



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Real life

E. O. Bleackley

23497, 18, 2, 15

HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY



THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
CLASS OF 1882
OF NEW YORK

1918

REAL LIFE;

AN

ORIGINAL COMEDY DRAMA,

IN FOUR ACTS.

BY

E. O. BLEACKLEY.

LONDON:

T. H. LACY, 89, STRAND.

MANCHESTER:

J. HEYWOOD, DEANSGATE; T. SUTCLIFFE, 8, MARKET PLACE.

[*Entered at Stationers' Hall.*]

1872.

REAL LIFE:

AN

ORIGINAL COMEDY DRAMA,

IN FOUR ACTS,

BY

E. O. BLEACKLEY.

LONDON:

T. H. LACY, 89, STRAND.

MANCHESTER:

JOHN HEYWOOD, DEANS GATE; THOS. SUTCLIFFE, 8, MARKET PLACE.

[*Entered at Stationers' Hall.*]

1872,

23497.18.2.15

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918

TO
COTTY MAY:

THIS DRAMA IS DEDICATED, BECAUSE THAT NOBLE MIND
URGED THE WORK AND ENCOURAGED

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E .

THIS Drama was written as an amusement in the spring of 1870, between the hours of ten and twelve o'clock at night, amid the anxieties of an active mercantile life. Whatever its faults may be, it can at least claim the merit of originality in plot, dialogue, and incident, though I scarcely venture to imagine it will command acceptance for the stage, especially when I remember that the late Mr. Mark Lemon had seventy pieces refused in succession, which, afterwards sent to other theatres, obtained deserved success.

At the request of some personal friends I consented to publish a few copies for private circulation, and now leave REAL LIFE to take its place amongst the forgotten tomes of buried hopes.

MANCHESTER, FEBRUARY 1872.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.

TIME—THE PRESENT.

OLD HUNTER (*a rich merchant*)—drab trousers, blue coat, brass buttons.

HARRY TEMPLE (*suitor to Adeline*)—First dress: Evening Costume;
Second, Walking.

MATTHEW MAINCHANCE (*suitor to Georgina*)
ADOLPHUS ABRAMS (*a sporting Jew* } Walking dress.
MAURICE HUNTER (*Old Hunter's son* }

CAPTAIN DE SMYTHE (*in the cavalry*)—First dress: Evening; second,
Walking.

THE INVENTER (*a lunatic*)—Very shabby dress.

MICHAEL (*his keeper*)—Plain livery.

BOLTER (*Temple's tiger*)—Swell livery.

MRS. HUNTER (*a strong minded woman*)—First dress: scarlet; second,
optional.

ADELINE (*her elder daughter*)—First dress: blue; second, optional.

GEORGINA (*her younger daughter*)—First dress: white; second optional.

MISS ABRAMS (*sister to Adolphus*)—Velvet or satin dress.

SUSAN (*Mrs. Hunter's maid*)—Neat print dress.

SCENERY.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.—A Drawing Room, with curtained doors c. opening into ball room brilliantly illuminated by chandelier; practicable doors and entrances R. and L.; carpet down; chairs, table, couch in positions R. and L.; large mirror; lighted fireplace.

SCENE SECOND.—Plain lodgings; scene lowered; table and easy chair on wheels pushed on R.

SCENE THIRD.—As Scene First.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST.—Dining Room; practicable doors, and entrances R. and L.; carpet down; sideboard; chairs, table, couch in position R. and L.

SCENE SECOND.—A street in London.

SCENE THIRD.—As Scene First.

ACT III.

SCENE FIRST.—Belvoir Square; exterior of three houses, with practicable balconies; garden seat; interior a shabby chair.

ACT IV.

SCENE FIRST.—The Library; practicable doors R. and L.; entrances R., L., and C.; chairs and couch in position R. and L.; large screen L.; sideboard.

PROPERTIES.

ACT I.

Bell outside, flower stand, cakes, gloves, table bell, prompter's bell, rouge box and puff, engagement cards on salver, coffee cups and saucers, bread and butter, watch and large seals, pipe of tobacco for Hunter's pocket, spirit tray, decanter and tumbler glass, dressing gown, newspaper, white tray cloth, two nicely bound books, knitting for ladies, two gentlemen's calling cards, gong, water bottle, lady's fan.

ACT II.

A piece of knitting, decanters, glasses, dessert spread.

ACT III.

Bundle of newspapers, barrel organ, a penny, cigars, loose straw, loose flowers, a ragged mantle, straw crown, straw sceptre, large bunch of keys, large carving knife.

ACT IV.

White handkerchief to bind Temple's hand, large screen L., table bell, decanter of brandy and wine glasses on sideboard, bottle of water, open note for Adeline, a few books on table, and empty decanter.

REAL LIFE.

ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.—*A Drawing Room, with folding doors, at Burneyside Park, Lancashire, c. discovering Ball-room practicable doors R. and L. ; entrances R. and L. ; chairs, table, and couch in position R. and L. Music to begin. Lights full up.*

Bell rings from inner room, R.

Enter SUSAN L. E., running across.

SUSAN. Coming madame. Oh dear me how impatient missus is (*runs to attend*).

ADELINE enters L. I E.

ADELINE. Susan, Susan, where are my gloves? Do see if I am all straight.

SUSAN (*hands gloves*). Yes miss, beautiful (*a ring, R*). Your mamma wants me. *Exit I E. R.*

GEORGINA enters L. I E.

GEORGINA. Susan, Susan, where is my bouquet?

SUSAN (*without R. I E.*). Yes miss.

GEORGINA. Do be quick, will you.

SUSAN re-enters R. I E.

SUSAN. Well now, Miss Georgina, what do you want? (*Hands bouquet to GEORGINA.*)

ADELINE. { *together* } Are we all right?

GEORGINA. { *together* } Is mamma ready yet?

SUSAN. Oh yes, charming (*fumbles their dresses*). Your mamma is not quite ready.

• B

GEORGINA. Not quite ! It has been not quite for the last forty minutes.

ADELINE. It is always the same with mamma.

GEORGINA. Yes ; she will not be ready when the guests arrive.

ADELINE. But then mamma will make one of her grand entrances and apologies.

GEORGINA. And we shall find all the best dancers engaged, except the painfully polite old beaux, and ourselves shelved ; or we shall have to do gravity with the boys.

ADELINE (*at door, R.*). Mamma, will you be long ?

MRS. HUNTER (*within, R.*). No dear. Susan ?

SUSAN. Coming madame.

Exit, R.

GEORGINA. Now, Adeline, if you get any good partners, and I am not full, you must introduce them.

ADELINE. You must give me a periodical report then, or how shall I know ?

GEORGINA. Oh, you little booby, you know I always scribble a few ideal partners on my card, especially when all the men think it a duty to dance with the daughters of the hostess, but I invariably expunge them when an agreeable exigency presents itself.

ADELINE. Yes, and how vain the men become when they think one has displaced an engagement for their especial pleasure.

GEORGINA (*laughing*). They seem never to wonder he does not turn up.

ADELINE. How can they when they think only of their own triumph and wonderful fascination.

GEORGINA. Or the grand effect they will create at their next bachelors' dinner when they relate the inscrutable power of their own killing manners, and that Miss So-and-So was evidently smitten.

ADELINE. Never thinking that they themselves ought to be smitten or smote with deep affliction for their own insuperable vanity.

GEORGINA. But, after all, some of them are very agreeable, if one could only believe them sincere.

ADELINE. Oh, they are very sincere in one thing—in looking after girls like us with plenty of money.

GEORGINA. Well, it is only a *quid pro quo*. We covet position and title.

ADELINE. Oh, papa's money will command that.

GEORGINA. I hope so, but it has not done so far. Here comes mamma at last.

Enter MRS. HUNTER, R. SUSAN *bustling about her*.

MRS. HUNTER. Well girls, have our visitors arrived?

ADELINE. I believe one or two have.

GEORGINA. Mamma you look charming, but I fear your colour is a little too high.

MRS. HUNTER. Susan, how often have I warned you against a vulgar red. Remove the rustic flush instantly (*sits down at glass*; SUSAN *rubs off rouge*).

ADELINE. Shall we go and ask papa's opinion on our appearance?

MRS. HUNTER. Certainly not, unless you want his agonising advice and everlasting sigh. I have told him to be indisposed and keep his room until our friends have left. What sympathy has the money grub with the proper display of his elegant wife and daughters.

ADELINE. I only thought it kind, as he will be left all evening alone.

MRS. HUNTER. Adeline, your vulgarity distresses me. *You* were never intended for the fashionable world.

ADELINE. Perhaps not mamma; but I wish every one to be happy, and must candidly confess I would rather papa assumed his proper position as host.

MRS. HUNTER. Yes, to shew the humility of your origin I presume. Young lady I have a great mind to banish you also.

ADELINE. Oh no mamma. Do not be angry. I only thought it would look better to have papa present. People must notice his absence, and that he never accompanies us into society, and very rarely to the opera.

MRS. HUNTER. So much the better. The only place where I can trust him to keep his mouth shut; and now, for a time at least, we shall escape the horror of his mercantile mind.

ADELINE. Well, but mamma, it is the achievement of that mercantile mind which has surrounded us with the luxuries

we now enjoy, and enabled us to indulge in every extravagance which we can conceive.

MRS. HUNTER. Yes, to box us up in a big country house, banished from the *beau monde*; with no sound but the grunting of pigs, or the cackling of fowls; no neighbours except coarse country wives. Adeline, little of my blood runs in your veins. Oh, I should die but for my beloved London season, and that the bear begrudes us. We are then at least three months free from his croaking about expenses and future ruin.

ADELINE. I cannot but think after all that papa really wishes us to be happy.

MRS. HUNTER. After his fashion possibly, although I can never descend to the level of his vulgar ideas. But miss you had better keep your room after all, for your primitive notions serve only to annoy your elegant sister and myself.

ADELINE. I am then, indeed, sorry to have expressed them (*weeps*).

SUSAN. Two gentlemen have arrived, madame.

MRS. HUNTER. (*To ADELINE.*) Then dry your eyes and banish this silly sentimentality. Georgina dearest are you in good spirits?

GEORGINA. Tolerably good mamma.

MRS. HUNTER. My own darling child.

Enter SERVANT, C.

SERVANT. Captain de Smythe and Mr. Temple.

Enter Captain DE SMYTHE, and TEMPLE lingers behind a little.

MRS. HUNTER. Ah, Captain! I am delighted to see you, and how kind of you to come early.

CAPT. DE S. The cautious general, madame, should always reconnoitre the field before the battle begins; and, as I have taken the liberty of bringing an ally with me, I thought an early advance would afford me the only chance of explaining myself. My particular friend is on a flying visit to me. Permit me to present Mr. Harry Temple (*TEMPLE and MRS. HUNTER mutually bow*).

MRS. HUNTER. Mr. Temple is heartily welcome at Burney-side Park. (*CAPTAIN saunters to ADELINE and GEORGINA and shakes hands. Ladies and gentlemen of ballet enter at in-*

tervals and take seats. Occasionally welcomed by ADELINE and GEORGINA, who shake hands with them. The gentlemen hand cards to ladies from table. Waiter hands round coffee on a tray.) I must express my gratitude to Captain de Smythe for your very *apropos* visit, as one or two gentlemen have unwillingly been compelled to disappoint me at the very last moment.

TEMPLE. Madame, the graceful courtesy of your welcome relieves any fear of intrusion, and more than justifies the liberty taken by Captain de Smythe in so earnestly pressing me to accompany him.

(Band, behind scenes, strikes up a lively dance pianissimo. Dancers pass and re-pass the folding doors c. in inner room.)

MRS. HUNTER *(bows)*. Excuse me a moment *(welcomes guests and talks dumb show)*.

TEMPLE. Certainly. *(Takes a seat, R. Waiter hands him coffee)*.

CAPTAIN (L.) *saunters in front with GEORGINA on his arm.*

CAPT. Will you have any more coffee.

GEORGINA. No, thanks. Had we not better commence our pedal gymnastics.

CAPT. Delighted I'm sure. *(They go to Ball-room doors, CAPTAIN nods at TEMPLE, and commence dancing. Music more subdued.)*

Re-enter MRS. HUNTER, C.

MRS. HUNTER. Mr. Temple, if you like dancing, I shall be happy to enlist your services for some of my young friends.

TEMPLE *(rises)*. Command me madame.

MRS. HUNTER. Your obedience shall soon be tested *(again leaves him)*.

Re-enter CAPTAIN and GEORGINA, C. He places her on a side seat, bows, and saunters towards TEMPLE, who is quietly sipping coffee.

CAPT. Still reconnoitring Harry. What do you think of that last importation, eh?

TEMPLE. The exterior is certainly prepossessing, but how are the rooms furnished?

CAPT. Rooms, eh ; headpieces I suppose you mean.

TEMPLE. Yes ; all the same. Have you known the Hunters long ?

CAPT. Hitherto only slightly ; but my invitation to-night indicates a wish on their part to renew the acquaintance. I first met them at Scarborough last season, just before my leave expired, but too late to make acute observations. The father is a money grub—only seen him twice. The old woman fancies herself in music, adores Giuglini, hates dinner parties, snubs her husband, and is open to any quantity of flattery. The girls are green—flighty ; but not unmanageable or *blasé*. Elder, natural ; younger, fast ; but both very obedient to mamma. Had no time to discover more, but if you like to take the field I will at once introduce you to the young ladies.

TEMPLE. Thanks. (CAPTAIN *advances to ADELINE, L, and talks in dumb show*). (*Aside.*) An interesting family truly. I will accept De Smythe's offer, and prosecute my studies in this direction further. And now to open the campaign.

CAPTAIN *saunters down stage with ADELINE on his arm.*

CAPT. Ah, Temple, I have obtained Miss Hunter's permission to present you. (*To ADELINE.*) My friend, Mr. Harry Temple.

TEMPLE (*bows*). I am delighted to have the honour of making Miss Hunter's acquaintance ; and she will increase my happiness by permitting me to inscribe my name as her cavalier in the earliest dance for which she may be disengaged.

ADELINE. I shall have very great pleasure. (*Hands her card. TEMPLE writes on it.*)

CAPT. May I ask you to take charge of Miss Hunter now, as I am engaged for this dance.

TEMPLE. I shall esteem it an honour. (*Offers arm to ADELINE. They saunter. CAPTAIN offers arm to GEORGINA, and they re-enter Ball-room. Low dance music continues, and dies slowly away. The heavy cloth curtains which overhang folding doors are gradually lowered to shut out Ball-room for a time.*) Permit me to have the felicity of obeying your commands. Where shall I conduct you ? Do you enjoy Winter's Paradise—the Ball-room ?

ADELINE. Your opinion is expressed in the sentiment, and

I confess I do, although at the risk of being unfashionable in order to be truthful.

TEMPLE. Surely no fashion can approve of deception.

ADELINE. I fear I sometimes sin by admitting I am pleased.

TEMPLE. But do you not think the *nil admirari* theory rather cold-blooded.

ADELINE. I do, indeed, for it is such a simple as well as an honest tribute to those who endeavour to please us to confess they have succeeded.

TEMPLE. It is only just ; and I appreciate the heart that is considerate for the pain or pleasure of others.

ADELINE. I fear you have made a very unfashionable admission, although I allow the sentiment to be quite in unison with my own.

TEMPLE. The world would be happier if it were more natural.

ADELINE. Why that is papa's idea, for he alleges everything is being turned upside down.

TEMPLE. So think many, though they dare not be honest enough to say so.

ADELINE. You and papa would agree amazingly.

TEMPLE. I shall be delighted to make his acquaintance.

ADELINE. You had better reserve that opinion until it is more experienced.

TEMPLE. But your admission justifies it.

ADELINE. You must not interpret me too literally.

TEMPLE. Your own words suggested it ; and I honour the man who dare give a candid expression to the natural dictates of his own heart, unfettered by custom, undismayed by fashion. Fashion is excellent so long as it is confined to civility and politeness, but despicable when it degenerates into insincerity.

ADELINE. Your ideas are not general in these modern days.

TEMPLE. Possibly ; but do I wrong your opinions when I venture to believe they agree with mine ?

ADELINE. Do you seek the office of father confessor ?

