come over me? I feel a woundy fancy to cry now. (*hitting his head*) O come out o' that, you fool! But somehow I can't part from her. I'ze zeed the fellows at fair conjure with what they calls a magnet, that made a needle jump to it, as though 'twere alive: and she's got a magnet about her, I'm thinking. But I'll see her again.

*Enter, from the park gates, SIR NORMAN CASTLECRAG,  
LADY CASTLECRAG and MISS LIPGLUE.*

Hollo! Here's the company from the manor house. (*goes to garden and busies himself*)

SIR N. I must say this is but a foolish fancy of yours, Lady Castlecrag. For once however I will indulge it. You see no harm in it, my dear Miss Lipglue?

MISS L. No, not exactly—no, Sir Norman; since you consider the proceeding unobjectionable.

LADY C. (*eagerly*) See, here is Daniel the gardener. He can probably give us the information we desire—Daniel!—I am longing to know—

SIR N. My dear Lady Castlecrag, you really must repress your impulses. How often have I told you that the display of emotion is not *comme il faut*? Am I not right, Miss Lipglue?

MISS L. Certainly, Sir Norman; and especially before the lower classes of society.

LADY C. Well, Sir Norman, do you then ask Mr. Daniel.

SIR N. Mr. Daniel. (*reprovingly*) My dear Lady Castlecrag, will you learn to make distinctions? (*reproachfully to Miss LIPGLUE*) Miss Lipglue!

MISS L. My dear sir—I am sure I have done everything—

SIR N. No matter now. (*to DANIEL, who is going*) Come hither, my good man. (*DANIEL down, R.*) A lady, as my steward wrote to me, has hired this cottage for a few summer weeks. What do you happen to know of her? What is her name?

DAN. (*aside*) She told me not to say a word—I'm cottedched!

SIR N. Is the fellow deaf? Don't you hear what I say?

DAN. Yes, I do, your honour.

SIR N. Then why don't you speak?

DAN. (*embarrassed*) Because I have nothing to say.

LADY C. (*eagerly to DANIEL*) The housekeeper tells me she has done so much good in charity since she has been here—visited the sick, attended to the children of my schools—I would know something more of her—make her acquaintance—thank her from my whole heart.

SIR N. Lady Castlecrag—this impetuosity! You are premature! We do not make acquaintance thus with unknown people,—we might plunge into an irretrievable mistake.

MISS L. We might, indeed!

DAN. I'd better get out of this. (*creeps up the stage*)

SIR N. (*to DANIEL*) Stay, fellow; we would learn something of this temporary neighbour. You must have seen her, what do you know of her?

DAN. I know, your honour—I know that she's an angel, but that's all I know, and enough too, I think. (*escapes R., behind house*)

SIR N. Come back, man, come back!

MISS L. Alas, Sir Norman, the spirit of revolt instilled into these plebeian classes by modern principles grows daily more distressing.

LADY C. You see, Sir Norman, our very gardener calls her an angel!

SIR N. Our gardener, Lady Castlecrag! our gardener! Good Heavens! What is a gardener's opinion to us, or ours to a gardener?

MISS L. What, indeed?

SIR N. This disposition to be swayed by low judgment shows once more how defective must have been

your education, as regards the proper feeling due to your position in the world. Fortunately I have been able to secure the services of my distant relative, the excellent Miss Lipglue.

MISS L. (*curtseying*) Oh, Sir Norman.

SIR N. As a companion—

MISS L. As a humble companion—a very humble companion, Sir Norman. Rigid propriety has always been my study, Sir Norman!

SIR N. (*to LADY C.*) She has a high sense of what is due to position in the world.

MISS L. Yes!

SIR N. (*to LADY C.*) Her moral judgment is faultless.

MISS L. You flatter me, Sir Norman. All credit is due to that excellent Dr. Tight, whose teaching has shown me the vile worthlessness of all humanity living beyond the pale of good society.

SIR N. Now, Lady Castlecrag, as regards this—lady! Yes! we will give her the benefit of the doubt and call her “lady!”—I have not thwarted your inclination to seek her acquaintance, but with caution, and the utmost diplomatic tact. Should she prove to be a—a—

MISS L. (*with horror*) A nobody knows who.

SIR N. Exactly so. Then, after taking hasty steps, what would be your regrets?

MISS L. And what would the world say?

SIR N. Exactly so! (*talks aside with Miss L.*)

(*during this scene LADY CASTLECRAG has the manner of a woman cowed by her husband, but utterly unconvinced, and impatient of control*)

*Enter MALPAS and BUZZARD, L.*

MALPAS. (*on entering, to BUZZARD*) By Jove! here they are. Now, Buz, you know what to do. Take off the attention of that infernal duenna, and afford me opportunities with the charming Lady Castlecrag.

BUZ. But the old girl already thinks I’m making love to her!

MALPAS. Hang it, man, you can’t be afraid of that perambulating piece of propriety!

Buz. (*confident in manner, but alarmed*) I ! afraid ?—  
Oh, no, no !

MALPAS. (*advancing*) Sir Norman—Lady Castlecrag.

LADY C. (*starting, aside, with some emotion*) Mr. Malpas.

MISS L. (*with a start, aside*) Mr. Buzzard. Oh ! (SIR NORMAN comes down R. of MALPAS)

SIR N. Can I believe my eyes ? Mr. Malpas, you in this neighbourhood ?

MALPAS, Yes, Sir Norman ; I have hired the Oakham Acres for shooting, totally unaware that I should have the happiness of finding myself so closely in the neighbourhood of Westland Manor. I heard by chance this morning of your arrival ; and I was hastening to pay my devoirs to yourself and Lady Castlecrag.

SIR N. (*shaking hands*) This is indeed a lucky chance. Mr. Buzzard, your servant. (*goes up a little*)

MISS L. (*coming down, l.*) Men of fashion. Now we shall enjoy some of the elegant decencies of life.

MALPAS. (*to LADY CASTLECRAG, who shakes hands with him, with eyes cast down, and in evident embarrassment*) Lady Castlecrag, you look even more blooming than when I had last the felicity of meeting you in town. (*aside to BUZZARD, who is making imitation bows—kicking him*) Be off, man, to work !

Buz. (*aside*) And sour work enough it is. (*he goes up with a smiling face to Miss LIPGLUE, who coquets with him apart*)

SIR N. (*down l. of LADY CASTLECRAG*) You are surprised, no doubt, to see us thus early abroad, Mr. Malpas. A whim of Lady Castlecrag's—a mere whim ! A strange lady occupies this house. She has been charitable in the neighbourhood ; and Lady Castlecrag is desirous of thanking her in person.

MALPAS. Desirous of seeing that lady ? (*aside*) Confusion ! that would never do. Were they to meet, a word might ruin me with Lady Castlecrag.

SIR N. You seem to hesitate as to the propriety of the step.

MALPAS. I own, Sir Norman, I am somewhat embarrassed ; for I happen to have met this mysterious stranger by chance ; and in her I have recognized—

SIR N. Hey! what?

MISS L. Somebody dreadful, I anticipate. I feel faint with apprehension. (*leans on BUZZARD who wants to shake her off*)

MALPAS. In fact—a well-known actress.

MISS L. Oh, horror!

MALPAS. And you conceive it would be impossible for Lady Castlecrag to make the acquaintance of such a woman.

SIR N. You see, my lady, to what your impetuosity might have exposed you.

MISS L. And what would the world have said? And good Dr. Tight, who preaches such exemplary sermons against the stage?

SIR N. And she presumes to come here dispensing her charities.

MISS L. Charity indeed! hypocrisy!

SIR N. Puffery, Miss Lipglue! puffery, to be talked about.

MALPAS. (*aside*) I think I have done the business.

SIR N. Who may I ask is this—this—female?

MALPAS. She is tolerably well known to fame. Her name is Kate Robertson.

SIR N. (*horrified*) Kate Robertson!

LADY C. (*aside, with much emotion*) My sister!

BUZ. (*to Miss LIPGLUE*) They say her father was a bankrupt costermonger and her brother is in gaol. (*Miss LIPGLUE expresses her horror*)

SIR N. (*aside*) She has dared, spite of my prohibition, to venture here.

LADY C. (*aside*) Could I embrace her!—could I but see her!

SIR N. (*aside to LADY CASTLECRAG*) Madam! you knew of this.

LADY C. (*aside to him*) No, I assure you.

*Enter KATE from the house, R., followed by HEPZIBAH with luggage.*

KATE. Find Daniel, he will help to carry the luggage to the station. Quick! I am anxious to be gone. (*HEPZIBAH goes up, meets DANIEL who comes from R. U. E., they exeunt*

*into house, R.)* Good heavens ! they are here ! my sister !  
*(pulls down veil)*

MALPAS. (*turning*) 'Tis she, herself.

SIR N. (*turning*) Ah !

LADY C. (*aside*) My sister, oh, my sister !

KATE. How pale she looks ! (*stands riveted*)

SIR N. (*seizing LADY CASTLECRAG's hand*) Lady Castle-crag ! Miss Lipglue, offer Lady Castlecrag your arm. (*MISS LIPGLUE passes to LADY CASTLECRAG to do so*) I will take care that she is kept from contamination. (*confronts KATE, who goes up*)

MALPAS. (*kicking BUZZARD*) Now, mind your cue, man !

BUZZARD. (*after a cry of pain, going to MISS LIPGLUE with a smiling face*) This is a shocking affair, my dear madam. (*takes MISS LIPGLUE up*)

MALPAS. (*apart to LADY CASTLECRAG*) Read this. The expression of my ardent admiration. (*puts note into her hand*)

KATE. (*aside*) What do I see—he gives her a letter secretly.

MALPAS. (*to LADY CASTLECRAG*) Do not refuse me one word of answer.

LADY C. (*much agitated*) Sir ! (*SIR NORMAN turns at the same moment and LADY CASTLECRAG thrusts the note into her bosom*)

KATE. (*coming down much agitated*) She receives it—imprudent woman ! Oh, my sister ! come what may, I must save you from disgrace.

*Enter HEPZIBAH with two bonnet boxes, from house R., then exit, R. U. E.*

SIR N. The lady seems on the point of departure ; we have nothing more to do here. Come, Lady Castlecrag ! (*aside*) The danger is averted. (*aloud*) Will you do us the honour to come up to the Manor House to luncheon, Mr. Malpas ?

MALPAS. With pleasure. (*squeezes the hand of LADY CASTLECRAG*)

BUZ. He didn't invite me. But that's of no consequence, I shall go !

*Enter DANIEL from the house, with luggage.*

KATE. (*to DANIEL*) Daniel, you can be of service to me.

DANIEL. (*delighted*) Can I though?

KATE. Will you follow me?

DANIEL. To the world's end—and as much further as you like!

KATE. (*leaning on the garden rails*) Yes, I can save her; and I will!

(SIR NORMAN goes up with LADY CASTLECRAG, who endeavours to look back at KATE—MALPAS follows—MISS LIPGLUE insists on taking the arm of BUZZARD, and coquets with him—DANIEL looks after with wonder—KATE looks after her sister, then buries her face in her hands.)

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

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## ACT II.

### L O N D O N.

SCENE.—*Room in the House of Kate Robertson. Entrance, door R.; door of inner room, L.; door of Kate's chamber, R.C. in flat; a folding screen, R.C., which may be made to extend nearly across the space between the entrance door and chamber door; table, L.C., with MSS., books, letters, writing materials, &c.; window, R.; handsome furniture.*

HEPZIBAH is arranging a stage costume on the back of a chair.

HEPZIBAH. Fine feathers make fine birds they say. Well! and I do believe, if I could go on the stage with such a lovely dress as this, I could act just as well as my mistress. Won't the people applaud to-night! and shan't I wish I were she? (*going to table*) What lovely letters she gets, too! How I should like to get a peep into one, just to see the true fine gentleman style—but I never have a chance. As soon as she opens a letter and smells

love powder—crack ! torn into bits or flung into the fire. (*turning over letters*) And not the tiniest for Miss Hepzibah Stubbs !—she has it all to herself. Even Mr. Daniel hasn't a thought for any one else. Since he has been in town how improved he is—rubbed off a cart-load of country rust, and on the way to be a smart fellow. But I might make all the advances I pleased and he wouldn't heed me. "How are you, Mr. Daniel?" says I, pleasantly enough ; and "How's Miss Mary?" is his only answer, as if that were the way to speak to a young woman whose name is Hepzibah !

DANIEL *knocks without, R., and then peeps in.*

Ah, there he is. Good morning ; how are you, Mr. Daniel ?

DANIEL. How's Miss Mary ?

HEPZI. There, what did I say ! You never ask after my health, Mr. Daniel.

DAN. And you never answer my questions, Miss Hepzibah—how's your mistress ?

HEPZI. She has lain down for an hour in her room.

DAN. (*eagerly*) Is she ill ?

HEPZI. No ; only she needs repose after last night.

DAN. I should think so ! didn't she act ? and didn't I cry till I could have beat myself for a confounded fool, only my hands were engaged another way ? (*applauds*) How they did go to be sure ! I couldn't help it, they went all by themselves, like a scarecrow's flappers in a high wind. Bang, bang !

HEPZI. Besides, she needs all her force for her part to-night.

DAN. A new part ? Well, the flappers are all right.

