

PLAYS TO THE PUBLIC

BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

ACTED AT THE
THEATRE-Royal, DRAMA,

IN FOUR ACTS.

BY

GEORGE ROBERTS,

(Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society)

AUTHOR OF

"Lady Audley's Secret;" "Idalia;" "Under the Rose;" "Cousin-Tom;" "Forty Winks;" "Three Furies;" "Partnership;" "Absent Man;" "Ample Apology;" "Golden Harvest;" "Echoes of the Rhine;" "Harlequin Jack Horner and the Great Bed of Ware;" "Blind Love;" &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

THEATRICAL PUBLISHER,

LONDON.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

First produced at the Holborn Theatre (under the management of Mr. Burleigh) Easter Monday, April 18, 1870.

Characters.

JOHN BOLTON	MR. J. C. COWPER.
BOB OLIVE	MR. BILLINGTON.
FRANK D'ARCY	MR. HENRY S. HAYNES.
NOBBY TWIST	MR. E. ATKINS.
JEMMY SCOTT	MR. W. MC INTYRE.
WEDGBY	MR. W. H. WALLACE.
VAMP	MR. ARTHUR WOOD.
HUGGINS	MR. H. RIGNOLD.
JACKSON	MR. TAPPING.
TITTERBY	MR. W. BRUNTON.
SPARKS	MR. H. VINCENT.
JUNIPER	MR. BUSH.
CRUMBS	MR. BUTLER.
CRAMMERS	MR. COOKE.
CALL BOY	MASTER VERNER.

Waiter, Policemen, Firemen, Students, &c.

GRACE DANGERFIELD	...	MISS JULIET DESBOROUGH.
POLLY SCOTT	...	MISS WINGFIELD.
Mrs. WADLEY	...	MRS. MANDERS.
Miss GUSHINGTON	...	MISS MARLBOROUGH.
GEORGEY GAVOTTE	...	MISS ANNIE MERTON.
NELLY BEAUCLERC	...	MISS MILLIE DE VERE.
AMY DANCER	...	MISS M. CONWAY.

Carol Singers by Mr. F. HERRING's Choir.

Period—Present Day. Modern Dress.

Time in Representation, 2 Hours and 45 Minutes.

To facilitate representation in the Provinces, the speeches of WEDGBY and Miss GUSHINGTON, and of SPARKS and TITTERBY, are respectively combined and condensed, and the character of GEORGEY GAVOTTE omitted.

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BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

" And shouts were heard, midst fire and smoke,
 And twice ten hundred voices spoke,
 ' The Playhouse is in flames ! ' "

Rejected Addresses.

ACT III.

SCENE 1.—**Exterior of the Royal Parnassus Theatre**

(*Boxing Night*).

THE THEATRE IN FLAMES.

" Busily the Temple Fountain murmured in the Moonlight."—*Martin Chuzzlewit*.

ACT IV.

SCENE 1.—**JOHN BOLTON'S CHAMBERS.**

SCENE 2.—**THE GROUNDS, CALYPSO VILLA**

(*Evening*).

SCENE 3.—**Garden Court, Temple**

(*Moonlight*).

BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

The Music Composed, Selected, and Arranged by Mr. W. C. LEVEY,
and the entire Piece produced under the Direction of Mr. F. VILLIERS.

CAROL SINGERS *By Mr. J. HERRING's Choir.*

A lapse of Six Months between Acts 1 & 2, & 3 & 4 respectively.

Programme of Scenery, &c.

"'Tis Woman that seduces all Mankind."—*Beggar's Opera.*

ACT I.

SCENE 1.—STAR & GARTER, RICHMOND!
Terrace and Gardens (Sunset).

SCENE 2.—“THE WREKIN.”

Broad Court, Bow Street, Dramatic Agency Office.

SCENE 3.—HERCULES BUILDINGS, LAMBETH.
THE CLOWN AT HOME.

“Revenge is sweet, especially to Woman.”

ACT II.

SCENE 1.—CALYPSO VILLA, CHISWICK..
(Christmas Eve).

SCENE 2.—HALL OF THE THEATRE.

SCENE 3.—The Gentlemen's Dressing Room.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

A C T I.

SCENE FIRST.—*The Star and Garter, Richmond—the Terrace, sunset. A small round garden table; four light wire or cane chairs, L. C.; one ditto, R. C.*

WEDGBY discovered seated, L. C., smoking—BOLTON standing, R. C., back to audience, looking at landscape.

WEDGBY. Try one of my weeds, Bolton, they're very mild.
BOLTON. Like the owner! No, thank you, I prefer full flavoured. (*turns and takes out cigar case*)

WEDG. (*looking at BOLTON's cigar*) That thing would blow my head off.

BOLTON. (*sits, R. C.*) Wouldn't take a powder magazine to perform that feat, Wedgby; I can generally gauge a man's brains by the strength of his baccy.

Enter WAITER, R. 2 E., with tray, liqueur glasses, and two bottles.

WAITER. (*to BOLTON*) Curacao or brandy, sir?
BOLTON. Brandy. (*WAITER pours out and passes to L. C.*)
WAITER. (*to WEDGBY*) Curaçoa or brandy, sir?
WEDG. Both. (*WAITER pours—WEDGBY drinks and returns glass to tray—WAITER crosses, takes BOLTON's glass, and exit, R. 2 E.*) I prefer them mixed.

BOLTON. Mixed, like your society; well, taking this evening's party as a sample, we are (as the haberdashers say) "rather a mixed lot." Let's see, tot us up, Wedgby ^{LUGHAM}.

WEDG. (*calling the names and ticking them off on his fingers*) Grace Dangerfield?

BOLTON. One woman—I should say, one widow of the world.

WEDG. Mr. John Bolton?

BOLTON. One man of business.

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WEDG. Your humble servant ?

BOLTON. One odd man in.

WEDG. And last, not least, the founder of the feast—Mr. Olive?

BOLTON. One too many.

WEDG. You mean one too many for you.

BOLTON. (*sarcastically and nettled*) Repartee's a dangerous razor, you'd better not try it, Wedgby, you might cut yourself.

WEDG. (*aside*) Can't stand a joke. (*aloud*) I noticed you were not nuts on the man; now I rather like his looks. You must allow, he knows how to order a dinner, and that's something in a fellow's favour. (*rises, comes down, L.*) Where does he come from ?

BOLTON. Yorkshire, I believe,

WEDG. Where has he been ?

BOLTON. (*leaning over back of chair in an easy attitude*) Everywhere.

WEDG. But what has he done ?

BOLTON. No good that I know of.

WEDG. Got expectations ? (*during following speech goes up, sits, L.*)

BOLTON. Had, but they died with old Dangerfield. This man, Olive, was a cousin, about the only relation left; our fair friend's marriage knocked him out of the field altogether—not that he was ever in the betting, for he'd been abroad for years, and only turned up at the news of Dangerfield's death—expected a plum, I suppose, and was sold. Queer fish, led a deuced rum life, I'm told ; not my sort at all ; I must give Grace a pretty broad hint to drop him, quietly—

OLIVE enters slowly, R. 2 E., smoking a short pipe—they don't notice him.

and Grace is a woman who can drop a fellow when she chooses, and no mistake.

OLIVE. (*aside*) Not a doubt about that. (*BOLTON and WEDGBY both recognise OLIVE, they rise*)

BOLTON. Ah, Olive, Wedgby and I were just expatiating on the pleasures of the past two hours—perfection, I assure you, wasn't it, Wedgby, first-rate from the start to the finish—from the clear turtle to the caviare ; where did you pick up the knowledge of the art of dining ?

OLIVE. That's more than I can tell you, though I believe I was celebrated for sauce when I was a boy. (*crosses, L., puffs smoke near WEDGBY as he crosses*)

WEDG. (*sniffing—aside to BOLTON*) Sheer Cavendish. I say, how about his brains ?

OLIVE. (*aside*) Both dined and Bolton pretty well on ; to be sure, a lawyer's tongue doesn't want liquor to set it going—still, as he's evidently in the vein, I'll encourage him ; a little information on a certain subject will be acceptable. (*takes chair and sits, L. C.—aloud*) Sorry D'Arcy didn't put in an appearance ; a gay bachelor has no excuse, he's his own master.

BOLTON. I suppose D'Arcy is his own master when Mrs. Dangerfield's out of the way !

OLIVE. Is she so very exacting ?

BOLTON. She's devilish fond of attention.

OLIVE. Most women are ; they look upon it as their peculiar perquisite. I heard there was something in that quarter. Is it attention only, or attachment ?

BOLTON. Nothing very serious, enough to talk of, but not to swear by. A fellow—specially a young 'un—is flattered when a pretty woman puts the harness on him ; but when it's a widow who handles the ribbons, he must do one of two things, trot soberly in the traces, or take the bit between his teeth, set to kicking, and bolt.

WEDG. To be sure !

BOLTON. My lady there (*pointing off, R.*) tried the whip, but it wouldn't do, only made Frank fidgetty and ready to shy.

OLIVE. Shied me over to-day for instance.

BOLTON. (*R. C.*) My notion is, Master Frank has got something in hand on the quiet. Wedgby and I saw him sculling down stream as we passed Barnes Terrace, I'm not short-sighted, and if there wasn't a bonnet in the boat, my eyes are not as good as they used to be—may have been my fancy.

OLIVE. Or Frank's fancy more likely.

BOLTON. The young 'un must look out, though after all there's more jealousy than love about her. D'Arcy can't tackle her. There's only one man who ever could manage, and who ever will manage Grace Dangerfield, and that man is Jack Bolton. (*goes up R., OLIVE crosses up stage and puts pipe in case*)

OLIVE. (*aside*) H'm, the more I see of my friend the less I like him ; something tells me we shall come to loggerheads before long.

WEDG. (*coming down R. of OLIVE*) Sharp practitioner, clever fellow, man of the world, knows a trick or two ; I've always said to hear Jack Bolton talk is worth—worth—

OLIVE. Six-and-eightpence !

GRACE. (*without, R. 2 E.*) I won't hear another word !

WEDG. Who's this with my lady ?

OLIVE. (*looking off*) Why, if it isn't Frank turned up after all !

Enter GRACE DANGERFIELD, R. 2 E., holding D'ARCY playfully by lappet of jacket, he is in boating costume, straw hat, flannels, &c.

GRACE. (R. c.) There's the culprit, gentlemen ; come along, sir, come into court and clear yourself, if you can. Now, doesn't he look like a culprit—Mr. Olive, I appeal to you ?

OLIVE. (L. c.) (to D'ARCY) Better late than never, old fellow ; I'm glad you have condescended at last.

GRACE. Oh, nonsense, you are too good-natured by half. (to D'ARCY) You are not going to get off so easily, I promise you. (to OLIVE) His conduct to you was treasonable, but his behaviour to me was open rebellion.

D'ARCY. (R. corner) Won't you let a fellow speak ?

BOLTON. Better not, you'll only commit yourself.

OLIVE. (L. c.) Ha, ha ! Legal advice, gratis, and not bad of its kind. Frank, though we've dined—

D'ARCY. (aside to OLIVE, looking at BOLTON) Yes, I see you've dined.

OLIVE. Still, we've had the civility to keep back one dish, specially for you, and which you'll have to discuss all by yourself—humble pie.

GRACE. That's right, don't spare him ; if he won't confess, we must bring him to trial.

ALL. Oh, yes, by all means bring him to trial.

GRACE. (C. of table L., to OLIVE) Let me see, you shall be judge, and I'll be jury ; Jack shall conduct the prosecution, and the prisoner may defend himself.

WEDG. (L. of table) What am I to do ?

GRACE. Oh, you shall be the public, and say nothing, but think a great deal.

WEDG. (sits) Delighted ! (ALL sit)

GRACE. Now, then, prisoner at the bar, are you guilty or not guilty ? (D'ARCY, seated R. of table, turns his back and is silent) He won't say anything.

OLIVE. He refuses to plead, then the usual course is to determine whether his silence proceeds from natural causes or malice.

GRACE. How's that to be managed ?

OLIVE. Try a pin !

D'ARCY. (rising in a huff) I wish to goodness you'd leave a fellow alone !—I can't stand chaff—that is, not to-day. (crosses to R.)

OLIVE. (aside to GRACE) He's out of sorts, so we mustn't be too hard upon him, you see, (pointing to BOLTON, who appears as if asleep in chair, R. c.) the prosecution doesn't press the case.

GRACE. (*looking at BOLTON*) Asleep, I declare ; the effects of your good dinner.

D'ARCY. (*crosses back to chair, L. C.—to OLIVE*) Why, didn't I write to you yesterday, explaining—

OLIVE. You made a statement, my dear fellow, but as for explanation—

GRACE. We'll have that now, and if it proves satisfactory, you shall be forgiven. (*slight pause as GRACE settles her dress preparatory to putting the question with mock solemnity*) Now, Mr. Frank D'Arcy, once and for all, where have you been, and what have you been about, sir, for the last four hours ?

D'ARCY. (*evasively and annoyed*) Oh, I don't know.

BOLTON. (*raising his head suddenly, and in a deliberate tone*) I do ! On the river, sculling Polly Scott.

GRACE. Polly Scott !

OLIVE. (*aside*) Phew ! There'll be a breeze. That's Bolton's notion of friendship.

D'ARCY. (*netted*) And pray, Mr. Bolton, if I were engaged as you have stated, what business is that of yours ? What right have you to meddle with my actions or Miss Scott's either ?

BOLTON. I shall exercise the use of my own eyes and my own tongue as I please, Mr. D'Arcy ; and as for the young lady in question, why, public people, as you ought to be aware, are public property.

GRACE. But this person, pray, who is she ?

BOLTON. Chambermaid.

GRACE. A chambermaid ! Where, here ?

BOLTON. No, no ! I'm speaking technically, not a chambermaid in the common acceptance of the term, but a representative of waiting maids and such like characters at the Parnassus Theatre.

GRACE. An actress ?

D'ARCY. And none the worse for that ! She and her father are honest and respectable, and they are far safer in their poor lodgings from the pitiless shafts of calumny, than many grander people who live in glass houses.

GRACE. What lofty language—this is the result of cultivating play-house society.

OLIVE. (*aside*) Poor devil, what between the lady and the lawyer, he stands no chance ; I must give him a leg up.

D'ARCY. (*rising*) Will any one hear me ?

OLIVE. I will, Frank ; hit out right and left, don't be afraid, I'll not throw up the sponge till you cry peccavi.

D'ARCY. (*speaking from back of chair and chiefly addressing himself to GRACE DANGERFIELD*) You may remember that a few evenings ago, on leaving the theatre, your coachman ran

the pole of the brougham against a man who was crossing the road; you drove on indifferent to what had occurred, and ignorant I hope of the not very flattering remarks made by the crowd, on his carelessness and your heartlessness. The man who was badly hurt proved to be one Mr. James Scott, or to give him his professional title, Herr Shottische, Clown at the Parnassus Theatre, and father of the young lady so unceremoniously alluded to by Mr. Bolton. I called a cab, had the poor fellow taken home, and have since frequently been to look after him at his humble quarters. If, therefore, in affording my friend Mr. Scott and his daughter two or three hours' enjoyment on the river, I have sinned against conventional etiquette, all I have to say is that the crime brings no shadow of shame with it, and that I shall repeat this heinous offence against society just as often as I feel inclined. (*crosses to R.*)

OLIVE. (*rising*) And if you ever repent that resolution, I'll— (*crosses to R.*) well, I'll never give you the chance of another dinner. What do you say now, Mrs. Dangerfield, hasn't he come off with flying colours? Why, all he had to be ashamed of was a good action.