TEMPLE. Pardon me if I have exceeded the bounds of courtesy.

ADELINE. You have not ; yet still I cannot allow you to know all I believe and think.

TEMPLE. It were unpardonable in me to hope it.

ADELINE. Yet I am free to confess my gratification in finding one who regards my old-fashioned ideas with concurrence.

TEMPLE. There are many things which our modern age calls "old fashioned" which I should regret to see abandoned.

ADELINE. Really you will persuade me I am talking to one of the old philosophers.

TEMPLE. Philosophy is too high a name with which to dignify my opinion. Let us call it common honesty. (*Curtains are gradually drawn aside again. Dancing discovered. MRS. HUNTER looks in, R.*)

ADELINE. Be it as you choose ; but I must bring our conversation to a termination as I see mamma anxious to speak to me.

Music swells louder.

TEMPLE. Permit me to conduct you thither.

ADELINE. With pleasure. (*Takes his proffered arm. All enter Ball-room. Dancing resumed with vigour. Curtains re-close. Music dies away. Old HUNTER enters stealthily round at side door, L. E.*)

Enter Old HUNTER.

OLD HUNTER. All seems quiet after the clatter. (*looks at watch*). Dear me, one o'clock. I wonder whether they are at supper, or gone home. I am not good enough, eh, to appear among the grand folks in my own house, but I am good enough to pay the shot for all that. My wife says I should retard the girls prospects by my appearance, and so I am to be indisposed and keep my room (*sighs*). I have a good mind to get very indisposed on gin and water, and I will too (*rings bell*).

Enter SERVANT.

Spirits.

SERVANT. What, here Sir !

OLD HUNTER. Yes ; anywhere I like. (*Exit SERVANT astonished.*) My family seem to have more regard for their

own pleasure than the comfort of their poor old father (*sighs*). (*Re-enter WAITER with spirit tray, and exits with grimace of disgust. HUNTER deliberately helps himself.*) Ah, well, I was young myself once, but there were no dancing days for me then. Bed and work have always been my lot, and ever will be so (*sighs*). However, I feel proud to know the young folks enjoy themselves, and flutter among the grandest. It gives zest to my work when I think I am providing for all these extravagances by my lucky speculations independent of my regular business (*sighs*). All the reward I ask is filial affection—gratitude (*sits in easy chair*), and I will work on, and find them plenty of money to squander, and dazzle those who fawn and flatter before my face, and call me old money grub behind my back (*sighs*). Money grub, eh. What is the world without money? A workhouse. What does everybody run after? Money. It levels everything—it buys everything—it swamps everything (*sighs*). There is but one virtue and one vice; the virtue of having money, or the vice of being without it (*lights a pipe taken from pocket*). Who knows but one of my girls may attract a baronet or a lord? If she does he shall soon be a duke. Who knows but I may have for a son-in-law an eloquent member of Parliament? If I have he shall soon be Prime Minister (*sighs*). Poor lords are common enough; but they must have gambled to be poor. If my son-in-law gambles I will only give him an allowance (*sighs*). I think, after all, a rising M.P. is safer than a lord, for he has no time to squander his means when he is labouring for his country and his own reputation (*sighs*). Yes, one of my girls shall marry a clever M.P. No matter if he is poor; if he has brains I will find the money. Brains and money! What a godlike mixture. No end to their influence. Glorious! (*suppresses a chuckle and takes the stage*). Ah, ah, glorious! My son-in-law the talented member for Tinsley Bongs. Did you read his great speech on the wrongs of fettered commerce? It thrilled the heart of the country—it struck terror into the vampires (*chuckles*). Grand. How the worldly idiots would fawn and scrape when they saw his father-in-law (*rubs his hands*), and whisper with awe—the right honourable gentleman married his daughter (*laughs*). Aye, he should have plenty of money, and I would get it all

back by the prompt action of anticipation through an inspired knowledge of what was going to be done. An intended city improvement would provide the young folks pocket money ; a coming railway, or probable war, would find them a fortune ; and my high-minded son-in-law would never suspect that his unguarded expressions to the simple father of his wife had provided the needful (*walks about chuckling and rubbing his hands*). Yes. I will have an M.P. son-in-law, they are safer. I had hopes of my own son Maurice once, but his mother has turned him into a fool, though I dare not tell her so (*sighs*) ; her mistaken kindness of holidays and sweets have grown him into a weakly milksop. There my hopes are ruined indeed, and the makings of a man will be distorted into an allowed nonentity. (*Sighs. GEORGINA and ADELINE heard laughing and talking outside ; puts pipe in pocket*).

Enter ADELINE, GEORGINA, and MRS. HUNTER. They run to fire, not noticing HUNTER, except ADELINE, who rushes to HUNTER and kisses him.

ADELINE. Well, papa, dear, whatever have you stayed up for.

GEORGINA. Yes, papa, we did not expect you to wait for us when there are so many servants in the house.

MRS. HUNTER (*warming herself at the fire, with her back contemptuously towards HUNTER*). Perhaps your father is under the impression he will save their wages by it.

OLD HUNTER. Well, well, dear wife, I did not think that I should, but I wanted to hear if my girls had enjoyed themselves, and who has been here. There is no harm, I hope.

MRS. HUNTER (*turning sharply round*). I believe you have been drinking.

OLD HUNTER. Yes, I have had one glass of grog and a pipe.

MRS. HUNTER. Grog and a pipe ! In the drawing room too !—Plebeian.

OLD HUNTER (*to girls*). Well, I see plain enough balls do not improve your mamma's temper.

ADELINE. Yes, mamma, we really ought to regard it as a compliment that papa has stayed up for us.

MRS. HUNTER. Stayed up for drink, you mean.

OLD HUNTER. Well, well, mother, I thought I might be excused one glass of grog, for my old blood gets chilled at this hour of the morning.

MRS. HUNTER. You have always some disgusting reason to assign.

OLD HUNTER. Well, well, keep your temper ; I'll take no more.

MRS. HUNTER. I suppose you have been eaves dropping to-night, as usual.

OLD HUNTER. You asked me to oblige you by being indisposed, therefore, as I promised, I kept my room until all was quiet, and I thought the company had gone.

MRS. HUNTER. You surely would not have disgraced us by exposing yourself in your present costume.

OLD HUNTER. I could soon have put my black clothes on had I been requested.

MRS. HUNTER. Reserve them for funerals. They are not fit for society.

OLD HUNTER. I am very much obliged to you. My tailor would break his heart if he heard you speak so disrespectfully of his handicraft.

MRS. HUNTER. Your tailor is a fool, like some of his customers.

OLD HUNTER. How polite you are getting. Society is giving you an extra polish. (*Drawing a chair.*) Well girls tell me whom you have met, and how you have enjoyed yourselves. Were you admired ? for none would be better dressed, or look handsomer.

ADELINÉ (*laughing*). Bravo, papa, you are truly gallant.

GEORGINA. I did not like the ball a bit. The men were stupid and common, and I did not know a quarter of them. All mamma's friends. I never enjoyed myself less.

MRS. HUNTER. Now, Georgy, Captain de Smythe was most courteous and polite to me. But I can always get on with a true bred gentleman ; with cads, never.

OLD HUNTER. What does my Adeline say ?

ADELINÉ. I really enjoyed myself very much, papa.

GEORGINA. One would imagine so, from the intense flirtation you had with that newly-found friend of Captain de Smythe.

OLD HUNTER. What is his name, and who is he Adeline ?

ADELINE. Mr. Henry Temple. I do not know who he is, but his manners convince me that he is a true gentleman, and from what little I could learn he is about to enter Parliament.

OLD HUNTER (*suddenly rising*). Parliament ! Is he clever ?

ADELINE. Very ; at least his language indicates it.

MRS. HUNTER. He is undoubtedly a gentleman, for he was most attentive to my wants at supper. (*Sniffs.*) What a filthy smell of tobacco and drink.

GEORGINA. Now, mamma, don't go on so. I do not know what you and Adeline see in Mr. Temple, but he did not pay me any attention. I think he is thoroughly satisfied with the good opinion he has formed—of himself.

ADELINE. Now, Georgy, that is downright libellous, for I never met a more sensible fellow.

GEORGINA. I suppose you also think everyone is of the same opinion.

ADELINE. Surely he contrasts favourably with Mr. Matthew Mainchance.

GEORGINA. To my mind—decidedly not.

ADELINE. How lucky tastes differ, so very much.

OLD HUNTER. Never mind, Adeline. I will accept your judgment.

MRS. HUNTER (*sarcastically*). How rational.

OLD HUNTER. Well, don't be always snapping at me. Surely I can form an opinion.

MRS. HUNTER. Certainly not, when you have never seen the subject of it.

OLD HUNTER. Well, but I soon will. Adeline give me his address, and I will ask him to dinner on Sunday.

MRS. HUNTER. Sunday ! He is not a tradesman to go out to dinner on a Sunday.

ADELINE. I do not know his address, papa ; besides it would not look well to ask him to dinner on so short an acquaintance.

OLD HUNTER. If he is a friend of de Smythe's I will tell him to bring him along with him.

MRS. HUNTER. That is the most sensible phrase I have heard you utter to-night.

OLD HUNTER. Ha, ha; I am not such a fool after all you see.

MRS. HUNTER. Query.

OLD HUNTER. I dreamt of an M.P. to-night.

GEORGINA. Indeed! Who was he?

OLD HUNTER (*scratching his head*). I am rather confused. I will endeavour to remember, and tell you all about it in a day or two.

MRS. HUNTER. Wonderful reticence.

ADELIN (*rising*). Really it is time to retire; we shall be talking here till daylight. Good night, dear papa. (*Kisses him. Exit.*)

OLD HUNTER. Good night, my darling. May Providence guard thee.

GEORGINA. Good night, papa. (*Exit.*)

OLD HUNTER. Good night.

MRS. HUNTER. I'm going. I suppose you prefer grog and a pipe, to sicken me with your Bacchanalian breath, monster. (*Exit.*)

OLD HUNTER. I'm coming. (*Sighs.*) Oh, how I could slave for one kind word from that woman. The more I pile luxury upon her, the less I am appreciated. (*Sighs.*) Not being the master of my own house, I am the ridicule of my friends, and the wet blanket of my family. This should not, and shall not be, much longer, I am resolved. (*Scene is lowered.*)

SCENE SECOND.—*Harry Temple's Lodgings; table and easy chair pushed on at side, R. I E.*

Enter TEMPLE, habited in dressing gown, reading newspaper, followed by BOLTER, carrying breakfast tray, white cloth, tea things, and hand bell.

TEMPLE. Bolter! Breakfast.

BOLTER. Ready, sir. (*Exit.*)

TEMPLE (*sits*). The debate was protracted. Stafford acquitted himself admirably. His arguments were conclusive—the division a squeak. And so this motion is again lost, and the country starves. Oh, I would give worlds to be in the House, and permitted to speak on this great question. I wonder if my time will ever come. How

anxiously I wait for advice from my agent Bosky as to the possible chance of my election for the enlightened borough of Chizzle-em-quick. I pine in solitude—I rust by inaction, waiting for a chance which never seems nearer. (*Rings bell. Enter BOLTER.*) Any letters?

BOLTER. Post not arrived, sir.

TEMPLE. Enquire. (*Exit BOLTER.*) Thus I pass a wasted life, nourishing hopes constantly doomed to disappointment—burning to save my down-trodden country. My hopes and fears rise and fall with every rumour—every chance of success, and I am either in the depth of despair, or on the pinnacle of bliss. I fear no poor man has much chance of entering Parliament, unless he chooses to be the slave of a clique, or the nominee of a wealthy landowner.

Enter BOLTER and CAPTAIN DE SMYTHE in walking dress.

BOLTER. No letter, sir. Captain de Smythe. (*Places chair, cup, and exit.*)

CAPT. Well, Harry, how do you find yourself after last night's dissipation.

TEMPLE. Pretty well in health, but somewhat infirm in temper.

CAPT. Why, it was a jolly ball.

TEMPLE. Oh, hang the ball. I have been reading the debate.

CAPT. Hang the debate. Leave such dry subjects for spouting tyros, or place-hunting toadies. Now, tell me, was it not a jolly dance. I thought you enjoyed it, for I saw you deeply engrossed with Miss Hunter, and I imagined you were taking my hint kindly—"Making hay whilst the sun shines," eh. Stick to her old boy. Marry her, and her father's money will soon get you a seat in the national debating society.

TEMPLE. You sadly mistake my character. Much as I want money and covet position, I will never marry for it.

CAPT. You possess a virtue very scarce in these modern days, when self-interest is everywhere paramount.

TEMPLE. I should despise myself were I to adopt such a heartless theory. I should ever doubt but that I was doubted. A marriage for money and money alone is neither more nor

less than a legal prostitution. A lie in the face of heaven. No good could ever come of such an union. (*Takes the stage.*) Let us change the subject.

CAPT. Well, whether aided by the advantages of a wealthy alliance, or the manly passport of your own merits, I wish you were in the House with all my soul. Fellows like you ought to be there. Virtue is so scarce, and patriotism now-a-days is generally sacrificed to demagoguery.

TEMPLE. My chance of getting there seems as remote as ever.

CAPT. Never mind, you have so much more time to enjoy yourself.

TEMPLE. You talk as if life were made for pleasure instead of duty.

CAPT. Faith, if a man has the option, I think him a fool to choose the latter.

TEMPLE. And I think if he does he is a mere food-consuming cipher.

CAPT. Well, ciphers are necessary, you know, to swell out the numerals, else how could we arrive at great aggregates.

TEMPLE. I cannot grumble if you are content with the selection, but for my own part I should prefer to be a leading figure.

CAPT. I have no objection, provided when you are Prime Minister you make it one of your first duties to see me gazetted to a colonelcy.

TEMPLE. Such disinterested motives are worthy of the highest reward.

CAPT. Remember, then, always to bear them in mind.

TEMPLE. The claim is too irresistible to be withstood.

CAPT. Gad, I wish you were Prime Minister to-morrow.

TEMPLE. For your own good, I presume.

CAPT. When I study my own good I am considering the country's as well. Efficiency and economy is now the cry; but tell me, what do you really think of Miss Hunter?

TEMPLE. The subjects of your enquiries are somewhat diffuse, but for your own private satisfaction I must admit she has many qualities which it were well if she had not; but having them—they become her.

CAPT. I am not good at riddles. Explain yourself.

TEMPLE. Why need I be more explicit, when I scarcely know my own opinion concerning her.

CAPT. Good! She has evidently occupied your thoughts, or you would not have so much difficulty in forming an opinion.

TEMPLE. I have no wish to wrong her by a false one, therefore I have not adopted any. I have lived long enough to know that ample opportunity for judgment should always be afforded before any lady is elevated into an angel, or denounced as a she-devil. Would the world generally were as deliberate before jumping at a conclusion.

CAPT. I see, a case of "doats yet doubts."

TEMPLE. No, not exactly that. I dare not doat, and have no reason to doubt

CAPT. Oh, you make yourself sure of conquest, then. I had a presentiment that either her person, her manners, or her voice would charm you.

TEMPLE. Her voice—oh, yes! Her notes are tremulous with feeling. She spoke to me in tones of liquid music, as if an *Æolian* harp of passing sweetness had just been fanned by the dying breeze of a summers' day.

CAPT. Oh, Jupiter, Mars, Bacchus, Apollo. That is quite sufficient my friend. I am now thoroughly convinced that you are over head and ears in love. However, if you wish to improve the occasion, I am calling on the Hunter's this morning to enquire with medical anxiety as to the state of their charming healths, and you may accompany me if you wish.

TEMPLE. Your consideration is most kind and I willingly accept your offer.

CAPTAIN. Put on your hat, then, and come along. My drag waits at the door.

TEMPLE. "Lead on, I'll follow thee," said the noble Dane.

CAPTAIN. "On to victory or death," is the soldier's motto.