HEPZI. A new part, no ; it is an old one, she has to learn over again. She has sworn never to play any new part before the one in Mr. Ashton's play.

DAN. Well, he's a good fellow, and deserves that she should love him. (*with a big sigh*) I suppose that she must love somebody better than anybody else ; it's in human nature, it is. Never mind !

HEPZI. I shouldn't wonder with your appreciative

powers you will soon become quite a theatrical critic, Mr. Daniel.

DAN. No! my appreciates as you call it, only goes as far as the plays in which Miss Mary acts; and then it comes all from a little corner somewhere here, (*hand to heart*) and not out of Master Stupid here. (*hand to head*)

HEPZI. Why, Mr. Daniel! to hear you talk, one would think you were in love with my mistress yourself.

DAN. In love! I in love with Miss Mary? Now, young female, I don't want to be cantankerous with you: for I believe you are a good girl in the main. But, if you go on saying such things as those, I shall be obliged to tell you a little bit of my mind, calmly—but savagely.

HEPZI. Well, Mr. Daniel, there'd be no harm if you were. There's plenty of young fellows in love with my mistress, and old ones too for the matter of that, I can tell you. Look (*goes to table, L.*) at all these letters sent from the theatre this morning. I can swear by the impudent look of them they are love letters.

DAN. Oh! if I could get at any of the jackanapes fellows, as dares to insult her with them, I'd teach them to hold their pens for them, till their fingers tingled. They wouldn't use one again for some time to come, I can tell you. My hands were jolly good hard ones, when I was a country lad; and they haven't got softer in town. (*rubs his hands on back of chair*) I have been harding them every way I could—never mind why, for a reason of my own. And I have a good stout crab-stick too, which I keep—never mind why again—for another purpose of my own. And let me tell you that hands and crab-stick are all at the fellows' service—and very heartily too—uncommonly heartily.

HEPZI. Bless me, Mr. Daniel, what a ferocious guardian you do make!

DAN. Do I? It seems to me all natural enough. But, I shall have an eye to these fellows, though they don't come near her; and a special and particular eye to the back stairs, (*pointing, L.*) going down from that room, she call her bowdoir, which means "sulky box," they say, though sulky Miss Mary never is, bless her!

HEPZI. (*laughing*) There's no fear of those awful back

(pointing, l.) stairs. My mistress always keeps the door that opens on them locked, and the key in her own room. So you don't want to have your eye there!

DAN. Never mind! It shall have a squint in that quarter all the same. Well, as it won't do to disturb Miss Mary, I must come again. I want desperate to see her, though; for I have important business to communicate.

HEPZI. (*laughing*) Important business! You?

DAN. Yes; important business! I!

HEPZI. What is it, may I ask?

DAN. Yes, you may.

HEPZI. Well?

DAN. But I shan't tell. 'Tis part my secret, part hers; and hers I shan't tell because it is a secret. As to my own—

HEPZI. (*eagerly*) Yes, Mr. Daniel?

DAN. I mean to keep that to myself.

HEPZI. (*aside*) He is less improved than I thought him!

DAN. So, I'll be going.

HEPZI. Surely you might have a little more chat till my mistress comes.

DAN. No, my lass. I have other pigs to take to market besides you; so "Adoo, adoo, bright spirit, to meet in happier times," as the man says in the play.

*Exit, R.*

HEPZI. (*alone*) It's of no use! Not a civil look will the dolt give. I verily believe I might have put on my best cap; and he would never have remarked it. He called me a bright spirit, however, and I suppose that meant something.

*Enter KATE from chamber, R. C., down R. of table, with a manuscript part.*

KATE. (*throwing MSS. on table*) Impossible to study more! I am nervous. My spirit should be tranquil; and my mind is fevered. Why does not Daniel come?

HEPZI. Did you speak of Mr. Daniel, ma'am?

KATE. Yes, yes! he has not made his appearance this morning.

HEPZI. He was here just now, ma'am.

KATE. And you did not tell me?

HEPZI. You don't like to be disturbed, ma'am, when you study.

KATE. True, true! 'twas unlucky.

HEPZI. He said he would return.

KATE. Good! (*sitting at table and taking up her part, then throwing it down again*) It is useless! Oh my poor sister! I feel within me—I know that you are guiltless. But Daniel is trusty. All the information, which, in pursuance of my instructions, he has been able to procure, tends to prove that, in her intimacy with this Malpas, lie thoughtlessness, imprudence, folly—that danger is impending over her—disgrace perhaps. No, no, that shall not be! I must and will see her. It is no selfish motive I obey; I will see her! But has Daniel found means to convey my letter to her hands? Will she come? This suspense is torture to me! (*taking up MSS. again*) In vain! the letters swim before my eyes. (*knocking without*) A visitor! I cannot be disturbed unless indeed it be a lady. See who it is.

HEPZI. (*at window*) It is Mr. Ashton, ma'am.

KATE. Leonard! Yes, I will see him. Have him admitted. *Exit HEPZIBAH, R.*  
It grieves me to keep this secret from him. His lively susceptibilities are so quickly roused. But even into his kind hands I cannot trust my sister's honour. No! there must be still this one thought closed between us.

*Enter LEONARD ASHTON, R.*

Leonard!

LEONARD. Mary, you look pale to-day! you are not ill?

KATE. A little fatigue—the excitement of last night.

LEONARD. You are always my own lovely Mary; for I cannot call you by that name, Kate, which belongs only to the herd.

KATE. See then, jealous one! you have a privilege beyond the public, to say nothing of some other trifling ones, of which you seem to make but little count—my esteem, affection—

LEONARD. Why not say "love?"

KATE. The word comes so fervently from your own lips, Leonard, that I would fain give you the monopoly of speaking it.

LEONARD. Oh, this coldness distracts me !

KATE. Hark to the man ! If he had his will, I verily believe he would expect me to prostrate myself at his feet, and in good stage fashion swear, " My Leonard, I adore thee ! "

LEONARD. Come, come ! you trifle with me !

KATE. What, will you not allow me one moment's pleasantry ? When the sunshine of your presence beams upon me, shall I not be joyous ? (*sighs*) The clouds of life are dark enough when the ray shines no longer.

LEONARD. Pardon me, dearest ! I am somewhat fantastic, I own.

KATE. If the lover pouts, what is the poor woman to expect when the lover becomes her husband ?

LEONARD. The trust and confidence of a happy heart, that knows the treasure is his own irrevocably. Your hand you have promised ; but is your heart always mine ?

KATE. Why doubt me, Leonard ?

LEONARD. I do not—would not doubt, and yet—

KATE. (*smiling*) And yet ? Fie on those " buts and yets ! " you know I hate the odious monosyllables.

LEONARD. I own my spirit is uneasy, until the name of husband gives me a right to spurn from your door the swarm of silly fops who court your favours.—Favours ! the very word fevers my blood. (*tossing over letters on table*) Look here ! a hundred *billet doux* for the fair Kate !

KATE. So many ? Am I then so risen in popular esteem ? My maximum was never more than half a score.

LEONARD. It must be a pretty pastime, doubtless, to read the tender scrawls.

KATE. Open them—read them, my friend, if you think there's such amusement. You see they are as yet untouched.

LEONARD. (*fingering the letters and then flinging them down*) I would not be the jealous-pated fool to open one.

KATE. Well, I cannot help you to your pastime ; for I myself am utterly unskilled in such effusions. I never read them.

LEONARD. What, noteven from that fop, that Mr. Malpas ?  
 (KATE shows her emotion) You start—you colour. He  
 boasts loudly enough of your acquaintance——

KATE. We never met but once at Westland.

LEONARD. Says he has written you a score of notes.

KATE. How should I know ? Have I not told you I  
 never read them ?

LEONARD. And yet just now you showed emotion.

KATE. For that, Leonard, your suspicion, however  
 slightly breathed, may well account.

LEONARD. Again pardon me ! Ah, were you not by  
 your public position exposed to those attacks——

KATE. What, still the old prejudice ? shall I then  
 refuse to play again—fling up my task—that which is to  
 give name and fame to Leonard Ashton ? (takes up MSS.  
 table)

LEONARD. You humble me.

KATE (proudly, giving her hand) No, I would raise  
 you—— (tapping heard at door) Who is there ?

DANIEL peeps in, R.

Ah ! Daniel.

DAN. May I come in, Miss Mary ?

KATE. Yes, yes ; I have been longing to see you. I  
 would speak with you. I have much to say—much to  
 hear from you. (enjoins silence, and looks anxiously at  
 LEONARD)

LEONARD. (unconscious of her looks) Good day,  
 Daniel ! Ever the faithful ally !

DAN. Only Miss Mary's servant, sir, and I—— (KATE  
 checks him with a sign, and goes up a little)

LEONARD. But a true friend. Give me your hand,  
 Daniel.

DAN. By all manner of means, sir, if you desire it, as  
 much as you like of it. (gives LEONARD a hearty grip)

LEONARD. (shaking his hand, laughing) Yes, and per-  
 haps a little more—mercy, man !

DAN. Beg your pardon, sir ! But my hands be a little  
 tough, to be sure ! You see, sir, I have been putting  
 them into training.

LEONARD. Into training ?

DAN. Well, sir, I don't mind telling you, as you are Miss Mary's true friend. I have heard say, from the theatre chaps, that your French play-houses over the water have a lot of fellows they call "clackers." They sit all together; and one of them—the leader—gives a signal, so! and off they all go, so! till their arms ache again. But they do it all for money. Now, thinks I, what they do for money, why shouldn't I do for love? So I'll get together, thinks I, a lot of fine fellows; and I'll choose them for the size and hardness of their hands; and I'll sit at the head of them when Miss Mary plays; and when I want, I'll give the signal with my stick, and off they all goes, as good as any *parley vous*, I warrant them. (KATE and LEONARD laugh) It's none of my fun, bless you; it's all earnest. And so I exercise my arms every day, (*makes gymnastic movements*) and harden my hands whenever I can; (*rubs his hands on backs of chairs, &c.*) and that's what I call going into training!

KATE. (*down, c.*) Thanks for your zeal, good Daniel. But I must forbid this imitation of our neighbours in the science of obtaining spurious success. It is downright conspiracy against art, my friend!

DAN. I don't exactly see what you mean, Miss Mary; but if you forbid me, there's an end of all my fine schemes. But you can't forbid me being a "clacker" on my own account; and if I can't have twenty pairs of hands to back me, why I'll harden my own until they can do the work of fifty all alone! (*goes up and rubs again*)

KATE. Your smiles and tears are worth more to me, Daniel, than your noisiest handiwork. (*aside*) In vain I strive to control my impatience; I must know. (*aloud*) Pardon me, Leonard—my time is just now so fully occupied.

LEONARD. Scarce have I had a word with you; and you would dismiss me. This is downright cruelty.

KATE. I would speak with Daniel.

LEONARD. Can I restrain you?

KATE. Alone, Leonard, alone!

LEONARD. (*uneasy*) You have secrets, then—secrets I must not know?

KATE. For a short time only; pardon me!

LEONARD. What secrets can a right-minded woman have, that she should conceal from her intended husband?

KATE. Trust in me, Leonard! Trust should be a lover's first virtue.

LEONARD. (*crosses, R., towards door*) Oh, I would not disturb you in your moments of confidence—not for the world; and I leave you, since you command!

KATE. "Command" is not the word. Good-bye, Leonard.

LEO. You are in haste it seems? I am going.

KATE. Good-bye. Will you not say good-bye?

LEONARD has a struggle with himself, and then goes out without speaking, R.

Gone! and not a word! 'Tis this jealous temper that I feared. Alas! But no, he will return—I know he will—to say "good-bye!" Now quick, Daniel. (DANIEL, down L.) What is your news? Have you conveyed my letter? Did it reach her hands?—will she come?

DAN. I can't take upon myself to say, miss.

KATE. Still this suspense! Speak out—tell me all you know.

DAN. I took the letter to Miss Trimmer, her ladyship's *fame de sham*, my old acquaintance at Westland, who always chattered to me all the stories I brought to you about her ladyship.

KATE. Yes, yes, go on.

DAN. And I slipt the letter into her hand, with a sly wink, and said it came from "she know'd who," because I didn't think it safe to say it came from you, Miss Mary.

KATE. (*agitated*) True, true!

DAN. An' she gave me a sly wink in return, and took it like a young woman who knows what's what, and was used to it.

KATE. (*sadly*) Alas!

DAN. But she was slightly out of her reckoning this time; and 'twas I had the last wink. Ha, ha, ha!

KATE. What then?

DAN. She promised her mistress should have it on the sly; and I'd swear from that young woman's way of winking she kept her word—and that's all. (*goes up*)

KATE. (*to herself*) Will she listen to my appeal?

Shall I see her once again—speak to her—fortify that tottering faith? Oh patience, patience! I must know soon.

*Enter HEPZIBAH, hastily, R.*

What now, Hepzibah?

HEPZI. There's a gentleman will come up stairs. He say he's an old acquaintance.

KATE. An old acquaintance?

HEPZI. The same who put me in such a flustration once. I was at the street door, and he said as I'd no butter and eggs now, he would come in.

KATE. What do you mean?

*Enter BUZZARD, R.*

Buz. Do me the honour, madam, of allowing me to explain—Hum, ha!

HEPZI. You see I could'nt help it, ma'am.