(GRACE DANGERFIELD and BOLTON *rise*, WEDGBY remains seated, L., as if asleep, with pocket handkerchief over his face, and hat off)

GRACE. (*to D'ARCY*) Why didn't you tell me about this before, I can't understand?

BOLTON. (c.) I can—motives of delicacy.

D'ARCY. (R.) The account didn't get into the papers, and I saw no reason for troubling you.

GRACE. Of course I should have felt bound to do what I could in the way of discharging the doctor's bill and all that sort of thing; though, after all, if people won't look after themselves over crowded crossings, they must take the consequences.

D'ARCY. (*aside to OLIVE*) There's feeling for you; hang it, it's not natural.

OLIVE. (R. C., *aside to D'ARCY*) Oh, yes, it is. Jealousy is woman's second nature.

D'ARCY. (*aside*) After running over a poor devil, and smashing his ribs?

OLIVE. (*aside to D'ARCY*) It's not a question of *his* ribs, it's a question of another *rib* altogether. Here, come this way, I've something to say to you. (*takes D'ARCY by the arm, they go off, R. 1 E.*)

GRACE. Mr. Wedgby, may I trouble you to order the carriage?

WEDG. (*springing up, throwing handkerchief from face, and putting hat on*) Delighted! Exit, L. 1 E.

BOLTON. So the murder's out.

GRACE. Do you know this girl?

BOLTON. Yes.

GRACE. What's she like?

BOLTON. Devilish pretty!

GRACE. Had you any idea of this affair till to-day?

BOLTON. No, the glimpse from the train was my first information.

GRACE. Why couldn't you speak to me privately, instead of exposing him—and me?

BOLTON. Because you wouldn't have believed me had I done so. My game was a forcing one, and I flatter myself I drew his queen.

GRACE. You had better have held your tongue.

BOLTON. I could not.

GRACE. Why not?

BOLTON. Because two—two devils were too strong for me—hate of him, and—and love for you.

GRACE. John Bolton, I really didn't give you credit for being such a fool.

BOLTON. Right, Grace Dangerfield! Love has made a fool—a knave—a felon—of many a man before now; love has robbed me of the few grains of honesty left me in the balance.

Re-enter WEDGBY.

WEDG. Ordered the carriage!

GRACE. (*aside to BOLTON*) No more of this now; drop the subject, and—if you wish to please me—never renew it; you know how distasteful it is to me.

Re-enter OLIVE and D'ARCY, R. 1 E.

D'ARCY. (R.—to OLIVE) Now, old fellow, you can understand my feeling?

OLIVE. (R. C.) Perfectly. (*aside*) Sad experience has taught me the sensation.

GRACE. (L. C.) Who's coming with me; there's room for one. Mr. Wedgby, I dare say, won't mind going on the box.

WEDG. Delighted!

GRACE. What do you say, Mr. Olive?

OLIVE. Much obliged, but Frank and I—

GRACE. (*coolly*) I forgot Mr. D'Arcy.

BOLTON. (*aside to GRACE*) That's what you should have done long ago. (*turns up*)

GRACE. (*crossing, and shaking hands with OLIVE*) Good night, Mr. Olive—or shall it be Bob, as in the old days. Your charming dinner was a real success; I never enjoyed

myself so much in my life. Now, do drop in at the Villa, when you've nothing better to do, and take pity upon a poor lone widow. (*holding out her hand to D'ARCY*) Ta-ta! I'm so glad you told me about that unfortunate little occurrence. I shall take the earliest opportunity of looking up those poor people; it's such a satisfaction to know they are honest and respectable. Come, Jack! (*crosses, L.*)

BOLTON. (*coming down L. c. to D'ARCY*) By-bye! (*coldly to OLIVE, as he offers his arm to GRACE, and speaking as he goes off*) Good night, Olive!

OLIVE. Good night, Bolton!

Music, piano—GRACE, BOLTON, and WEDGBY exit, L. 1 E.—

OLIVE throws himself in chair, R. of table, L., absorbed in thought.

D'ARCY. (R.) I am so relieved now that I have told you all; you are the only man I could trust; to-morrow you shall see Polly, and judge for yourself. (*noticing OLIVE's thoughtful and sad manner*) Why, what are you thinking about, old boy? (*crosses to him*)

OLIVE. Oh, nothing particular! I couldn't tell him my thoughts. I was dreaming of the love I had hoped I had buried for ever, and thinking how I had been awakened from that dream by the touch of Grace Dangerfield's hand.

(*picture—music to end of scene—closed in*)

SCENE SECOND.—*Broad Court, Bow Street—The Wrekin Agency Office.* (1st grooves).

Enter TWIST and VAMP, door in flat, R. C.

TWIST. 'Tain't my fault—s'help me Bob, it ain't; call again—say—next Saturday, Mr. Vamp.

VAMP. Bah! next Saturday! That's the same tune you've been fiddling ever since I was idiot enough to put myself on your infernal books. Now, didn't you tell me you knew a party—

TWIST. So I did, true as gospel, but he's bust up—going through the Court. There's no doing business with you, my lad; you're such a particular card. I could put you in the way of a good thing, if you'd try the country; you'd better; you want bracing.

VAMP. Country! No, no—none of those tips for me Nobby; try it on with the young 'uns. What, sir, do you suppose that Mortimer Vamp, who has played the lead at the West-end, is coming down to a booth or a barn? Nobby, do you see anything green here?

TWIST. Devil a bit, it's all yellow—yellow as a guinea.

VAMP. (*crossing, L.*) I've half a mind to try the Yankees. The British public have no soul for art, sir, they can't appreciate the legitimate.

TWIST. Legitimate! not they; all they care about is legs.

VAMP. How goes the enemy, Nobby, I left my watch at home.

TWIST. (*aside*) At his uncle's. (*aloud*) Just gone one.

VAMP. I thought as much; a voice within whispers the hour. (*crosses to R.*) I'll see you again on Saturday, Mr. Twist, and if you've no better news for me, sir, I regret to say that I shall be reluctantly compelled to withdraw my patronage; so I pledge you my word.

Exit, R. 1 E.

TWIST. (*alone*) Ha, ha—pledge me; he's always pledging something. I remember the time—and it's not so very far back—when Mortimer Vamp was a prime one to patter—slap-up spouter—brains and bellows—and could have had any manager on his own terms. (*looks off, L.*) Talking of managers, there comes old Crammers, from the provinces; what does he want, I wonder!

Enter CRAMMERS, L. 1 E.

How's yourself, Mr. Crammers? you're looking first-rate—first-rate!

CRAM. First-rate! I'm in a galloping consumption; eaten out of house and home—ruined, Mr. Twist—positively ruined by my salary-list.

TWIST. You don't say so.

CRAM. Never were such times! Leading men, sir, turn up their confounded noses at two pound ten, and a good old woman not to be got for five-and-twenty bob.

TWIST. Well, what can I do for you, my dear Mr. Crammers; what is it you want?

CRAM. I want a lot of useful people—worth their salt, none of your novices; responsible, rough and tumble; you know the style, Twist.

TWIST. Rather! There's enough upstairs to furnish any first-class house—metropolitan or provincial. Step up, my dear Mr. Crammers—step up to my private room, and take stock of 'em as you go through the office; I'll be with you directly; pick for yourself—pick for yourself.

CRAM. (*crosses, R.*) Trust me for that; I take 'em at my own price, or not at all. But remember, Mr. Twist, they must be cheap, sir, very cheap!

Exit, door in flat, R. C.

TWIST. (*alone*) Not a doubt about that, or they wouldn't suit your book. (*taking note-book from pocket*) Now, let me see what's wanted. "Walking lady, Leeds;" "Singing chamber-maid, Sheffield;" "Old woman, Wolverhampton;" "Leading

gent, Heavy ditto, two Utility, a Trombone, and Clarionet, for the Potteries." By Jove ! I was forgetting Grimsby's letter, what does he say ? (*takes letter from breast pocket*) grumbling, I'll be bound, as usual. (*reads letter*) "Dear Nobby"—rather familiar—"Dear Nobby,—The two niggers are no go, and the "Sisters Twitters are rank duffers. One of the Elastic "Brothers hurt his back, doing the double summersault on "the trapeze ; send me another by return, and"—what's this? oh !—"and be sure to take his railway ticket yourself. "Ikey Jones, of Whitechapel, would do for a makeshift. "The property man you warranted sober has been dead drunk "all the week.—Yours, Antonio Grimsby. N.B. I want a "Cornet, who can dance well, paint at a pinch, and is handy "at bill-sticking." (*folds letter, and puts it in his pocket*) That's it; that's the way they all serve me; it's a poor trade; if it wasn't for the public and the supper business after the theatre, I might have put up the shutters.

Enter BOLTON, L. 1 E.—TWIST has his back turned, and doesn't see him.

It's a melancholy spectacle, Nicodemus Twist, to see a man of your colossal capacity wasting his gigantic talents by condescending to pocket five bob fees, when nature has destined him for a more exalted sphere—

BOLTON. (*L.—tapping him on shoulder with cane*) The gallows !

TWIST. (*turning round*) Mr. Bolton, I declare you quite startled me; poking your fun as usual, ha, ha ! (*aside*) What brings him here, I wonder? (*aloud*) You don't want anything in my line, do you, governor?

BOLTON. I shouldn't be here if I didn't, you may take your oath o' that. I want full particulars of Polly Scott, of the Parnassus Theatre ?

TWIST. What, little Polly Scott ? It's no go, governor—it's no go.

BOLTON. What the devil do you mean by no go ?

TWIST. (*with a knowing look*) I repeat it's no go. I—I've tried it on myself, and—well it's humiliating—but it's a fact, she actually repudiated my honorable advances.

BOLTON. Is the girl engaged at present ?

TWIST. Well, she is, and she isn't. The Parnassus closes in a fortnight; the notice went up this morning to terminate the season.

BOLTON. Then she wants an engagement ?

TWIST. She'll be wanting bread and butter, to say nothing of gloves and shoes, and a new skirt, before many days.

BOLTON. I mean, what'll she take—what salary?

TWIST. As much as she can get.

BOLTON. You must ensure her an engagement, d'ye hear.

TWIST. Easier said than done, governor. (*aside*) What's his little game?

BOLTON. I say it must be done.

TWIST. Very well, then, if it must be done, Nobby's the one to do it—if you make it worth his while.

BOLTON. Trying to stick me, eh! and suppose I say no, and trust to the girl's merits?

TWIST. Merit, ha, ha! a good joke—what's merit to do with it? it's money now-a-days. Many a girl may starve on merit, and make a name on money.

BOLTON. Drop that—sentiment doesn't suit you. Understand, this is a simple question of £ s. d.

TWIST. (*considering*) They want a girl in her line at the Apollo.

BOLTON. Where's the difficulty?

TWIST. Well, you see, I've promised Carry Chaffers, and she's good for a fiver.

BOLTON. I'll double the sum if you'll fix 'em with Polly.

TWIST. It's a bargain.

BOLTON. Bring me the engagement, stamped.

TWIST. Stamped—it ain't usual, governor.

BOLTON. I say stamped, this afternoon—at my chambers, you know them well enough.

TWIST. Rather! I've to thank you for my legal education—I picked up a thing or two in your chambers in Garden Court. (*aside*) and one or two more things than you gave me credit for.

CRAM. (*without*) Now then, Mr. Twist, I can't stay here all day!

TWIST. Coming, Mr. Crammers.

BOLTON. (*as TWIST is going*) Half-past three.

TWIST. I'll be there. (*aside*) And if I don't find out his little game, my name's not Nobby.

Exit, door in flat.

BOLTON. (*alone*) Now to see Grace. She ought to be satisfied—her object is to patronize these people, and to regain D'Arcy's good opinion by a show of sympathy; and she—she asks Jack Bolton for his assistance—asks him to lend her a helping hand towards bringing her lost lover to her lap; and he—he's doing her bidding with his eyes open, because he knows devilish well that it's too late, now, my lady, it's too late!

Exit, R. 1 E.

SCENE THIRD.—*Jemmy Scott's Lodgings, Hercules Buildings, Lambeth, plainly furnished; table and arm chair, L. C., by fire-place, L. 3 E.; another table, R., chairs each side; buffet or cupboard under window, R. 3 E.; books, newspapers, old play bills, medicine bottles, pots of jam, plate of grapes, oranges, small jar of tobacco, pipes, and pipe lights on table, L. C.; little work box on R. table; pen and ink on buffet; benefit cards on same; pumps, with portion of clown's dress half finished mending, at which POLLY works during scene; nail on scene, R., for POLLY to hang her bonnet and shawl on; two other chairs, one c., for SCOTT to rest his leg on, with pillow and footstool.*

SCOTT discovered sitting in chair, L. C., foot resting on chair c., busied in the act of finishing dressing a clown's wig smoking.

SCOTT. (calling) Polly, Polly!

POLLY. (entering door, R. crosses to SCOTT, kisses him and hangs up bonnet and shawl) Well, daddy!

SCOTT. When was the notice up do you say?

POLLY. This morning, I saw it in the hall as I went to treasury. "The ladies and gentlemen of the company are respectfully informed the season will terminate on Saturday, the 24th," that's just a fortnight.

SCOTT. It's hard times, my girl; half the houses shut up, the country engagements filled, and to make matters worse, the old un on the shelf. I don't know what's to be done. (short pause while POLLY arranges things on table, L. C.) You were rather late last night, wern't you; it was raining too—how did you get home?

POLLY. Spangles offered me a lift, but Mr. D'Arcy called at the stage door and brought me home in a cab. Wasn't it thoughtful of him?

SCOTT. (smoking sententiously) Hem! (Polly SCOTT sits on footstool)

POLLY. But he would insist upon my having some supper first.

SCOTT. Supper?

POLLY. Yes, he wanted to order chicken and tongue and champagne and I don't know what, but I wouldn't have it.

SCOTT. What!—not chicken and tongue and champagne—and I don't know what! oh, wouldn't I just! (smacking his lips)

POLLY. No, so we had lobster—such a lovely one, so red and such claws—and salad, and brown bread and butter as thin as wafers, and stout.

SCOTT. In the pewter?

POLLY. Yes.

SCOTT. Was there more than one pewter?

POLLY. No.

SCOTT. Polly!

POLLY. Well!

SCOTT. That's a case.

POLLY. What do you mean?

SCOTT. That one pewter—he's gone.

POLLY. Gone?

SCOTT. And very far gone, too, or I'm out of my reckoning; he's got it here (*touching his heart*) and no mistake. If there had been two pewters, I should have thought nothing about it, but that one pewter has done the business.

POLLY. Oh, daddy!

SCOTT. It's all very well to say "Oh, daddy," but do you think I wasn't watching him when he was pulling us two on the river yesterday; no need to say "Eyes in the boat," Polly, as long as you were steering.

POLLY. What nonsense you are talking.

SCOTT. Not half so much, I'll be bound, as he has been putting into your little noddle. (*POLLY rises*) By Jupiter, though, (*getting excited*) if I thought he meant mischief, I'd—I'd kick him! (*raises his leg from chair—twinge of pain*) No, I shall never be able to kick anybody again.

POLLY. (*replaces and settles SCOTT's leg on chair, and stands R. of table, L.*) Now, you'll be making your leg worse and me very angry if you go on in this fashion. Mr. D'Arcy has always been very polite and respectful to me, and if a gentleman in his position condescends to honour us with his society, we should receive his attentions with gratitude, and not suspicion. Now, I hope you are all the better for that little lecture. (*goes to table, R.—takes work out of basket, and sits in chair, L. of table, R., and works*)

SCOTT. I'm not ungrateful; I eats his victuals—don't I, and drink his liquor, and smoke his baccy, and take his medicine; there's no ingratitude in that—is there; but, Polly, I ain't satisfied? (*slaps his leg, and makes a wry face of pain*)

POLLY. Well, I'm sure!