TEMPLE. Startling option, but let us calmly await the *denouement*. Give me a moment for preparation, and I am yours. (*Exit, both arm in arm. The table and chairs are noiselessly pulled off R. I E., by the black strings attached to them,*

Scene rises discovering SCENE THIRD as SCENE FIRST.—*Young ladies knitting and reading. MRS. HUNTER has a red shawl over her head, as if suffering from cold; her legs on a chair reading.*

MRS. HUNTER. What a noble fellow Guy Livingstone was. Oh, how delightful it would be if one could meet such a man in everyday life. (*Casts the book aside*). But splendid men are very scarce. Girls, whenever you marry choose a handsome, dashing, and accomplished man. A true gentleman, mind, not an old whining money-bag, like your father. Some one you feel proud to look at, and reflect that he is yours. Oh! if you knew the misery of being tied, bound hand and foot, to an unsympathetic nature, with no feeling in common; no advice but expostulation; no conversation but a whimper of despair.

GEORGINA. You paint marriage in such gloomy colours, mamma, that it is enough to deter we poor girls from ever entertaining the subject. But for my own part I should like some one to take care of me when I am old, and you both are gone, and I hope I may have as indulgent a husband as papa has been to you.

MRS. HUNTER. You are utterly ignorant of the subject you presume to discuss, Georgina.

GEORGINA. Why, what on earth has papa ever done to deserve such constant and severe censure.

MRS. HUNTER. Hitherto I have kept sacred my own peculiar sorrow, but as you both have arrived at an age when you ought to be able to judge for yourselves and form judicious alliances, I will tell you my own miserable history.

ADELINÉ. I shall feel deeply interested in its recital, mamma.

GEORGINA. Do commence. We are all attention.

MRS. HUNTER. Very well, then, let me have no interruptions. Listen attentively, and gain experience at my bitter cost. My father was a disreputable drunkard. He beggared himself, and I was in consequence sold to the highest matrimonial bidder. I married your father for a home. For years I tried to love him, but his vulgarity invariably disgusted me, and when once he returned from a country rent dinner, inflamed with wine, I indignantly

D

repelled his loathsome caresses. He struck me! I left him—and secretly fled to the house of a trusty friend. He sought me everywhere, and in a month he found me. He begged my forgiveness, and entreated my return. My friends were not able to maintain me, so I consented on one condition:—that I should ever after have my own undisputed way in everything. He loved me madly, and promised me all I asked. Up to the present moment he has kept his word. But I have had a sweet, an ample revenge. I have insulted his advances; I have banished his friends; I have lavished his money, and the poor despicable fool still wears his yoke with unrebelling meekness.

ADELINE. Really, mamma, whatever papa's faults may have been, he is a kind and indulgent father. Surely the atonement of a life's devotion ought to wipe out the blot of one sad mistake.

MRS. HUNTER. Adeline, you are impertinent when you presume to advise your mother, and I regret that recently I have had more than one occasion to chide your ostensible affection for your maudlin father. Is it for this I have brought you up? Have watched over and educated you? "Oh, how keener than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child." I am ashamed of you, and despise you.

ADELINE (*weeps*). I have no wish to be undutiful, and from my inmost heart I desire to love both you and papa with a true and daughterlike affection.

MRS. HUNTER. The thing is impossible. If you love him, you cannot love me.

ADELINE (*advances weeping, and puts her arms round MRS. HUNTER'S neck*). Oh, mamma! dearest mamma! do not say so. Remember the sacred vow you made at church to "love, honour, and obey."

MRS. HUNTER (*spurning her away*). Am I to be taught my duty, and by a child like you. Leave me this instant, you unnatural girl, and remain in your room until you are recalled by me.

ADELINE. I obey. May Heaven change your heart. (*Exit sobbing*).

GEORGINA. Mamma, I think you rather too severe on poor Adeline. She does not mean anything wrong, but she has no politic way of expressing herself,

MRS. HUNTER. Hold your tongue. I suppose next you will be as bad as she is, and both my girls will desert their fond mother. (*Sobs. Enter SERVANT, with card tray, MRS. H. takes off cards and reads, CAPTAIN DE SMYTHE, MR. HARRY TEMPLE.*) Show them in. (*Exit SERVANT. MRS. H. throws red shawl off her head, rushes to mirror and arranges herself, both bustle about, and regally sit down just as*)

Enter CAPTAIN and TEMPLE.

CAPT. My dear Mrs. Hunter I have done myself the honour of calling to enquire if you had survived the fatigues of last evening, and meeting my friend, Temple, have taken the liberty of bringing him along with me.

MRS. HUNTER (*graciously*). Any friend of yours, Captain de Smythe, is always welcome, but when it embraces a man of Mr. Temple's reputation he is more especially so.

(*CAPTAIN advances ; shakes hands with GEORGINA, and talks dum show.*)

TEMPLE. My dear madame you relieve the anxiety I naturally felt in introducing myself for the second time into your family circle.

MRS. HUNTER. Let me assure Mr. Temple he will always be welcome under our poor roof.

TEMPLE. Miss Georgina, permit me to pay my respectful considerations to you also.

GEORGINA (*bows*). I was scarcely prepared, Mr. Temple, for so distinguished an honour.

TEMPLE. You overwhelm me ; but I hope there is no hidden satire intended, and which I may have deserved. Is your sister quite well ?

MRS. HUNTER. She is at present reading in her room. She is a very ardent student, and frequently leaves us to pursue her researches in quietude. (*Rings bell. Enter SERVANT.*) Summon Miss Hunter from her room, and say that Captain de Smythe and Mr. Temple are here.

Exit SERVANT.

CAPT. And how is Mr. Hunter? He makes himself as scarce as an angel's visit, and is as secluded as a hermit.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, thank you, he is quite well, but at present absorbed in that fascinating subject called commerce ;

but I expect him home presently, and if you will so far honour us you may see him at luncheon.

CAPT. Thanks. Neither myself nor Temple have any prior engagement, and we will gladly accept your proffered hospitality.

MRS. HUNTER. We shall regard it as an honour. Mr. Temple I really hope we may include you.

TEMPLE. I shall be most happy. I have a great wish to make Mr. Hunter's acquaintance, and none the less so from the favourable impression created by his charming wife and daughters.

MRS. HUNTER. Really, Mr. Temple, you will confuse me if you continue so complimentary.

TEMPLE. I am sure I cannot be the first by very many who have uttered the same opinion.

Enter ADELINE neatly attired and pale.

ADELINE (*shakes hands with CAPTAIN*). Captain de Smythe I am glad to see you. How kind of you to call. (*Coldly.*) Mr. Temple you are welcome.

Luncheon gong sounds.

MRS. HUNTER. Come, gentlemen, the luncheon signal.

(CAPTAIN *offers* MRS. H. *his arm*; GEORGINA *follows*.
Exeunt.)

TEMPLE. Miss Hunter, I fear you are not well.

ADELINE. Quite, I assure you, except a slight headache. Do I look so woe-begone that you should think so. (*Smiles.*)

TEMPLE. I am relieved by your assurance, and confess my Esculapian perception in error.

ADELINE. You philosophers are not always right, you see.

TEMPLE. In this case I am glad to be mistaken.

ADELINE. For why?

TEMPLE. Can not Miss Hunter imagine that there are some whose presence even for the first time awakens an unaccountable—an irrepressible sympathy.

ADELINE. Indeed. (*Sighs.*) I have been very sad.

TEMPLE. Are there any means at my command to relieve it?

ADELINE. None. It is a secret sorrow.

TEMPLE. It would vanish by being shared.

ADELINE. I am sure Mr. Temple is too well bred to ask an inconvenient question.

TEMPLE. Forgive me if my anxiety carried me beyond the bounds of politeness.

ADELINE. I have nothing to forgive, and can understand Mr. Temple's inquiry, although I cannot satisfy it. (*Sinks into a chair.*)

TEMPLE. You are not well !

ADELINE. Ring for a servant. (*Faints.*)

TEMPLE. Oh, Heaven, what have I done. (*Chafes her hands, gets water, damps her forehead, kisses her hand.*) My suffering angel !— I am spell bound ! What can be the cause of all this ! (*Fans her.*)

Enter OLD HUNTER C. Stands at door observing with astonishment.

TEMPLE. Oh, one word ! one look ! Adeline ! dearest Adeline ! look up. (*Kneels and takes her hand.*) Where is the bell ! (*Rises and rushes into OLD HUNTER'S arms.*) A thousand pardons, sir. Will you kindly summon the servants.

OLD HUNTER. Sir, may I enquire your name ?

TEMPLE. Temple, sir, and yours ?

OLD HUNTER. That young lady's father, sir.

ADELINE. (*awakes and murmurs.*) Papa, dearest papa.

OLD HUNTER. Adeline, my darling.

ADELINE. (*faintly and staring vacantly.*) I am very ill, papa. Do you know Mr. Temple ?

OLD HUNTER. No, darling. Has he offended you ?

ADELINE. (*starting.*) Oh, no, papa. *He* has been very kind. Mr. Temple, my father. I am very ill. (*Swoons again.*)

TEMPLE. I hope to be your friend, sir. Will you remain here whilst I run for a doctor.

OLD HUNTER. Yes ! (*stares at ADELINE wildly*) oh, yes ! kind sir—Fly !

TEMPLE. I will not return without help. (*Rushes out.*)

OLD HUNTER. Adeline, my darling, look up. My suffering child. (*Kisses her.*) Whatever can be the cause of all this. Has that fellow wounded her feelings, or shocked her sensibility. Oh, if I thought so, I would brain him. No, it cannot be—I wrong him. Villainy does not lie under

a face like that, or my knowledge of physiognomy is much deceived. (*Carries ADELINE to a couch.*) There, darling, you will be easier now. (*Bathes her head.*) Adeline, dear Adeline, speak to me one little word, and relieve my pent-up feelings. When will the doctor come?

ADELINE (*slowly recovering*). Papa.

OLD HUNTER. I am here, my child. (*Kneels at her side.*)

ADELINE (*puts her arm round his neck and sobs*). Where is Mr. Temple. Gone! What will he think of me.

OLD HUNTER. Has Mr. Temple said anything to annoy you.

ADELINE. Oh, no! He was most kind.

OLD HUNTER. Was he the cause of your distress.

ADELINE. He was not.

OLD HUNTER. Who was then?

ADELINE. Do not ask me, papa. My illness is not in any way attributable to Mr. Temple, but he happened to arrive when I could no longer command my feelings.

OLD HUNTER. Who violated them? I insist on knowing.

Enter MRS. HUNTER and GEORGINA.

ADELINE (*reluctantly*). Mamma.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, indeed, and you are my dutiful daughter.

GEORGINA. She is my suffering sister. (*Advances towards ADELINE.*)

(*ADELINE falls fainting into OLD HUNTER's arms.*)

OLD HUNTER. And my darling child.

MRS. HUNTER (*with uplifted hands*). Can this be real!

TABLEAU.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE FIRST.—HUNTER'S *Dining Room. Practical doors R. and L. ; entrances R. and L. ; chairs, table, and couch in position. Lights full up.*

ADELINE *discovered knitting.*

ADELINE. "There are some whose presence even for the first time awakens an unaccountable — an irrepressible sympathy." How these words ring in my ears, and yet they may mean nothing but a well bred compliment. Still I am almost sure, when I fainted away, I heard the same manly voice whisper—"Adeline, dearest Adeline !" Was I deceived, or was my overwrought nature merely dreaming of happiness as a counterpoise to the misery of that sad night.

Enter GEORGINA R.

GEORGINA. Well, Adeline, dear, I am glad to see you so much better, but you really must not excite yourself any more.

ADELINE. I will not Georgy. I am determined to restrain myself for the future, but when mamma was so severe my heart was aching, and I could not bear her rebuke.

GEORGINA. When she wrung your heart, she wounded mine, but we must forgive her passionate temper, for the sake of the warm love she bears us both.

ADELINE. I wish she would spare a little for papa as well. Has anyone called to-day ?

GEORGINA. No, dear. Did you expect any one ?

ADELINE. Has Mr. Temple been ?

GEORGINA. Not that I am aware of Del. I more than half suspect that he deserves some blame for your illness. What is there in Mr. Temple different to other men which has so fascinated you ? He is clever, I admit, but he is also proud and poor,

ADELINE. I am aware of it. Honourable pride is a great virtue in a man.

GEORGINA. Yes ; but should his poverty suggest you as simply the means for its relief?

ADELINE. I would refuse him although it broke my heart. But why make these cruel suggestions, when his attentions have probably no meaning beyond civility?

GEORGINA. Because I believe they have. To you he spoke in the low diffident tones of tender budding love ; to others he was voluble and merry. I marked the difference well, I assure you, and understand the meaning ; besides, he well knows we are rich heiresses.

ADELINE. Oh ! what a bitter degrading rival is money. To be beloved and doubt its inspiration ; to fear to love, for fear the thing beloved should be unworthy. Oh, would to Heaven I were a poor girl, for then I should have none of these harrowing doubts, and my spontaneous nature could gush in faithful and requited love.

GEORGINA. Yes, how nice. Romantic, but not practical. The days of love in a cottage and cold mutton are exploded. No girl in her senses now dreams of such a thing after she is seventeen. This is the age of progress—reform—go a head right or wrong—move on.

ADELINE. It is a cold unfeeling world, and I hate it.

GEORGINA. So do all girls in love, who cannot get exactly their own way. However, if Mr. Temple should propose to you, take my advice—pause. Think of struggling genius, disappointed hopes, and the difficulty of rising without money.

ADELINE. I hate such mercenary theories. Give me genius, even if it has to struggle—rather than the wealthiest boor ; besides, mamma says no, girl ought to marry a man unless she feels proud of him. Oh, how proud I should be of Harry ; how joyous to sympathise, to encourage, and to share his reputation. For he will be renowned, I am sure, when he gets into Parliament. That voice will both persuade and convince. How my heart would swell with rapture when he elicited the tumultuous applause of listening crowds. What a glorious destiny would then be mine.

Enter SERVANT L.

SERVANT. Mr. Temple. (*Exit.*)

GEORGINA. Oh, dear ; the crisis has arrived. (*Exit R.*)

Enter TEMPLE L.

TEMPLE. My dear Miss Hunter do not rise. I am delighted to see you so much better—better than my hopes anticipated. Do you find yourself quite convalescent.

ADELINE. Very many thanks for your kind enquiries during my illness. I think I may now pronounce myself out of the doctor's hands.

TEMPLE. Such an announcement from your lips affords me the liveliest satisfaction.

ADELINE. I am surprised to find that my health can be a matter of such great interest to Mr. Temple.

TEMPLE. Adel—pardon me—Miss Hunter's health is ever *de*—always interesting to *me*.

ADELINE. Are you in the habit of taking these sudden interests ?

TEMPLE. I am not, and if my sympathy is offensive it is my duty at once to withdraw it.

ADELINE (*laughing*). I should never survive the loss.

TEMPLE. Miss Hunter, I fear I have called inopportunately, and will at once retire.

ADELINE. Now, really that is very ungallant, especially when I was wanting something to amuse me.

TEMPLE. My errand was not to amuse, but to speak candidly—honestly—on a more serious, and, I had hoped, interesting subject.

ADELINE (*suddenly grave*). I am ready to listen to anything Mr. Temple has to say.

TEMPLE. When I met you a few days ago I had never till that moment known that such a being existed as yourself. The small opportunity I had of conversing with you made an indelible impression on my mind, and every word you then uttered is now photographed on my memory. On the second occasion, I saw you suffering from some deep mental sorrow, and all the pity, all the sympathy of my nature was aroused. I was already beginning to feel that you possessed more than an ordinary interest for me, and your illness filled me with an anxiety amounting to anguish. That illness culminated the feelings which had

been so suddenly aroused, and might otherwise have remained dormant some time longer. It caused me to look into my own heart, and it now forces me to ask you the one momentous question of joy or misery. It compels me to confide to you the one absorbing idea of my life—That I love you. I cannot offer you a princely home, but I lay at your feet the warm true love of an honest man, and if your heart speaks in sympathetic response to mine, it will be the object of my life to deserve your confidence. Adeline, dearest Adeline ! say you will be mine.

ADELINE. Your declaration has filled me with surprise—with affectionate gratitude. I will endeavour to be all you wish. (*Sinks into a chair.*)

TEMPLE. Bless you, darling, for those kind encouraging words. You shall never regret them. (*Kisses her kneeling. Enter OLD HUNTER, who stands surprised.*) I have now a new incentive to exertion, and I will make a name which you shall be proud to share.