*Exit door, R.*

Buz. I have already had the pleasure this autumn—

DAN. Why 'tis tother gosling come again!

Buz. And I would claim the privilege of an old acquaintance, although slight—slight I admit. (*aside*). Come, I think I am doing it in true Malpas style.

KATE. You will allow me to ask your business, sir?

Buz. Business, ma'am! I'm not in business. Do I look like a man in business? I appeal to your judgment, madam.

KATE. You have pretext, probably, for this intrusion?

Buz. Pretext!—intrusion!

KATE. Some reason for desiring to see me, then? (*with double meaning*) I presume, sir, you have some reason—some little reason?

DAN. (*who is hardening his hands, down L., at table, to KATE*) Shall I now? You have only to say the word. Crack, 'tis done! (*makes gesture of turning out BUZZARD*)

KATE. Hush! (*to BUZZARD*) Sir, I await your pleasure.

Buz. Hum, ha! I—that is—I have been ordered—no—I mean commissioned—no—charged to convey into your hands a missive of delicacy and importance; and if you will allow me a few words—hum, ha!—

KATE. I am ready, sir, to hear you.

BUZ. But alone, fair lady—alone. Such diplomatic intercourse is not for the ears of domestics. (*aside*) Malpas himself couldn't have done that better.

KATE. I have nothing to conceal, sir. Daniel, you will remain in quiet. Your will, sir?

BUZ. (*embarrassed*) Hum, ha! (*aside*) 'Tis the sportive rustic again. (*aloud*) Ha, hum! Madam—my friend, the Honourable Harry Malpas—my friend, madam—my most intimate and valued friend—is desirous of renewing an acquaintance, causally made, and, to his sorrow, abruptly broken off. (*aside, avoiding DANIEL who comes near him*) Confound the sportive rustic! (*aloud*) He has written to this intent a series of letters; but, not receiving a reply, he fears they have not reached your fair hands; and he has entreated me, his dearest friend, as I have said, to transmit myself, to those said fair hands, this—(*aside, turning off, l. c., a little up, avoiding DANIEL as before*) He's a perfect pest! (*stretches out a note at arm's length to KATE*) this—(*gets away*) this note.

KATE. (*taking the note*) I have but one reply, sir, to these unsolicited attentions. It is this. (*tears the note and throws it on table*)

BUZ. But allow me—hum, ha!—to remark that I can't take back an answer which—ha, hum——

KATE. Then take back this, sir—that I entreat the gentleman to spare himself and me further unnecessary trouble. Well, sir! what do you seek more? You have now a message to your master.

BUZ. (*indignant*) My master—my master! The Hon. Harry Malpas is my friend, madam—my friend.

KATE. Pardon me, sir. You performed the office of a lacquey, and cannot be astonished that for a moment I mistook you for a menial.

BUZ. Menial! Madam, we men of breeding——

KATE. When you find yourself unwelcome, display your breeding by retiring at once. (*curtseys*) Daniel, show the gentleman the door, but as beseems a gentleman.

BUZ. (*aside*) That's what one gets by mixing with low creatures.

DAN. You did me the honour of making a remark.

BUZ. Certainly not. (*angrily*) Your servant, madam.

*Enter HEPZIBAH suddenly, R., and jostles him.*

That young woman is determined to be the destruction of my coat. (*goes up a little to arrange his coat, returns and sees DANIEL, R.*)

HEPZI. (*whispering to KATE*) Madam, there is a lady below thickly veiled. She would not give her name.

KATE. (*aside*) 'Tis she! she is come. (*to HEPZIBAH*) Tell her to wait one moment. (*seeing LADY CASTLECRAG enter*) Ah! too late!

*Enter LADY CASTLECRAG, R., veiled, in much agitation—she starts on seeing BUZZARD, utters an exclamation, and pulls her veil more closely over her face, crosses—DANIEL goes to door and holds it open.*

BUZ. (*aside*) Another of the theatrical tribe! A fine woman too, by Jove! I swear I know that figure. Confound the veil! what the deuce does such a woman want to be so cursed modest about? I am sure I have seen her before.

DAN. (*holding door, R., for BUZZARD*) Now, old acquaintance, will you budge?

BUZ. Rascal, you presume. Acquaintance, indeed!

DAN. (*mimicking him*) Oh! "slight—slight, I admit." I only wish the acquaintance had been closer. (*makes gestures of striking*)

BUZ. Stand out of the way, fellow, and keep your dirty hands to yourself—do you hear? *Exit, R., hastily.*

DAN. (*following*) It's all I can do though, I can tell you. *Exit, R.*

KATE. See, Hepzibah, that Daniel be not violent.

*Exit HEPZIBAH, R.*

KATE. (*going with agitation to LADY C.*) Lucy, you are come!

LADY C. (*much agitated*) Yes, yes, you see. But that Mr. Buzzard is known to me. Should he have recognised me—

KATE. You are so closely veiled.

LADY C. Yes ; and he never could have thought to see me here !

KATE. (*with some bitterness*) True, true ! you need have no alarm.

LADY C. He is one of the tale-bearers of society ; and were it known —

KATE. (*as before*) That you had visited an actress, what would the world say ?

LADY C. (*with conviction*) Aye, what, indeed ? You think he did not know me ?

KATE. No.

LADY C. (*still uneasy*) What did he here ?

KATE. (*with meaning*) No matter now ; hereafter you may know. Have no more fears.

LADY C. (*tossing up her veil*) Let me kiss you, my dear Mary. It is so long, so long a time ; and, when we met at Westland by that chance, how bitterly I yearned for only one embrace !

KATE. (*joyfully*) Ah, my own dear sister once again !

LADY C. Yet 'twas imprudent of you, dearest, to have come there ; Sir Norman was so enraged. But tell me, love ! you have written me an appeal so urgent, that I have come, spite of my husband's prohibition—at the risk of my name and character.

KATE. (*with meaning*) True ! they were in danger.

LADY C. I am glad, love, you see it calmly in that light. You are moved—the tears are in your eyes. I see it all. You repent the fearful step you have taken—your degrading position preys upon you. (*KATE looks at her with sad reproach, but does not speak*) You are unhappy.

KATE. Most unhappy !

LADY C. Then heed and mark my words, dear. Throw off the deep disgrace. It is not too late to shun the fearful precipice on the brink of which you stand.

KATE. It is you who say so, Lucy ?

LADY C. Yes. How strangely you look at me !

KATE. I heed and mark your words, my sister.

LADY C. You know I love you, though your course of life has severed us. Speak then—'tis plain you need my help. What can I do to save you ?

KATE. Save me ? It is I who would save you, my sister.

LADY C. Me ?

KATE. You, if it be not too late. (*looks intently at her*) No, I will not believe it is. It cannot be—no—I repeat your words, “it is not too late to shun the fearful precipice on the brink of which you stand. Then fly the deep disgrace.” You see I have marked your words, and well.

LADY C. And it is to me you address them? (*laughing constrainedly*) I do not understand you. What do you mean?

KATE. That laugh—that changing colour belie your words, and prove you understand me well.

LADY C. I am no tragedy sphynx to read your stage-play riddles.

KATE. (*with reproach*) Lucy! (*changing tone*) Hear me! A man hovers around you with insidious words of love. You listen with complacency to the expression of his passion.

LADY C. (*laughing as before*) You allude to Mr. Malpas. Pshaw! a mere drawing-room flirtation, which foreign ususage sanctions—society smiles upon—and the world holds innocent.

KATE. (*with irony*) And the world’s opinion is immaculate—the world that flings mud into the face of those it deems beyond its pale, and, painting the visage of its own votaries with its daintiest colours, cries “Look! this is the very blushing bloom of innocence.” The good world!

LADY C. Fie, you are soured!

KATE. Perhaps! But will your guardian genius, the world, that smiles so benignly upon open indecorum—yes, I say indecorum in a wife—will it permit the lover’s courtship by stealth in secret?

LADY C. (*confused*) In secret?

KATE. In secret! With my own eyes I saw you receive from that man’s hands a letter, and conceal it.

LADY C. A jest only.

KATE. In secret you have since received many such. Does the jest continue? In secret you have met him—in secret you have walked together—in secret he has poured his words of poisonous love into your ear.

LADY C. 'Tis false!

KATE. 'Tis true.

LADY C. My character stands high above such base suspicion.

KATE. One blow of shame may hurl it from its pedestal.

LADY C. My principles—

KATE. Are wavering. That blush affirms it!

LADY C. (*angrily*) Mary! (*checking herself proudly*) But you know not what you say; and I will pardon you. In taking this step of sisterly affection, I have braved the opinion of the world; and I am punished—justly punished! Farewell! You yourself have broken the last tie! (*going towards R.*)

KATE. Lucy, Lucy, one word! Must I believe the world has thus perverted you? Have all the memories of our girlhood's days—the days when we were as one together—the days of trust, and confidence and affection, without stain, passed from your heart? Have you forgotten utterly the times, when, hand in hand, we told each other every inmost thought, and deemed concealment of a passing fancy a treachery to our love? I had a sister then, so pure, so truthful, that if, in weakness—and though good at heart she could be weak sometimes and wayward—she had committed any girlish fault, she would seek me out, and, with her arms about my neck, her blushing face buried in my bosom, she would sob “Sister, I have erred!”

LADY C. (*deeply moved*) Mary!

KATE. 'Twas from me she sought comfort, consolation, sympathy in tears,

LADY C. Mary!

KATE. Her world was centred all in one confiding heart—in mine; and if danger assailed her peace of mind—if her firm hold of faith gave way, in my arms she would have found a refuge with the cry—

LADY C. (*rushing to KATE, and throwing her arms about her*) Save me! Save me from him! Save me from myself! (*she sinks down at KATE's feet, and buries her face in her dress*)

KATE. My poor sister—my own dear sister! (*raising her, and leading her to a sofa*) Here—here! rest on my heart, and tell me all.

LADY C. I am guiltless—guiltless still.

KATE. I knew it. I was sure of it!

LADY C. I have been foolish—mad! They drove me to it by their cold rigorous formalities. But no, I will not seek excuses. I have erred, deeply erred, but I am innocent.

KATE. Be calm—be calm! (*wipes away LADY CASTLE-CRAG's tears*)

LADY C. I have known no moment's peace! I would have persuaded myself, that there was happiness in sin; but I was wretched. When your letter reached me, a secret presentiment—a sting of conscience—told me it might be for this you sought to see me. I feared to come. Twice I seized my pen to delay the meeting—even to refuse. But again a better impulse whispered, that I must seek you out. I flung the half-traced scrawls aside—I pretended illness—need of repose—as I have often done before—from my chamber stole away by a back stair, and came—Ah! how I bless the better thought that brought me to a sister's arms.

KATE. No more! no more! I have you here, my own sweet sister, once again. 'Tis all I ask. But now, you do not love this man?

LADY C. Can I tell? My brain was fevered with his earnest protestations that he loved but me—had never loved another.

KATE. The base, bad man!

LADY C. You know him?

KATE. I know well his character. If there be one true feeling for him in your heart, tear it away. He is unworthy of a thought. This I can prove. In how far does he hold you in his power?

LADY C. He has my letters.

KATE. They must be obtained from him. Till then you cannot be secure,

LADY C. But how? Yes! I will supplicate. He cannot refuse to hear me.

KATE. No, no! tamper not with the serpent's wiles again. I have a plan! 'Tis hazardous; but it shall be done! I will restore them to you. Time presses, Await the execution of my purpose in my chamber.

LADY C. What would you do?

KATE. I would save you. One kiss again, to give me courage. Do not stir from thence, until I call you forth at the right time. Now go! (*puts LADY C. into room, C., in back—going to table and writing hastily*) If this succeed the blow must at once end all. But will he come? Why doubt it? Why doubt the inordinate vanity of man? (*rings*) But the address—where is that scrawl? (*picks up fragments of torn letter*) Yes, the address remains. Close at hand too; that's well.

*Enter LEONARD, R.*

(*without looking up*) Hepzibah, this letter, immediately, to its address! Take it yourself. (*looking up and seeing LEONARD—with surprise and discomfort*) Leonard!

LEONARD. Yes, Mary, I have come—I have returned to say—

KATE. To say good-bye. I knew you would. (*gives her hand, concealing letter*)

*Enter HEPZIBAH, R.*

Ah, Hepzibah! (*aside*) I cannot delay—yet in his presence—unlucky! Still it must be done. (*aloud*) Pardon me, Leonard. (*gives letter to HEPZIBAH, and whispers instructions*)

HEPZIBAH nods her head and exit, R.

LEONARD. (*aside, during this*) She was agitated. Why did she conceal that letter?—for she concealed its superscription palpably. Why mystery, if not for evil?

KATE. (*turning back*) And now a few brief words with you, Leonard.

LEONARD. Again but a few brief words. More secrets too!

KATE. (*smiling*) Did you come back to pout? No, you came back to take my hand in trust and confidence. Am I not right?

LEONARD. I did. I seek to school my heart to every confidence and trust. But when I see secrecy—mystery—in all around—

KATE. You will still smile and grasp my hand.

LEONARD. Tell me, to whom was that letter—that

letter so pressing, you would not have fall into my hands?

KATE. Do not ask. One day you shall know.

LEONARD. But if I would know now?