SCOTT. Now, look here, Polly. Mr. D'Arcy don't come here and smoke his pipe to listen to my yarns about the profession out of love for me. He hates theatres. I ain't the attraction—never am the attraction, but in front of the footlights at Christmas, just after the change, and then I'm good for a round from the boys. I tell you, Poll, I ain't the sensation here—that's clear as mud.

POLLY. (*crosses over to SCOTT—sitting on stool at his feet—looking up at his face*) You oughtn't to look a gift horse in the mouth, daddy.

SCOTT. It's the gift horse who is looking at somebody else's mouth, and small blame to him, when it's such a pretty one. (*takes her face in his hands, and stoops to kiss her*) Now, Poll, to come to the point—are you sweet on this chap; yes or no?

POLLY. Don't tease me—there's a dear old thing! (*rising—kissing him*)

MRS. WADLEY. (*without*) This way, gentlemen.

POLLY. Ah! somebody on the stairs; I hear Mrs. Wadley's voice; what can she want, I wonder?

SCOTT. I know very well what she wants; she wants the rent.

Enter MRS. WADLEY, door, r. 2 e.—followed by D'ARCY and OLIVE.

MRS. W. This way, gentlemen. (*to SCOTT*) Company, Mr. Shottische, to see you and Miss Mary. (*aside to POLLY*) and somebody who'll be welcome, I'll warrant. (*as D'ARCY and OLIVE advance*) Mr. D'Arcy and friend. (*SCOTT rises, supporting himself with sticks—bows—POLLY moves arm-chair to fire*)

D'ARCY. (*R.*) That's it, Mrs. Wadley—you've just hit it, the best friend I have in the world. (*to POLLY*) Miss Scott, Mr. Olive—Bob Olive, I should say. (*OLIVE bows to SCOTT and POLLY*) And how's the patient to-day?

SCOTT. (*L.*) Not much more than middlin', thank ye, sir. Take a seat, sir. (*to POLLY*) The gentleman's standing, Polly. (*POLLY arranges chair at table, R.—MRS. WADLEY at table, L., busied clearing it*) I'm precious weak on my pins: I fancy I shall never be able to walk again. (*walks with sticks to fireplace*)

MRS. W. (*L. c. of table, L.*) Fiddlesticks! Don't believe him, gentlemen. (*to SCOTT*) You'll be giving the slap again, Mr. Shottische, and taking it, too, as merry as a grig, next Boxing-night.

D'ARCY. (*R. of table, R.—aside to OLIVE*) Isn't she pretty? I can't help it.

OLIVE. (*L. of table, R.*) Of course you can't. It's her misfortune—not your fault.

SCOTT. (*L.*) What'll you take, gentlemen? Polly, glasses: there's a bottle of real Old Tom in the cupboard. (*POLLY goes to cupboard, R.—brings glasses to table, L.—takes up needle-work, and sits L. of table, R.—MRS. WADLEY crosses to table, L., with bottle*) Mr. D'Arcy can answer for his character.

OLIVE. Rather early in the day—isn't it? (*rises—crosses, L. to MRS. WADLEY, who pours out spirits*) Easy, easy, my good woman; only water bewitched. (*takes glass*)

MRS. W. (c.) Lord love you, sir; don't be afraid! it's beautiful, wouldn't hurt a new-born babby, it's delicious.

SCOTT. (*standing L. of table, L.*) Eh! How do you know, Mrs. W.?

MRS. W. (*with dignity—offended*) By the smell, Mr. Shottische—by the smell.

OLIVE. (*raising his glass*) Here's to your speedy recovery, Mr. Shottische. (*sets down glass after drinking*) Any man's case must indeed be desperate that did not improve under the hands of such a nurse as yours. (*looks across to POLLY, who is at work, L. of table, R.—D'ARCY opposite her*)

SCOTT. Right enough, sir; my daughter's smiles are better than all the doctor's stuff. (*gets to chair by fire*)

MRS. W. (*at back of table, L.—filling glass*) Hear, hear! a sentiment I beg to be allowed to echo. Oh, dear me; such language reminds me of the days when I was in the walking lady line.

D'ARCY. (*to POLLY*) I wish she was in the walking lady line now; can't you induce her to give us a specimen of an exit?

POLLY. She's rather hard to move under present circumstances; there's only one cue will take her off.

D'ARCY. What's that?

POLLY. Lock up the bottle?

MRS. W. (*refilling glass*) And here's to you, my dear Miss Mary, and wishing you health and happiness and a handsome husband—that is, a husband as will do handsomely by you. Mr. Shottische and gentlemen, when I was that dear girl's age I was just such a face and figure—and if I could have stooped to give my hand without my heart, I should have told Wadley to go and whistle for me, though whistling wasn't much in poor dear Wadley's line—he was our double-bass, gentlemen, but a very single-minded soul, for all that.—Miss Mary, Mr. Shottische, and gentlemen, here's all your very good healths.

D'ARCY. (*to POLLY*) Hadn't you better give her the cue?

POLLY. There's nothing to say; it's what we professionally call business. See. (*rises—takes bottle and glass from MRS. WADLEY, who is in the act of drinking—returns them to cupboard—comes back to her seat, L. of table, R.*) That's business.

MRS. W. ((indignantly)) That is not genteel; I don't like it; it's not lady-like. (*crosses to door, R.*) Poor dear Wadley would never have done it; at least, I'd never have let him do it.

Exit, door R.

OLIVE. (L.) That's a relief.

SCOTT. (*chuckling*) Polly, now you can let Old Tom out again.

OLIVE. Not on my account. (*aside*) The old fellow only wants an excuse to get at the bottle.

SCOTT. (*to OLIVE*) Like a pipe, sir? Bristol bird's-eye. (*OLIVE declines, and rises*) Look at the paper, sir; there's a capital line in "The Piccadilly News" for my girl. (*OLIVE crosses to fireplace—looks over paper—SCOTT, L. of table, pointing out the paragraph*)

POLLY. (*to D'ARCY—at work, as before*) I like your friend; he has a nice honest face.

D'ARCY. Bob's a deuced good fellow; there's no humbug or beating about the bush with Bob; says what he thinks.

POLLY. (*r. c.*) Does he? (*aloud*) Ain't you going to have a cigar, Mr. D'Arcy?

D'ARCY. Mr. D'Arcy! Now, we agreed—at least, I agreed—it was always to be Frank.

POLLY. Very well, Mr. Frank.

D'ARCY. Frank, without the Mr., if you please. No, I don't care about smoking; somehow, or other, these last few days, I don't seem to care about anything.

POLLY. Dear me!

D'ARCY. I don't know what to do with myself.

POLLY. Don't you, then I'll find you some occupation. (*takes benefit tickets from box*) These are tickets for my benefit night next week; they only want signing; will you fill them in?

D'ARCY. Only too happy.

POLLY. There's the ink, and here's a beautiful magnum bonum. (*resumes seat*)

D'ARCY. (*writing*) All right! I'll go ahead. "Polly Scott."

POLLY. No, not Polly—Mary.

D'ARCY. Why, I thought your name was Polly.

POLLY. It's all the same. Polly's short for Mary. How stupid you are!

D'ARCY. Am I? it doesn't seem any shorter. All right; I'm going ahead.

OLIVE. (*reading newspaper*) "There's no question that Miss Scott is becoming (if possible) a greater favourite with the audience each succeeding evening, and we may safely prophecy for this gifted and charming young lady no mere ephemeral popularity, but a brilliant and dazzling future." (*lays down paper*) Very nice—very pretty, Mr. Shottische, you must be very proud of your daughter.

SCOTT. (*rises*) So I ought to be, sir. (*crosses to chair, which POLLY places, R. C.—OLIVE seats himself, L. C.*) She's all that's left me now.

OLIVE. Ah, I understand; lost her mother.

SCOTT. Yes, sir. I'll tell you how it was. My wife and I,

sir—we were both in the same line, ballet business,—had just played out at Naples, when she—poor soul—was taken suddenly ill with the marsh fever. I was obliged to go to Milan—La Scala—magnificent house, sir—to fulfil an engagement, so I carried little Polly with me—a tiny thing then, not above a year old—leaving the wife to follow with little Nina, the elder child. They did follow ten days after, but the coasting vessel in which they embarked was caught in a squall in some gulf thereabouts—I'm no great geographer, nor good at names—it began with a G.

OLIVE. (*suggesting*) Genoa ?

SCOTT. Genoa—that's it. Well, to make a long story short, a small handful of the crew were saved, and the rest—Heaven only knows where they are now. (*bows his head, and weeps*)

POLLY. (*looking across*) Poor daddy !

D'ARCY. I never heard him speak of this before.

(*music, piano*)

SCOTT. (*takes miniature from breast pocket, wrapped in canvas case*) My wife's likeness. (*kisses it, and hands it to Olive*) that was done at Naples by the scene-painter. (OLIVE *takes miniature—starts at seeing it*) What's the matter, sir; do you see any resemblance—

OLIVE. To Miss Scott? No, no. There was something reminded me of—but it must have been fancy. (*returns miniature to Scott—music ceases*) A sad thing for a daughter to lose a mother's care so early; you've done your best for her though, I'll be bound.

SCOTT. I've tried to do my duty by my girl, sir. What with day-schooling, a bit of music, and a scrap of foreign lingo, here and there, from friends in the profession, Polly's not without accomplishments. She don't know what it is to be idle.

OLIVE. Idle! that I'll be bound she doesn't. And yet, isn't it strange, Mr. Shottische, that half the people outside your little world won't understand that play with you means work—and very hard work, too?

SCOTT. D'y'e hear that, Polly?

POLLY. When I'm in want of a champion, I shall know where to find one. (*crosses to table, L., and arranges things*)

OLIVE. (*crossing to table, R.—to D'Arcy*) Don't you agree with me, Frank?

D'ARCY. (*writing*) I don't know; don't you see I'm busy?

OLIVE. (*with intention*) I see you are engaged.

POLLY. (*coming back to c. of table, R.*) In my service. (*taking up tickets D'Arcy has been signing*) Why, goodness gracious!

D'ARCY. (*rising*) Well, what's the matter.

POLLY. Why, they're all spoiled.

OLIVE. (*taking up tickets, and reading aloud*) "Admit one—upper boxes. Signed, Mary D'Arcy."

POLLY. What could you have been thinking about? (*goes up, R.*)

OLIVE. What, indeed? Mary D'Arcy! it's too bad!

D'ARCY. (*R.*) Don't chaff, old boy. (*aside*) I'm serious. (*POLLY engaged at cupboard—SCOTT as before*)

OLIVE. So I see. Frank, that's a deuced good girl; I know she is; I feel she is; there's no mistake about her—

Enter BOLTON and TWIST, door, R.

still, if you ask my advice— (*seeing BOLTON*) Bolton!

D'ARCY. (*aside to OLIVE*) What does this mean?

POLLY. (*looking at BOLTON*) That man, who has persecuted me for weeks past!

TWIST. (*crossing to table, L., to SCOTT*) Jemmy, this gentleman (*pointing to BOLTON*) is my particular friend and legal adviser, Mr. John Bolton, of the Temple. (*aside to SCOTT*) He's in with the managers, I can tell you; a party as has interest. (*aside*) infernal high interest, too—seventy per cent., at least. (*aloud to POLLY*) It's all square, my dear; here's the engagement for the "Apollo." First walking lady, to combine juveniles, salary, four pound ten.

POLLY. Four pounds ten! (*crosses back to table, R.*)

SCOTT. (*L. of table*) I say, Polly, that'll do.

D'ARCY. (*corner, R.*) I don't understand;—this person, (*looking at TWIST*) who is he?

TWIST. (*crossing to D'ARCY*) Twist, sir—Nicodemus Twist, sir—otherwise Nobby. Dramatic, operatic, and musical agent, The Wrekin Office, Broad Court, Bow Street; happy to place you on my books. (*takes out note-book—D'ARCY turns away*) Galas and fêtes organised, monster entertainments conducted, amateur and military theatricals superintended. (*turns to OLIVE*) Happy to place you, sir, on my books.

OLIVE. Not in my line, thank you.

SCOTT. Polly, a glass for Mr. Twist. (*POLLY goes to cupboard—fetches bottle, glass, &c.—places them on table*)

BOLTON. (*C.—to OLIVE and D'ARCY*) Odd I should run you two to ground here!

(*OLIVE turns up stage, R., and avoids him*)

BOLTON. (*aside*) Disturbed their billing and cooing. (*goes up, C.*)

TWIST. (*R. of table, L.*) Thank you, my dear; I'll take it neat. (*takes bottle from POLLY—pours out*) it's better without water. (*raising glass*) Jemmy, my lad! (*nods*) gents all, your healths; miss Polly, I looks towards you, and may your benefit be a bumper.

Enter MRS. WADLEY, door, R. 2 E.

Why, if it ain't the old woman! What can I do for you, Mrs. W.; they want a dresser for the ladies at the "Apollo," but sobriety indispensable. (*tosses off glass*)

MRS. W. (*aside, R.*) The odious wretch! Poor dear Wadley would never have made such a remark. (*aloud, to SCOTT*) A lady to see you, Mr. Shottische, (*general movement*) on particular business.

OLIVE. }
D'ARCY. } Oh, then, we'll go.

SCOTT. Don't move, gentlemen; it's only Ma'mselle Stella, to arrange about columbine business at Christmas; show her up, Mrs. Wadley.

MRS. W. She don't want any showing up; Ma'mselle Stella's a-coming.

OLIVE. Stella—Stella! A Frenchwoman! (*crossing to corner, L.*)

SCOTT. (L. C.) A Frenchwoman! Lor' love you—no, sir? at home, she's Sally Star, of Bermondsey, but Ma'mselle Stella afore the footlights.

As GRACE DANGERFIELD enters, door, R. 2 E.

Well, Sally. (*crosses to GRACE—starts with astonishment—situation*)

POLLY. (L.—*aside*) A lady!

D'ARCY. (R.) Grace!

POLLY. (*aside*) He called her Grace.

SCOTT. (L. C., by table—stammering an apology) I beg pardon, ma'am. I thought—

GRACE. It is for me to apologise. (*crosses, C.*) I heard only last night, through Mr. D'Arcy, of your accident, of which I was the cause—but, believe me, the innocent cause—and I am come, though somewhat late, to make amends for what I fear you may have construed as indifference and neglect. (*TWIST, during this speech, has crossed to table, R., for pen and ink, and returned with them to table, L.*)

SCOTT. (*aside*) Genteel comedy all over; she's a devilish fine woman. (*aloud*) There are no bones broken, ma'am; and that gentleman—God bless him! (*pointing to D'ARCY*) has taken such care of us, that we are in no want. (*introducing POLLY*) My daughter, ma'am. (*POLLY bows stiffly, and GRACE looks at her coldly*)

TWIST. (*to POLLY*) Now, my dear, time's up, and I'm due in Bow Street; here's the agreement (*produces paper*) for the engagement.

BOLTON. (R. C.) And for which you have this lady to thank.

POLLY. Her, I have her to thank ?

TWIST. Yes, and my friend here. (*pointing to BOLTON*) Now, my dear, sign the duplicate.

POLLY. (*tearing paper*) Never ! I'll not be in her favour, or his debt ! (*general astonishment, preparatory to forming picture—SCOTT in attitude*)

SCOTT. (R. of table, L.) Polly, what does this mean ?