ADELINE. Harry, dear Harry, permit me a few moments to recover from the agitation which your avowal has caused me. When I am more composed I promise you ample opportunity to renew the subject. Till then rely on my love. Farewell. (*Sees OLD HUNTER and runs out.*) Oh, papa ! (*Exit.*)

OLD HUNTER (*advances and offers his hand to TEMPLE.*) Mr. Temple it would be idle to attempt to hide from you that I see the position of affairs. I am disposed to listen to your propositions.

TEMPLE. Sir, it would perhaps have been more in accordance with custom to have made you acquainted with my intentions before venturing to address your daughter, but I never could regard marriage as a mere mercantile transaction. I thought it better first to ascertain her feelings towards me before presuming to approach you ; and, now believing them to be enlisted in my favour, I apologise for this apparent abuse of your hospitality, and ask from you your daughter's hand in marriage.

OLD HUNTER. You shall have it—that is, if Mrs. Hunter consents. But how do you propose to live?

TEMPLE. I am in receipt of a sufficient private income to command a medium position of respectability, but on the

demise of an old aunt my means will be considerably increased, and it is not till that sad event occurs I should ask for any further favour than your approval of my engagement to your daughter.

OLD HUNTER. I care not so much about money, as—family—respectability.

TEMPLE. On that head I shall be able to satisfy you.

OLD HUNTER. What occupation do you intend to pursue, for I will never consent to my daughter's marriage with an idle man.

TEMPLE. The ambition of my life is to get into Parliament.

• OLD HUNTER. A poor paying business to keep a wife on.

TEMPLE. But the honour of serving one's country is eternal, and I reminded you I was not a pauper.

OLD HUNTER. Honour is generally trampled upon, unless accompanied by money.

TEMPLE. I would allow no man breathing to tread on mine, and would as quickly avenge an insult as I would readily atone a wrong.

OLD HUNTER. Valiant promises are not always realised.

TEMPLE. It was in no boastful spirit that I uttered my sentiments.

OLD HUNTER. Pardon me. I did not wish to insinuate that it was. I like your spirit—your enthusiasm. You shall have my daughter, and a handsome settlement—that is, if her mother is agreeable. Come and lunch with us to-day, and we can talk matters over.

TEMPLE. At what hour?

OLD HUNTER. Two o'clock.

TEMPLE. I will be there. (*Exeunt both at opposite sides.*)
(*Scene is lowered for street scene.*)

SCENE SECOND.—*A street in London. Enter ADOLPHUS, MAURICE, and MATHEW.*

ADOL. Now, my boys, sit well back in the saddle, pull yourselves together, whip in the prickers, and over you go. Come to my club, and we will have a night of it, fair honest drinking. You blokes from the country seem afraid of a bottle, and tremble at the musical pop of a cork.

MAURICE. Do we. You are much mistaken; but down in

the country we can soon work off the effects with a fly in the saddle, or an hour with a gun.

MATHEW. I think the fellows from Lancashire can take their part in anything a cockney can. I do; eh, Maurice?

MAURICE. We have the reputation, at any rate, and I have yet to learn that it is undeserved.

ADOL. Fiddlesticks. You let go your heads, are as green as yearlings, and fancy yourselves as accomplished as four-year-olds.

MAURICE. A yearling can go "a hopper," if he has the breed.

ADOL. Yes, but he "can't stay." Speed without endurance is like the momentary flash without the thunder—brilliant, but not grand.

MAURICE. If you admit the first qualification, I am willing to wait for the maturity of experience in order to obtain the second.

ADOL. That is if you escape being a "confirmed roarer."

MAURICE. Then I shall only be fit for short sprints, and degenerate into a "half-miler."

ADOL. Many a good roarer has pulled off a clever thing, when his head was loose. But place yourself in my hands, and I will pull you through.

MAURICE. Wait till the old boy turns up his toes, then I will show you a pace.

ADOL. Yes; but unfortunately you are a long-lived family. How do you propose to find the cash in the meantime?

MAURICE. Oh, I get it out of mamma, and she is the only one who dare rob the governor with impunity. When he growls, she bullies, and he is then afraid.

ADOL. Should any difficulty arise, I can introduce you to a friend, who will, on my recommendation, do a bill or two for you, and let go "the sugar" on easy terms.

MAURICE. Thanks. I shall be glad to avail myself of his services, for I am often hard up, and I intend to enjoy myself whilst I am young, so that I may have food for reflection when old.

MATHEW. Linger subjects for repentance, you mean, you do.

MAURICE. Possibly, Mr. Cynical, but who avoids pleasure for fear of pain.

ADOL. Philosophers, old maids, and spoonies.

MATHEW. Only think of those who have no money to spend. I do. I should never deny myself any pleasure if I had means, I shouldn't. Do you think your friend could do a bill for me till I come into my property, do you?

ADOL. Your property? My friend objects to long-dated paper. When you have married Maurice's sister the security would be better. If you have at present no money of your own, you have learned to stick close enough to those who have. But don't let go your head just yet. You are a firm friend of Maurice's.

MATHEW. As firm as yourself, though more sincere, I trust—I do. In attempting my portrait you have depicted your own, indeed you have.

ADOL. Now, crusty, you have let go your head, have you.

MAURICE. He might well when you knocked him clean out of his stride.

ADOL. Never mind, it will do him no harm with Georgina. When do your sisters come up to town?

MAURICE. As soon as the opera season commences. I wish it were deferred, for I shall have to chaperone them every evening, and sacrifice my own pleasure.

ADOL. Oh, never mind, old fellow, I shall be about. My sister has taken quite a fancy to them. They are such sweet girls.

MATHEW. But you are quite indifferent, I should imagine, I should.

ADOL. Now, old curiosity shop, you have got your head loose again, and are having another canter.

MATHEW. Yes, but if you tackle Mr. Temple as you do me, he will make you gallop, he will, I can tell you, I can.

ADOL. And who the deuce is Mr. Temple?

MAURICE. A fellow who is spooning after my sister Adeline.

ADOL. Indeed? (*Surprised.*) What is he?

MAURICE. A poor gentleman, who is going into Parliament.

ADOL. And so he is looking out for a wife on the strength of his prospects—or her's. Is he coming too?

MAURICE. I believe he spends half his time in London, so you will probably see him.

ADOL. I shall be delighted. It will be so agreeable to take a future legislator the rounds, let go his head, and try his paces.

MAURICE. I do not think he is one of our sort—too much in the literary and spouting line.

ADOL. So much the better. We can find him a few texts to spout from.

MAURICE. I would rather not attempt. Mathew is quite sufficient as one probable brother-in-law. I do not care about all my family connections knowing too much about my private affairs. However, let us go in now and get Mathew to sing.

ADOL. No don't, please. I too well remember his last effort in the musical line, when he got his head loose, and I am not partial to hear wheezing screams filtered through a sieve in the human throat. It makes me quite melancholy.

MATHEW. It would be well if it would make you modest, it would. By jove, you are as cheeky as a pampered jockey, you are, and as conceited about your own superiority.

ADOL. Now, Mathew, you really are not fit to have the reins; do draw it mild, or your mental efforts will injure you.

MATHEW. Never mind, you won't be required to pay the doctor's bill, you won't.

ADOL. Bravo. Smartly said. You have got your head loose at last. Let us go in now and put a little steam into that particularly lively creature, the club waiter.

MAURICE. You are too exacting with subordinates.

ADOL. I confess I like to see a waiter leap like a frog, and not crawl like a toad.

MAURICE. You will never obtain that by bullying a fellow.

ADOL. They are a degenerate race, and now turn the tables by making their masters into the real waiters.

MAURICE. You are always in such a terrific hurry. Surely you can allow sufficient time for a man to turn round.

ADOL. Certainly not, he might get his head loose. The art of waiting is anticipation, and it is irritating to have

a want supplied only by means of a request. It injures the appetite, and ruins digestion. The finest waiter in London recently cut his throat because a guest asked for the salt. He felt, with Othello, that his "occupation was gone," indeed.

MAURICE. I always find that civility and patience rapidly get all my wants supplied.

ADOL. In the country such a theory may go down, but in town it is simply barbarous. My motto is, hold everybody fast by the head.

MAURICE. Bosh. You are too exacting.

ADOL. Every man ought to know his own business perfectly, or else leave it for something else. Every occupation has its special feature, and the majority of mankind follow the very calling for which they are least fitted. A bankrupt hatter became Indian Minister of Finance, and a constant writer on economic science. A merchant, who never could make his own business prosper, revolutionised the laws of trade, and planned commercial treaties between nations. They started in the wrong groove, so does nearly every man until accident jerks him on his own line.

MAURICE. What do you consider your speciality?

ADOL. Finance. The greatest and most useful of all the sciences; for it is the art of paying one's own debts with other people's money, and living comfortably out of the difference. A science always maligned, when blundered, I can assure you.

MAURICE. But nearly everyone endeavours to practice it.

ADOL. Endeavours, I grant; but how few succeed. Hence the discredit brought on the science. I knew a stable boy who would have applied for the office of a bishop had he heard of a vacancy.

MAURICE. Well, this is the age of deception, of humbug. *Parvenus* will spend a hundred pounds in stuffing doubtful friends at a dinner party, but would not give a hundred pence to save a poor deserving family from starvation.

ADOL. Yes, we have nothing real left. Charity has become ostentation, calico is made of starch, broadcloth of shoddy, and French kids are only vermin cases.

MAURICE. How do you make that out?

ADOL. Are you not aware that French gloves are made of rat skins.

MAURICE. Oh! indeed. Then I suppose it takes two to make a pair.

ADOL. However, as Mathew is getting impatient, let us go in and try to cure James of the "slows," and then we can have a quiet hand at cards.

MATHEW. I am agreeable if the stakes are not too high, I am. What shall we play for?

ADOL. How much can you afford to lose?

MATHEW. As much as I shall play for, I can.

ADOL. Excellent resolution, and one that will keep you out of trouble.

MATHEW. Remember, then, a fair shuffle, and first knave deals, he does.

ADOL. Of course, the old rule, and I hope it will fall to me.

MATHEW. There can hardly be any doubt of it, there can't.

ADOL. You really don't say so. (*Makes a grimace.*) Now, Mathew, don't you think your own claims a *leetle* superior? However, let go your head, and away. *Exeunt all.*)

SCENE THIRD as SCENE FIRST.—HUNTERS' *Dining Room; dining table, decanters, nuts, dessert; OLD HUNTER and TEMPLE discovered at wine.*

OLD HUNTER. Well, sir, I have carefully thought over your suggestion about sending Maurice to college, and I sounded him about it in my last letter. (*Sighs.*)

TEMPLE. It is imperative that he should go, and have the classic experience, the mental exercise, of a gentleman. Far better give a boy a good education than leave him a fortune. The first is a capital he can never lose; the latter renders him the aim of every designing knave he meets, and without education he would run so much the greater risk of being speedily fleeced. Besides, a son of yours ought to make a figure in the world, and not at this eventful period of his life be tied to his mother's apron string, when he should be training his mind for the inevitable battle of life.

OLD HUNTER. I wish you would broach the subject to Mrs. Hunter.

TEMPLE. I will take the earliest opportunity.

OLD HUNTER. Do not be dismayed if you meet with a point blank refusal,



TEMPLE. Small difficulties never dishearten me. If we cannot penetrate the citadel from the land side, we must try the sea.

OLD HUNTER. If you are successful I shall be for ever grateful.

TEMPLE. Then rest assured of victory. When I was in London a month ago, they were in the height of an unusually brilliant season. Everybody of note was in town, and the fashionable world was in a continual flutter. But you will have heard already about our adventures.

OLD HUNTER. Not a word.

TEMPLE. Indeed! You surprise me.

OLD HUNTER. My family have been six weeks from home, and I have not yet received a line from any one of them, even to assure me of their safe arrival. I have written Maurice twice, but he condescends no reply. The only evidence I have had of their existence is an occasional letter to my cook, instructing what provisions and fruit he is to send in their daily hamper. Georgy always used to write me when she was a child, but that is all past now. (*Sighs.*)

TEMPLE. Has not Adeline written to you?

OLD HUNTER. No; but I suppose she has to you?

TEMPLE. Daily. (*Leans on his hands in deep thought.*)

OLD HUNTER. When one is old you see, there is a chance of being forgotten.

TEMPLE. No reason in the world can justify the neglect of a parent, more especially a kind one.

OLD HUNTER. I endeavour to do my duty to my family, and all I yearn for is their love.

TEMPLE. Are you quite sure *Adeline* has never written to you?

OLD HUNTER. I repeat I have not received a letter from any one of them.

TEMPLE. And away six weeks!

OLD HUNTER. Yes. (*Sighs deeply.*)

TEMPLE. Your communication fills me with surprise and pain.

OLD HUNTER. Oh, I do not blame my children; it is their mother who forces them to be so unnatural.

TEMPLE. There must be some cause.

OLD HUNTER, Yes. A year after our marriage I had been dining out, and maddened by her reproaches, under the influence of wine, I forgot myself. For five and twenty years I have endeavoured daily to atone my crime, but her antipathy for me is implacable.

TEMPLE. It is unholy—unnatural, my friend. (*Rises and shakes his hand.*) I deeply sympathise with you.

OLD HUNTER. What would you advise me to do?

TEMPLE. To be master in your own house, at whatever cost, and save your children from ruin.

OLD HUNTER. Yes, but how?

TEMPLE. By firmly, yet gently, asserting that authority given you by Heaven, and expected by man.

OLD HUNTER. I dare not do it. Will you help me?

TEMPLE. It is a delicate office to interfere in another man's household, but my advice will always be at your service.

OLD HUNTER. Oh, thanks, my friend. I feel as if you were already my son.

TEMPLE. You must not act rashly, nor betray me in this affair, or your attempt will be frustrated, and my influence destroyed.

OLD HUNTER. I give you my faithful promise.

TEMPLE. And I agree to the compact.

OLD HUNTER. Oh, if you knew the weight I have for years carried in my heart. How I have endeavoured to expiate the past. No want ungratified, no extravagance restrained.

TEMPLE. Without justifying the act you unfortunately committed, I am bound to acknowledge it has been deeply atoned.

OLD HUNTER. It is this constant thirst for senseless pleasure which distresses me—this utter abnegation of everything useful, or socially advantageous. I dare not give a dinner party in my own house for fear of my guests being insulted, I am passionately fond of the country, but no freighted carriage ever leaves my park gates and turns any way except towards the town, and the bills of extravagant folly I have annually to liquidate are incredible. When I approach, the conversation suddenly ceases, as if I were an

interloper. My English is ridiculed at my own table. I am the butt at which my wife openly launches her sneers against ignorance, and I am laughed at as a fool by my own children.

TEMPLE. The remedy is in your own hands. If you will be true to yourself, boldly assert your authority at once, and commence by cutting off the supplies. Say that it is your turn to govern, which has at length arrived, and that henceforth you intend to assume your true position as master of your own house.

OLD HUNTER. You are, indeed, a true friend, and I will act on your advice when they return from London. But what about your own prospects?

TEMPLE. My agent writes me to say the present member for Chizzle-em-quick is on his death-bed, and that as soon as a decent time has elapsed after that sad event, he is ready to take the field, and that my return is certain. So that in less than a month I expect the dream of my life will be realised.

OLD HUNTER. Anything in my power you may command. A *carte-blanc* for expenses, for instance.

TEMPLE. Many thanks, but it will not be necessary to tax your generosity. I live in the hearts of a constituency which money cannot buy.

OLD HUNTER. It will be a proud day for me when you are returned to Parliament, but the proudest of all will be the day when I call you my son-in-law.

TEMPLE. I will endeavour to deserve your confidence. (*Rises.*) To-morrow I shall be in London, and see your family. My aim will be your happiness and interest, but my observations shall be unobtrusive. Rely on me as a staunch friend, and till we meet again let the word be—Caution. (*They warmly shake hands.*)

ACT III.

SCENE FIRST.—*Belvoir Square. Day. Exterior of three houses, with three practicable balconies; HUNTER'S House L; Madhouse C; Abram's house R; street Arabs playing; newspaper lads and London cries; Italian organ grinder playing opposite HUNTER'S garden seat R.*

Enter SUSAN on balcony L.