KATE. (*sadly*) You cannot.

LEONARD. As you will. (*crosses to R., going, returns*) And you tell me not to doubt.

KATE. You would do me bitter wrong to doubt me.

LEONARD. I would not. (*smiling constrainedly*) Come, scold me—think me a fool—laugh at me—but have some little pity for a poor lover's whims. To whom was that letter?

KATE. You have my answer, Leonard.

LEONARD. I have truly.

KATE. And you will this time say "good-bye," without one pettish thought?

LEONARD. (*ironically*) Assuredly. Good-bye, good-bye. (*aside, going*) She drives me mad. Come what may, I must—I will have conviction. *Exit, hastily, R.*

KATE. Leonard! Yet I must not detain him. Should this Malpas come. Poor fellow! I feel he suffers from his jealousy; and yet I must dissemble with a smiling face. Have I done well? Have I done right? Yes, it was the only way to save my sister. (*seeing HEPZIBAH enter eagerly, R.*) Well?

HEPZI. The gentleman followed me, madam. Will you receive him?

KATE. I await him.

HEPZI. (*surprised*) I don't quite understand you, ma'am.

KATE. I thought I made myself clear. Admit him.

HEPZI. (*aside*) Uncommonly odd. *Exit, R.*

KATE. Now, soul of the artist, rouse thyself within me—aid me now or never!

*Enter HEPZIBAH, followed by MALPAS, R.*

HEPZI. (*announcing*) The Hon. Mr. Malpas.

KATE. Leave us, Hepzibah.

HEPZI. (*aside*) Odder and odderer still. I can't make her out at all to-day. *Exit, R.*

MALPAS. This note really comes from you, my dear madam? (*shows it*).

KATE. It does. (*takes note from his hand and puts it on the table with some agitation and excitement*) You may think it strange, sir, that, after receiving your emissary in a way so little courteous, I should then request your presence. You may accuse me of that caprice usually laid to the charge of us poor women.

MALPAS. If caprice there be, it is me to congratulate myself upon its exercise. (*lays down his hat and cane on sofa*) It has made me infinitely happy. At last then you have condescended to remember one of the most humble of your adorers, and granted him the opportunity of proving how genuine is his adoration.

KATE. The words of a man accustomed to pay his homage to every woman!

MALPAS. No, no! do not thus malign yourself. It is no common every-day silly puppet of the world I find in you. It is the woman raised above the herd by every brightest attribute of her sex.

KATE. Your declaration flatters me.

MALPAS. Dare I then venture to hope?

KATE. (*laughing with agitation*) You must pardon a little emotion. I am somewhat overcome. It is warm here. A little air will revive me. (*goes and opens door R., at back*)

MALPAS. (*aside during this*) Is this real?—no matter! It's very evident I may consider this another conquest.

KATE. (*coming down*) Mr. Malpas—pray pardon me—we actresses are supposed to be a little arbitrary in our dealings. You express a kindly feeling for me. (*they sit*)

MALPAS. Kindly feeling! You must not tamper with my words. Love the most genuine.

KATE. Be it so. And you would prove that love?

MALPAS. Yes, by a devotion beyond bounds.

KATE. But should I be exclusive and exacting in my estimate of love, and expect you to forego all homage to another?

MALPAS. My whole soul shall be yours and yours alone.

KATE. Should I require that you should sacrifice to me all proofs of previous affection?

MALPAS. No sacrifice shall cost me too dear.

KATE. I have learned that you have been assiduous in your attentions—most assiduous—to one lady in society.

MALPAS. Pshaw—mere common scandal.

KATE. It is not that. I tell you, we pariahs of the world know more than you might think. You have proffered love to another. Give into my hands—no, that were too exacting, even for an arbitrary creature like myself—destroy before my eyes all evidence of this passion for another. Make me this sacrifice; and then perhaps I may believe the love you now affect.

MALPAS. Affect! you cannot thus mistrust me. Well, so be it; I am content to destroy in your presence every vestige of the past; for in truth, you, you, Kate, are the only woman whom I love—have ever loved.

LADY CASTLECRAG *bursts from the room in flat, and comes down, R.*

LADY C. Liar to one or both!

KATE. (*aside*) Imprudent woman, she has ruined all!  
(*going to her*) Ah! Why have you done this?

MALPAS. Lady Castlecrag! what can this mean?

LADY C. (*clinging to KATE*) Ah! you have rescued me from that villain's wiles.

MALPAS. (*aside*) A plot, 'tis clear. That woman has betrayed me. (*assuming boldness*) My dear Lady Castlecrag, what strange accident can have brought you to a house like this it passes me to understand; but it is a house wholly unfit for one in your position in society.

LADY C. It's one in which I find you, sir, with words of passion on your lips to a lady who— (KATE checks her)

MALPAS. Surely, my dear Lady Castlecrag, you will not have the weakness to believe there was a moment's earnest in that vulgar *bardinage*?

LADY C. Even had I not been convinced, sir, of your perfidy, I would not have allowed a single sneer of scorn against a being so good, so pure, so noble—

MALPAS. As Miss Kate Robertson. In her very presence it ill-becomes me certainly to say I am at a loss to comprehend your ladyship's extraordinary infatuation.

LADY C. Not a word, sir, will I hear against one who is—

KATE. (*interrupting quickly*) Not that! For your own sake forbear, I entreat you.

MALPAS. (*aside*) What the deuce does all this mean? I am bewildered.

KATE. No matter, sir, what accident has brought this lady to my house. Through me, she entreats you to return to her that, which no man of honour or delicacy can refuse—her letters.

MALPAS. Her letters. And it was for that then? (*aside*) Duped by an actress!

KATE. Her letters, written in moments of weakness, she would now recall.

MALPAS. The proofs that once she entertained better and truer feelings for me. She cannot ask a sacrifice so cruel.

LADY C. A sacrifice you would have made at the first bidding of another.

MALPAS. Deluded woman! And you still believe——

LADY C. My letters, sir!

MALPAS. (*with a mock bow to KATE*) I am no match for two such ladies. (*aloud*) Few men are for one—(*as before*) especially when so experienced in her art.

LADY C. My letters, sir, I say. (*KATE checks her impetuosity*)

MALPAS. My dear Lady Castlecrag, since it is your will, so forcibly expressed, your letters shall be restored into your hands—*your own* hands. But let me again remind you, as a friend, that your presence here does not become you. Allow me to escort you home.

KATE. (*preventing him*) No! your very touch would be pollution to her now. (*gives hand to LADY CASTLECRAG*) Go, go! had you not been rash the letters had been mine. But you have his promise; as a gentleman he will keep his word.

MALPAS. (*with a sneer*) Assuredly. (*aside*) But I may choose my own way to do so.

LADY C. (*to KATE*) I owe you more than life. We must meet again.

MALPAS. (*aside*) No, I'll take good care you don't do that.

KATE. Farewell.

LADY C. Farewell! (*about to embrace KATE, is checked by her—aside, going*) The villain! *Exit, R.*

MALPAS. (*who has taken up his hat, but forgotten his cane, stopped by KATE, as he is about to leave the room with a bow*) Am I your prisoner, madam? Had it not been for the confounded treachery, of which I have been the dupe, I might have been enchanted at your eagerness to keep me by your side.

KATE. I will not long detain you, sir. You cannot be seen leaving this house with Lady Castlecrag. Beyond that room (*pointing, L.*) is a back staircase. By that you are at liberty to depart.

MALPAS. Most flattering! With all the honours of a favoured lover.

KATE. With such honours, or such honour, as you think your due. Your pardon still one moment. The key is in my room. If you need amusement, you will find a MS. effusion of your own; (*pointing to torn letter*) a little damaged possibly. I shall not be long.

*Exit into chamber, R.C., in back.*

MALPAS. What the deuce can have possessed the woman to show me up here? Was it jealousy? If so, I may still win the game with both!

*Enter LADY CASTLECRAG hastily, and in great agitation.*

LADY C. My husband is below! I saw him in the passage. I dare not face him here—Oh—I am lost. Hide me—where is she? (*looks around for KATE*)

MALPAS. Here, in this room! Come, quick! (*putting Lady Castlecrag into room, L., and following*) What did I say? The luck of the game begins to turn already.

*Exeunt, L.*

*Enter HEPZIBAH, R., trying to prevent the entrance of SIR NORMAN, who comes in with two half-written notes in his hand, and followed by Miss LIPGLUE.*

SIR N. Where is the mistress of this house? This Kate Robertson, as they call her. There is a lady with her.

HEPZI. Really, sir. I keep no 'count of all my mistress' visitors.

SIR N. You see, Miss Lipglue, the deception-practised in the family of a woman so degraded.

MISS L. I am shocked, Sir Norman. Had it not been your urgent desire that I should come, the slighted breath of propriety would have frightened me away. (*aside*) I did so long to see what such a hussey's home looked like.

SIR N. These half-scrawled notes you found in Lady Castlecrag's room prove that she had some design of coming here. She has left the house unknown to all. It is clear she must be here, in defiance of all propriety—of all duty to me!

KATE appears at door in flat, and is coming out, but starts back.

KATE. (*aside*) Sir Norman, what does this mean? (*retreats and listens*)

Enter BUZZARD, R.

SIR N. }  
MISS L. } (*with astonishment*) Mr. Buzzard!

Buz. Sir Norman! Miss Lipglue! I'm astounded!

MISS L. Fie, fie, Mr. Buzzard! shocking!

Buz. Oh! I'm only here to look after my friend, Malpas, who went out mysteriously; but I was not to be done. I followed and saw him enter this house. (*goes up, looks about*)

SIR N. Mr. Malpas—here—here!

Buz. Yes, look! here's his cane on the table. No one sports (*coming down, R.*) such another cane in all London, but me. Malpas and I have the privilege. See, here is the twin cane! (*shows his own*) What did I tell you? There is no mistaking it. He must be still in the house.

SIR N. What does this mean? Mr. Malpas here, and Lady Castlecrag.

Buz. Lady Castlecrag, too. I'd wager my reputation as a man of fashion, 'twas she I saw here just now, I thought I knew the figure.

SIR N. (*violently crosses to BUZZARD*) You saw Lady Castlecrag here, you are sure?

Buz. Well, I can't be positive. (*aside*) Have I got into a mess?

SIR N. (*as before*) And at the same time as Mr. Malpas?

BUZ. I can't swear that. (*aside*) Decidedly, I have got into a mess.

KATE. (*aside, behind*) He did not meet her on the stairs. She is still here then. She must be in that room with him.

SIR N. A frightful suspicion crosses my mind. (*all face towards R.*)

KATE. (*aside, behind*) There is still one way, by the yard. I have the key.

(HEPZIBAH, who has gone up on a sign from KATE, spreads the screen—KATE steps behind it from door, c. flat in back to R., makes a warning sign to HEPZIBAH, and disappears, R.)

SIR N. I am confounded! It is horrible!

MISS L. Scandal upon scandal! What would Dr. Tight say?

SIR N. But I will search this den of iniquity thoroughly.

BUZ. (*aside*) I must get out of this. (*aloud*) Sir Norman, I retract my words.

SIR N. Too late, sir. You swear to the cane.

BUZ. No, I don't. (*aside*) Pardon me, thou mould of fashion.

*Enter LEONARD ASHTON, R.*

LEONARD. (*unseen by the others*) Who are these people?

SIR N. It is very clear, sir, that Mr. Malpas is here, concealed in this house, sir.

LEONARD. (*aside*) Malpas. (*goes up R., to screen, to observe*)

SIR N. Why is he here, sir? Is it for my Lady Castlecrag, whom you recognized?

BUZ. No, I swear I didn't. (*aside*) The mess gets worse and worse!

SIR N. Or is it for Miss Kate Robertson? I presume it must be for one of the two.

LEONARD. (*aside*) Ah!

SIR N. But they shall tremble before my just indignation, sir! Where are they? (*crosses to door, L.*) The door is locked! Why is it locked? (*shakes it*)

MISS L. Oh, this is awful! I know I shall faint. Mr. Buzzard! (*staggers to BUZZARD*)

BUZ. Now don't try that on again, I beg of you.

SIR N. (*at door, L.*) I hear smothered voices! Open, I say. (*the door L. opens*)

*Enter KATE, door, L.*

KATE. What may I ask is the meaning of all this?

LEONARD. (*up behind*) 'Tis she!

SIR N. Madam! I claim the right of a husband to dictate the conduct of a wife. I seek my wife, who has visited this house.

KATE. I will not affect to ignore your name, sir. Lady Castlecrag is not in this house—I can affirm with truth. (*aside to HEPZIBAH who has come round to her*) Conduct the lady who is in the yard below to the nearest cab, quick!

*Exit HEPZIBAH, R.*

MISS L. (*aside to SIR NORMAN who has crossed to her*) But that doesn't account for that naughty Mr. Malpas.

SIR N. (*to Miss LIPGLUE*) With this woman's doings I have no concern. (*aloud to KATE*) In that case, madam, I offer such apologies as you may think your due, and I leave you to the society of your friend Mr. Malpas.

KATE. I disclaim all friendship with the gentleman you name.

SIR N. (*again suspicious*) Indeed! Yet he is here, Mr. Buzzard has assured me of the fact.

BUZ. (*crosses, coming down, L.*) No, no! I wash my hands of all responsibility.