POLLY. (*getting round so as to be on his right*) Don't ask me, daddy ; I know I've done what is right. (*on her knees—D'ARCY the other side of her—SCOTT supporting her*)

OLIVE. L.—*watching GRACE'S countenance—aside*) It was not fancy ; the face I saw in yonder portrait !

BOLTON. (R. C.—*aside to GRACE*) He'll marry her ; mark me—he'll marry her.

GRACE. (C.—*aside to BOLTON*) He shall not.

BOLTON. Who will prevent him ?

GRACE. I will.

Music—picture—quick drop.

MRS. WADLEY.

TWIST.

D'ARCY.

BOLTON. GRACE.

POLLY. SCOTT.

OLIVE.

END OF FIRST ACT.

A lapse of Six Months between First and Second Acts.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST.—*Interior of Calypso Villa, Chiswick—Drawing room elegantly furnished and well lighted; a carpeted passage, L. C., partially shut off by curtains, set obliquely; fire-place, with mirror above, R.; window (French) practicable, R. 2 E.; fire burning, lounges and easy chairs about room, tables R. and L., small occasional tables at back, R. and L. C.—Music, to take up curtain.*

Enter BOLTON, door L. 2 E., in evening dress, overcoat and crush hat, ushered in by JACKSON.

BOLTON. (R., taking off coat, assisted by JACKSON) Mrs. Dangerfield not done dinner, Jackson ?

JACKSON. (L.) Dessert on, sir—we're rather late to-night, sir—company, sir.

BOLTON. Who's here ?

JACKSON. Mr. Wedgby, sir, and Mr. Olive.

BOLTON. Olive?

JACKSON. Yes, sir; he and Mr. D'Arcy returned from the continent rather unexpected. You'll excuse me, sir, I'll let Mrs. Dangerfield know you are here, sir.

BOLTON. Thank you, Jackson.

JACKSON. Thank you, sir.

Exit, door L. 2 E.

BOLTON. (*alone, sits at table, R. C.*) D'Arcy back, that's bad, and Olive with him, that's worse, after I had reckon'd upon their wintering abroad, and had made sure of getting the girl off the ground before their return. Six months ago, after that affecting little tableau at Hercules Buildings, the cards couldn't have played better for me, and now my strong suit is ruffed, and not a trump in my hand. Not a trump did I say? (*rises*) Easy, my boy, easy! what's the position?—sole trustee; and by this time you should know the value of such stewardship. Eye on the pass book; finger on the check book; and both hands in everybody's pocket. (*crosses L.*) If I haven't the key to Grace Dangerfield's heart, at least, I've the picklock of the cash box. More power to you. Pshaw! what greater power would you have, John Bolton, than power of attorney.

(*crosses to table, R., takes up tray with visiting cards, turns them over and reads*)

Enter MRS. DANGERFIELD, door, L. 2 E., unnoticed, and watches him.

"Lord Leamington, Captain Levant, Colonel Cataract, C.B., Signor Andanti, Mr. Serjeant Badgerby;" all men, and a nice lot too.

GRACE. Hem! (*coughs*)

BOLTON. (*starts, turning round*) Oh, it's you.

(*nearly upsets card tray*)

GRACE. Take care of that *bric-a-brac*, please. Upon my word, Mr. Bolton, you should consider yourself highly honored, for to ensure a *tête-à-tête* with you, I have deserted our friends.

BOLTON. Our friends! yours, you mean. You are not so fond of a quiet chat with me, Grace, as to give up society without a motive. How is it you never told me D'Arcy and Olive had returned?

GRACE. I didn't know it myself till yesterday.

(*crosses, and sits L. of table, R.*)

BOLTON. (*L. C.*) Well, what's to be done about Polly? D'Arcy back; they are sure to meet—perhaps they have met already.

GRACE. Where's the girl?

BOLTON. Re-engaged at the Parnassus for the pantomime,

so Twist tells me—you've no time to lose; I see but one way to separate the love birds. (*crosses up, c.*)

GRACE. How?

BOLTON. (*c.*) By a word of friendly advice to the old man, Mr. Scott is a gentleman who has an astounding faith in two things—liquor, and those mystical letters, £ s. d. Let me but show him Frank's position—a briefless barrister with a bare pittance—and I'll guarantee he'll soon get his notice to quit. That's my plan, and why you see me here to-night, is to warn, advise, and serve you if I can.

GRACE. (*in a cool sarcastic tone*) You are very considerate.

BOLTON. Grace, do you remember what you said after the Richmond dinner, last summer?

GRACE. A great many silly things, no doubt; people generally do after Richmond dinners.

BOLTON. When I spoke to you of my love, you told me—

GRACE. Never to renew that subject; that was about the only sensible remark I made that evening.

BOLTON. What if I prove to you, the task to regain Frank D'Arcy is a hopeless one, that you have lost all hold over his affections.

GRACE. (*rising with passion*) I know it, and it is that thought, John Bolton, that maddens me and makes me grasp at any shadowy power to recover the treasure of which I have been tricked and cheated, yes, cheated by that girl's soft smile and winning look! You men don't know the strength of the web of which woman's wickedness is spun. To hate the thief who robs you may be a crime—it is but human nature after all.

(*crosses down, R.*)

BOLTON. This is love with a vengeance.

GRACE. I've not lost all hope; six months' absence from her, coupled with change of clime and scene, may have worked wonders, and bring him again to my feet.

BOLTON. I doubt it—better give him up.

GRACE. Give him up? Never! I'll have Frank D'Arcy's love, if I have to force it from him; and woe betide the woman who crosses my path in reaching his heart! The love I covet, John Bolton, is not that which is bought or bargained for, but which is to be fought and battled for, and is all the dearer for being dearly won. (*change of tone*) You understand me—it's better to speak out plainly. (*crosses L.*)

BOLTON. You don't mince matters. Why isn't D'Arcy here to-night—did you ask him?

GRACE. Yes; Mr. Olive said he was engaged, that was all.

BOLTON. H'm! You won't get much out of that fellow Olive; why do you have him here?

GRACE. Because I please; his blunt honesty is a relief after the counterfeit sincerity of those about me; besides I like—I like Bob Olive.

BOLTON. I don't; and let me tell you, he's in my way, and yours, as you may find to your cost some day.

GRACE. What do you mean?

(OLIVE and WEDGBY heard without)

BOLTON. That's my affair. Remember, Grace, I've put you on your guard—they are leaving the dining room.

Enter WEDGBY and OLIVE, l. 2 E.—WEDGBY laughing, crosses and shakes hands with BOLTON.

Well, what's the news, Wedgby? (nods to OLIVE)

WEDG. (C.) Oh, ask Mr. Olive, I declare he's nearly been the death of me.

BOLTON. (R. C.) Justifiable homicide! (to OLIVE) So you've brought Master Frank back safe and sound?

OLIVE. (L.) Oh, yes, safe enough. (aside) I wish I could warrant him sound, poor fellow.

WEDG. Did your duty like a man, didn't you? Took young spooney out of the reach of mischief and further temptation, to the German baths, to drink the waters—

OLIVE. Of Lethe; which disagreed with him.

WEDG. Then to Switzerland—

OLIVE. Which bored him.

WEDG. Then to Paris—

OLIVE. Which finished him completely. (aside) I wish the old bore would change the subject; I haven't told so many fibs since my school days—and it doesn't agree with me. (goes to table, L.)

GRACE. And if the naughty boy has forgotten, he shall be forgiven; tell him so from me, Mr. Olive. Well, something must be done, I suppose, to amuse you selfish wretches, or you'll desert me. Mr. Wedgby, will you turn on the gas in the billiard room.

WEDG. Delighted.

Exit by passage, L. C.

GRACE. (to OLIVE and BOLTON) Now, you've no excuse for running away to your club, so light up, gentlemen, and give your orders.

OLIVE. (to GRACE DANGERFIELD) You'll play?

GRACE. I'd rather not.

BOLTON. (to OLIVE) You'll take a ball? (crosses up, C.)

GRACE. (interposing) No, you mustn't carry Bob off, I can't spare him. (to OLIVE) I want a chat with you.

BOLTON. Very well, Wedgby, as they all fight shy, I'll play you pyramids.

WEDG. Delighted—all right.

Exit after BOLTON, L. C.

GRACE. All right; I'm very much afraid Mr. Wedgby will find it all wrong; Jack Bolton's a first-rate player.

OLIVE. So I suppose.

GRACE. (*sits at table, R., takes up work, OLIVE sits L., opposite her, with photograph book, turning over leaves*) I was quite surprised to hear of your return, for not a fortnight ago I was told you were in Rome.

OLIVE. So we were, but Frank got hipped and moped, and a few mornings after found us homeward bound at Marseilles.

GRACE. Marseilles? Ah, how the sound of that name recalls early days, and brings back (as if it were but yesterday) fresh memories of old friends and kind faces.

OLIVE. You know it?

GRACE. I was born—that is, brought up there. You'll laugh when I tell you I haven't the faintest idea where I was born.

OLIVE. No.

GRACE. I suppose I was born somewhere. (*laughs*) I've misty recollections of a woman who bundled me about from place to place like a bale of goods, and of my being everlastingly packed and done up again, and having no definite resting-place, until I found myself at home with the dearest old father a child could wish for—Papa Beauval, one of the richest merchants in dear Marseilles.

OLIVE. (*thoughtfully*) Beauval—Beauval! (*aside*) I mustn't forget that name; but you never told me this before.

GRACE. An old childless widower, who adopted me. I had an English governess, and the best masters in music, dancing and languages, and—but I'm boring you with this stupid story.

OLIVE. Not a bit, pray go on, I was all attention; I want to know everything. What made you leave Marseilles?

GRACE. Poor Mr. Beauval's ruin and death. After having been brought up as an heiress, with half the town at my feet, I suddenly found myself, at eighteen, alone in the world, without a sou. A lady engaged me as companion, and after running the gauntlet of the Continent, chance threw me in the way of your cousin, Mr. Dangerfield—you remember.

OLIVE. Remember—well enough! Too well! Dick and I were travelling together. (*aside*) The first time in our lives we fell in love, then fell out. (*aloud*) What a fool I made of myself—didn't I, at last you cut me dead—or Dick cut me out; which was it?

GRACE. (*aside*) Poor Bob! he feels the wound still. (*aloud*) You know the rest, and that there was little love—at least, on my side.

OLIVE. A question of exchange—a purse for a pretty face. Dick was an odd fellow; not that there was anything odd in his

falling in love with you, especially when I set him the example.
(pause) By-the-bye, how came you to be so intimate with Mr. Bolton?

GRACE. He was my husband's solicitor, and naturally, as my sole trustee——

OLIVE. Sole trustee? Bolton sole trustee?

GRACE. Under Mr. Dangerfield's will. Is that so extraordinary?

OLIVE. Yes. Oh, n—no, of course not! (aside) I wasn't aware of this position before. (aloud) Then he has entire control over your money; that is, over the principal?

GRACE. I'm sure I don't know; how can you expect a woman to understand such matters? I've plenty to spend, and I don't trouble my head about—— (bell-wheels) what a ring! Who can that be, at this hour? (rises)

TWIST. (without, L.) But, I tell you, I must see him!

Enter JACKSON, L. 2 E.

JACKSON. (with card on salver) The person, madam, insists on seeing Mr. Bolton, on very particular business. (presenting card on salver) Here's the person's card, ma'am.

GRACE. (taking card, and reading) Mr. Nicodemus Twist.

TWIST enters, door L. 2 E.

TWIST. (hat in hand) You'll excuse the intrusion, ma'am, I beg, but an affair of a very pressing and important nature with Mr. Bolton——

BOLTON appears, L. C.

Ah, there he is! (goes up, c.—JACKSON exits, L. 2 E.)

BOLTON. (aside) Twist! (to him, in an under-tone) What do you mean by this impertinence? How dare you come here?—what do you want?

TWIST. (to BOLTON, L.) What do I want, Mr. Bolton? Why, in the first place—civility, and in the second—cash. (aloud) I dare say we could have our private conversation in another room, without disturbing the company.

GRACE. (R. c.) Why not here; it's quite at your service.

TWIST. You're very obliging, ma'am.

GRACE. (to OLIVE) Come, Mr. Olive; let us go into the billiard room, and take care of Mr. Wedgby, or he'll be very disconsolate. (crosses up, c.)

OLIVE. (he has got round meanwhile to R.—up stage, C., as GRACE exits, L. C.) She looks anxious—what does all this mean? I'll find out; and if Yorkshire 'cuteness can beat London villany, Bob Olive'll be a match for both you scoundrels yet.

Exit, L. C.

BOLTON. (R.) Well, what do you mean by dogging me into a lady's drawing-room at such a time?

TWIST. (L.) 'Tain't my fault; the bums are after me; writs out right and left, guv'nor. Music hall spec. failed. Hit between the eyes on the last event. S'help me, guv'nor, if I don't get a monkey before to-morrow, I'm—well, I'm toasted there!

BOLTON. What's that to do with me? For weeks you've not ceased to pester me with your begging letters.

TWIST. And much good I've got by it, wasted an entire ream of beautiful best blue wove! Now then, will you do it—yes or no?

BOLTON. No.

TWIST. You won't help me?

BOLTON. Certainly not.

TWIST. Then I must help myself. You know, guv'nor, what the bird-fancier says to the bashful bullfinch as can pipe and won't pipe; you must be made to pipe!—Will you give me the money?

BOLTON. No, for the last time!

TWIST. (*aside*) Now's your time, Nobby, now or never! (*advancing*) Mr. John Bolton, I've always been of an inquiring turn of mind, and I told you, that during the time I had the pleasure of acting in the capacity of your law clerk or legal scavenger, I was lucky enough to pick up a few scraps of information. Should you like to know what I picked up, in the course of my trespasses upon "Tom Tiddler's Ground," among the tin boxes in the Temple Chambers? (*GRACE draws curtains, and listens*)

BOLTON. (*sarcastically*) Some mare's-nest!

TWIST. A lovely parchment document of my own engrossing. (*aside*) He's engrossed now. (*aloud*) The will—

BOLTON. A will!

TWIST. No, not a will—the will; the original last will and testament of Richard Dangerfield, Esquire, deceased. You'll give me the money now, won't you, guv'nor? (*BOLTON rises, makes a rush at TWIST, and seizes him by the collar*) Loose your fingers or I'll raise the house. (*BOLTON throws TWIST from him*) Must I put the screw on, guv'nor?—a word from me would do it, shall I tell the fine lady—

BOLTON. (L. C.) Hush!

TWIST. The story of the false will, shall I tell her she's a cheat and an impostor, shall I tell her she owes her fortune to a forger and a felon, shall I tell her the truth?

GRACE. (*comes down, c.*) You have told her! (*BOLTON and TWIST, R. and L., the picture forming a triangle*)

BOLTON. (*to GRACE*) What! you'd believe this fellow?

TWIST. Of course the lady would, and she'd believe stil

more were he to show her the original document drawn up by Nicodemus Twist in his most approved small text. (*as BOLTON makes a move as if to search him*) It isn't about me, guv'nor, don't think it; I ain't quite such a flat as that.

GRACE. (*to BOLTON*) Why have you done this?

BOLTON. Did I not tell you to what crime man has been drawn by love?

TWIST. Love indeed, yes, love for number one. Forges his name as sole trustee, pockets the swag *ad lib.*, and calls it love.

BOLTON. (*aside to GRACE*) There's no way but to yield to his demands.

GRACE. (*to TWIST*) What is the purport of the will?

TWIST. Oh, that's my secret; I wouldn't be hard upon a lady—keep me in funds and I'm as dumb as a door nail.