SUSAN. Here you—Mr. *Hitalian*—go into the next square. We have no one lying ill here at present. Here is a penny for you. Now, go at once. (*Throw him a penny.*)

ORGAN GRINDER (*picking it up and examining it*). Tank you, *Mee Senora*.

SUSAN. Get along you impudent fellow. I never *snore*. (*A few boys laugh loudly. Exit ORGAN GRINDER.*)

Enter MICHAEL R.

MICHAEL. What, Susan, can I believe my eyes. Is that really you?

SUSAN. Who would have thought of seeing you at this hour. Have you resigned your *per*fessional duties?

MICHAEL. Oh, no; I have only left the doctor in charge whilst I take an airing, as he wanted leave of absence for the remainder of the day.

SUSAN. Michael, how kind you always are.

MICHAEL. Yes, we *per*fessional men must be; it is a portion of our duty. But when did you come to town; strange I never heard of your arrival.

SUSAN. Perhaps you did not care to know, Mr. Michael. I suppose you are married now.

MICHAEL. No, Susan, not yet, my duties is too *arduous*. Besides, I must have a country lady.

SUSAN. La! you don't say so, Mr. Michael.

MICHAEL. *Yes*, I do ; and how are you getting on with *missus*—have you brought her with you, and is she made into a duchess yet ?

SUSAN. Not yet ; but she is always happy when she is away from *master*, and can hear Ginglini warble—the man with the divine legs, as she calls him. She is in her element here, passing herself off as a great lady amongst these fashionable London folk ; driving in the park in her grand carriage, and having her box at the opera every evening.

MICHAEL. And how are the young ladies ?

SUSAN. Oh, they have grown quite into women, and now chatter about marriage, and they seem so joyous and happy, especially Miss Adeline, with her handsome beau, who is kind as he is handsome.

MICHAEL. Is he a real gentleman.

SUSAN. I should rather think he was. Why, he hardly ever comes without tipping me half a sovereign. I am sure he is a true gentleman, for he always says, "Thank you," when I do any little service. It would be a pleasure to wait on him, even if he gave me nothing.

MICHAEL. I tell you what, Susan, you are a lucky girl to be so well connected. In the madhouse line we hardly ever get a tip. Friends don't often come, and patients havn't enough sense.

SUSAN. Well, why don't you give up the *perfeccion*, and come into trade. It mayn't be as "swell," but it is far more *profitabler*.

MICHAEL. I should like to be appointed butler in your family, Susan:

SUSAN. Well, Michael, there is things as has been more *unlikelier*.

MICHAEL. Oh, Susan, don't be setting my *beezum* heaving with great thoughts, Susan. Don't.

SUSAN. Would you like to speak to *missus*, and point out her *dooty*.

MICHAEL. Perhaps the young master wants taking care of.

SUSAN. Bless you, Master Maurice has got into a fine young man, and fancies he knows how to take care of himself. He talks in such a grand way about his club, and his chummy swells, and the wonderful sights they see. It is a queer place this London.

MICHAEL. He is an expensive game I fancy.

SUSAN. Well, he has plenty, and what will money not do, I wonder; but master would heave a sigh or two if he saw how they all make it fly here. This season's bills will rather astonish him, I think, and he will then blow up everybody except missus, who will laugh at him and call him a stingy beast, and that he ought to feel proud to pay the bills. I wish I had such a stingy beast, I should want for nothing.

MICHAEL. You'd put by for a rainy day, wouldn't ye, Susan—eh.

SUSAN. Don't make any mistake, Mr. Michael, I've done that for a long time, I can tell you, and as I don't think the game will last for ever, I intend to continue it until it is all *U P*.

MICHAEL. Susan, dear, I always knew you were clever.

SUSAN. Yes—the man *wot* marries me will get something besides my rags. But after all, I do despise a man as *isn't* master of his own house. I would rather have a poor chap, with the pluck of a man, even if he thrashed me sometimes.

MICHAEL. What a good wife you would make, Susan.

SUSAN. Yes—when I am that way inclined, but I am in no hurry, for missus is after all a great creature, and I intend to stick to her so long as she is master, and pays so handsomely, though I shall soon be independent of her. I do believe she is in love herself with Miss Adeline's beau; at any rate I am when he fees me so well.

MICHAEL. Now, Susan, don't make a fellow miserable.

SUSAN. Don't you get into the lunatic line really, if you are *perfectionally*— (MRS. HUNTER *calls within*, Susan! Susan!) There! There's missus calling. You cut, Michael.

MICHAEL. I will see you to-morrow, Susan, darling. (*Kisses his hand, and exit.*)

SUSAN. Oh, get along with you.

Enter MRS. HUNTER below L, grandly dressed for the opera.

MRS. HUNTER. Wherever can the girl be. Susan!

SUSAN (*on balcony very nimly*). Yes, ma'am.

MRS. HUNTER (*looking up*). What on earth are you doing on the balcony. Go and order the carriage round to the side door entrance at once. Where is Mr. Maurice?

SUSAN. He is in his own room, ma'am, and the young ladies have not yet finished dressing.

MRS. HUNTER. Tell them to be quick, and I will enjoy the air until they are ready.

SUSAN. Yes, ma'am. (*Exit.*)

Enter MAURICE in an evening dress, yawning).

MRS. HUNTER. Really, Maurice, you seem as if you were more fit for bed than the opera.

MAURICE. Well, too much music in warm weather, mamma, is a bore, and this is my fourth night this week. It is killing me, for I am not strong.

MRS. HUNTER. Some soul-stirring music will revive you?

MAURICE. My dear mamma, have you ever studied that interesting act, passed in the 12th and 13th years of the reign of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, caption 92, section second, entitled "Cruelty to Animals Act," threatening certain penalties to any person who shall cruelly beat, ill-treat, over-drive, over-ride, abuse, or torture any animal? My case, dear mamma, is specially provided for under the said act.

MRS. HUNTER. Wherever did you get all that knowledge?

MAURICE. I pumped a lawyer's clerk.

MRS. HUNTER. My dear boy, I am sure you can't be well. You must have some medicine, or I will send for a doctor.

MAURICE. The perpetual supply of hard boiled ham, which you have ordered to be sent from home, and on which you and the girls seem to subsist with evident satisfaction, is too much for me.

MRS. HUNTER. Well, but my dear, you are not compelled to eat it. You can order anything else.

MAURICE. Yes, but I do not like to be singular, and disturb your family arrangements.

MRS. HUNTER. How considerate of you, Maurice, darling, and if you will see us safely ensconced in our box at the opera, and remain in view for ten minutes, I will excuse your further attendance this evening.

MAURICE. How kind of you, my dear mamma. (*Aside.*) I shall have a jolly evening at the club.

MRS. HUNTER. To-day Mr. Temple is coming up to town, and I doubt not will only be too happy to supply your place as our cavalier.

MAURICE. I shall be delighted when he arrives.

MRS. HUNTER. Maurice, that is a very ungallant speech. I do believe you wish to get rid of your sisters as speedily as possible.

MAURICE. Not unless they find jolly husbands, mamma, that I could chum with. Girls ought to get settled as soon as they can, or they rapidly become mouldy. Men can wait, watch, and benefit by delay; girls never.

MRS. HUNTER. Do you not approve of your intended brother-in-law.

MAURICE. I like Georgy's choice, because Mathew is not so much my intellectual superior, but that fellow, Temple, makes me feel so little with his profuse lingo and knowledge of everything, and he seems to care nothing about enjoying himself.

MRS. HUNTER. But he is popular in the country, and may become famous, and then what lustre will be shed on the family of his wife, should he make a hit in the House. I shall be a frequent occupant of the ladies' gallery, and get presented at court.

MAURICE. It is not often you and the governor like the same person, and one would imagine this Temple monopolises all the talent in the world, for the governor now seems to ask his advice about everything he does, and I feel almost sure that he has suggested that I should go to college next term.

MRS. HUNTER. What! tear my boy from me. Leave that to me. You shall not go; and if Mr. Temple already begins to interfere in my household he will find his own footing very unsafe, and that there is only one here whose will is law, and who intends to rule without a rival.

MAURICE. Well, do you really think, now, the governor would have brains enough to conceive such an idea as college?

MRS. HUNTER. Your father is a fool, and if he makes any such absurd proposition to me I shall stop it at once. So rest assured, my dear boy, you shall not be torn from me.

MAURICE. All the fellows go to college, though, therefore I should not mind so much, for I could pay some one to cram me, only I don't want to go just now.

MRS. HUNTER. Neither now nor hereafter will I consent to part with you. College is only necessary for men who have to work in order to advance, and as your father can leave you plenty of money, I do not see why you should be torn from me. *Your* future is safe. He had better go himself, it would do him a world of good, I'm sure.

MAURICE. What a treat that would be for you, mamma, if the funds were not stopped. But talking about funds, can you lend me a £50 note until I come into my property.

MRS. HUNTER. You extravagant boy, you had a hundred three days ago. How do you get rid of the money?

MAURICE. I have had a hot time of it at billiards, and I had to give a dinner to some fellows at the club, for I do not like to be shabby.

MRS. HUNTER. Quite right, Maurice, dear. Always remember that you have large expectations, and I am glad you have made the acquaintance of some fashionable men since we came to town.

MAURICE. I fancy they are glad, too; they have won nearly all my money, and I let them see that my mamma was somebody.

MRS. HUNTER. Generous boy, the nobility of your character is a card of introduction anywhere; you shall have the £50 you require. But you have not told anyone your father is in trade, have you?

MAURICE. I should rather think not, for it would be the safest way of getting me cut, and voted a cad. No, no, I have said nothing about my family, but I just let slip, as if by accident, that we lived at Burneyside Park, Lancashire.

Enter SUSAN below L.

SUSAN. Madame, the carriage waits at the side door, and the young ladies are seated. (*Exit.*)

MRS. HUNTER. Very well. Maurice, your arm. You are, indeed, a noble boy, and the pride of your mother's heart. (*Exeunt.*)

Enter ADOLPHUS L, MISS ABRAMS R, meeting.

MISS ABRAMS. Ah, Adolphus, just returning from town, Any news to-day?

F

ADOL. Yes. Be careful or we may be overheard. (*Looking up at balcony L*). Both the Hunter girls are engaged.

MISS ABRAMS. Indeed! You astound me.

ADOL. So much for your advice last season, in telling me not to be in any hurry. When the [field was open I ought to have let go my head.

MISS ABRAMS. Rather blame your own excessive caution in waiting for news from Lancashire as to the *bona fide* wealth of their father, before you committed yourself.

ADOL. Recrimination is useless now. The time for action has arrived. I have ascertained that Old Hunter is very wealthy, and will give a handsome dowry with his daughter. My seedy fortune wants recruiting. I must marry Adeline, and her engagement with that fellow, Temple, shall be broken off. Your duty as my sister is to help me. Begin with the women—first, by gentle insinuation, until you feel you are making good progress, then put on forty-horse pressure.

MISS ADAMS. But how am I to do it?

ADOL. The strongest agency with a woman is—ridicule. When the opportunity arrives, hint that Temple is a fool—an adventurer—that everybody thinks so—and the day is ours.

MISS ABRAMS. But the men would not be so easily blinded.

ADOL. Oh, leave them to me. Maurice and Mathew are a brace of simpletons, green as grass. I have already both in my power, and can manage them easily. The father being a nonentity can be disposed of in any way by Mrs. Hunter through you, but I fear most Temple's ability and shrewdness, and know not at present how to assail him.

MISS ABRAMS. Every man has a weakness somewhere.

ADOL. Trust me, I shall soon find out his.

MISS ABRAMS. Rely on me. This business is imperative, and must be accomplished.

ADOL. It might be of great advantage to you as well.

MISS ABRAMS. Indeed, in what way?

ADOL. If you could catch the son, it would be no bad spec. We then could surely work the entire family between us.

MISS ABRAMS. Why, he is much too young for me.

ADOL. Every day will remedy that defect.

MISS ABRAMS. He is a mere boy. I am ten years his senior.

ADOL. But you need not tell him so.

MISS ABRAMS. He must know it.

ADOL. Not he. He knows nothing.

MISS ABRAMS. A nice recommendation for a husband, truly.

ADOL. He will be so much easier to manage.

MISS ABRAMS. The world will say I am too old for him.

ADOL. Our modern fashions obliterate age.

MISS ABRAMS. But he has shown no preference for me.

ADOL. Bah. Are you a woman, and cannot fascinate a boy. Work your eyes at him, then drop them and sigh. Fast lads of his age have neither time nor desire to reflect. They feel flattered by any girl's preference, proud of their own power, and fancy themselves in love before they know what the sublime passion means. Get him committed to a letter or two, and he *shall* marry you, if you hold him fast by the head, or he shall pay swinging damages for breach of promise.

MISS ABRAMS. I do not like the part you wish me to play.

ADOL. Think of his prospects and your position.

MISS ABRAMS. They certainly hide many defects, and the latter renders their adoption an imperious necessity. I agree, and will at once lay siege to him.

ADOL. Well, then, invite them all to our evening party. Keep father out of the way, or our Jewish origin will be too prominent, and I well know the Christian prejudice against our ancient race. He is a Jew, they whisper, as if our only ancestor was Barabbas, and a feeling of loathing at once fills the heart of the cautious Christian. If Temple arrives, ask him also. Be hearty in your congratulations on his engagement. This will lull suspicion.

MISS ABRAMS. I'll tickle him with compliments and flattery.

ADOL. Which may throw him off his guard, and gain you his confidence. I will approach him another way. If you can get the waiting-maid, Susan, into your pay we should always be apprised of their intended movements, and equal

to any emergency ; for, by the honour of a Jew, I am determined this engagement shall be broken off, either by fair means or foul.

MISS ABRAMS. Your earnestness arms me with resolution, and you shall find in me a staunch ally.

Enter MAURICE on balcony L., who lifts his hat to MISS ABRAMS.

MAURICE. Miss Abrams I am delighted to see you. Dolph, how do you feel ? A shade seedy, I presume. Miss Abrams, I hope our late hours have not impaired your health.

MISS ABRAMS. Oh, not at all, Mr. Maurice, I assure— ; but you are always so polite. How are your sisters and mamma to-day ?

MAURICE. Well, thanks. I have just returned from escorting them to the opera. In hot weather I like my music in the open air.

MISS ABRAMS. Quite an Italian idea. *Al fresco.*

ADOL (*reclining on a garden seat and smoking*). Yes, Boulevards, *café noir*, cigarette, and German band. Oh, bliss ! (*organ grinding is heard outside momentarily*) rapture ! Shall we have the Tipperary Italian here.

MAURICE. Dolph, you are not off "*your nut*," I hope.

ADOL. No, I shall recover in time, only be patient.

MAURICE. Well, I am glad it is not a bad case, although the symptoms are violent.

MISS ABRAMS. We missed you very much, Mr. Maurice, last evening, and delayed supper in the hope of seeing you, but I presume your club was too attractive.

MAURICE. Unfortunately I was detained beyond my usual hour.

MISS ABRAMS. I think the clubs are the greatest rivals of our sex, in detaining and harbouring those so anxiously expected elsewhere.

MAURICE. Yes, but where else ?

ADOL. Sister, dear, would you mind getting me that book out of the library, entitled, *Universal Equality*. I want it for Maurice's delectation. (*Rises and whispers—Draw it mild till he bites.*) Go in now, that's a dear. I will send for you if necessary.

MISS ABRAMS. Mr. Hunter, excuse my absence, but I have some little matters requiring despatch.

MAURICE (*lifts his hat*). Good day.

MISS ABRAMS. Adieu for the present. (*Exit.*)

ADOL. Well, Maurice, what is your game to-day?

MAURICE. Nay, I was coming to see if you had anything lively afloat, for I want freshening up. I got a duster last evening—never won a thing, and I am bored to death by our people.

ADOL. Anything fresh?

MAURICE. Yes; wait till I come down. (*Descends from balcony and enters.*)

ADOL. Don't be long, then, especially if it is too important to whisper from where you are. (*Aside.*) A grand secret, no doubt, about the cat.

MAURICE (*advances mysteriously and whispers*). Temple turned up to-day for a few hours, and my mother and sisters have been worrying him as if he were a hero.

ADOL. Indeed. When did he arrive in town?

MAURICE. By last night's mail.