SIR N. I, myself, heard voices in yonder room. If not your friend, in what sense do I find him here? Whom did he come to visit?

KATE. (*aside—agitated*) And he still there!

LEONARD. (*behind—aside*) She hesitates.

SIR N. Will you deign an answer, madam?

KATE. (*aside*) Compromised thus before her husband! Oh, my sister!

LEONARD. (*as before*) What will she say?

KATE. (*confused*) I deny, sir, that you have any proof of your assertions.

*Enter MALPAS, from room, L.—BUZZARD, gets up, R., afraid—exclamations in different senses of all present—LEONARD sinks into a chair and hides his face in his hands.*

MALPAS. Sorry to disturb you, madam, or annoy you in the least before so much good company; but I feel it due to myself to avoid a conflict with a fellow—a low ruffian, who, armed with a stout stick, has entered by the window yonder and threatened violence.

*Enter DANIEL, L., with a stick in his hand.*

Here is the gentleman. (*crosses to SIR NORMAN*)

DAN. Hallo! what's this?

KATE. Daniel! (*aside to him*) oh, what have you done?

DAN. (*aside*) I've made a dommed fool of myself, I fear.

MALPAS. I hope, madam, I shall find your house less ferociously beset on the other side. (*crossing to R.*) Sir Norman, your very humble servant. *Exit, R.*

SIR N. Come, Miss Lipglue, let us leave this house. We have evidence sufficient, I think, to justify my opinion as to the morality of the stage. (*crosses to L. door*)

MISS L. If Dr. Tight could only have seen this enormity, he'd have been delighted.

KATE. (*struggling with herself*) Sir Norman, you must not—shall not—leave me thus—an insult on your lips. (*aside*) And yet I cannot speak—I should betray her.

LEONARD. (*coming forward, c.*) Spare yourself further falsehood, madam. It would avail you little.

KATE. (*horror-struck*) Leonard! Here!

DAN. I can't stand this. They shan't abuse you thus. I will tell the whole truth, and let them know that—

KATE. (*seizing DANIEL's hand*) Not one word, I command you.

DAN. But— (BUZZARD comes down L. of MISS LIPGLUE)

KATE. Not a word.

SIR N. Miss Lipglue, this has been a frightful mistake. *Exit.*

MISS L. (*coquettling*) Oh, Mr. Buzzard, you men are shocking creatures! *Exit, R.*

BUZ. (*aside*) There's no fear at least of my shocking her.  
*Exit, R.*

LEONARD. (*who has gone to table and taken up his MS., with assumed calmness, down c.*) I presume, madam, since every tie now is broken between us, that you will no longer need these pages.

KATE. Leonard, do you too accuse me?

LEONARD. (*ironically*) Accuse you? Oh, no! of course I should again do you wrong.

KATE. You would!

LEONARD. (*bursting out*) Can you think me still so blind?

KATE. Hear me, Leonard, hear me. You are deceived.

LEONARD. (*bitterly*) I have been cruelly deceived!

KATE. Deluded by false appearances.

LEONARD. Bitterly deluded!

KATE. No, you must not—shall not believe—

LEONARD. The evidence of my own senses.

KATE. Not even that.

LEONARD. Shall I not believe this letter, then? (*takes up KATE's letter to MALPAS, thrown by her on the table*) This letter alluring that man to visit you. Your own handwriting, madam. You forget I know it well! Oh, treachery beyond parallel! (*crumples the letter, and flings it at the feet of KATE—crosses, R.*) Farewell! You have acted well your deceitful part; but the curtain falls upon it now for ever.  
*Exit, R.*

KATE. Leonard! Gone! Gone! and thinks me guilty. Misery! (*sinks into chair*)

DAN. And it's all my doing. I have caused all by my infernal violence. I! I! who know how good you really are. I, who have sworn to defend you at the risk of my life! And you would not let me speak. Will you forgive me? Can you forgive?

KATE. (*springing up*) It is over, it is over—gone—gone! and I alone again—alone! Well, I can be firm! Now for the theatre. Smile, slave of your art, smile! (*with increasing wildness*) They await me—I must be there—the merry laugh upon my lips. I must be gay—gay! Yes, I must court their plaudits; or they will murmur. Come, come, I am ready; come to the theatre.

Why do you not laugh, my friends ? See how jovial my humour is—ha, ha, ha ! (*breaks down in her laugh*) Be firm, good heart, be firm ! That's well, that's well. Ah ! (*she staggers and faints, DANIEL rushes to support her—HEPZIBAH, who has re-entered during the foregoing scene, flies to her*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

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### ACT III.

SCENE.—*A Common Room in the Hotel de France, at Nice.*  
*Entrance door and chamber door, R. ; another chamber door and an open fire-place with a low wood fire burning on the hearth, L. ; in back flat, C., large window with curtains reaching to the ground and opening to a balcony terrace from which steps are supposed to descend into the garden of the hotel ; tree tops indicate the garden. Beyond, the sea in the distance. French hotel furniture. Sunset.*

LADY CASTLECRAG *sits wearied and melancholy at a table holding an old newspaper in her hand ; MISS LIPGLUE is seated looking over the hotel book of names ; SIR NORMAN CASTLECRAG is walking up and down impatiently ; luggage strewn about ; TRIMMER sits on a box half asleep.*

*Enter MADAME MOREAU, R. l e.*

SIR N. Ah ! the landlady at last. (*to MADAME MOREAU*) Well, madam, how long are we to wait in this common room of your hotel before we can have fitting apartments ?

MADAME. As milor has been informed, the suite of apartments on that side (R. U. E.) are free. They 'ave giv' satisfaction to many milors and miladies. There is no hotel in the whole town of Nice can equal to the Hotel de France for decoration, service, reasonable charges and the universal contentment give to all milors and miladies.

SIR N. A truce to this flourish, madam! I have already let you know that those rooms are too small for us. Can we, or can we not, have another suite of apartments more suitable?

MADAME. Milor shall be accommodated if there be the possible—ah!—hold! Perhaps the lady who has the chambers there (*pointing L. U. E.*) will graciously yield them to milor. She is alone with a *femme-de-chambre*; she can be accommodate with less.

SIR N. Why was I not informed of this at once? Take my compliments—Sir Norman Castlecrag's compliments—to the lady. No—no, on second thoughts, I may be hasty in the compliments. Who is the lady?

MADAME. (*seeking in her memory*) Madame—madame—I cannot find in my head these English names. She is an invalid, pale—pale.

LADY C. (*looking up*) We had better not disturb a lady in ill health.

SIR N. You reason with your usual foolish impetuosity, Lady Castlecrag. She has but a few steps to take to the other apartments; and she cannot refuse such a request from persons of our condition. (*to MADAME M.*) Ask the lady to cede the rooms and take the smaller suite. Tell her, never mind what—there! go!

MADAME. I will even do the impossible. I have always given contentment the most perfect to all milors and miladies.

SIR N. I requested you to go at once, madame.

MADAME. I fly on wings. (*aside, shrugging her shoulders, and crossing behind to L. door, 2 U. E.*) Oh, ces Anglais! *Exit, L. U. E.*

SIR N. (*walking up and down again*) Humiliating necessity to be kept waiting.

LADY C. Will you not sit down, Sir Norman?

SIR N. Foolish question! How can I sit down when I am worried out of my life? I am no woman, madam. I cannot sit moping, with an air of supreme indifference, madam. I feel as a man. I feel as a gentleman. Can I conceal from myself, that I have disgraced my blood, madam, by engaging in speculations—in base mercantile speculations—that have nigh ruined me? Can I forget,

that I have been obliged to mortgage Westland Manor, and come to live for a time abroad, and exercise disgusting economy, madam? Am I not upon tenter hooks to know who is this mysterious personage who has advanced the money upon the mortgage, and who now holds Westland Manor in his grip, madam? And you ask me with that air of apathy—why I do not sit down!

LADY C. Apathy! you generally accuse me of undue impetuosity, Sir Norman.

SIR N. Pshaw! you women never know how to feel rightly at the right time. (*goes up impatiently to balcony, c.*)

LADY C. (*apart*) Not feel! Alas! I can feel most bitterly—oh, my sister! Not one single communication has she vouchsafed me since that terrible scene! Not one word of answer to my numerous letters! And now (*glancing at the newspaper*) gone—gone far away perhaps for ever! Not one sign of life! Surely, she must be dead, or she would not have been thus obdurate. (*crosses to R. table—broods over her thoughts*)

MISS L. (*suddenly*) Oh! (*knocks down a book*)

SIR N. (*turning*) What alarms you, Miss Lipglue?

MISS L. Your pardon, Sir Norman! I fear I was wanting in propriety. It was not alarm, that prompted my little exclamation. On looking over the list of names of this year's residents, at Nice, domiciled at this hotel—I find—I find—those of so much good quality. I was so delighted to see that you, and dear Lady Castlecrag, would have the prospect of enjoying the society of proper persons, that I declare that I have let fall my my dear invaluable Murray. (*picks up book*)

SIR N. Pray expound your meaning, Miss Lipglue.

MISS L. We have the honour of possessing in the same hotel, (*reading*) "Colonel and Lady Fanny Gabble, The Hon. Mrs. Cruickshanks and family, Sir Dazzly Brewster, and (*with a simper*) among the other distinguished personages, your friends, the Hon. Mr. Malpas, and Mr. Buzzard." (*aside*) Dear Mr. Buzzard! he cannot live without me. He has followed me abroad.

LADY C. (*who has started at the name of "Malpas," aside*) Malpas! he still pursues me. Spite of my precautions he has learned my route. (*looking at TRIMMER,*

*who has likewise started at the name of "Malpas," and as LADY CASTLECRAG looks at her pretends to be asleep again)*—That woman has been his accomplice; and I am in the power of my own maid. Oh, shame!

SIR N. (*up at table, to himself*) Well, I suppose in a man of Malpas's standing, I must overlook that disgraceful affair with the actress.

LADY C. (*smiling to conceal her agitation*) I fear, Sir Norman, the air of this place will scarcely agree with me—I feel it oppressive. Cannot we journey on?

SIR N. And did not you tell me that this very place was recommended for you by the faculty? It perfectly agrees with me—I mean with my arrangements. Whims, madam, whims. (*to Miss LIPGLUE*) Any more names of note, madam?

MISS L. No; mere unknowns, Sir Norman—small fry, men of letters, artists, and such people. Mr. Belmore Simmonds, Mr. Leonard Ashton.

LADY C. Leonard Ashton!

SIR N. (*to LADY CASTLECRAG*) Is not that the name of a young artist formerly received on a footing of intimacy at Westland Manor?

LADY C. The same—a friend of my girlhood. (*aside*) He once loved Mary.

SIR N. I am far from desiring to be harsh or rude, Lady Castlecrag; but do not forget that I—I, your husband—discourage all such early intimacies.

MISS L. How correct is your judgment, Sir Norman! An artist indeed! (*goes up*)

*Enter LEONARD ASHTON, R. 1 E.*

LADY C. 'Tis he!

LEONARD. Is it possible! Lucy Somers—I beg pardon—Lady Castlecrag! (*goes to shake hands*)

LADY C. (*embarrassed*) Mr. Ashton! (*curtseys and points to SIR NORMAN*) My husband, Sir Norman Castlecrag.

SIR N. (*after bowing coldly to LEONARD, aside to LADY CASTLECRAG*) Show tact and discretion, I entreat you, madam. (*goes up to Miss LIPGLUE, c.*)

LEONARD. (*wounded*) I fear I intrude. But I sought

my sketch-book, which I left on the table. (R.) I am about to profit by the lovely sunset. (*bows*)

LADY C. (*embarrassed, and looking round to see whether SIR NORMAN observes her*) You are still an artist, Mr. Ashton?

LEONARD. I once renounced the profession in a moment of madness, which I have bitterly repented. But I have resumed it; and I am a wanderer now among the scenery of Southern France and Italy. (*bows again-going*)

LADY C. (*seeing that SIR NORMAN's back is turned and seizing LEONARD's hand—apart to him*) What do you know of Mary?

LEONARD. (*agitated*) What should I know?

LADY C. Her position you knew?

LEONARD. (*bitterly*) I did.

LADY C. And now you know nothing of her whereabouts?

LEONARD. Nothing.

LADY C. The papers said she had left England for America, after a fever which seized her before the public on the stage one night—(*aside*)—that night.

LEONARD. The papers said so.

LADY C. You have no news of her?

LEONARD. I have no news.

LADY C. She may be dead.

LEONARD. She may.

LADY C. (*aside*) She must. (*sinks into a chair*)

(LEONARD takes up his sketch book, bows to SIR NORMAN, and exit by balcony)

SIR N. (*coming down*) You have dismissed the gentleman. Receive my congratulations, Lady Castlecrag, on your improvement in wordly tactics.

*Enter MADAME MOREAU, from L. to R.*

(to her) Well, madam, does the lady comply?

MADAME. Milor's desires are accede. The lady will remove to the smaller apartment.

SIR N. I am glad to find she has a proper sense of what is due between gentlefolks.

LADY C. (*aside*) No hope of escaping from the presence of that man.

**MADAME.** I will provide that milor's luggage be convey to milor's room. See! here is the lady's courier who evacuates her effects.