GRACE. (c.) What does the man want?

TWIST. Only a monkey, ma'am. (*GRACE looks to BOLTON for explanation*)

BOLTON. Five hundred pounds. (*GRACE goes up to R. of R. table and sits at desk*)

TWIST. Post-dated cheque will do. (*GRACE writes—aside to BOLTON*) As her trustee, you can sell out the stock at her direction, and place it to her account as easy as A B C.

Re-enter OLIVE and WEDGBY—WEDGBY looks at TWIST through glass.

GRACE. (*aside to BOLTON*) Remember! you understand the terms at which his silence must be bought; revenge against the girl! (*WEDGBY at fire-place, R.*)

OLIVE. (c., *aside*) How pale she looks; what can have happened?

WEDG. What a queer card! (*looking at TWIST—to GRACE*) where does he come from?

GRACE. The library; about some places at the theatre on Boxing Night.

WEDG. What! you're going?

GRACE. Yes, to see the pantomime.

WEDG. (*aside*) Ugh! And I shall be called out on special duty to help to dress the box, what a nuisance!

GRACE. (*to WEDGBY*) May I trouble you to touch the bell?

WEDG. Delighted! (*rings bell by fire-place*)

GRACE. (*folding cheque in envelope—rises, crosses to TWIST*) You won't forget, please; the stage box. (*gives envelope*)

TWIST. All right, ma'am!

GRACE. Won't you take something, Mr. Twist?

TWIST. You are very kind, ma'am, and as you are so pressing, I don't mind if I do.

Enter JACKSON, L. 2 E.

GRACE. (*to JACKSON*) Some refreshment, Jackson, for this gentleman.

JACKSON. (*L.*) Gentleman, indeed!

TWIST. Yes; gentleman—don't put yourself out, Jackson. Cold turkey, slice of tongue (smoked, if you please) with just a pint of fizz—dry fizz, mind, is the thing for my digestion—wish you good night, ma'am—gents all, good night! (*aside*) Not bad sport, Nobby—bagged the brace. (*to JACKSON*) Now then, lead on, Flunkey!

Exit door, L. 2 E., shown off by JACKSON.

GRACE. (*to OLIVE*) You'll make one and join us at the play, won't you?

OLIVE. With pleasure!

GRACE. Mr. Wedgby, you'll come?

WEDG. Delighted!

GRACE. (*near table, R.*) Jack requires no invitation. (*aside to BOLTON*) Meanwhile find out about the girl and Frank, do you hear?

BOLTON. (*R., near table*) Yes, yes. (*aside*) That will—how to get back that will? (*goes up, C.*)

OLIVE. (*coming down L. C.*) Which theatre?

GRACE. The Parnassus. (*goes to window, R.*)

OLIVE. The Parnassus! the very place where Polly is engaged; I must put Frank on his guard; (*begin Carol**) no, why make him more anxious and unhappy, I'll watch myself.

(*CHRISTMAS CAROL SINGERS heard without, R. U. E.—forte first part—piano through GRACE's dialogue, afterwards forte till close—GRACE opens window, looks out—moonlight streams on her as she draws the curtains*)

GRACE. The carol singers wishing me a merry Christmas and a happy new year. (*aside*) What a mockery.

(*picture closed in—position of characters at close of Scene†*)

SCENE SECOND.—*Interior of the Hall of the Parnassus Theatre.*

Enter HALLKEEPER, door in flat, R., with packet of letters in hand—enter two SUPERS., L. 1 E. and cross.

FIRST SUPER. Cold night, Mr. Crumbs!

CRUMBS. So it is; but you'll soon warm up to your work.

Exit Two SUPERS, door in flat.

* NOEL. Music and words to be obtained at Messrs. NOVELLO'S Berners Street.

Enter JUNIPER, L. 1 E., with pot of beer, bread and cheese, crosses and exit, door in flat—enter NELLY BEAUCLERK and AMY DANCER, with two or three BALLET GIRLS—they crowd round CRUMBS.

NELLY B. Oh, Mr. Crumbs, have you got any letters for me?

AMY. Or me?

ALL. Or me? or me? (*business round CRUMBS*)

CRUMBS. One at a time, ladies. (*looks over letters*) Miss Beauclerk; that's all; twopence to pay; over weight!

ALL. Ah!

AMY. That's the love inside makes it so heavy!

NELLY. All right, Crumbs; I won't forget.

AMY. Who's it from—the one with the dark moustache or whiskers?

NELLY. No; its from ginger; you know the Manchester one (*looks round at call which is fixed upon scene*) Oh, here's the call for to-morrow. (*reads*) "Pantomime, all concerned at ten." What a shame! and he promised to take me to the Crystal Palace.

AMY. Which one—ginger, or the dark one?

NELLY. No, whiskers; he's awfully spooney—he's in the dry goods line and his pa's an alderman. Come along, dear, I'll tell you all about it.

Exit with AMY and OTHERS, door in flat.

TITTERBY heard without singing Music Hall air—Enters L. 1 E., crosses to CRUMBS, and pokes him facetiously with cane.

TITTER. Well, my merry little Crumbs, and how goes it, anything for me this evening, eh?

CRUMBS. Yes, here's a letter for you, Mr. Titterby, (*gives him letter*) marked immediate.

TITTER. Ah! looks important—about my star engagement. (*opens letter*) Eh; why, what's this? County Court summons for my last pair of trousers!—that's number three within the week. Here, Crumbs, I'll make you a present of it to light your pipe with.

Exit door in flat, singing.

Enter two or three BALLET GIRLS, L. 1 E.

BALLET LADY. Come along, girls, or we shall be too late.

All exeunt, door in flat—PROMPTER hands letter through door to CRUMBS.

PROMPTER. Be careful to let Miss Duffin have that before she leaves to-night; not to be given her, mind, till after the performance.

Exit CRUMBS.

Enter POLLY and D'ARCY, l. 1 e.—she carries bag and a small umbrella.

POLLY. You mustn't hinder me—indeed you mustn't; only think what a scrape I should get into if daddy was to see us together.

D'ARCY. (l.) I can't help it if he does. Polly, I don't understand your father's conduct. When I called in Hercules Buildings, immediately on my return, he forbade me the house, and gave no reason whatever for such behaviour. It's strange, more, it's hard—very hard, Polly, after what I've done; not that I expect praise, but I don't deserve ingratitude.

POLLY. I'm sure I can't tell, dear, what has changed him; he tells me, he has his reasons. I don't know what to do, Frank, I don't, indeed; you see I can't disobey him; what would you have me do?

D'ARCY. Give up this life, Polly, give it up—now, for good and all.

POLLY. What! give up my profession? why, dear, what nonsense you talk—why I should starve. Do you know I get six pounds a week during the run of the pantomime, and Daddy twelve?—that's a little fortune.

D'ARCY. It makes my heart ache to see you going out all winds and weathers. I don't want to say anything harsh or unkind against your profession, I know so little about it.

POLLY. Then it's very wrong, dear, to express an opinion of what you don't understand.

D'ARCY. I only know this, that the theatre is no place for you, I hate the very name. The green room can't be good for your constitution, or the gas either.

POLLY. That's a question. After all I must live.

D'ARCY. And I want you to live—that is, with me, Polly, as my own darling little wife. Only think how much happier you would be, sitting by the cosy fireside, with—with somebody, than shivering in book muslin at the wings, catching your cue, and your death of cold into the bargain.

POLLY. Now, Frank, I've a great mind to be angry—I would too, if I'd time; you want me to run away with you, that's what you mean. I won't do it.

D'ARCY. You told me you loved me, Polly.

POLLY. Did I?

D'ARCY. You know you did.

POLLY. Well. (*taking him affectionately by the hand, and looking him straight in the face*) I do love you, Frank—there, I love you because you are good, and kind, and generous, and honest, and I'm sure you wish me to be honest too. Now, were I to run away, and be married to you secretly, and desert daddy, I should be wicked, and mean, and deceitful; and I'd sooner, well, I'd sooner play bad parts all my life, than make such a

promise. If I can't be married openly, and in the sight of everybody, and with dear old daddy's consent and approval, I—I will make up my mind to remain single and stick to my work, and when I'm too old and too ugly for the juveniles, I'll settle down peaceably and contentedly into the first old woman.

D'ARCY. I see it's no use talking to you, Polly?

POLLY. Not now, dear—I've got more important things than marriage to think about; there's my dress to look out, and my hair to do, so you mustn't hinder me, please.

D'ARCY. Well, when can I see you again?

POLLY. After the opening of the pantomime's over—daddy will be on all the harlequinade.

D'ARCY. What time?

POLLY. Oh, say half-past ten; but you are going in front, ain't you?

D'ARCY. What a question! Of course I am.

POLLY. And if you don't clap, and shout, and stamp with your umbrella, and get Princess Prettypet a grand reception, I'll never speak to you again, and I'll give my hand and my heart to the wicked King Oki-Poki, the Orange Ogre of the Tooralooral Mountains. There, good-bye, dear.

(D'ARCY kisses her—at this moment, CRUMBS appears at door in flat, with parcels—puts his hands before his face, as if shocked)

CRUMBS. Here are your shoes, miss, and I don't know what else.

POLLY. Thank you, Crumbs; will you take them in for me? You didn't see anything—did you, Crumbs?

CRUMBS. Oh, no, miss!

POLLY. You're an angel, Crumbs! (to D'ARCY) At half-past ten!

D'ARCY. Half-past ten!

Exit L. 1 E.—POLLY and CRUMBS door in flat.

SCENE THIRD.*—*Interior of Gentlemen's Dressing Room, Parnassus Theatre. Shelves round the sides—clothes, properties, &c.—door, R. C.*

JUNIPER discovered over fire, R., heating water—VAMP, dressed for HAMLET just finished dressing, with hand-glass in one hand, and kettle in the other—HUGGINS, as GHOST, on box C., going through his part—SUPER, as CLAUDIUS, with pot of porter and bread and cheese, L. of HUGGINS—two SUPERS as BERNARDO and MARCELLUS, sitting near fire playing cards.

VAMP. (*studying*) 'M—'m—'m—"Frailty, thy name is—"
(handing kettle to JUNIPER) kettle! "No more like my father

* Great attention should be paid to the minutiae of this Scene, and the minor parts efficiently filled.

than I to Hercules!" "It is not, nor it cannot come to good." "But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue."

HUGG. (c.) Why the devil don't you? How can you expect a fellow to get a line in his head while you're making that caterwauling! (*rises, and crosses to washstand, L.*) Hot water! (*JUNIPER crosses with kettle—pours into basin—water goes over HUGGINS*) Why, what are you about, you've nearly scalded the Ghost to death!

CALL BOY. (*at door in flat*) Ten minutes, gentlemen! (*withdraws*)

HUGG. (*in dress*) "I am thy father's spirit——"

VAMP. "Thou comest in such a questionable shape——"

HUGG. "Like quills upon the fretful porcupine!" —um—um—"Noble youth, the serpent that did sting thy father's life——"

VAMP. "Hath ope'd his ponderous and marble jaws!" (*crosses to CLAUDIUS—takes pot, drinks, returns it, and crosses back to R.*)

HUGG. Juniper! Three penn'orth of brandy! "My custom always in the afternoon——"

VAMP. "And makes each petty artery in the body as hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve!" (*crossing R. and L., working up scene, and upsetting MARCELLUS and BERNARDO*) I beg pardon, gentlemen, I hope I didn't hurt you, I was just working up my scene. (*BERNARDO and MARCELLUS reseat themselves by fire, and resume playing cards on each other's knees—VAMP takes glass, adjusts his wig, then, with foot on chair, settling pads*) "Oh! that this too solid flesh would melt, thaw——"

HUGG. (L.—*washing his hands*) I wish this soap would melt, and thaw, it's as hard as a brickbat!

Enter TITTERBY—waltzes round room—getting opposite dressing place, L. C., and noticing a pile of neatly arranged things, stops suddenly in comic attitude)

TITTER. What do I see here? an invasion of my territory! no, no, you don't lodge here, Mr. Ferguson! (*throws clothes over his head into middle of stage*)

JUNIP. (*coming down, c.*) Oh, dear! oh, dear, what are you about, Mr. Titterby? (*collecting clothes*) The gentleman's name ain't Ferguson, it's Signor Canzonetti, the party wot's coming to sing.

TITTER. Oh, is it? Then tell "the party wot's coming to sing" he must sing very small if he wishes to make a favourable impression upon me, Juniper, and if he declines, I shall be reluctantly compelled to make an unfavourable impression upon—(*imitating*) "The Grecian bend, the Grecian bend!" *dances, with back towards VAMP, who is adjusting his pads,*

and CLAUDIO getting between them, knocks the latter against him—VAMP stumbles, R. 1 E.—wig comes off, showing bald head—turns round, apologises profusely, and dances—crosses to L. backwards against HUGGINS, L. C., who is fixing moustache with one hand, holding glass with the other, causing him to gum moustache over right eye—general laugh—situation)

HUGG. Confound you, Teddy ! See where you've made me stick my moustache.

TITTER. (*laughs—crosses to dressing place, L. C.*) Here, Juniper, hot water !

JUNIP. All right, Mr. Titterby.

TITTER. And Juniper—fresh cake of soap, and, Juniper, get me a penn'orth of vermillion, and don't forget a bit of whiting from the paint room—jump, Juniper. While he's gone, I'll indulge in a smoke.

JUNIP. (*at door*) You mustn't smoke here, Mr. Titterby, the manager will fine you a week's salary.

TITTER. I wish the manager would find me my last week's salary.

VAMP. I tell you what it is, my young friend, you'll be setting the theatre alight some fine day, with your penny Pickwicks.

TITTER. That's more than you will do the Thames with your penny readings. (*general laugh*) Off, Juniper !

JUNIP. I'm going.

Exit, door in flat.

HUGG. (*on box, with great solemnity*) "Adieu, adieu—remember me."

TITTER. Hollo, (*chaffing*) here's poor Huggins taken ill; don't do that again, old boy, it sets my teeth on edge.

VAMP. (*crosses R. to L.*) "I must be cruel only to be kind—Thus, bad begins and worse remains—"

(*as he crosses, HUGGINS hits him with ghost's truncheon*)

HUGG. Behind!"

TITTER. A hit—a palpable hit. (*to VAMP*) Now you've got it.

VAMP. I have severely. (*crosses back to R.*) I tell you what, sir, I wish I could succeed in getting an occasional cue from you, Mr. Titterby.

HUGG. Ha, ha, one for you, master Teddy—better mind your P's and Q's.

TITTER. That's easier than looking after your H's, Mr. Uggins. (*overture to Zampa played till entrance of SCOTT, TWIST and BOLTON*)

CALL BOY. (*appearing, door in flat*) Overture, gentlemen. (*withdraws*)

TITTER. Bet you it's not begun—what a set of chaps you are—no takers—no takers.

HUGG. Yes, I'll take myself off. (*adjusts helmet, and crosses majestically to door in flat*)

VAMP. (*in mock tragic attitude, as GHOST beckons from door*)

"Lead on, I'll follow thee." (as he crosses, he makes a pass with RAPIER—TITTERBY wards it off with cane comically—exits after HUGGINS door in flat)

TITTER. Ha, ha, there goes a maniac! No takers, 'gad, I think I'll take something, I'm not on till the last act—so here goes for the Sheridan's Head, a whiskey punch, and a game at cribbage.

Exit door in flat, R. C., singing "Tommy Dodd"—while CLAUDIUS and SUPERS have gone off after VAMP.

Re-enter JUNIPER—SCOTT speaks at door in flat.

You can come in here, gentlemen, my own room is full.