ADOL. The impetuous young man has let go his head, with a vengeance, and not lost much time in settling down to a morning woo. I hate turtle doves.

MAURICE. So do I. There is such an uninteresting sameness in watching others spoon, bill and coo, hold hand, and ogle. With a fellow's sister it is disgusting, especially when one has no similar occupation.

ADOL. It is the fate of Tantalus.

Enter MISS ABRAMS on balcony R.)

MISS ABRAMS. Adolphus, I cannot find *Universal Equality*.

ADOL. Never mind, we are coming to it.

MISS ABRAMS. Well, I hope you won't be long. (*Exit.*)

ADOL. Where is Mr. Temple now?

MAURICE. He was obliged to take first train to the borough where he is going to *Chizzle-em*, but Del said if he returned soon I was to tell him to follow them to the opera. In fact, I fancy it is on the strength of his return that I have got leave of absence to-night.

ADOL. What do you propose to do with yourself in the meantime?

MAURICE. I came to ask you the same question. I want some excitement. What can you suggest?

ADOL. A madhouse.

MAURICE. Good Heaven's ! What do you mean?

ADOL. What I say. Let us pay a visit to my friend, Dr. Wheedle, over the way there. He has often asked me to biscuits and sherry, and I can guarantee a welcome to my friends in any capacity.

MAURICE. But that is not a madhouse.

ADOL. Certainly not. Only a private refuge for those suffering under mental aberration, and can afford to pay.

MAURICE. I have not noticed it before, and always thought it a private residence, and never heard of any screams or noises.

ADOL. Hollow walls, double cased apertures, are non-conductors of sound.

MAURICE. I appreciate the neighbourhood.

ADOL. You need not be alarmed, but as we have both had a tolerable experience among the candidates for this kind of thing, let us see how they look when lodged in their haven of rest. In plain English, what better fun can we have than turning over a few lunatics?

MAURICE. You have some original ideas of pleasure, but as I want a little excitement, I will accompany you.

ADOL. Don't you think we had better wait a little for the chance of Temple returning. Perhaps he would like to go. It would be a study for him, and he could spout about it, you know, in Parliament—when he gets there.

MAURICE. Oh, never mind him ; let us go alone. Besides, he has an engagement. I must tell him *where* our people expect him.

ADOL. But there is no necessity for you to remember his engagement, and as I wish to be introduced to Temple, I shall not deem it a very friendly act on your part if you deny me the present favourable opportunity.

MAURICE. Very well ; if he comes I will ask him, but I hope he won't accept.

ADOL. But I do, (*aside*) and who knows what lucky accident might happen.

Enter TEMPLE top-coated, &c.

TEMPLE. Ah, Maurice (*shakes hands*), I have been looking for you all over the house. They told me you had gone out, but could not be very far.

MAURICE. Indeed. Allow me to present my friend, Mr. Adolphus Abrams—Mr. Temple.

ADOL. Delighted (*proffers hand, slowly accepted by TEMPLE*) to make your acquaintance, sir. I have long wished to know one of the most rising men of the day.

TEMPLE. Flattered, I'm sure.

ADOL. We are about to visit a private lunatic asylum. No ordinary place, but the refuge for poets, engineers, and statesmen, whose brains have been too much for their bodies. Will you accompany us?

TEMPLE. I am expecting a note appointing a meeting for this hour, but if none has arrived I shall be happy. Maurice, are there any letters for me?

MAURICE. There is not an unopened letter in the house.

TEMPLE. That is strange. None by hand?

MAURICE. You had better come with us. We shall not be long.

TEMPLE. I fear to spoil the pleasure of your party.

ADOL. You would enhance it.

TEMPLE. Is it far away?

ADOL. Close at hand. Join us as philanthropists seeking a more ultimate knowledge of a sad calamity, with the object of alleviating it.

TEMPLE. Your motives are excellent, and I accept your invitation on one condition, that I may return within an hour.

ADOL. Our visit will not require half the time. (ADOLPHUS *advances C, opens gate, revealing inner door, with a large plate, inscribed, "Dr. Wheedle's Institution for Mental Afflictions."*) The subject of lunacy has formed an interesting study to some of our greatest actors and painters. Garrick's wonderful impersonation of madness in *King Lear* was a photograph from *real life*.

TEMPLE. I can never behold the semblance of a man—one void of reason—without a feeling of the deepest melancholy and despondency. It crushes all the pride—all the vanity out of my nature, when I reflect that an Omnipotent Power might turn me also into a drivilling idiot.

MAURICE. Well, let us enter, and not stand here moralising.

ADOL. Restrain your impetuosity for a moment (*rings and whispers to MAURICE*), and hold yourself fast by the head. (*Aloud.*) We shall soon enough be in the midst of misery. (*MICHAEL, in livery opens door, and unlocks gates and fastenings.*) Is Dr. Wheedle at home, Michael?

MICHAEL. He is not, Mr. Abrams, but can I do anything for you?

ADOL. My friends have a wish to look through the institution.

MICHAEL. We do not make a practice of showing the institution to strangers, but the doctor will never object to any friends of yours, Mr. Abrams. If you will wait here, gentlemen, I will fetch the keys. (*Exit.*)

MAURICE. What a ghastly place. I begin to feel as if I had a raging madman's fingers on my throat already.

TEMPLE. And this is the abode of living death, where the bodily frame is nourished after the nobility of reason has fled. How dreadful the reflection. To my mind death were infinitely preferable to this sad calamity.

ADOL. Oh, lunatics are happy enough. They fancy everyone else mad but themselves, and their wants being merely animal are easily gratified. I doubt if it be the miserable existence you seem to imagine.

Re-enter MICHAEL with keys.

MICHAEL. This way, gentlemen, please. (*Unlocks and pushes aside sliding doors, and reveals THE INVENTOR mad, picking and tossing straw and flowers; making noises and frantic gestures to vacancy; then he laughs, but does not notice visitors.*) This patient is a mechanical inventor, who owing to a sudden reverse in circumstances, and the cruel ingratitude of an unnaturally proud daughter, drank himself into *delirium tremens*, and became eventually mad.

MAURICE. What do you call him?

MICHAEL. The Inventor. (*Turning to TEMPLE.*) We sink all the surnames of our gentlemen when they enter here, or their friends would not like it.

ADOL. It is better than numbering them the same as they do in jails,

TEMPLE. It is a wise precaution against impertinent curiosity. Is this a bad case?

MICHAEL. Incurable. His disease is of the brooding melancholic kind. Were he subject to frequent violent paroxysms of rage we should have greater hopes of his recovery.

TEMPLE. Do you often succeed in curing violent cases?

MICHAEL. Oh, yes, often. Rest, quiet, new ideas, and gentle suasion will work miracles with a raving madman.

TEMPLE. Why, Michael, you are almost a doctor yourself.

MICHAEL. Well, I ought to be, sir. I have been long enough in the *profession*, and have been pretty sharply drilled by the Lunacy Commissioners, who won't stand no nonsense. They expect you to know what a patient has done, and what he is going to do. The doctor taught me my gamut, and they perfected me.

TEMPLE. Your life is quite romantic.

MICHAEL. Yes, and so is our patients. There are many gentlemen occupying high positions in the world, whom we have occasionally under our charge, and they are at the same time reported on the Continent—up the Rhine—out of town. Ah, sir, the world little suspects the misfortunes of some of our great men who are so much envied.

TEMPLE. But our poor friend here seems harmless enough.

MICHAEL. More's the pity. We should have some hopes if we could only rouse him, without raking up his sorrows. He is quiet enough unless he is crossed, or sees some one resembling his betrayer, then he instantly becomes ferocious and dangerous, and would murder any one he could lay his hands on.

ADOL. (*aside savagely*). I wish the fit would come on him now, and he would pay special attention to Temple.

MICHAEL (*continuing*). Otherwise he is a very good patient, and gives us little trouble. In fact, it is amusing to hear his harmless talk about his inventions.

ADOL. (*aside*). Maurice, come along with me. I know every room in the house. I will show you something better than this.

MAURICE. But had not Temple better go with us?

ADOL. Oh, loose his head, and leave him to amuse himself

with his newly-found friend. They seem to suit each other.

MAURICE. Very well ; but I hope no danger will happen to him.

ADOL. Not the slightest fear, I assure you. (*Aside.*) There is no such luck unless The Inventer takes him for his swindling debtor, whom he somewhat resembles, if the photograph does not lie. (*Pushes MAURICE quietly and unobtrusively through a side door. Exeunt with back to side door.*)

MICHAEL. Now, my King of Inventers, I have brought a gentleman to see you. Do your hear, King?

THE INVENTER (*slowly turning his head round, regally rises, drawing himself to his full height, stares and smiles*). Ha, ha—at last—years I have waited for him, and he is come at last. Is he a mere ambassador, or the king, ha, ha? If only an ambassador cut off his ears, and throw him o'er the ramparts—ha, ha.

MICHAEL. Why, Inventer, do you think I would dare to bring you any one less than a king?

(*INVENTER throws a rag regally over his shoulders, puts a crown of straw on his head, and holds a straw sceptre.*)

TEMPLE. Well, my friend, I hope you are quite well to-day.

THE INVENTER. Stand back, I say. (*Waves hand majestically.*) Stand back and tremble. You are before the mightiest monarch of the age, before whom all earthly kings must bow. I—am—the engineering king. I can belt the universe, level mountains, open seas, and compared to me what a useless thing art thou. (*Rushes across the stage, and seems to struggle with an ideal being, and binds him down on to a chair.*) Ha, ha. Hell hound, I have thee now.

MICHAEL. Whom have you got?

THE INVENTER. Ha, ha. (*Dancing round with wild gestures.*) Hush! Tippoo Saib and his stolen wife. Ha, ha.

MICHAEL. Well, my King of Inventers, mind you take care of him. (*To TEMPLE.*) You see, sir, one of the great secrets of managing a lunatic is never to cross or contradict him, however wild his fancy.

TEMPLE. An excellent rule, creditable alike to the heart and the judgment.

MICHAEL (*looking round*). But where are your friends

gone? Excuse me whilst I go in search of them, for we have several patients at large in the recreation ground, and the sudden presence of two strangers would disturb them.

TEMPLE. Very well; I will remain here, and talk to our friend.

MICHAEL. I will not be a minute, sir. There is no danger. (*Exit.*)

TEMPLE. How did your Royal Highness manage such a clever thing as to catch Tippoo Saib. The government will reward you handsomely, for they have long wanted him.

THE INVENTER. Hush, ha! (*Grimming and dancing.*) Hush! the secret is gold!—ha, gold! (*Whispers.*) I bound him down on my flying machine, and at once steered for England. (*Points.*) There he is glaring at me. (*Rushes and kicks at the air.*) Lie down, I say. Pish!—Nigger!

TEMPLE. On your flying machine! It must be a wonderful machine, indeed.

THE INVENTER. Would you like to fly with me [to the other end of the world.

TEMPLE. I should be delighted; but how?

THE INVENTER (*jumps on to a chair*). Come up here, and get on my machine. In five minutes I will transport you to the antipodes, the Indies, or the diamond fields of the Africa. I often go for an airing. Come up, I say. (*TEMPLE also gets on the chair*). Hush! tread softly, or the engineer may drop you. Ha, ha, ha. (*Sings.*) I mount, I fly; I mount, I fly! (*Throws up his arms as if ascending.*)

“Great business must be wrought e’re noon,
Upon the corners of the moon.”

TEMPLE. But wait a moment, I have no luggage. (*Gets down.*)

THE INVENTER. Never mind, I will clothe you in the heavy mail of gossamer. I will surround you with balls of rolling fire. Ha, ha. (*Sings a wild refrain.*)

Come with me o’er land and sea,
Oh! come with me and be my bride.

TEMPLE. But where can we stop for refreshments?

THE INVENTER. The gods never eat. I will make you a god.

TEMPLE. But we may pass over some nation at war, and get shot at with mitrailleuses as a flying post office. (INVENTER jumps off chair, grasps TEMPLE by the wrist, and drags him across the stage. War! war! blood! The government stole my steam gun, throwing small bullets two miles at the rate of 5,000 a minute. It will conquer the universe, but I can blow up Sebastopol without it.

TEMPLE. Indeed; you will thereby earn the gratitude of your country, and achieve an everlasting name. But how would you do it?

THE INVENTOR. By my glass ships, which I can sail twenty fathoms under water, and the monsters of the deep acknowledge me king and tremble. Ha!

TEMPLE. Most mighty monarch, you are worthy of the honour, but how can your glass ship serve any purpose of war?

THE INVENTOR. By aid of the same genius with which I provide for everything. I take soundings, and make observations under water. I place bomb chests, torpedoes, and powder barrels beneath their fleets—below their walls. I insert the slow fusee, and fire it. It explodes, spreading devastation—I am miles away. I know my handiwork by the thunder. The enemy has never seen me. I return and witness his utter destruction—a sea of blood and burning towns in smouldering ruins. Mighty monarchs crave my aid, and I alone am the Ocean King.

TEMPLE. But would not your powder get damp under the water?

THE INVENTOR flies at TEMPLE in a rage, and gets him by the throat.) Do you give me the lie? Accursed! Do you dare to mock me. You stole my gold, and poisoned my daughter's heart against me. You have changed your name. Where is she? Hell hound! you shall die. (Lets go TEMPLE, who leaps through window. Madman runs and gets a large knife, hidden in a hole, and rushes after him on to the roof of the building. TEMPLE suddenly turns round and arrests the knife from THE INVENTOR, and throws it on to stage. Death struggle half over the edge of building. They finally roll over together, and as they fall through the lower roof (made of slate coloured paper) a terrific crash and scream is heard, and they

are caught in blanket just under roof out of sight of audience. As soon as THE INVENTER flies at and struggles with TEMPLE the square rapidly fills with people).

Enter MISS ABRAMS and others on balcony R; SUSAN and others on balcony L.; ADOLPHUS and MAURICE below to witness the struggle.)

SUSAN (*screams*). Will none of you go to help him.

(MICHAEL is seen climbing up the roof, and gets to the top just as they fall over.)

MISS ABRAMS. A horrid death is the just reward of a dreadful life.

(*When the combatants fall over general shriek.*)

TABLEAU.

CURTAIN FALLS.

ACT IV.

SCENE FIRST.— *The Library; practicable doors R., L., and C.; chairs and couch in position R. and L.; large screen L.*
MRS. HUNTER, GEORGINA, and MISS ABRAMS seated.

MRS. HUNTER. I wonder whatever has become of my boy, Maurice. He rarely absents himself so long. Surely no harm can have happened.

MISS ABRAMS. I do not think you need give yourself the slightest apprehension, for he was accompanied by my brother and Mr. Temple. If you have not every confidence in Mr. Temple, I can guarantee Adolphus as the kindest and most cautious of brothers.

MRS. HUNTER. Your assurance partly relieves my anxiety. But why do you imagine I have no confidence in Mr. Temple?

MISS ABRAMS. Pardon me, I did not say so.

MRS. HUNTER. No, you did not absolutely say so, but I understood you to imply it.

MISS ABRAMS. My dear Mrs. Hunter you do me an unintentional wrong. I have a high—a very high opinion of Mr. Temple.

MRS. HUNTER. But I am not quite so sure that I have unlimited confidence in him after all.

MISS ABRAMS. I like trusting friends of whom I have had some experience; and, without insinuating anything wrong, I must confess Mr. Temple's manner is somewhat peculiar.

GEORGINA. Very peculiar. He fancies he knows everything—and everybody else—nothing.

MISS ABRAMS. I only give currency to what I hear expressed by others.

MRS. HUNTER. Indeed, and what do people say about him?

MISS ABRAMS. Now, my dear Mrs. Hunter, it would be

very wrong to repeat what I have heard. You know I love Adeline dearly, and considering our sisterly friendship, I am sorry I have inadvertently said so much.

GEORGINA. Oh, don't be afraid of speaking out, Miss Abrams. I tell you candidly I do not like Mr. Temple.

MISS ABRAMS. I have heard others express a similar opinion.

GEORGINA. Well, do speak out then. Mamma is not so prejudiced in his favour as to believe him an archangel. Are you, ma?

MRS. HUNTER. Whatever you know derogatory to Mr. Temple, I shall consider it a kindness, as well as your duty, to tell me.