*Exit, R. 1 E.*

*Enter DANIEL, L., with trunks, &c.; he is dressed as a foreign courier, and wears a black wig with enormous black whiskers and moustachios.*

**DAN.** (*aside—coming forward*) I'm a stunner in these traps—every inch a furrin' courier. Nobody would know me, not even old granny, if she were alive, or Tantrums the old dog. Here goes. I'll try them. (*aloud to SIR NORMAN, affecting a foreign accent*) My lady will soon be ready to vacate the apartment—enchanted to do a pleasure to a gentleman so distinguished.

**SIR N.** Good, good.

**DAN.** (*aside*) No, the old fellow doesn't smell even the tail of the most diminutive rat. (*aloud to LADY CASTLECRAG*) She is ravished to offer an obligeance to a lady so charming.

**LADY C.** She has my thanks.

**DAN.** No, not even Miss Lucy has the slightest notion I'm Daniel the gardener's boy. I'll try it on with my old friend, the *fam de cham*. (*crosses up to R.—aloud to TRIMMER*) Young woman, you will find much commodiousness in the apartment.

**TRIMMER.** Thank'ee, mousoo. (*rises*)

**DAN.** (*aside—crossing to R.*) She calls me "Mousoo." I'll be dashed if the girl doesn't take me for a regular parley voo. She'd have wunk if she'd know'd me. I am intimately acquainted with that young woman's way of winking. I'm doing it in prime style. I'll give them a finisher with the lingo I learnt from the other courier chaps in furren' parts (*aloud*) Why don't these sacred garçons come to help me with this luggage? Corbleu! morbleu! Parbleu! Corpo de Bacco! Godd'em! Pomme de terre!

*Exit into apartment, R. 3 E.*

**MISS L.** (*coming, R. c.*) Shocking! Well, if the invalid lady has no better manners than her courier, I can't say much for the propriety of the family. (*goes up, R., sees and pointing*) Ah! here we have good company.

*Enter from garden by balcony, COLONEL GABBLE and LADY FANNY GABBLE, as if from a walk.*

LADY F. (*very voluble*) Sir Norman—Lady Castlecrag, I heard of your arrival, and I hasten to welcome you.

COLONEL. (*pompous*) How are you, Sir Norman? How are you, Lady Castlecrag? How are you—how are you—how are you?

LADY F. Delighted to have you among us in our little coterie; for, between ourselves, there's a dreadful set of English here! One never knows who's who.

COLONEL. Awful! positively awful—awful!

LADY F. I really wonder such people are not prohibited travelling, or at least visiting the same places as other people.

COLONEL. It's scandalous, scandalous, scandalous!

LADY F. Apropos, my dear Castlecrag, there are such frightful stories afloat about a dozen people here. I shall be delighted to tell you them all.

COLONEL. Oh! frightful, frightful, frightful!

*Enter MALPAS and BUZZARD, by balcony\*—MALPAS comes down, R.—he shakes hands with SIR NORMAN, who goes up, then goes to shake hands with LADY CASTLECRAG, who merely curtseys coldly, and goes to table and sits—TRIMMER comes down R., with bandbox, &c.*

MALPAS. (*aside*) She bears me still a grudge; but I shall have her in my power. The discovery I have made shall aid me. (*after looking to see that the others are engaged in conversation comes down to TRIMMER, who now stands with the luggage*) Thanks for your information, Mrs. Trimmer. You see I was enabled to precede you. (*gives money*) What does she say? What does she do?

TRIMMER. (*low*) Oh, sir, my lady is very mopish and melancholy; and I am sure, by that, she still loves you; besides, Sir Norman do snub her awful. She'd throw herself at your head any day.

MALPAS. She has had no communication again with her sis—with that woman?

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\* Buzzard now wears a different pair of trousers to Malpas.

TRIMMER. Bless you, no, sir; since those last letters I intercepted by your orders, from one and t'other, and gave into your hands, there's been nothing.

MALPAS. Good. (*gives more money—TRIMMER goes up to luggage—aside*) Yes, letters which have revealed to me a secret shall drive her to my arms. I have already prepared the way with Lady Fanny. (*crosses to LADY CASTLECRAG—getting round to LADY CASTLECRAG, who is now sitting apart—aside to her*) You are unhappy; but I will rescue you from the clutches of the man who renders you thus miserable.

LADY C. (*looking round her with terror*) Leave me, leave me.

MALPAS. So be it. A few lines shall explain to you the past, and inform you of my plans. Will you receive them? (*LADY CASTLECRAG only waves him away and joins the party—aside*) Good! silence gives consent. (*goes to table, R., apart, and writes*)

MISS L. (*who has pursued BUZZARD round the room into a corner*) Oh, Mr. Buzzard, how delightful this meeting. I see how much you are moved.

Buz. I am distracted.

MISS L. Distracted, Mr. Buzzard?

Buz. Yes; don't you see? (*shows his trousers*)

MISS L. (*prudish*) Good gracious, Mr. Buzzard!

Buz. An accident. I fell from a horse—tore the others, ma'am, tore them; and now it is impossible for me to be in due conformity with my friend Mr. Malpas. Judge of my agony of mind; I am sure he is as afflicted as myself.

MISS L. Oh, Mr. Buzzard! I sympathise with you deeply. You know how deeply. (*attempts to lean on the arm of BUZZARD; he tries to avoid her*)

MALPAS. (*coming down to BUZZARD with the note he has just written*) I am sorry to disturb so sweet a tête-à-tête, Miss Lipglue.

MISS L. Oh, Mr. Malpas, in all propriety!

MALPAS. Of, course, fair lady; but allow me a few words with Buzzard.

Buz. (*aside to MALPAS*) Blessings on your noble head for this rescue!

MISS L. (*going up*) Provoking! I know he was going to pop the question; my heart told me so.

MALPAS. (*apart with BUZZARD*) Listen, old fellow; this letter to Lady Castlecrag urges an elopement this very night. I have placed her present disastrous position before her—protestations of love, of course. My presence in the house of the actress most diplomatically explained away—those vague phrases which humbug a woman always. She will yield—I know she will. She must. But, though Sir Norman's suspicions have slumbered, I cannot risk this letter in his presence. You must find means to give it to the wife—adroitly, do you hear?—adroitly, as you value my friendship.

BUZ. Can you doubt my tact, my discretion, my finesse? (*takes the letter—MALPAS goes up to the others towards L.*) What shall I do? Genius of Intrigue, inspire me, and render me worthy of his friendship! Ah, inside that book. (*takes from table, R., "Murray's Hand-Book"*) I'll slip it in, and then—

SIR N. (*approaching from R.*) Can I believe my eyes? What do I remark? Mr. Buzzard, you are neglecting your model. (*points to BUZZARD's trousers*)

BUZ. (*startled, puts book down*) No, Sir Norman! but I am afflicted to the heart's core. Ruined, undone—an accident. (*talks aside, going up, c., to SIR NORMAN*)

MISS L. (*coming down, R., having observed him*) Goodness gracious, how my heart beats! He put a note into my dear invaluable Murray. I divine all; he has been too timid to speak. (*comes to table and abstracts letter from book*) Come, treasure of love! (*goes up to read letter in balcony*)

BUZ. (*finishing his conversation with SIR NORMAN*) And now, Sir Norman, you can understand my affliction.

SIR N. Perfectly. (*turns away again*)

BUZ. That was a narrow escape! All's right, however. The old boy saw nothing. Oh, ye husbands, what blind deluded folk ye are! (*taking up book, going to LADY CASTLECRAG, who now sits alone absorbed in her thoughts*) So pensive, my dear Lady Castlecrag. Allow me to offer you a little relaxation for your leisure moments. You will find ample subject for your contemplation in its contents. (*gives book*)

LADY C. (*taking the book mechanically*) Sir!

Buz. (*mysteriouslly*) Your feelings will doubtless respond to the truth of its sublime effusions. (*aside, going up*) I think that trick was well played and won. (*goes up*)

LADY C. What does he mean? A Murray's Handbook!

MISS L. (*coming down apart*) Oh, dear, dear; naughty, naughty Mr. Buzzard! An elopement! My position in this family, disastrous, so it is! He loves me to distraction! I knew that all along! Excuses his presence in that dreadful woman's house. Oh! my heart had long since excused him! This very night, at eleven o'clock—Oh, propriety! but oh, love!—a priest will join our hands, of course. Dear man—can I refuse him?

Buz. (*down on the other side with MALPAS*) All right, she has got it safe.

MALPAS. Good!

(*during the following scene, DANIEL comes from R. room to L., returns with HEPZIBAH and KATE, who is dressed in black, with a thick black veil—KATE is about to cross to R, but is arrested by the conversation, KATE makes a sign to HEPZIBAH to carry her luggage R., and remains with DANIEL, who gets R.—TRIMMER enters the apartment, L., with some of the Castlecrag luggage*)

LADY F. (*taking up the old newspaper, which LADY CASTLECRAG has left on the table*) A paper! any news? any delicious bit of scandal? Pshaw! it's an old paper—months old. (*LADY CASTLECRAG starts, and is about to speak and take the paper, but restrains herself*) It has been well thumbed, however; it must be vastly interesting. What have we here? (*looking at it, looks at LADY CASTLECRAG, and then at MALPAS with a nod of secret intelligence*) A paragraph regarding that actress all you men have raved about so much. Miss Kate Robertson, who did something very extraordinary I recollect. Yes, so it is, (*really*) "We learn that our celebrated actress, Miss Kate Robertson, whose strange performance, when under an attack of fever and delirium, excited so painful an interest, has in a great degree recovered her health, and has left England for the United States." Very odd! does this paper belong to you, my dear Lady Castlecrag? (SIR

NORMAN seizes LADY CASTLECRAG by the arm angrily; she looks at him deprecatingly) To be sure, you can have no especial interest in this Miss Kate Robertson.

LADY C. (overawed by SIR NORMAN, in a choked voice) I have none!

TRIMMER enters the apartment, L.

LADY F. Didn't we hear, by the-bye, Colonel, that this woman had been originally of good family?

COLONEL. Yes—good family—good family.

SIR N. (aside) Confusion! (to LADY CASTLECRAG) Raise your eyes boldly—look unconcerned!

LADY F. And now I remember, I think it was even whispered that she was sister to some one to whom I was acquainted, wasn't it, Colonel? (looks at MALPAS who signs to her to go on)

COLONEL. Yes—some one, some one!

SIR N. (aside) I'm on coals of fire! How was this known?

LADY F. To be sure—now it comes across me—it was said—but of course it was a mere malicious stupid mistake—that she was sister to you, Lady Castlecrag.

COLONEL. Yes, to you—to you!

SIR N. (to LADY CASTLECRAG) Folly! Who may be your authority, Lady Fanny, in this—ha, ha, ha!—absurd and ridiculous report? Ha, ha, ha! (to LADY CASELECRAG, aside) Laugh!

LADY F. Really I can't recollect who told me. (looks at MALPAS) There are so many odd stories about people.

SIR N. The mistake is too ludicrous to need refutation. (aside to LADY CASTLECRAG) Cannot you speak and end this disgraceful scene at once?

LADY C. (aside to him) Spare me.

SIR N. (as before) Speak.

LADY C. (aloud—choked) I have no sister. (aside) She is dead.

KATE. (behind, bitterly) She has no sister! My very existence she denies.

MALPAS. (aside) Now, Lady Castlecrag, I have you in my power.

*Enter LEONARD ASHTON by balcony, and remains behind unobserved.*

LADY F. Of course, I never believed such a report a moment ; for this Miss Kate Robertson was a young woman of detestable character, I hear.

COLONEL. Detestable—destable—detestable !

LADY C. (*aside*) And yet I dare not speak ! Oh, shame !

SIR N. (*aside to LADY CASTLECRAG*) Command yourself, madam !

KATE. (*behind*) She hears this—and is silent. Not one word of defence from her lips ! Oh, Lucy !

LADY F. In truth, what connection could my dear Lady Castlecrag have with a creature so disreputable ?

COLONEL. Disreputable.

MISS L. I happen to know parties of unimpeachable veracity who can testify to the impropriety of that female's conduct, in seducing away amiable young men of family (*looking at BUZZARD*) who have since repented of their errors.

SIR N. Enough, Miss Lipglue !

KATE. Too much, too much ! I can bear this no more ! (*she is about to lift her veil, and dart forward down, R. when LEONARD ASHTON advances rapidly, and prevents her speaking*)

LEONARD. Sir Norman Castlecrag ! I have known the lady whom you mention—(*looking at LADY CASTLECRAG, who stands trembling with her eyes cast down*) as others have known her—and I will not hear her thus traduced.

KATE. (*aside, with surprise and joy*) Leonard !

SIR N. This violence, Mr. Ashton—

LEONARD. Whatever my own feelings as regards Miss Kate Robertson—and I may have had cause for sorrow and for pity for that unhappy lady—I am ready still to defend her fame against sweeping accusations, as foul as false.

SIR N. False, sir ! You impugn the veracity of me, Sir Norman Castlecrag.

LEONARD. Of you, Sir Norman Castlecrag—of you especially—of you, who, last of all men, should have lent

your tongue to so vile an aspersion on that lady. You understand me, sir !

SIR N. By what right, sir, do you dare to speak thus ?

LEONARD. By the right of justice and truth against calumnious libel.