Enter SCOTT, dressed as clown—great coat over shoulders, and mufflers round neck—TWIST and BOLTON follow.

SCOTT. We can talk the matter over here quite private.

TWIST. Just the thing.

BOLTON. What'll you take, Mr. Scott, it's very cold, and you've a hard night's work before you.

SCOTT. No mistake about that, sir; I won't say no to a glass of brandy.

BOLTON. (to JUNIPER, who is folding up dresses) A bottle of the best brandy. (gives money)

TWIST. (aside to JUNIPER) Get it at my shop.

Exit JUNIPER, door in flat.

SCOTT. (to BOLTON) Take a seat, sir.

(TWIST sits with legs across chair, R.—SCOTT on box—
BOLTON, chair, L.)

BOLTON. Now, Mr. Scott, there's no time to lose—so let's to business before we are interrupted. This is a point that not only concerns Miss Scott's future happiness, but your own present interest—pecuniary interest; you understand?

TWIST. Touches your pocket; do you see that, Jemmy?

SCOTT. What do you mean?

TWIST. Just this—Miss Polly's salary goes a good way towards keeping you, don't it? Ever since that accident you've been rickety; don't feel over comfortable about getting over to-night, do you?

SCOTT. I wish I did; I wish I did.

TWIST. Exactly; well, if Miss Polly cuts the shop, and goes into the matrimonial line with this young sprig, Mr. D'Arcy, what's to become of you? Between a barrister without any briefs and with an interesting young lady, everlasting finding herself in a very interesting state—a pretty pair of family supports, eh?

SCOTT. I should have to keep the lot.

BOLTON. Not a doubt of it.

TWIST. Clear as mud.

JUNIPER re-enters with bottle of brandy and glasses on tray—sets them down on box, R. of SCOTT—TWIST pours for SCOTT, and motions JUNIPER off.

Now, don't you see the situation, Jemmy?

SCOTT. Yes, I see mine plain enough, but (*to BOLTON*) what may yours be? You've got a reason, I suppose, and a good one, too, for taking such an uncommon interest in my affairs, eh? Instead of half the scene, let's have the whole picture, while you're about it.

TWIST. (*refilling SCOTT's glass—speaking across to BOLTON*) I told you he was a deep 'un.

BOLTON. The very point I was coming to, Mr. Scott. Of course I've a motive. I'm acting for a lady, who is anxious to prevent Mr. D'Arcy's union with your daughter.

SCOTT. I know. The swell party, as dropped in on us last summer. She was a stunner. Oh! she's spoony on him? I thought as much.

BOLTON. Of course you did; a man of your penetration would detect it at a glance. (*to TWIST*) Mr. Scott's glass is empty. (*TWIST refills*) Now, as long as the flame burns, the moth will flutter round it; in other words, while your pretty daughter is on the scene, to exercise her fascinating influence over Mr. D'Arcy, our friend's chance is hopeless. Our point, therefore, is to remove the obstacle; you'll excuse the use of such a term in relation to so charming a person as Miss Scott?

SCOTT. You—you want to get us out of the way?

BOLTON. We want to get the young lady out of the way.

SCOTT. (*getting excited*) Not without me, you shan't do it! (*rises, and crosses to R.*) D——d if you shall, nobody shall part me and Polly; she shall never leave her old daddy!

TWIST. (*aside to BOLTON—rising*) Won't do to crab him. (*aloud*) That's the point, Jemmy. If she married this young chap she would leave you. What the governor means is this—if you're agreeable to go to America or the Colonies (there's a ready-made fortune for you there; all the swells do it now, and come back with a pot)—why, we're prepared—

BOLTON. To come down liberally—handsomely.

TWIST. D——d handsomely!

SCOTT. (*crosses back to C.*) Go to 'Merriker? I don't know, I'll think it over, (*TWIST fills SCOTT's glass*)

BOLTON. All expenses paid!

SCOTT. Engagements guaranteed?

BOLTON. Better make up your mind at once, Mr. Scott.

TWIST. Or the birds may bolt. This evening I saw the pair o' pigeons at the stage-door.

SCOTT. (*getting drunk*) You—you did?

TWIST. Talking like two turtle-doves. (*aside to BOLTON*) That's put his monkey up. (*to SCOTT*) Take another glass.

SCOTT. No, no—of! I've had enough. (*aside*) She dared to meet him, when I told her not.

BOLTON. (*going to door in flat*) Well, turn the matter over in your mind, Mr. Scott; remember—round sum down, and all expenses paid; we'll see you again after the pantomime. (*to TWIST*) He won't refuse, I knew what money would do.

Exit, door in flat.

TWIST. (*at door*) And so did I, my pippin, when I took that valuable document, "The last will and testament of Richard Dangerfield, Esquire, deceased," under my protection. By-bye, Jemmy!

Exit, door in flat—SCOTT alone—crosses c., and sits on box.

SCOTT. Go to 'Merriker! M—m—might do worse! f—forfeit engagement, though; how is it to be managed? g—go to Australia, and come back with a hat-full. Polly 'ud be sure to draw. How dare she carry on with that chap, when I told her I wouldn't stand it?

JUNIPER. (*appears at door in flat—speaking off*) Gentlemen are gone, miss; you can come in.

POLLY enters, dressed as "Princess Preetypet"—JUNIPER exits, closing door.

POLLY. Well, daddy dear!

SCOTT. (c.) Come here, girl. What do you mean by it? d'ye hear, what do you mean by it?

POLLY. (*disengaging herself from him, as he seizes her hand roughly*) Oh, daddy, don't; You're tumbling my beautiful new dress. How do you like it, daddy?

SCOTT. I don't like you at all.

POLLY. How strangely he talks, what can have happened? Ah! (*noticing bottle*) I see it all. (*tries to remove bottle—he seizes it*)

SCOTT. No, no, you don't, Polly! How dare you go sweetheating with that chap, when I told you not to speak to him? d'ye hear me, girl, you were seen with him at the stage door.

POLLY. (*bridling up*) What if I were? Mr. D'Arcy has a right to speak to me. I'm not ashamed of what I have done, nor would you be for me, had you heard what passed between us.

SCOTT. I—I don't want to hear anything.

POLLY. But you shall, father. He told me how he loved me, and I told him, too, that I loved him. (SCOTT rises)

SCOTT. You—you did? (*catching at her*)

POLLY. (*releasing herself*) Yes, and I would tell him so again, before you—before the world! He wanted me to go

with him—to run away and be married; but I said I couldn't leave you—that I'd never desert daddy.

SCOTT. (*embracing her*) That's a good child! that's a good child, and you shan't leave me; we'll go together.

POLLY. Go where?

SCOTT. To 'Merriker—to make our fortunes, Polly. It's all settled. We'll forfeit our engagement, pack up our traps, this very night, after the pantomime, and leave England.

POLLY. Leave England; who says we are to leave England?

SCOTT. I do, everybody does! T—Twist says so, and so does that lawyer fellow—what's his name?—B—Bolton says so.

POLLY. Oh! this must be some plot to ruin us—to part me from Frank.

SCOTT. L—let's drink Bolton's health. (*staggers, with bottle in hand—music, piano*)

POLLY. No, daddy, you shall not. (*takes bottle quietly from him*) For your sake, for—for mine! (*he sinks on box—she kneels by him.—Act drop descends slowly*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Exterior of the Royal Parnassus Theatre, showing colonnade set obliquely, R. C.—gallery door, practicable, L.—stage door, L. C.—box entrance of theatre, C. and L. up stage—Confectioner's shop, R. 2 E., open—Woman seen serving behind counter, snow-cloth down—snow on portico and cornices of theatre—public house, L. 2 E., lighted up—lamps lighted (gas) round theatre—two Guardsmen on guard pacing up and down in front of theatre—Coster and barrow, with oranges, candles in paper shades—Crossing Sweeper, R. 3 E.—two Boys with "Echo" papers—Woman with bills of the play, ditto with trotters, outside gallery entrance—Sandwich Man near stage door—bustle as scene opens—People passing and repassing—full scene—Linkman and Policeman.*

BOX PARTY come from principal entrance, C. and L., and exit, L. 1 E.—two or three off, R.—GIRLS enter, R., go into stage door—drunken SOLDIER enters from public house, goes to PIE-MAN to top, staggers off, R. 2 E.—OLIVE and D'ARCY enter, R. 1 E.—former in evening dress and Ulster coat—latter in morning dress (winter).

OLIVE. Better come into the box; Mrs. Dangerfield expects you.

D'ARCY. Don't ask me to do it; I tell you I dare not face her. She'll only hold me up to ridicule; besides, I must be where she cannot watch my face when Polly comes on; so I've secured a place in the upper circle.

OLIVE. As you please. Frank, old fellow, look here. I had intended keeping my thoughts to myself, and not causing you anxiety. I have my reasons—no matter what they are—for fancying that scoundrel Twist, and that greater scoundrel, Bolton, are up to their tricks, and mean some mischief to Polly or you, or both of you, to-night. (D'ARCY *expresses astonishment*) How, when, or where's the question; it's only my surmise; still, I thought I'd put you on your guard—that's all!

D'ARCY. They can't hurt me. As for Polly—I'll take care of her.

OLIVE. Are you to see her to-night?

D'ARCY. At half-past ten, at the stage door. Mind, you must come to supper with us.

OLIVE. If I can get away I'll join you; but that depends on Bolton's movements.

D'ARCY. I must go in, or I shall miss Polly's appearance; do come to supper, dear old boy, if you can.

Exit, L. C., into theatre.

OLIVE. (*alone*) Ever since that chat with Grace the other evening, my heart, which had been frozen up for years, has been gradually thawing with the returning warmth of the old days. Frank D'Arcy, you're a devilish lucky dog to have escaped Grace Dangerfield's toils. You ran away like a man—a sensible man; and the man who loves and runs away, may live to love another day.

Exit into theatre, principal entrance, C. U. E.

ORGAN MAN crosses from R. U. E. and off L. 1 E.—drunken SOLDIER staggers on from public house, L. 2 E., and staggers off, R. 3 E.—two NIGGERS pass, R. 1 E., cross, and go into public house, as TWIST enters from R. U. E., and comes down.

TWIST. A monkey!—not bad to begin with. I must bleed my man quietly, and wait before I put the knife in. Nobby, you didn't prospect for nothing when you pocketed that bit of parchment; work the golden vein gently, my boy, and don't exhaust the mine.

BOLTON enters from stage door, L. C., and crosses to TWIST.

BOLTON. Stick to the girl—d'ye hear—and don't lose sight of her!

TWIST. All right, gov'nor, don't fidget—I'm fly.

BOLTON. As for old Scott, he should be pretty far gone by

this time, and, before to-morrow, we must have him further still.

Exit into theatre, C. U. E.

TWIST. Hum!—the sooner I clear out of this the better; but needs must when a certain old gentleman drives. Let me see how to invest my property when—when—I get it. Bill discounting ain't bad; and the ring—well, the ring's all very well for a welsher, for he's nothing to lose. No—you must turn over a new leaf, Nobby—go in for the genteel and respectable! By-bye to Bow Street, and start afresh at the West End. What shall it be? Say cigars and wines from the wood—genuine Havannahs made in Holborn! East Indy Madeira—over the left; Hamburg sherry! Make no mistake, Nobby; honesty—honesty's the best policy of assurance after all.

Exit through stage door.

(WOMAN, CHILD, and MAN cross from gallery door, L., to confectioner's shop—pause, and return with bag of confectionary, then go into public house—come out, and go back into theatre—LINKMAN calls—“Mrs. Dangerfield's brougham !”)

Enter GRACE and WEDGBY from the principal entrance.

GRACE. (to WEDGBY, coming down R. C.) It's quite refreshing to get a little air; the heat was stifling, and the glare of the gas dreadful. Where can Bob be, I wonder?

WEDG. Bolted to the club to smoke, I've no doubt. (*aside*) No fool either;—I only wish I had the chance.

GRACE. Oh dear! my opera glass!—I must have left it in the box; would you mind going back to see, Mr. Wedgby?

WEDG. Delighted!

Exit into theatre as BOLTON re-enters and joins GRACE.

BOLTON. (to GRACE) Oh! here you are! Seen Mr. Scott—and, unless I'm much mistaken in my man, we shall square him before the night's over. We mustn't let the grass grow, for D'Arcy and the girl have met already, as I anticipated. Twist saw them together this evening, at the stage door.

GRACE. They must not meet again—promise me that. I cannot—dare not—trust Frank D'Arcy longer.

BOLTON. Some means must be devised to entice the girl out—Twist can manage it. He's of use to us now; but when we've done with the fellow, we must find some means to turn the tables on him, and get back the will. Suppose the scoundrel should take it into his head to turn honest—not that there's much chance of that—and turn round upon us;—where should we be?

GRACE. You mean, where would *you* be. I was no party to this fraud; I know nothing about this business, except from his statement, and your own avowal.

BOLTON. Better not seek to know. "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise."

GRACE. No—it's not bliss, John Bolton, it is misery. Since that night I have been upon the rack; my silence is wronging others of their rights; I would know whom.

BOLTON. For what purpose—idle curiosity?

GRACE. To make the only reparation in my power—restitution!

BOLTON. Ha, ha! relieve your conscience at the expense of my liberty! A pretty return for my trouble! This is gratitude! Come, Grace, it's useless crying over spilt milk, and it's well if nothing worse than milk be spilt in this affair. I forged the will for my own ends, thinking by that means to ensure your hand, if not your heart. I reckoned without my host. You can give me up to justice, if you choose; but, if you do, you give up all chance of revenge against your rival, Mary Scott.

GRACE. I would buy that—no matter what the price.

BOLTON. Spoken like—a woman!

GRACE. Make what terms you please with this man; rob, plunder, strip me penniless; but free me from this jealous fear, John Bolton, and I will never upbraid you.

BOLTON. I'll do my best;—if all goes well, you *shall* be free to-night.

Exit through stage door, L. C.

D'ARCY *re-enters from principal entrance, C. U. E.—coming down, does not see GRACE—looking at his watch.*

D'ARCY. It must be near the time Polly appointed.

LINKMAN. (*calling out*) Mrs. Dangerfield's carriage coming up! (D'ARCY turns round—at that moment GRACE crosses to him)

GRACE. Frank, won't you speak to me? You *shall* speak to me! Why didn't you come to my box to-night?

D'ARCY. I—I was engaged.

GRACE. Yes, I saw you were engaged. I watched you, though you little thought I marked your every look and action. I know why you are here now—for whom you are waiting—Mary Scott.

D'ARCY. I am waiting for her—what of that?

GRACE. The girl whose flattery has tricked you into the belief that she is all love and truth and honour, while all the time she wears a heart as false as the stage baubles on her neck!

D'ARCY. Polly false!—my life upon her honour!—I will not believe it!

Re-enter OLIVE, C. U. E., noticing D'ARCY and GRACE—comes down to GRACE.

OLIVE. (*aside*) The lady collared him, and reading the poor fellow a lesson, I'll be bound. (*aloud to GRACE*) Aren't you afraid of the cold, Mrs. Dangerfield? Where's Bolton?—I missed him as we came out. (*looks up c. as WEDGBY appears*) Ah! perhaps Wedgby knows. (*aside*) I mustn't lose sight of him. (*goes up, joins WEDGBY, and re-enters theatre*)

GRACE. (*to D'ARCY*) A pretty alliance for you, Frank—marry the daughter of a mountebank. Ah, look!

(BOLTON, TWIST and POLLY, *in ordinary dress, appear at stage door, l. c.—POLLY's manner very earnest—GRACE seizes FRANK's hand and points to the group*)

POLLY. (*at door*) Where's my father?—you told me he was here.