MISS ABRAMS. You place me in a painful position; but on condition that my name shall not be mentioned in the matter, I will consent, for the great regard and esteem which both myself and my family have for you.

MRS. HUNTER. You may rely on my discretion, and that no improper use will be made of your communication.

GEORGINA. Now, my dear Miss Abrams, do tell us.

MISS ABRAMS. Well, then, I have heard that he is as poor as a rat; in fact, a mere adventurer. That his family is quite common; in fact, of very low origin. That he is a very gay young man, addicted to wine, and is only courting Adeline for her money, and as for his going into Parliament the thing is absurd. He could not even get credit for an election bill.

MRS. HUNTER. I have already suspected as much.
(*Rising.*) You will permit me to apprise Adeline of her danger with this young man.

MISS ABRAMS. Only on condition that my name is not mentioned, for which you both have given me your word.

MRS. HUNTER. It would strengthen my arguments if you would permit me to reveal my authority for I fear she positively loves the fellow, but my word to you shall not be broken, and I will find other means of conquering her infatuation.

GEORGINA. Of course, mamma, you must not betray Miss Abrams; but if Adeline marries him after she knows what we do, she must be simply—mad.

MRS. HUNTER. Marries ! The thing is impossible. She shall not. *I am her mother.*

GEORGINA. Well, do not say anything to her at present, whilst papa is in town. He cannot remain longer than a day or two. When he has returned to the country we shall have had time for reflection, and know better how to act. Hush !

Enter ADELINE.

ADELINE. Oh, my dear Miss Abrams, are you here. Have you seen my brother and—Mr. Temple to-day.

MISS ABRAMS. Oh, yes. They went out with Adolphus a few hours ago, but where I know not.

ADELINE. Ah, then, all will be safe.

MISS ABRAMS. Yes, my brother is very much attached to Mr. Maurice.

ADELINE. I was thinking of Mr. Temple's discretion ; perhaps he has taken them to the House.

MISS ABRAMS. I do not imagine he has the *entrée* there.

ADELINE (*proudly*). Mr. Temple has the *entrée* to any place where he desires to go.

MISS ABRAMS. I was not aware of it.

Enter MAURICE.

ADELINE (*running to MAURICE, and taking both his hands*). Maurice, wherever have you been ?

MAURICE. To a madhouse.

ADELINE. Whatever induced you to go to such a place.

MAURICE. Oh, Dolph proposed it for fun, but it did not turn out so. I wish I had not gone. I was never so frightened in my life.

ADELINE. Why?— Why?—

MAURICE. Because a raging lunatic flew at Temple with a knife. Suppose it had been me? I should have been killed.

(ADELINE swoons away unobserved on a couch.)

MRS. HUNTER. Is Temple hurt ?

MAURICE. Oh, no ; at least not much. Cut in the hand a little, which he called to get dressed at a surgeon's. His courage and his strength saved him. But it was a near thing, though. I wonder they were not both killed in rolling off the building.

MRS. HUNTER. Thank Heaven, my dear boy, you are not hurt.

MAURICE. Yes, I am safe, but it has given me a shock. I must say Temple is a cool fish. It was a hundred to nothing on the lunatic once. The keeper told me he escaped by a miracle. The maniac got his blood up through Temple doubting the power of one of his machines. You see, you must never contradict a lunatic. But how Temple got the knife from him, and held him so long in that perilous position, I do not know. My heart jumped into my mouth when I saw them, and expected both to be dashed to pieces in a moment.

MRS. HUNTER. But what did Mr. Abrams do?

MAURICE. He looked on, and said Temple must be very strong. It was the keeper who saved Temple, and the lunatic obeyed him like a child. I was glad to leave, I assure you. No more madhouses for me.

ADELINE (*reviving*). Henry, dear Henry, say you are not hurt.

MAURICE. It is all right, Del, he has only got his hand scratched. (*To MRS. HUNTER.*) One of his thumbs nearly cut off.

ADELINE. I am not well. If I am wanted you will find me in my room. (*Exit.*)

MISS ABRAMS (*aside*). So this was my brother's work, then. He has commenced with a vengeance, and given me a lesson on decision. (*SUSAN enters; MISS ABRAMS whispers.*) Susan, I have bought a handsome silk dress for you, when you have time to fetch it.

SUSAN. Oh, thank you, miss, very kindly.

MISS ABRAMS. I shall be disengaged at three o'clock.

SUSAN. I will call at that hour.

MISS ABRAMS (*aside*). Now I will quietly retire before the plot thickens beyond my comprehension. Mrs. Hunter, will you excuse me, I have a slight headache. Mr. Maurice, adieu; I am so glad you are safe.

MAURICE. Permit me to escort you. (*MISS ABRAMS lovingly smiles; takes his arm, and they exit, followed by SUSAN.*)

MRS. HUNTER. Georgina, go and see if Adeline has

recovered her senses. The idea of swooning for such a fellow.

GEORGINA. It was the talk of blood which upset her. She will not disgrace herself when she really knows Temple to be a low-bred adventurer. But we must approach her cautiously. I will go and soothe the poor frightened darling.

MRS. HUNTER. Be cautious; but resolute in purpose.

GEORGINA. You may depend on that. My feelings are enlisted. (*Exit.*)

MRS. HUNTER. My child stands upon the edge of a moral precipice, but a fond mother shall save her, and not a moment must be lost.

Enter TEMPLE, with hand bound up in white kerchief.

TEMPLE. I must apologise for being somewhat late, but I have been unavoidably detained.

MRS. HUNTER. No apology is required. Mr. Temple has the right to act as he chooses.

TEMPLE. Yes, but I feared my prolonged absence might cause you some anxiety, as I promised to return long ago, and am in the habit of keeping my word.

MRS. HUNTER. I perceive you fully estimate your own importance.

TEMPLE. Surely, I have not offended you, Mrs. Hunter. If I have, believe me it was unintentional. Nothing could have kept me away had I been a free agent, but I was unavoidably—nay, forcibly detained.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, you need not deal in mystery. I know well enough you have been leading my son into danger, and setting him a nice example.

TEMPLE. Does Maurice say so?

MRS. HUNTER. I know his loving duty to me too well, to make it necessary to enquire.

TEMPLE. Maurice will not do me the wrong to say I either led him astray, or induced him to go where he has been.

MRS. HUNTER. I am surprised you should endeavour to shelter yourself behind the boy's honour.

TEMPLE. I shelter myself behind no one, madame. I alone am responsible for my own acts, but I decline to be made the scape-goat of another's folly.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, I am well aware you know how to take care of yourself. You have always one eye and one ear open for the main chance.

TEMPLE. Mrs. Hunter, I do not understand these vague charges, and I demand—nay, I insist upon an immediate explanation.

MRS. HUNTER. Sir, the demand is too vast to be satisfied in a moment; but you have induced my innocent boy into the lower strata of London night life, and not content with ruining his reputation, you have endangered his life by taking him to a madhouse.

TEMPLE. The former part of your wild charge I emphatically deny, and request your authority for it; and so far from your second statement being true, it was your son, conjointly with Mr. Abrams, who persistently begged me to accompany them.

MRS. HUNTER. Why, Maurice was never in such a place before, and knows no one who has anything to do with such dens, except yourself.

TEMPLE. It is worse than idle folly for me to asservate if you do not believe me, and I can only conclude that you have some important reason for seeking a pretext to quarrel with me, possibly with the object of breaking off my engagement with your daughter.

MRS. HUNTER. No daughter of mine will ever wed with an adventurous meddler.

TEMPLE. A meddler?

MRS. HUNTER. Yes, a meddler. What business of yours was it to suggest that my son should go to college?

TEMPLE. Such a suggestion was for his own good, and cannot surely be regarded as a crime.

MRS. HUNTER. Such a suggestion was a piece of impertinent presumption, and if it had been necessary at all ought first to have been made to me. But let me now assure you, I require no possible son-in-law to help me in the management of my children.

TEMPLE. I do not deny having made the suggestion to Mr. Hunter solely for the boy's future good, and I have hitherto been labouring under the impression that the head of a household is the father, and the proper person to be

first consulted on all matters concerning the education of his children.

MRS. HUNTER. Then I pray you at once to undeceive yourself, and know that I am an exception to such an absurd rule. (OLD HUNTER *glides in and goes behind screen, peeping out occasionally, and rubbing his hands gleefully.*) I acknowledge no domineering husband. I manage my own affairs, and am the sole head of my family. When I want a mentor I shall be happy to employ one who has shown himself so fitted for the office. (*Curtseys majestically.*)

OLD HUNTER (*peeps from behind the screen L. and whispers*). Bravo! war is declared now. I shall have a stout ally.

TEMPLE. I am astounded at your statements.

MRS. HUNTER. I am amazed at your presumption.

TEMPLE. Surely Adeline is not of your opinion.

MRS. HUNTER. My children look through my eyes.

TEMPLE. No lips but her own shall convince me.

MRS. HUNTER. That delightful satisfaction you shall have at the first convenient opportunity.

TEMPLE. I beg of you to hasten the occasion.

MRS. HUNTER. It has come to a pretty pass that an acquaintance of a few weeks should give himself such airs.

TEMPLE. This altercation is very painful to me.

MRS. HUNTER. Then let it be the last.

TEMPLE. Not until I fully understand the true meaning of your conduct.

MRS. HUNTER. I thought I had been sufficiently explicit.

TEMPLE. More explicit than polite; but you have afforded me no explanation.

MRS. HUNTER. You have had all I intend to give; but let this serve—you shall never wed my daughter, nor be allowed again to tempt my boy, and endanger his life amongst madmen.

TEMPLE. It was my life that was in danger—not his; and were I of a suspicious nature, I should imagine I was tempted there for no good purpose.

MRS. HUNTER (*anxiously.*) Did not Dr. Wheedle, then, ask you to visit him.

TEMPLE. No; I never saw Dr. Wheedle, and do not even know him by sight.

MRS. HUNTER (*aside*). Then all is safe. (*Aloud and boldly*). And who attacked you?

TEMPLE. A poor maniac, whose affluent daughter treats him like a dog, and without a thought allows him to rot in that den ; but the hour of retribution is at hand.

MRS. HUNTER (*alarmed*). His name?

TEMPLE. The Inventer. *Your Father !*

MRS. HUNTER. Who told you so?

TEMPLE. He—himself. When a man has done his best to take your life, 'tis as little as he can do to explain who he is, even although he may be mad. Chance betrayed the connection an hour ago, and your confession now confirms it.

MRS. HUNTER (*shrieking*). 'Tis false ! He is not my father. 'Tis the raving delusion of a madman, and this unmanly attack only the more determines me that your acquaintance with my family must from this moment cease for ever. (*Throws herself on couch, and buries her face sobbing.*)

TEMPLE. You cannot deceive me ; but you need not fear. For Adeline's sake your secret is safe, and shall never more pass my lips, whether we are friends or foes. Farewell ! (*Rushes out, OLD HUNTER after him. After a pause, MRS. H. rises from sofa and looks around.*)

MRS. HUNTER. The wretch has gone—I hope for ever. What a narrow escape I have had. I hate him more now he knows so much—more than I ever thought he could possibly learn. But my flat denial, that the lunatic was any relation of mine evidently shook his confidence, or he would not have so readily promised to breathe it no more. I can believe him, but he little knows what a lever of torture to me his chivalry has thrown away. But he shall never marry Adeline, and I am now glad that I consented to join in Miss Abrams' plot against him. (*Touches table bell. Enter SUSAN.*) Susan, was all prepared when Mr. Temple left just now, and did you induce Miss Adeline to look out from the balcony window?

SUSAN. Yes, madam. I told her the air would refresh her, and everything was done as you instructed. Miss Abrams was walking about on the opposite side of the square, and could just be discerned in the twilight. Mr.

Adolphus was dressed exactly like Mr. Temple, and when he left you in such a passion, he banged the hall door to, and walked close past the lower windows at a rapid pace. Mr. Adolphus then emerged from his hiding, crossed the square, put his arm round his sister, and kissed her. I exclaimed, "Well, who would have thought that." Miss Adeline saw it, and screamed with jealous rage and indignation, both at what she fancied she saw, and the fact of Mr. Temple leaving the house without seeing her. I do not think you will now have any trouble in breaking off her engagement with Mr. Temple.

MRS. HUNTER. You are sure she thinks it was Mr. Temple who crossed Belvoir Square?

SUSAN. Nothing on earth would convince her to the contrary.

MRS. HUNTER. That is well.

SUSAN. She may forgive, but she will never forget it.

MRS. HUNTER. The Hunters' never forgive, leave that to me. Keep your own council, and your faithful services shall be richly rewarded.

SUSAN. Oh, thank you, ma'am. (*Curtseys*) You were always very kind and thoughtful to me.

MRS. HUNTER. And will continue so. You may now retire.

SUSAN. Yes, ma'am. (*Exit R. I E.*)

MRS. HUNTER. Now I will go and instil some dignity and self-respect into my obstinate and love-sick daughter. (*Exit R. I E.*)

Enter OLD HUNTER C., *dragging* TEMPLE *reluctantly after him.*

OLD HUNTER. Nay, nay, my good friend, you shall not leave my house suffering under such burning insult. Why, she is gone. Do come in; all shall be explained, and satisfactorily too. I feel you have good grounds for what little I heard you say, and I admire your pluck for speaking out. You have inspired me with fresh courage, and I will imitate your example. (*TEMPLE sinks into a chair pale and exhausted; OLD HUNTER pours out a wine glass of brandy from sideboard.*) There, take a dash of brandy, my boy; it will revive you, after your double-handed combat with the

she dragon. Come, man, do not be cast down. Look at me. (*Drinks and offers glass.*) Drink ! (*TEMPLE drinks mechanically.*)

TEMPLE. No alcohol can alleviate the mental agony of this day.

OLD HUNTER. Nonsense. I go through it regularly, administered by the same agreeable person ; yet I am alive, you see—alive and kicking.

TEMPLE. But you have not to defend a false and odious charge. You have not the young budding tenderness of a first and only love at stake. Mrs. Hunter is my bitterest foe. I know it ; she asserts it ; and I feel it.

OLD HUNTER. Never mind, her husband is your warmest friend, so that will balance the account.

TEMPLE. Yes, but your power is not what it ought to be.

OLD HUNTER. It shall be more. I am nerved at last.

TEMPLE. I fear your resolution, and tremble when I reflect whom you have to encounter.

OLD HUNTER. Never mind, I intend to take a leaf out of your book. So rely on me, and now explain the cause of your disagreement with Mrs. Hunter.

TEMPLE. I am as ignorant of the reason as yourself. She seemed determined to pick a quarrel at any cost. Charged me with leading Maurice astray, trepanning him to a madhouse, and meddling in your family affairs.

OLD HUNTER. Perhaps there the shoe pinches.

TEMPLE. Did you tell her I had suggested sending Maurice to college ?

OLD HUNTER. No ; but I wrote telling him I thought he ought to go, if he wished to take any position in the world, and she is quite clever enough to surmise the rest, especially if she heard you had been with me. You cannot close the mouths of servants, whose mistress is mean enough to use them as spies on her husband. But how came you to the madhouse ?

TEMPLE. Abrams importuned me to accompany them, and said it was an interesting and suggestive study to any man of feeling or philanthropy.

OLD HUNTER. Had you any previous acquaintance with Abrams ?

TEMPLE. None. Maurice had only introduced him a few minutes previously.

OLD HUNTER. Indeed. He and Maurice left you alone with the madman?

TEMPLE. Virtually, yes, because the keeper was obliged to follow them, and then I was left alone.

OLD HUNTER. That is not like Maurice. If he is foolish he is not ungenerous. (*Ponders.*) I must enquire into this. Can Abrams have any motive to injure you?

TEMPLE. None, that I am aware of. I never saw him until to-day, and I do not intend to cultivate the acquaintance.

OLD HUNTER. A wise resolution. He is a man I instinctively dislike.

TEMPLE. I do not think he will do Maurice any good.

OLD HUNTER. How they became acquainted I do not know. His familiarity is impertinent, and I am convinced he is a dangerous man. I pray you avoid him.

TEMPLE. Our paths are apart. I can neither do him good nor harm. Why should he injure me?