SIR N. You insult me, sir—insult me !

LADY F. (COLONEL and BUZZARD *interposing*) Gentlemen ! gentlemen !

LEONARD. (*breaking away*) Then insult for insult to the absent ! If you need further explanation, sir, I am a sojourner in this hotel ; and I await your pleasure.

*Exit in agitation, R. 1 E.*

KATE. (*apart*) He alone defends me !—Leonard ! can he love me still ? No ! 'twas but his soul of honour spoke.

MALPAS. (*aside to BUZZARD, while the others are occupied about SIR NORMAN*) The fellow has played my game. After all this scandalous exposure Lady Castlecrag must fly to me for refuge.

SIR N. (*who has been talking excitedly with the others*) He is a low fellow—beneath my notice.

MISS L. (R. of LADY FANNY) Hasn't an idea of the propriety of good society. An artist !

SIR N. I am sorry for this unseemly scene—(*seeing KATE, veiled*) before strangers, too. You, I presume, madam, are the lady who has so kindly ceded me your rooms ? Accept my sincerest thanks.

KATE. (*curtseys with cold disdain to SIR NORMAN—then aside, looking at LADY CASTLECRAG*) And she never said a word—not one word in defence of one who has sacrificed all—all to her !

*Exit, R. 3 E.*

WAITERS enter with lamps which they dispose upon the tables, and close the balcony windows—they then take the rest of the luggage into room, L., return and exeunt, R. 1 E.—night has come without—moonlight.

LADY F. I have music and cards in my apartments. Will you join us with Lady Castlecrag, Sir Norman ?

SIR N. Not to night; Lady Castlecrag is fatigued. (*aside to LADY CASTLECRAG*) Stand up, madam, and smile ! All eyes are upon you ! (LADY CASTLECRAG obeys,

*but staggers)* See to Lady Castlecrag, Miss Lipglue—she is faint. (MISS LIPGLUE goes to LADY CASTLECRAG, R., to support her to a chair, R. of table—SIR NORMAN goes up annoyed and looks through window)

LADY F. (to COLONEL) Yes, poor thing! She must have had enough to agitate her.

COLONEL. Quite enough—quite enough—quite enough!

LADY F. Oh, Mr. Malpas, what a charming piece of scandal! No—awful I mean. But what can you expect when you mix with questionable society?

*Exit with MALPAS, R. I E.*

COLONEL. What indeed—what indeed—what indeed?

*Exit following.*

MISS L. (with intention) Dear, Mr. Buzzard, we shall meet once again very soon—you understand.

Buz. (à la MALPAS) With delight. (*aside*) Oh, bother the old fool! *Exit, R. I E.*

MISS L. He said “with delight.” Be still, my heart.

SIR L. See to the room, Miss Lipglue,

MISS L. With delight. (*aside, going*) How his sweet accents echo on my tongue. (*taking her book from table*) Come, dear Murray—more dear to me than ever!

*Exit, L. U. E.*

SIR N. That dreadful secret has leaked out. It may in time find credence. Your foolish agitation has nigh betrayed us, Lady Castlecrag. You must learn to show a bolder front.

LADY C. They maligned her; and I never spoke. I was base enough already to be thus passive in your hands.

SIR N. Oh, why did I marry into such a family? Come, come, I don’t mean to be harsh, but this scene has upset me. Now go to your apartments.

LADY C. You do not come?

SIR N. No! I must go at once to the Consulate, where the letters from my lawyers should be addressed to me. There has been some mystery in the affair of that fatal mortgage; and my lawyer has promised to discover who is the true mortgagee.

LADY C. Do not leave me, I entreat you. Not now—not now, I beg!

SIR N. What do you mean? Pshaw! this is mere childish nervousness a lady of the world ought to be ashamed of. There, there, go to your room. I must see the Consul. Good-bye! *Exit, R. 1 E.*

LADY C. Sir Norman! He will not hear me, and I am filled with terror. Malpas is audacious; and that man his friend. What did he mean by his strange allusions to that book? My mind is tossed upon an ocean of doubt. (*going, L.*) Oh, Mary, Mary, just has been your scorn of me; and cruelly have I betrayed you to your foes! *Exit, L.*

DAN. (*who has watched the whole scene, coming forward*) They didn't mind me; but I had my eye on them all. And if I don't put them screws to rights that are all loose, may I be for the rest of my days the regular parley-voo I look. But what's to be done? I have grown a complete play-actor myself in this toggery. I, Daniel Dewlap, who once hated play-actors worse than—we know who. And now, as I am alone, and nobody by, I don't mind saying, that I flatter myself I would make a devilish good actor in my way. I shouldn't be surprised if I had took to the stage. I might have been a popular favourite; and the public would have applauded me perhaps; only think of that! I could almost give myself a round with the old flappers; they know the tune. But now I must be an author to invent a plot to bring about a good *denouement*. "Aye, there's the rub," as the man says in the play. (*rubs his hands*) What if I asked advice of one of those furren courier chaps? Borrow my ideas from a parley voo? No, hang it, that would never do now-a-days! Ah, Miss Mary.

*Enter KATE, in agitation, from door R. 3 E.*

KATE. Yes! they are gone! Daniel, I choke, I suffocate! My feelings must have vent; and yet the only friend, in whom I can confide, deserts me too.

DAN. Meaning me, Miss Mary? It is droll how you give me pain and pleasure all at once with those words. Your friend—and yet desert you! No, Miss Mary; but I had matters to settle in my head, never mind what.

KATE. Sorrow makes me unjust, Daniel. (*wildly*) You heard them?

DAN. Didn't I? And if you'd have let me, I'd have pommelled all round; the men leastways. Those sneering fine ladies too deserved it, only one can't larrup the fair sex.

KATE. And she, for whose reputation I have sacrificed all I hold most dear—she too betrays me!—she has no sister! Did she not say she had no sister?

DAN. And yet, I take it, Miss Mary, she loves you still.

KATE. Love me—no! They have crushed the last glimmering spark of affection in her perverted heart. Since that fatal day, when all my treasures were flung before her, to be trampled on—when honour, reputation, happiness, were all lost to save her happiness, reputation, honour—not one single communication has she deigned to make me—no word of gratitude—no word of comfort in my misery. My letters all unanswered, disregarded. She loves me—no! She too has withdrawn all love. (*bursts into tears*)

DAN. Miss Mary, you mustn't take on thus; you know what the doctor said; you must be calm.

KATE. Calm when they strike me to the earth, and she stands by unaiding! Calm! Daniel, the torturing conviction, that she has indeed deserted me, has struck me more deeply to the soul, than the hour, when, agony in my heart, and fever in my brain, I smiled before the public on that fatal night—when his face seemed, where'er I turned, to frown at me with accusing menace from the crowd, until the brain could bear no more—the scene swam before my eyes, and forgetting all, I said—what did I say?

DAN. Never mind now, Miss Mary.

KATE. Yes; they have told me—it is graven there. In my delirium they seemed to accuse me all, to point at me the finger of scorn; and I confronted them. I, in turn, accused the world—the false maligning world—as my assassin. Horrible recollection! I shudder still at the remembrance.

DAN. Poor Miss Mary! You did wrong to come here. I told you so.

KATE. No, no; I could watch over her, and love her still, though she loved me no more. Could I desert her when I knew her husband's fortune was on the point of ruin, and the time might come when I could wash away.

her tears? No, no, I say! When my own convalescence urged me to seek a warmer climate, and I learned that she was coming to this place, I hurried onward here, knowing that she would not recognise me.

DAN. I should think not with that black veil. It almost beats my parley-voo, black whiskers, and thingumjigs.

KATE. (*lost in thought*) Yet he defended me—he who alone had reason to suppose that he was deeply wronged.

DAN. Oh, Miss Mary! Mr. Leonard is a noble young fellow after all. He still deserves that you will think kindly of him.

KATE. Yes, yes, he has my—my gratitude. I can give no more. He too has fallen from me; and my love is crushed within me. The pure sweet flower of hope and trust, and fond affection, has been rudely snapped. It could not but wither! It has withered! I am strong now.

DAN. Oh! Miss Mary, now he is here, do let me tell him all; do'e now—do'e now!

KATE. At her expense? No, never! I have your word, Daniel, to be silent.

DAN. As an oyster in its shell, mum. (*retires—aside*) But oysters are made to open.

KATE. (*again brooding*) Why did his accents awaken within me once again echoes of feeling I had long thought dumb? No, no, 'twas only gratitude.

DAN. (*at door, r. 1 E.*) There are people coming along the passage, 'tis Mr. Malpas and the twin gosling a-cackling—a-quacking—

KATE. They must not see me—come! (*goes up, c., stretching out her arms towards door*) Oh, Lucy—Lucy, why have you betrayed me? *Exit, r. 3 E.*

DAN. I'll have an eye upon them, and an ear too—and a good long one to-boot, though it may be no jackass's—Oh, if I could but find my *denouement*! (*goes up to r. 3 E., following KATE—he re-appears shortly, watching*)

*Enter MALPAS with BUZZARD, r. 1 E.*

MALPAS. No one here—everything is still—all right!

BUZ. Nobody ever comes here at this hour. They're a devilish slow lot after all—go to bed with the cocks and hens, and such dirty bipeds.

MALPAS. You are sure Lady Castlecrag got the letter?

BUZ. As sure as I am of my own—no *your* elegance.

MALPAS. Sir Norman has left the hotel. One would think the foul fiend had inspired the baronet to give me an opportunity to carry off his wife.

DAN. (*aside, listening*) Oh, that's the business is it? You pair of blackguardly thieves of the night, (*crosses to window and gets behind curtain*)

BUZ. What's this? I heard a noise. (*listening at door, R. 3 E.*) No, all is quiet.

MALPAS. Have you got me the guide to pass the frontiers? We must have a safe fellow who knows the country.

BUZ. The hotel touter has promised to send me a sure hand—a sort of smuggler—who knows every road about.

MALPAS. Good!

DAN. (*behind*) Good too, I've got my *denouement*. (*opens window, slips out upon balcony cautiously and disappears*)

BUZ. What's that again? I'm horrible nervous, Malpas. A presentiment of evil! I thought I heard another sound. (*listening, L.*) Perhaps it was only old propriety snoring in her sleep.

MALPAS. Dreaming of you, happy rascal.

BUZ. Don't name it. You give me cold shivers all down my back. That woman will be the death of me.

MALPAS. Poor Buz! See that there be no one in the garden. (*BUZZARD goes up on tiptoe, opens the window and goes out on balcony*) Will she come? Yet even should she still have scruples—should *this* night's business fail—she cannot, shall not escape me. No, no, my Lady Castlecrag, I love you. But you have aroused another feeling in my heart, more powerful even than my love. My pride has been deeply wounded; and the web is woven around you with such resistless force, that, struggle as you may, poor fly, you are in my claws. These letters (*pulls out letters*) never shall be yours, until, mine and mine alone, you no longer care for their possession. How nigh the weapon was wrenched from my grasp, by that designing woman's artifice! But I hold it still. (*to BUZZARD, who returns*) Well, what now?

Buz. (*down, R.*) The garden is so quiet, you might hear a *pas seul* performed by a mouse. I'm all right again now, ready for any venture. (*starts as the door opens R. 1 E.*) Eh! Hallo, what's this? I'm all of a tremble again!

*Enter DANIEL, R. 1 E., enveloped in a cloak, and covered with a slouched hat.*

DAN. (*gruff, affecting broken English*) One milor English here want an honest fellow to show way?

MALPAS. Ha! the promised guide.

Buz. (*low to MALPAS*) An honest fellow, he says; he looks like an infernal ruffian!

MALPAS. Pooh! 'tis but the common aspect of these smugglers.

DAN. (*aside*) They don't like the looks of me. But, if they came to hearts, I know who'd look an awful sight uglier than me.

MALPAS. (*crosses to DANIEL*) Hark ye, fellow; you understand English, it seems?

DAN. Leetle, leetle.

MALPAS. You may be needed to-night to show the shortest way to the Frontiers. A carriage will drive up to the garden gate of the hotel. You will take your seat on the box beside this gentleman.

Buz. (*low to MALPAS*) Beside me!—that objectionably dressed individual? You can't mean it.

MALPAS. Come, no foolery now, Buzzard. You can't sit inside, you know. (*to DANIEL*) You shall be handsomely rewarded for your pains.

DAN. It is good. (*aside*) I'll find my reward where you little think it.

MALPAS. As soon as I enter the carriage with another person, drive on like mad.

DAN. It is good. (*aside*) If I don't upset your scheme, at least I can upset the carriage and break one of your necks or both.

MALPAS. Accompany him down stairs, Buzzard.

Buz. (*going*) I don't like this business at all; but I'm in for it now. (*crosses R., as he passes DANIEL, with a shudder*) Bah! what a scaly ruffian it looks. *Exit, R. 1 E.*

DAN. (*going*) Don't the palms of my hands itch now to give him a good larruping. They've certainly got a little soft. I'll give them a good polish up as I go down the stairs.