TWIST. So he was a minute ago, I'll take my oath of it.

POLLY. I don't believe you—he's wanted on the scene; I'll go back and look for him. (*re-enters stage door, quickly*)

BOLTON. (*to TWIST*) And so must I. (*catches a hasty glance at D'ARCY*) There's the young 'un; watch him, d'ye hear?

Exit into theatre by stage door leaving TWIST outside.

GRACE. (*R., to D'ARCY*) You saw that—John Bolton with her; you know his reputation among a certain class. Now do you believe your eyes?

D'ARCY. (*breaking from GRACE*) No, I'll speak to her myself. (*crosses to stage door—TWIST stands in his way—he pushes him aside*)

TWIST. Now then, where are you coming to?

D'ARCY. Never you mind. (*is about to enter when CRUMBS appears and stops him*)

CRUMBS. (*L. C.*) Against orders, sir; no one allow'd behind except on business. (*D'ARCY hands card to CRUMBS*)

GRACE. (*aside*) Bolton's too quick for him. (*turns up and goes towards principal entrance with WEDGBY*)

D'ARCY. (*to CRUMBS*) Let Miss Scott have that immediately. (*as he turns away TWIST takes card from CRUMBS*)

TWIST. (*L. C.*) All right, Crumbs, you can't leave the door, I'm going in, and I'll take charge of it, (*aside*) and what's more—take good care Miss Polly don't get it! If the young gent waits till she comes out, he stands a chance of catching chronic influenzy.

Exit through stage door.

Two FIREMEN enter from gallery down L., and look round.

1ST FIREMAN. Nothing in the gallery, Bill.

2ND FIREMAN. I could have sworn I smelt somethin' burnin'.

D'ARCY. (*noticing them*) Is anything the matter?

1ST FIREMAN. No, sir, not as I know of. My mate here fancied—

D'ARCY. What?

1ST FIREMAN. That there was a smell of fire.

D'ARCY. Fire?—where—here? (*a cry of "Fire!" without*) (*a cry of "Fire" taken up—a slight murmur on the R., answered on the L, gradually louder as glare of light increases—*
slight glare of light and smoke when BOLTON at stage door—
begin to work flames from window at 1st bell—the blinds or
curtains to fall one at a time at 3rd bell—cue to light gas,
and tow flames, when D'ARCY well through window—then
clear black backing away—then crash and sparks kept up
till drop)

Re-enter TWIST from stage door, and runs to front.

TWIST. The shop's alight, and no mistake; that idiot, Titterby, must have been smoking in the dressing room, run, for the engines!

(CRUMBS runs off R.—*a distant cry of fire, gradually swelling into a tumult, and taken up by CROWD—GRACE and WEDGBY and OLIVE, R., enter with CROWD from theatre)*

OLIVE. (*to D'ARCY*) Where's Polly?

D'ARCY. Inside with that man Bolton.

OLIVE. Great heavens! Quick, Frank, quick! (*crosses up to stage door—TWIST plants himself in the way—OLIVE turns him round, and is met by BOLTON coming out of stage door*) Let me pass!

BOLTON. The smoke's too much for you.

OLIVE. Where's the girl—where's Polly?

BOLTON. How should I know, when I left her, she was going towards the dressing room on the ladies' side.

POLLY. (*at window*) Help! Help!

SCOTT. (*rushing out at stage door*) My child! my child! (*is making back again, when is kept back by VAMP, TITTERBY, and HUGGINS, who come from public house—business till close of Act*)

(1st movement or bell—box party from principal entrance come out from down R.; 2nd bell—people run out from gallery and from R.; 3rd bell—VAMP and TITTERBY come out and restrain SCOTT; 4th bell—body of POLICE crosses from L. 1 E. to R., form line and keep MOB back with their staves; 5th bell—ladders and engine from R. 3 E., which FIREMEN place against colonnade, leaving portico open in front of stage door for fire escape; 6th bell—fire escape from R. 1 E. run on, wheeled across to L. C. and placed against theatre—OLIVE, when fire escape on, strips off his coat and waistcoat, and after a

slight struggle with D'ARCY, putting him over to GRACE and WEDGBY, R., takes hatchet from FIREMAN, runs up escape, breaks sashes of window and goes in—MOB applaud—ALL on when engine and ladders come on—wall falls showing interior of theatre in flames—BALLET GIRLS run out screaming—HARLEQUIN comes out of window with CHILD dressed as FAIRY (boy) on his back, descends escape—FIREMEN come out of next window with BOYS dressed as SPRITES, place them in safety—COLUMBINE is taken by a GENTLEMAN, who places his coat round her and takes her to L.—PANTALOON descends—OLIVE now comes out of ruins with POLLY, down C.—ALL shout and wave their hats—MRS. WADLEY at window of house, R; 7th bell—general MOB—ALL get R. except the ACTORS, VAMP, &c.)

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A lapse of Six Months between Third and Fourth Acts.

ACT IV.

SCENE FIRST.—*Interior of Bolton's Chambers, Garden Court, Temple, comfortably furnished in bachelor's style; sporting and theatrical prints on the walls (one to represent the portrait of a danseuse particular); office table, C., chair, R. of same; easy chair, L. C.; writing materials, lighted taper on table; fire-place, no fire.*

BOLTON discovered R. of C., having finished writing a note—TWIST standing L.

BOLTON. (reading note) "In a few minutes, Polly will be in my chambers, and in your power—come to-night." If this doesn't satisfy Grace, nothing will. (seals note, extinguishes taper, rises. To TWIST) Now then, as soon as our little matter is disposed of, make the best of your way to the villa, and deliver this note into Mrs. Dangerfield's own hands. (gives note) You understand?

TWIST. (L.) All right, guv'nor.

BOLTON. (R.) Now for the second point—the money!

TWIST. Ah, that's a very nice point, that is.

BOLTON. It is ready; bring me the will, and—

TWIST. You stump up five thousand pounds.

BOLTON. Five thousand pounds.

TWIST. In notes?

BOLTON. In notes.

TWIST. When?

BOLTON. To-night, after you return from the villa.

TWIST. Where?

BOLTON. Here.

TWIST. Here? (*aside*) Not if I know it—it's too quiet here by half. (*aloud*) Why not in the Court below, by the fountain?

BOLTON. By the fountain, if you prefer it.

TWIST. At half-past nine—we cry quits.

BOLTON. (*aside, with emphasis*) We will cry quits! (*looking at watch, aloud*) It wants but a few minutes of the time appointed for your meeting Polly; the disguise is all ready, so in with you. (*points to door, L.*) Look alive, and try to look respectable, if you can.

TWIST. (*going to door in flat, L.*) Respectable; a good joke; a party who goes in for forgery and abduction, to talk of being respectable.

Exit door, L.

BOLTON. (*alone*) At last the game is yours, Grace Dangerfield. The fire—which extinguished all hope for the moment—has, in the end, made your fortune. The girl and her father thrown out of an engagement, D'Arcy's purse too slender to render them adequate assistance—and that meddling Yorkshireman out of the country, and out of our way for the present. Nothing could work better for us. First the loan office—next, the pawn shop—and last, penury. Polly's pride revolted at her lover's knowledge of their misery; but I found out the secret, and the rest was simple strategy. “To persons in difficulties.—Money advanced on no security. Address, A. Z., Post Office, Strand.” The line was no sooner dropped into the water than the bait was swallowed. Twist, who, to give the devil his due, is no bad hand at a disguise, worked the oracle, and in less than ten minutes, pretty prudish Miss Polly will honour me with a visit, for the purpose of arranging a trifling pecuniary advance. Not bad, Jack Bolton—not bad.

Re-enter TWIST, door L.—in disguise, long coat, grey whiskers and wig—very snug and demure, grey gloves, umbrella.

TWIST. (L.) Bad! no, I don't think it is for a makeshift—who's the respectable party now—not much to be ashamed of in me, is there, guv'nor? (*pulls out large watch from fob with ribbon and seals*) How goes the enemy—this is only a dummy enemy.

BOLTON. Not a moment to lose; she must be at the corner of Essex Street before now.

TWIST. Off we go; I couldn't think of keeping a lady waiting. (*crosses to door, R.*)

BOLTON. Shew the girl in here and leave the rest to me—at half-past nine, remember.

TWIST. (*at door in flat, R.*) For the paltry consideration of

five thousand pounds, "The last will and testament of Richard Dangerfield, Esq., deceased," shall be yours, guv'nor; you've got a bargain, and no mistake.

Exit, door, R.

BOLTON. (*aside*) When the balance is struck we shall see who comes off the cheaper. (*looks round room*) Now to set all in order. (*arranges papers and puts aside letters in drawer*) I'm afraid we haven't a very money-lending appearance; a desk, a high stool and an iron safe is the proper style; with the old masters, the coals and the curious champagne in the cellar; never mind, this must do at a pinch. (*looks at prints on walls*) The ballet girls won't shock her, at any rate; lucky the back room is so quiet and retired and at the end of the passage, for Polly's sake I wish it had a more picturesque view. My laundress being of rather an inquisitive disposition, I've thought it prudent to indulge her in a week's holiday. Impossible to calculate the term of imprisonment—that must depend upon Grace's compassion.

Exit door, L.—pause—TWIST in disguise ushering in POLLY, dressed very plainly, door, R.

TWIST. (R. C., with disguised voice) This way, miss, if you please. (POLLY crosses L. C.) The gentleman who conducts these matters will see you directly. Take a chair, miss, pray. (*places chair for POLLY—she sits*) Like to see the paper, miss? (*hands paper*) Account of the new piece at the theatre last night (I never go to theatres myself)—and beautiful murder in Bethnal Green. (*aside*) Now, Nobby, you must be off, or your feelings will be too much for you.

POLLY. Will the gentleman be long?

TWIST. I don't think so, miss. (*aside*) I must get off. (*moves towards door*)

POLLY. I beg your pardon. Pray what is the gentleman's name?

TWIST. His name? (*aside*) Oh, lor, quite forgot to arrange that little matter! (*aloud*) Oh, his name, miss, he wouldn't have it known for the world—his benevolence being gratis, you see, miss, were his name to be published, his liberality might be misconstrued into ostentation. Good afternoon!

Exit, door, R.

POLLY. (*alone, sitting*) I fancied from the advertisement this was a matter of business, only that no security was necessary, and heaven knows we have little to offer now. I couldn't bear to tell dear Frank of our poverty, and be a burthen to him, who has already done for us more than he can afford. Ah, had good Mr. Olive been in town, I should not have been ashamed to have asked him for assistance, and I know he would have been too willing to give it. (*rises and looks round room, crosses R.*) Well, this place looks very snug and comfortable. I should like to see poor daddy in that jolly easy chair. (*sighs, crosses L., inspecting prints on walls*) "Madame Allegroas Amina,"

never saw her. Why if that isn't an old friend, "Little Stella," the columbine—

BOLTON enters quietly, unobserved by POLLY, door, L., crosses to door, R., turns key and stands.

it's a great deal too pretty for her, but that's always the way with prints, they do flatter so.

BOLTON. (R. of table) They couldn't flatter you, if they tried, Polly.

POLLY. (with a slight shriek, retreating) Mr. Bolton—where—where am I?

BOLTON. Garden Court, Temple, in my chambers, my dear; don't be frightened. You see the benevolent gentleman before you. As for interest, I can't help taking interest in you, Polly, and for the matter of security, I want no better than a pretty face.

POLLY. Great heavens, I see it all now. This was a trap to deceive me. (BOLTON crosses to her, and takes her by the hand) Let me go!

BOLTON. Impossible, you're too precious to lose; and after all my trouble in catching the bird, you don't suppose I'm quite such a fool as to open the cage door.

POLLY. By what right do you dare detain me?

BOLTON. By the right of conquest, my love—possession, as the Roman officer said to the Sabine lady, is nine points of the law, come, be reasonable, my child; I learnt you were in distress, and knowing your pride, devised this plan of offering you my assistance. You're in want of money, I am ready to advance—more, to give what you want on certain terms.

POLLY. Once more, Mr. Bolton, let me go or I'll cry out for help.

BOLTON. That would be a sad waste of breath, here no one will take notice; you'll do no more harm than disturbing poor old Plodder over his pleadings, and yourself no good.

POLLY. My father, oh, my poor father! (sinks on chair, and rises as he tries to put his arm round her waist) Don't touch me! I've heard all speak of you with loathing and contempt. Frank D'Arcy told me of your life, and taught me every day to shun and hate you more and more.

BOLTON. He did—did he? I'm much obliged to Mr. D'Arcy, and I'm glad to have it in my power to return his favour in his own coin—contempt. What will he say when he hears his pretty love, his pink of prudery, has been John Bolton's guest in Garden Court; what will he say to that?

POLLY. Wretch! villain! you would do this?

BOLTON. And give you proof I would and will. (advances towards her—she shrieks)

POLLY. Help! Help!

BOLTON. I mean you no harm. Ah! (listening) footsteps—somebody on the stairs. That idiot, Twist, has forgotten to

sport the oak; who can it be? (*leading POLLY towards door, L. 2 E.*) I tell you I mean you no harm—don't you believe me, on my honour. (*music, piano, till OLIVE's entrance*)

POLLY. Your honour?

BOLTON. You shan't be long a prisoner here. (*opens door, L.*)

POLLY. Oh, daddy, dear daddy, if you could but see your Polly, now! (*BOLTON thrusts her in door, L.—knock outside, R.—BOLTON returns, locking door, L.*)

BOLTON. She's safe. (*goes to door, R., opens it*) Who do you want? What is your business?

Enter OLIVE, door R.

OLIVE. (*pressing door open*) My business is with you, Mr. John Bolton.

BOLTON. (*aside*) Olive. Curse the fellow—can he have any suspicion. (*crosses, L., aloud*) Delighted to see you, Mr. Olive. For what am I indebted for the pleasure of this visit. I am engaged at this moment on a very pressing affair.

OLIVE. (*R. of table*) I won't detain you many minutes. In the ordinary course of business, I should have put the matter in my solicitor's hands, but as it is of a peculiarly delicate nature, I preferred a personal interview with you.

BOLTON. (*aside*) An ominous beginning. (*aloud*) Take a chair, won't you? (*crosses up to L. of table*)

OLIVE. Thank you—I'd rather stand. (*BOLTON in easy attitude—OLIVE near door, R.*) I only arrived this morning from abroad.

BOLTON. You look fagged.

OLIVE. From Marseilles.

BOLTON. Marseilles! I know it—stale fish, bad brandy, mosquitoes, and all that sort of thing—well?

OLIVE. The object of my visit there was to search for certain family papers belonging to the late Mr. Beauval, a merchant of that town, who died about five years ago. (*BOLTON starts*) You may have heard the name?

BOLTON. Never.

OLIVE. That's strange—for our mutual friend and your client, Mrs. Dangerfield, was intimately connected with the gentleman—passed her early days in his house, in fact, was adopted and educated by him.

BOLTON. (*aside*) Now, what line is he on now? (*aloud*) Indeed! you surprise me.

OLIVE. I thought I should. But being desirous of substantiating this story, I prosecuted enquiries at Marseilles personally, and from Mrs. Beauval's notary I arrived at facts.

BOLTON. Quite right, nothing like facts—pity you didn't take to my business—you'd have been invaluable in getting up a case. And these facts—

OLIVE. Were embodied in a statement, accompanying Mr. Beauval's will, signed by him, and attested by witnesses now living in Marseilles.

BOLTON. For a romance, the story is charming—but really, my dear sir, you are dreaming. (*on edge of table, facing audience*)

OLIVE. I am not dreaming, John Bolton! I am not dreaming that these papers were given up to you at Marseilles, when acting on behalf of my late cousin, on the occasion of his marriage. I am not dreaming that you have kept them back for some vile purpose! I am not dreaming that I am here to-day, for no love of self, but for the love long buried I once bore Grace, to save her from the man who under the guise of her trustee has systematically robbed and plundered her!

BOLTON. (*enraged*) It's a lie, I have not robbed or plundered Grace Dangerfield. The woman owes me all—the very bed she lies upon; without me, without my help, she might at this moment have been wandering barefoot in the streets, or—or worse. (*recitative through scene*)

OLIVE. Poor soul, she must be sunk low, to stand in need of such a friend. (*BOLTON makes a movement towards him*) Have a care, it's only for her sake I hold back my hand, and stay the Yorkshire blood that's rising here. My course is clear, to protect her from further contact with such a man as you. These are the terms—a strict scrutiny on my part of your stewardship, from the date of my cousin's death and acknowledgment of your dealings with sums embezzled—and last, not least, your promise to leave the country, never to return.

BOLTON. Thank you—but as this climate happens to suit my constitution, I prefer staying where I am.

OLIVE. You refuse?

BOLTON. Absolutely.

OLIVE. In that case, the law must take its course.

BOLTON. Let it, and you shall have the satisfaction, Mr. Robert Olive, of seeing your early love—the woman you deemed all spotless purity, dragged into court, and branded as a forger and a felon—a pretty picture for a lover to feast his eyes upon.

OLIVE. Would you dare?

BOLTON. It's not dare with me, it's doing. I don't deny the charges—fraud—forgeries—what you please, but remember, if you place me in a dock, you place my partner and accomplice in guilt, Grace Dangerfield, beside me.

OLIVE. Villain, you—(*movement towards him*)

BOLTON. One moment; hear me out. Ask her by whose means she enjoys the wealth the world assumes to be hers, and ask her if she is conscious of the fraud by which she holds it, that's all.

OLIVE. I will ask her, and if you have lied, John Bolton, you shall pay the penalty in full. I'll save Grace Dangerfield if I

can save her, not from you only, but from her worst enemy—
herself. *Exit door in flat, R.*

BOLTON. (*takes out handkerchief, fans himself, takes stage*) Phew, that was hot work—diamond cut diamond. It was my only chance to make a clean breast of it. I knew my man, and that his love for Grace would keep me harmless. No one now to fear but Twist, and the will once again in my possession I shall feel my feet again. (*takes his hat from table as he goes out door in flat, R.—music, forte, and kept up till D'ARCY and SCOTT on next scene—change—lights down a little for change.*

SCENE SECOND.—*The Grounds of Calypso Villa—Evening.*
Cloth down to 1st grooves.

Enter JACKSON, followed by D'ARCY and SCOTT, R. 1 E.

JACKSON. (*crossing, L.*) Mrs. Dangerfield is somewhere about the grounds. (*to D'ARCY*) What name shall I say? (*looking at SCOTT*) T'other chap's a curiosity;—not one of our regular customers.

D'ARCY. (*c., aside to SCOTT*) Better send in *your* name.

SCOTT. (*R.*) Scott—Mr. Scott, if you please.

JACKSON. Well, he's a civil sort, at any rate; knows how to address his superiors. *Exit, L. 1 E.*

D'ARCY. You say you never knew Polly fail before?

SCOTT. She's always in by three o'clock.

D'ARCY. And she left home this morning, at what time?

SCOTT. Ten. I got a bit fidgetty when my girl never came back; then I enquired at Bow Street—looked in at Nobby's, but could get no tidings—so—so—I came round to your lodgings, thinking you might be able to give me news of her.

D'ARCY. I am very glad you did. If there has been any foul play—and after what you told Mr. Olive and myself of the proposition made to you by Bolton and Twist on the night of the fire it is not improbable there has been—this is the quarter to find it out. You know my position here; so be prepared for anything that may follow.

SCOTT. You told me you were sweet about the lady, or she was sweet on you before—before my Polly came in the way—that what you mean, sir? After that, o' course it's natural she shouldn't be particular amiable to either of us, and if she shows her teeth, I shan't be afraid.

D'ARCY. (*looks off, L.*) Hush! here she comes!

Enter GRACE, L. 1 E., opens note in her hand.

GRACE. (*to D'ARCY*) This is good of you indeed, taking compassion on my solitude. I was dozing in the summer-house over a stupid novel. (*turning to SCOTT*) Mr.—Mr.—

D'ARCY. Mr. James Scott. You remember the accident that introduced him and his daughter (*GRACE winces*) to your notice last summer?

GRACE. I was relieved to hear of your recovery, Mr. Scott. (*crosses, c.*) My coachman's fault entirely; I was obliged to send him away; he *would* drink—a dreadful habit.

SCOTT. It is, ma'am; but it ain't confined to coachmen, more's the pity. (*aside*) She can't be so bad as he's painted her; for she has just such a smile as Polly's mother had—just such a smile.

D'ARCY. Mr. Scott has come here at my suggestion, in search of his daughter, who is missing.

GRACE. Indeed! I am very sorry for Mr. Scott, and can sympathize with him in his anxiety; but how can I assist him in his search? You must not hold me accountable for the desultory habits of Miss Scott, or any other lady of her profession.

D'ARCY. I *can* and *do* hold you accountable. Mr. Scott knows the part you played last winter, in employing such foul means as those of Bolton and his accomplice, in endeavouring to wean the girl from him and me. My doubts, and those of my friend Olive, were aroused; and my firm belief is that now his watching hand is withdrawn, advantage has been taken of his absence, and that mischief is at work against Mary Scott, at the hands of you and your confederates in this guilty business.

GRACE. Upon my word, a pretty exhibition! (*turning to SCOTT*) This gentleman, I trust, has not your sanction, Mr. Scott, for these rash words.

SCOTT. At least, you do not deny it.

GRACE. Deny what, man?

SCOTT. The fact—for fact it is—that my girl was in your way. My poor child (you'll pardon my plain speaking), cut you out with Mr. D'Arcy here. Well, what if she did? Her face ain't her misfortune or her fault.

GRACE. I know but little of you or your daughter, and wish to know still less. (*crosses, R.*)

SCOTT. Polly left home this morning, and has not returned; do you know where she is?

GRACE. No, but—

D'ARCY. But what—

GRACE. I can guess where she *may* be. (*aside*) I'll not spare him now. (*aloud*) What if she is with her lover?

SCOTT. Her lover?

D'ARCY. Polly's lover?

GRACE. Call him by what name you please. (*to D'ARCY*) Have you forgotten the man I pointed out to you the night of the fire? (*seeing the effects of her suggestion*) I see you have not forgotten.

D'ARCY. John Bolton!

SCOTT. Bolton! He my Polly's lover, you don't mean what you say!

GRACE. Go—judge for yourself.

SCOTT. It can't be true! My child—my child never deceived me yet. Come, Mr. D'Arcy, come.

D'ARCY. (to GRACE) What! You would accuse Miss Scott of—

GRACE. I accuse no one; you came here for information—you have it; make what use of it you please. (*crosses*, R.)

SCOTT. (to D'ARCY) We'd best be going, Mr. D'Arcy. (*aside—watching* GRACE) I cannot bear to watch her face, there's a strange look, that brings back to me the dead—brings back the dead! *Exit, l. 1 E., with D'ARCY.*

GRACE. (alone) He will have the witness now of his own eyes. (*reading note, which she has in her hand*) "In a few moments the girl will be in my chambers, and in your power." My power! the triumph I have longed for! there is no time to lose; I must reach Garden Court before them.

Exit, r. 1 E.

SCENE THIRD.—*Garden Court, leading to Chambers, 3 E.—steps, c.—Fountain at back, playing—the chimes of St. Clement Danes heard as scene opens.*

MAN crosses with supper things, and baize cloth over them, R. to L.—

POLICEMAN enters, R.—three LAW STUDENTS heard, L. U. E., singing "Up in a Balloon!"—they enter, and down steps.

POLICEMAN. Just a bit springy. Come from what they calls a call party. Well, it's quite a treat to see a bit of a spree here. It's a precious dull beat—this Temple. I'd sooner be in Ratcliff Highway, seeing the gas off. (to STUDENTS) Now then, you must move on, gents. (*as they come down, R.*)

FIRST STUDENT. All right, Bobby!

POLICEMAN. It's not all right.

FIRST STUDENT. (offers POLICEMAN a shilling) Here's a bob for you, Bobby.

POLICEMAN. Couldn't do it; it's against orders. We ain't allowed to take anything. (*turns his back, and lets* STUDENT *slip money into his hand, and exits, l. 1 E.—STUDENTS exit, r. 1 E.—music, piano*)

Enter SCOTT and D'ARCY, l. u. e., and come down steps.

D'ARCY. (pointing, R.) These are Bolton's chambers. Do you stay and wait till I call. *Exit, door r. 3 E.*

SCOTT. (alone) Her lover—her lover! It can't be true! My Polly—who has ever been as good as gold, as true as steel, as pure as snow—to listen to such as he; a man, they say, who knows neither pity nor compassion. (*chimes repeated*) The chimes. How they bring back to me the old days! The

wedding morning, the church where her mother and I were married, the humble breakfast at the country inn, when there were not wanting kindly hearts and honest faces to wish us well and happy! Happy! Not five years gone from that day, and my wife and child were taken from me, and only Polly left; and now—now she is gone—perhaps dead, or, maybe, worse than dead. (*sits at foot of steps, c., leaning head on hands, sobbing*—D'ARCY *re-enters, R. 2 E.*)

D'ARCY. The oak is sported, and no sound within. (*to SCOTT*) Come up with me, and help me in the search.

SCOTT. Anywhere you will—anywhere to find Polly.

Exit with D'ARCY, R. 3 E.

GRACE *enters, L. U. E., down steps, cloak and bonnet on. Music.*—
Looks at Bolton's chambers, R. 3 E.

GRACE. No light in the window!

She is crossing to doorway, R. 2 E., as BOB OLIVE enters suddenly and confronts her.

OLIVE. (R.) Grace!

GRACE. Mr. Olive!

OLIVE. You here, and at this hour, and alone!

GRACE. I was only going to Mr. Bolton's chambers—is that so strange?

OLIVE. This is not the time ladies generally select for consulting counsel.

GRACE. You have no right to use that tone to me. What if I question you in turn? How comes it that I find you here?

OLIVE. This quiet court in a cool summer evening is a relief, after the noise and bustle of the streets. (*aside*) She has some motive for this visit.

GRACE. (*aside*) He is trying to deceive me. (*aloud*) I heard you were abroad!

OLIVE. I have been. I only returned this morning from Marseilles.

GRACE. Indeed! There must be some charm that binds you to that place.

OLIVE. There is—my journey there was in search of proof.

GRACE. Of what?

OLIVE. Your parentage.

GRACE. My parentage? And you have discovered—

OLIVE. That which I have for some time past surmised is not conjecture, but certainty.

GRACE. What do you mean, you look quite serious?

OLIVE. It is a serious subject, Grace, I scarcely know how to break the news—though if my tidings were to soften your revengeful spirit, and change the current of your thoughts to tenderness and pity, I shall indeed be a proud and happy herald.

GRACE. Robert Olive, I have always honoured and respected

you—I value still your counsel and advice, but on one point do not attempt to speak or argue with me. I cannot conceal, even from you, the bitter hate I feel towards her who has robbed me of Frank D'Arcy's love, no more than I can hide the triumph I have gained in having Mary Scott at last within my power.

D'ARCY with POLLY and SCOTT re-enter, R. 3 E.

OLIVE. She in your power! Great heavens, and would you raise your hand?

GRACE. I would not spare—

OLIVE. Not your own flesh and blood—your sister?

GRACE. (*looks first incredulously, then sees in OLIVE'S face the truth, her countenance assumes a look of horror*) My sister! (*hides her face in her hands**)

OLIVE. Yes, Grace Dangerfield, your sister. The woman you still carry in your baby memory, who perished in that storm—which gave you Mr. Beauval's kind protecting care, was—was your mother, the dancer, Nina, and the man who can once again clasp you in a father's arms—is Herr Schottische, the clown.

SCOTT. (*advancing*) My Nina—my lost, lost Nina.

GRACE. Do not touch me, father—oh, of what a crime I have been guilty. The thought of the past will kill me.

POLLY. The past—let that be buried here—(*they embrace*)

OLIVE. Hush! (*looks R., points to L. U. E.*) Twist and Bolton—what is their business here?—let us watch. (*ALL group in shade within doorway watching as TWIST enters, R. 1 E., and BOLTON, L. U. E. down steps and gets towards L. C.—moonlight full on*)

BOLTON. (*aside*) No one about—now is the time. (*aloud*) You have the will!

TWIST. (L.) All right, gov'nor, it's here. (*tapping outside breast pocket*) Now for the notes!

(BOLTON makes a feint of taking notes from his pocket, while TWIST does the same with respect to will, when BOLTON suddenly turns upon him, and after a short struggle throws him, L.—as BOLTON is kneeling on TWIST and takes will, OLIVE rushes forward and snatches it from BOLTON—picture—ALL advance from doorway—BOLTON turns upon OLIVE—short struggle—OLIVE throws BOLTON off, C.—as POLICE enter down steps whom D'ARCY has called on—they seize BOLTON—he struggles, throws them off and rushes into chamber, R. 3 E. followed by OLIVE—a pause—report of pistol heard, R.—GRACE and POLLY scream—music throughout.

* OLIVE. GRACE. POLLY. SCOTT. D'ARCY.

Re-enter OLIVE.

GRACE. Who fired that pistol?

OLIVE. Bolton.

GRACE. Not—not dead?

OLIVE. Dying, by his own hand. (*music, piano*)

(BOLTON brought on falls at foot of steps, C., supported by two

POLICEMEN—he motions GRACE to come near him, R. of him)

BOLTON. *in a very faint voice*) Grace, Grace, your hand. (*he takes her hand*) I told you what love could do; see, see what it has already done! (*starts wildly*) The will—the will! where is it?

OLIVE. (R., holding it up) Here!

BOLTON. (*to GRACE*) By that will you lose—lose all; tell—tell her. (*to TWIST*)

TWIST. (R., *to GRACE*) It is the truth. (*to OLIVE*) It is your title to your late cousin's property.

OLIVE. Mine!—the property mine?

GRACE. And I—I have robbed you.

OLIVE. Hush!

BOLTON. Don't blame her, she was ignorant of the contents; none but Twist and I were in the secret. Grace, there is no time to tell more; I feel it coming—coming—coming fast. Death, it—it is welcome. (*fiercely*) Death robs him (*pointing to OLIVE*) of his triumph and the law of its victim. (*dies—GRACE hides her face*)

GRACE. Dead; and it was for me he sinned—his guilt is on my head.

OLIVE. But you live to repent and ask forgiveness there. (*points to POLLY and D'ARCY*)

GRACE. (*looking at POLLY*) She never can forgive me. (*crosses and kneels to POLLY*)

D'ARCY. I know her better; she can—she will forgive you.

POLLY. (*raising GRACE*) Don't, don't kneel to me, dear; I am so glad you do not hate me now.

SCOTT. My child brought back by you!

GRACE. (*to OLIVE*) And 'tis to you I owe a sister's love.

OLIVE. Then I have my reward in full. Bob Olive has not watched in vain BEHIND THE CURTAIN!

POLICEMEN.	CROWD ON STEPS.
TWIST.	BOLTON.
GRACE.	SCOTT.
OLIVE.	POLLY.
R.	D'ARCY.

Curtain.