*Exit, following BUZZARD, R. 1 E.*

MALPAS. It must be near the time. I positively think my heart beats; I haven't felt such a sensation for many a long day. (*a clock strikes eleven without*) Yes, 'tis the very hour. I think I hear a step within her apartment. This glare of light may alarm her. (*puts down lamps*) Is all safe? (*goes softly, R. 1 E., looks out*) Yes, there is no one in the corridor. (*steps out*)

*Enter MISS LIPGLUE from L., with a carpet bag and a band box.*

MISS L. 'Tis the hour he named. No one here. He awaits me beneath the balcony. Now, love, assist me! Oh, Buzzard, Buzzard—you make me very naughty!

*Exit carefully by window and balcony.*

MALPAS. (*turning*) A step! a female form! 'tis she—she did not see me. But victory! she is mine. (*goes towards balcony*)

*Enter LADY CASTLECRAG, L., with candle—stage light.*

LADY C. Where is Miss Lipglue? I tremble to be alone. (*seeing MALPAS, with a scream*) Ah! he here!

MALPAS. Lady Castlecrag here! Then who?—no matter!—you are come, you have listened to my entreaties.

LADY C. Your entreaties, sir? I little thought to find you here.

MALPAS. You do not come in compliance with my note.

LADY C. I know of no note. Leave me, sir! (*going*)

MALPAS. (*interrupting her*) No, Lady Castlecrag, whatever the cause of your denial, which I am at a loss to comprehend, I cannot quit you thus. You are unhappy; and I would bring you peace of mind.

LADY C. Peace of mind! you—you!

MALPAS. You cower beneath the tyranny of a cruel husband. I offer you the refuge of my love; spite of appearances, I swear it ever has been yours.

LADY C. I can listen to such words no more.

MALPAS. Your position in the world is deeply compromised—your secret known to all. Your sister's shame must reflect back upon yourself.

LADY C. Her shame? no, mine, and mine alone.

MALPAS. Ruin presses on Sir Norman. With me you may avoid a life of misery. In another land a blissful existence awaits you.

LADY C. My husband ruined, you say! and should I leave him in such a moment? Is your opinion of me so low? But I have deserved this.

MALPAS. No, no! but think how lost, deserted, lonely in the world you are.

LADY C. Aye, she has deserted me!

MALPAS. While far away from all the world, strong in my deep affection——

LADY C. Leave me! (*crosses to R.*)

MALPAS. Have a care, Lady Castlecrag, I have other passions almost as boundless as my love.

*Enter KATE from door, R. 3 E.*

Your letters are in my possession, and if I would revenge myself——

LADY C. You would not be so base.

MALPAS. Can I tell to what excess of frenzy your cruel scorn might drive me? I might be no longer master of myself.

LADY C. Lost—lost!

MALPAS. Listen to reason. Let me be assured of your affection. One word of love, (*holding the letters*) these shall be yours.

KATE. (*down c., snatching the letters*) No, they are mine;

LADY C. (*starting as if she saw a spectre*) Mary!

MALPAS. She here? Foiled again—and by that woman!

LADY C. (*stretching forth her arm to KATE*) Mary! (*KATE waves her back with scorn—LADY CASTLECRAG covers her face with her hands—DANIEL appears up the balcony with LEONARD—he points out the group to him, whispers in his ear and disappears—LEONARD remains behind*)

KATE. (*compelling herself to calmness*) You are sur-

prised to see me, doubtless. I came hither unknown, unheeded, to watch over and defend one, whose happiness and welfare have been more dear to me than my own.

LADY C. (*looking up*) Mary!

KATE. (*waving her back again*) But she has ill repaid my love—she—no matter! I will not sear her heart still more with my reproaches. 'Twas for this purpose that I came hither. If I remain, 'tis to defend *myself*. These letters can prove to the maligning world, it was not Kate Robertson—it was my Lady Castlecrag, whose fair name was sullied, whose purity was tainted by a love—no, “love” I will not call it—of a base heartless man!

LEONARD. (*behind*) Ah!

MALPAS. (*angrily*) Madam!

KATE. (*unheeding him—with increasing vehemence*) These letters can proclaim my innocence, vindicate my reputation, restore to me again, perhaps, a treasure more dear to me than the opinion of the world—the esteem, the confidence, the love of one, who has crushed my heart by his contempt.

LEONARD. (*behind*) What do I hear?

KATE. These letters may give me back all I have lost—all I regret so bitterly—I have them in my power.

LADY C. (*weeping*) It is but justice.

KATE. You say so, Lady Castlecrag?

LADY C. Use them, my sister—I will bear my fate.

KATE. (*breaking down*) You have called me by that name—your sister! (*assuming coldness again*) Yes! I have them in my power. I could use them, but I *will not* (*crosses to fire-place, L., and flings the letters into the flame*) There!

LADY C. What have you done?

KATE. Done! I have struggled with the tempter at my heart; and I have vanquished him! They burn—they burn! Those evidences of my innocence; and yet I feel a great and holy joy. Be happy, my sister; (*crosses, C.*) you are released from an ignoble bondage! Once more your honour and your name are saved; once more Kate Robertson gives her honour to the buffets of the world. Fear not for her; she can be happy in the consciousness of right, even if she succumb beneath the blow. (*staggers*)

LEONARD. (*rushing forward and supporting her*) Never, noblest of women, if my devoted love can support you through life.

KATE. Leonard!

LEONARD. Can you forgive me my mistrust?

KATE. You were true to honour, even when cruel to me.

LADY C. Yet me she does not forgive. All my appeals to her tenderness were scorned.

KATE. Your appeals? I know of none! My letters were unanswered.

LADY C. Letters! Not one has reached me.

KATE. (*looking at MALPAS*) Ah! I divine all. Come hither, my poor injured one! (*presses LADY C. to her heart*)

MALPAS. Upon my soul, this affecting business is too much for my nervous temperament. I will no longer intrude upon this little scene of domestic happiness. (*going, l.*)

KATE. (*raising her head*) Stay, sir! There is still a premise due to this lady—to my sister—for now you know the ties of blood, that bind us to each other. Worshipper as you have been at the altar of the world, there must still lurk within your heart the spirit of a gentleman! I give the word its genuine noble sense. To that spirit, which true mothers of nobility instil into their children's hearts, I appeal. From the gentleman I ask the promise, that the secret of the past be guarded for ever from the false interpretations of the world.

MALPAS. Madam, you have shamed me! You have my word of honour—I shall keep it now.

*Enter SIR NORMAN, r. 1 E., with a letter and papers—general movement.*

ALL. Sir Norman!

SIR N. Why this strange assemblage? What does all this mean? You do not speak—I ask an explanation.

*Enter DANIEL, r. 1 E.*

DAN. That explanation I can give you, Sir Norman. I have happened willy nilly to be mixed up in sundry little matters. (*uneasy movement of KATE*)

MALPAS. (*apart*) Confound that fellow—he will betray all! (*goes up and goes, L.*)

SIR N. Speak, fellow, whoever you are.

DAN. I have the honour to announce to you, that your friend, Miss Lipglue, has endeavoured to effect an elopement with my old acquaintance, t'other gosling—I mean Mr. Buzzard.

SIR N. Miss Lipglue eloped?

DAN. Not quite. I drove the happy pair into the stable yard, and locked them up in the coach-house. But, don't be alarmed—I let out my prisoners before they scratched each other's eyes out in the dark.

SIR N. This intelligence is perfectly astounding!

DAN. Upon information received, as we cautiously say in the detective service, Mr. Leonard Ashton came to tell my lady there of the happy news—no, I mean of the 'stounding intelligence. Mr. Malpas here was awful shocked at his friend's very improper behaviour; and came to settle matters about the sweet young couple. And—and there you have a correct explanation of all the rumpus, Sir Norman.

SIR N. Miss Lipglue, the model of propriety! Is it possible?

DAN. You'll excuse me, Sir Norman! but 'taint all snow that's plastered white. (*goes up towards table and observes*)

KATE. (*pressing LADY CASTLECRAG's hand*) Now again, farewell. (*going*)

SIR N. Stay, madam, I did not think to find you here; but you cannot leave me without one word. This letter, I have just received, informs me that the mortgage effected upon Westland Manor has been returned into my hands.

KATE. (*embarrassed*) Your affairs, sir, can little concern me.

SIR N. They concern you much, madam; for the same letter tells me that a secret—*your* secret—has been betrayed. The hand that saved me from approaching ruin was that of—of Mary Somers. It cannot—it must not be! I feel your purpose was great and noble; but from your hands I never could accept—

MALPAS. One word, Sir Norman! I affirm, and I affirm

with truth, although with shame, that vanity alone induced me to permit the belief that Miss Kate Robertson had done ought but disdain my addresses.

LEONARD. Could jealousy thus have blinded me? Oh, Mary, how can I ever forgive myself?

SIR N. I have misjudged her then, and foully—but still it cannot be—*(to KATE)* take back these papers.

KATE. I take them back (*taking them*), but to entrust them to the care of one in the safe keeping of whose honour they may best be placed—that of your wife, Sir Norman. (*gives the papers to LADY CASTLECRAG*)

SIR N. Madam—Mary—sister—you have vanquished me.

DAN. (*aside*) I know'd he'd give in. (*goes to L. corner*) Old Prejudice knocked over—huzza!

LEONARD. 'Tis not the passing cloud can blot the brightness of the sun. (*takes KATE's hand—screams without*)

*Enter Miss LIPGLUE clinging to BUZZARD.*

MISS L. Oh, Sir Norman! oh, Lady Castlecrag! this horrid man has presumed upon my girlish innocence, carried me off, abducted me, and now he refuses reparation.

BUZ. But it was all a mistake.

MISS L. A mistake! He says it was a mistake, and before so much good company! Oh! I shall die. (*tries to fall on BUZZARD, who shakes her off*) But that note, you horrid man! I will bring it into court for breach of promise.

BUZ. (*aside*) I wish she would; but I am afraid she won't. (*aloud*) But that's the mistake—that note.

MALPAS. (*down between them, aside to BUZZARD*) Not a word. If you split, we split for ever! I am sorry for you, Buz; but you must marry her. (*passes her over to him*) I'll give away the bride.

BUZ. Marry her? Never! (*he tries to escape—Miss LIPGLUE clutches hold of him*)

SIR N. I have learned a lesson—perhaps a hard one; and even now old pride is beating loudly at my heart.

But no matter! I have been taught that there is a

prejudice among us in the world, cruel as false, and that, on the stage, virtue may still pursue a steady path. (*introducing KATE*) This is my wife's sister—my own sister—now my friend.

KATE. Sir Norman, my course will still be sundered from that, your station claims for you. The hand of my truest friend, my husband, (*takes LEONARD's hand*) will support me. Yet we may still think kindly of each other, although your part be played in the great World, and mine be on the Stage.

Oft as the actress, friendless, and alone,  
Seeking the "spark divine" she'd make her own,  
Devotes her sleepless nights, her anxious days  
To weary study, wearier care, for praise,  
The world nor knows, nor heeds her struggles bold  
'Gainst poverty, temptation, lures of gold !  
Whilst hands applaud, the breath of scandal rails—  
The public lauds, but prejudice assails.—  
Dear are the plaudits that ensure her fame,  
But dear the world's esteem : and she would claim  
From the more generous spirit of the age  
**A kindlier feeling betwixt WORLD AND STAGE !**

### Curtain.



# AMATEUR'S GUIDE,

## Hand-book and Manual, 1s.

containing Particulars of everything necessary for  
the Proper Production of Plays—

THE FORMATION OF A COMPANY, AND THE CHOICE OF PIECES,  
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BEFORE COLLECTED OR PRINTED.

A LIST OF THEATRICAL TRADESMEN, AND THEIR ADDRESSES.

Edited by T. H. LACY.

Ninth Edition, corrected to February, 1872.

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## THE AMATEUR'S GUIDE TO HOME OR DRAWING ROOM THEATRICALS.

From "Saunders' News Letter," May 23rd, 1866.

THIS is a most useful little work, which supplies most effectually a want long felt by those desirous of cultivating theatrical amusements and tastes, and of indulging in the harmless and not unimproving recreation afforded by amateur theatricals. The book consists of three parts, by three different authors—all amateur actors, who give the benefit of their experience and advice in a rather lively style. The first is by Mr. J. W. DRELL, and treats of the duties of the manager and company, and the easiest and easiest mode of bringing out a piece successfully either in drawing-room or private theatre. The author shews how matters which are most mysterious to the general public, and interpose almost insurmountable difficulties to their production by the uninitiated or small companies, may be overcome. Their nature is explained, and a plan—cheap, easy, and effective—is shown by which the most and the pretentious amateur company may get up a creditable theatre and performance. Chapters are given on scenery and scene painting, stage properties and effects, thunder and lightning, pieces suitable for private representation, advice on acting, dresses and properties, the duties of a manager, and rehearsals, in all of which there is excellent advice and valuable information. "How to get up Theatricals in a Country House," by a gentleman who writes under the *nom de plume* of Captain Sockum, is the second part, and will be found an excellent appendix to the preceding part. It contains, besides, a long list of plays, with descriptions and directions, that will be found of great use to country amateurs. A supplement by the editor, THOMAS H. LACY, is the last part, and in it the deficiencies of the two preceding are supplied. The laws and laws for regulating amateur companies are here laid down, and lists of plays are given. The book will be found of the greatest possible use to the amateur, supplying what long felt, and rendering the production of a play upon an amateur stage a matter of ease, even to parties whose opportunities of witnessing theatrical performances have been few.

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