OLD HUNTER. I do not say he will. I only recommend you to be cautious.

TEMPLE. The caution of avoidance I shall certainly adopt.

OLD HUNTER. 'Tis a wise resolution, and in the meantime, leave me to guess the riddle. I will soon find out "how the land lies." Now leave the house quietly, and let none of the servants see you.

TEMPLE (*rising*). I am in no humour to see anyone. Good bye. (*Exit C.*)

OLD HUNTER (*looks through door after him*). Poor fellow, I pity him. He has not even entered the family before ~~he~~ begins to feel the power of female influence. However, Mrs. Hunter will now have to fight an extra man.

Enter MRS. HUNTER R. I. E.

MRS. HUNTER. I thought I heard voices. Who has been here?

OLD HUNTER. A gentleman, my dear. Not a lady, I assure you.

MRS. HUNTER (*stamps her foot*). I should think not, indeed. Who was it?

OLD HUNTER (*meekly*). Mr. Temple, my dear.

MRS. HUNTER. Impossible. He left an hour ago.

OLD HUNTER. Oh, indeed. Then I must have fetched him back.

MRS. HUNTER. What for?

OLD HUNTER. A little conversation.

MRS. HUNTER. Then you had no business. What did he say?

OLD HUNTER (*screws himself up*). Mrs. Hunter, I have allowed you to manage my family affairs for very many years, but now I intend to make a change, and manage them myself.

MRS. HUNTER (*sits down and snaps her fingers*). Rubbish—you can't.

OLD HUNTER. But I intend to try.

MRS. HUNTER. I shall not allow you.

OLD HUNTER. You cannot prevent it.

MRS. HUNTER. Is the man mad or drunk.

OLD HUNTER. Neither, but I have had my eyes opened.

MRS. HUNTER. By that villian, Temple, I suppose?

OLD HUNTER. By the muscular exertion of my own eyelids.

MRS. HUNTER. Then I shall soon close them again.

OLD HUNTER. You can't. I have been blind long enough.

MRS. HUNTER. Mr. Hunter, do you remember the solemn promise you gave me five and twenty years ago?

OLD HUNTER. Too well. Have I kept it, up to the present moment?

MRS. HUNTER. You have—religiously.

OLD HUNTER. Then I shall keep it no longer, and I now intend to resume my own proper position for the next quarter of a century, and to keep you in yours.

MRS. HUNTER. Monster! I will leave you.

OLD HUNTER. Do; and I promise you shall never return. Nay, I will bribe you with a handsome allowance on condition you do not trouble me any more.

MRS. HUNTER. What do you mean, you cruel villian?

OLD HUNTER. Cruel! There was a time when such a word uttered by you would have made me believe it true; there was a time when such an epithet from you would

have made me cringe into myself with self-loathing. That time is past, and cruelty now becomes justice. During the whole of that time your life has been one odious unnatural lie.

MRS. HUNTER. Good Heavens! what do you mean?

OLD HUNTER. You have estranged the love of my children; you have made my home a hell. Extravagance and ingratitude I could have forgiven, but the horror of to-night's revelation has inspired me with the unflinching determination of being master in my own house at whatever cost.

MRS. HUNTER. What revelation?

OLD HUNTER. What revelation! The knowledge that your father is not in America, as you have so often told me, but now lies in a London madhouse, uncared for, unthought of, by his own child, save her regular remittances to his incarcerator, not out of filial love, but for fear of exposure and disgrace.

MRS. HUNTER. Mercy! mercy! (*Falls on sofa sobbing.*)

OLD HUNTER. What can I expect after this? What fearful lessons have you inculcated into my children.

MRS. HUNTER (*screams*). And Temple told you all this? He broke his solemn word to me, and I curse him.

OLD HUNTER. Withhold your silly hate. He told me nothing. I heard it from your own lips, when I was behind that screen. My eaves-dropping propensity, you see, is rewarded at last, and in a way I little expected.

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, mercy! Forgive me! I will do all—anything—you ask me. Only for the sake of our children preserve this fatal secret.

OLD HUNTER. Can I trust you?

MRS. HUNTER. Oh, yes, you may, indeed.

OLD HUNTER. Then give me an instant proof of your obedience. The filial duty of attending a feeble and aged parent is the proudest privilege of a noble heart, and the deed will be registered in Heaven. Go and prepare yourself whilst I order the carriage round. We will at once visit your poor father, and make a more comfortable provision for his declining years.

MRS. HUNTER. Yes. (*Exit sobbing.*)

OLD HUNTER. I have done my duty at last. (*Exit.*)

Enter ADELINE, pale, with open note in hand. She sits down and leans on her hand wearied.

ADELINE. I would have forfeited my life on his word. What a hard fate is mine—to love so deeply, and yet to be so basely deceived. (*Reads note.*) “Grant me an immediate interview, even if it be the last. Your chilling note is as inexplicable as your mother’s charges are unjust. All seems lost, but my honour. Your wretched, Harry.” His honour! But yesterday, and I would have staked my soul on it. Oh, man! false man! to what length will thy perjury lead thee. (*Takes up a book abstractedly, and sits back to c.*)

Enter TEMPLE C.

TEMPLE. She turns coldly away from me. No lighted eye bids me welcome now. (*Advances.*) Adeline, I am here.

ADELINE (*without looking*). I am aware that Mr. Temple is already in the room.

TEMPLE. “Mr. Temple!”

ADELINE. Yes. Did you not write to say that you were coming immediately?

TEMPLE. I did; but I scarcely expected this reception from you.

ADELINE. I suppose you thought that the magic of your presence would fill me with gratitude for so distinguished an honour.

TEMPLE. Adeline, what is the solution of this heartless conduct. Do you wish to break off our engagement?

ADELINE. Are you under the impression that a rich girl like me cannot obtain a professing lover whenever she chooses?

TEMPLE. Do you insinuate that my professions have been insincere, or that any base sordid motive has influenced me in my love for you?

ADELINE. I insinuate nothing. I always understood Mr. Temple’s character was too noble even to be suspected.

TEMPLE. Adeline, there is something so strange—so wild in your words, that you are either influenced by some fatal mistake—some treachery, or you are acting under the forced instructions of your mother.

ADELINE (*turning suddenly round like a tigress, and looking*

TEMPLE *fiercely in the face*). I am acting under no instructions. 'Tis an insult for you to say so. I am influenced only by what I know and have seen. I loved you with a love as pure, as true, as ever woman felt for man.' A love that would have smoothed your life, and shared your poverty without a murmur. A love that has bewildered by its own intensity. How have you rewarded me for it?

TEMPLE. By returning a love as pure, as true, as the source from which it sprung.

ADELINE. Oh ! Henry Temple, you make my heart ache with shame when you utter such false words. I could have forgiven everything, but one. I could have even pardoned your choice of me for my future wealth, and thanked Heaven that my accidental possession of the filthy dross had been the means of rescuing a noble soul from obscurity.

TEMPLE. Miss Hunter !

ADELINE. I could have forgiven everything, but infidelity, practised under my very eyes, too.

TEMPLE (*very excited*). Miss Hunter, recall those words. The charge is odious—is false. I demand a full explanation.

ADELINE. I can explain no more. The subject is too revolting for any modest girl to contemplate. Your conscience (if you have any left) will supply the rest.

TEMPLE. Adeline, 'tis useless for me to defend a wild and unexplained charge. For some reason you wish to be free. *You are so !* I have loved you with an honest, manly, and constant heart. No wish, no desire, has stood between me and your love, which was the pride—the secret joy of my life. But in the sacred contract we were about to form, there could only be one link—heart for heart. I have not yours, *therefore, you are free !* There could be no happiness without mutual respect—esteem. I have sunk in your estimation ; I am degraded by your insinuations, and poor as I am I would rather beg my bread from door to door than sell myself for gold at the altar of Heaven. You are free to choose another. and may an Omniscient Power make your choice a happy one. But if in after times we chance to meet in this cold world's great gatherings, my conduct shall take its tone from yours. If you acknowledge me, I shall return your recognition with a respectful obeisance ; if you ignore

me, I shall consider you best know what is necessary for your own happiness.

ADELINE (*gasps to speak and fails, sinks sobbing on sofa.*)

TEMPLE. Farewell for ever! (*Rushes against MR. and MRS. HUNTER, who are just entering C.*)

OLD HUNTER. Farewell for ever. Nonsense. What is to do now, I wonder. Adeline, what is the meaning of all this?

ADELINE (*rising and recovering*). Mr. Temple and myself are strangers.

OLD HUNTER. What for?

ADELINE. He best knows.

TEMPLE. Mr. Hunter, upon the honour of a man I know not the cause, but where there is no confidence there can be no love, and where there is no love—no marriage.

OLD HUNTER. Temple, did I not believe you to be the soul of honour, I should deem your conduct unworthy; but knowing your high principles, I am at a loss to understand what can be the grounds of so severe a rupture between you and Adeline.

ADELINE. His high principles! I believed in them once.

OLD HUNTER. And you don't now?

ADELINE. Alas! no. I have received a shock which will kill me.

TEMPLE. Mr. Hunter, *that* is the cause of our separation. I am charged with a crime without a name. I know of none that I have committed. I am to be slandered and traduced forsooth, because maidenly modesty declines to state my sin.

ADELINE. Henry Temple, did you not a short time ago, when you left my father's house without condescending to see me—did you not at once cross the square and embrace a woman who was there waiting to receive you?

TEMPLE. I did not, so help me Heaven.

ADELINE. Oh, angel of truth! I saw you with my own eyes from the balcony window; else had I not, no slanderer on earth could have induced me to believe it.

OLD HUNTER. Adeline, you are labouring under some fatal error. I followed Mr. Temple out of the house, overtook him immediately, and brought him back here, and your mother knows it. Mrs. Hunter, speak, I command you.

(*All start and look astonished.*)

MRS. HUNTER (*meekly*). Adeline, your father is right. It was not Mr. Temple that you saw, but Mr. Abrams, dressed exactly like him, who crossed the square and saluted his sister.

ADELINE. Then, alas ! I am undone. Oh, misery ! What is the meaning—what the object of this vile plot.

MRS. HUNTER. To break off your engagement with Mr. Temple, and enable you to marry Mr. Abrams, who had secretly proposed to me for your hand. I, too, have been sadly deceived, but I intended all for the best.

TEMPLE. What wrong have I committed that you should become so bitter an enemy?

MRS. HUNTER. I was jealous of your suddenly-acquired influence over my husband. I saw an end to my authority, and being told that you were an adventurer, and a money hunter, in blind rage I adopted the plan invented by Mr. Abrams, and communicated by his sister. Forgive me. My eyes have been suddenly opened, both as to my husband and to my children ; but I never more intend to assume an authority which I find can only be properly discharged by the male head of a family. Will you give me your hand for this recantation ? (*Offers her hand, TEMPLE slowly takes it.*) I am very sorry, and will make you ample amends.

TEMPLE. Madame, you astound me.

OLD HUNTER (*grasps TEMPLE's hand, and whispers aside*). God bless you, my boy. I owe all this to you.

TEMPLE. Adeline, do you believe me now ?

ADELINE. I must.

TEMPLE. It was cruel of you ever to doubt me.

ADELINE. I despise myself, and can never hope that you will forgive me.

TEMPLE. I have no option. Love forgives everything. But you will henceforth trust me.

ADELINE (*smiling*). Implicitly.

TEMPLE. Bless you, darling. I am happy once more.

Enter SUSAN, who pushes rudely past OLD HUNTER, and whispers to MRS. HUNTER.

MRS. HUNTER. Susan, never whisper to me in the presence of any member of my family, and henceforth you will take your orders from Mr. Hunter as its head. I have abdicated.

SUSAN. Yes (*who looks astonished*) ma'am.

OLD HUNTER. Susan, who crossed Belvoir Square to-night, just as Mr. Temple left the house?

SUSAN *looks at* MRS. HUNTER *without speaking*.

MRS. HUNTER. Tell the truth, Susan. Deception is no longer necessary.

SUSAN (*timidly*). Mr. Abrams went from behind the porch to meet his sister.

ADELINE. Oh, Susan, how could you deceive me so?

SUSAN. I only obeyed orders, miss. I was very sorry.

Enter CAPTAIN DE SMYTHE *with polling papers*.

CAPT. (*holding out both hands to* TEMPLE). Harry, my dear boy, I have been hunting for you everywhere to congratulate you. You have been returned as member for Chizzle-em-quick almost without a struggle, in fact, a regular walkover. Ladies and gentlemen allow me to present Henry Temple, Esq., M.P. (*All delighted. To* MRS. H.) Is it not a pleasure to hear such good news about a dear friend? (*Talks in dumb show to* MRS. HUNTER.)

Enter MAURICE and GEORGINA *on* MATHEW'S arm.

MAURICE (*as he is entering*). I have just heard it at the club. I am sure it is true. Ah, Temple, let me congratulate you. You will land the treble event for a hundred. I'll tell you a secret—I am beginning to like you. Your cool pluck at the madhouse won me over completely.

TEMPLE (*laughing*). You honour me. But what on earth do you mean by the treble event?

MAURICE. Return to Parliament, escape from a lunatic, marrying Adeline. Any one of these incidents is quite enough for an ordinary person.

TEMPLE. But the most important event has yet to come off.

MAURICE. Only a matter of time, if I am any judge, eh Del?

ADELINE. I really wish you would talk about something you understand, Maurice.

MAURICE. Well, but you don't think I'm blind, do you?

ADELINE. How absurd.

MAURICE. By the way, Temple, did you think me shabby

for leaving you alone with the lunatic? It was not my wish, I assure you.

TEMPLE. I know it—it was Abrams', and I also have a shrewd guess why he so urgently pressed me to go there.

MAURICE. What for?

TEMPLE. To get the lunatic to kill me, because he had not courage enough to do it himself.

MAURICE. There, I think, you wrong him. He is fond enough of winning my money, but to seek a man's life—no. He is not so bad as that. Besides, what object could he have?

TEMPLE. Adeline.

MAURICE (*astounded*). Rumbling thunder. The scales have fallen off my eyes. I never thought of that. I now see the meaning of a thousand acts. What a blind ass I have been. Confound the fellow. (*Walks aside pondering.*)

Enter ADOLPHUS and MISS ABRAMS.

ADOL. Ladies, I salute you. (*Ladies bow stiffly.*) Gentlemen all, I hope you are well. (*Advances to TEMPLE with proffered hand; TEMPLE does not take it*) Mr. Temple allow me to offer you my heartiest congratulations on your escape. I was horrified, but powerless to help you.

TEMPLE (*aside*). You lying scoundrel.

ADOL. Mr. Hunter, stocks are rising rapidly. Bulls carrying all before them—buy.

OLD HUNTER (*aside*). I wonder what he wants to sell.

ADOL. Mrs. Hunter I have obtained you a box for the first dress rehearsal of the new opera. (*Anxiously whispers.*) Is all going well?

MRS. HUNTER. Just as it ought.

ADOL. Good. (*Aside.*) My sinking hopes revive. Hence misgivings. If I could but trust that Susan. (*See's CAPT. DE SMYTHE and is confused.*) Hollo, Captain de Smythe, you here.

CAPT. I am wondering, Dolly, how you got your nose in.

ADOL. Hush! They will overhear us. I am a friend of Mr. Hunter's.

CAPT. Then I pity him. (*Advances to TEMPLE.*) Harry, is this fellow a friend here?

TEMPLE. No, an interloper, a parasite, who will not be shook off.

CAPT. Nonsense, I'll soon banish him. Dolly.

ADOL. Captain de Smythe, I am your servant.

CAPT. Yes, but I was yours when I fumbled paste-boards with you. Mr. Hunter, Dolly Abrams says he is a friend of yours. Is that so?

OLD HUNTER. I have only known him a few days, but by his manners you would imagine all my life.

CAPT. Good, did you ever play with him?

OLD HUNTER. I never play with anybody. I am always working.

ADOL; (*plucking CAPTAIN'S arm*). I said Mr. Hunter, junior. Maurice's. Do be quiet will you?

CAPT. Then so much the worse for the junior. Mr. and Mrs. Hunter, ladies and gentlemen, I have had the honour of knowing you sufficiently long to justify me in taking a very deep interest in your welfare; and as I have to-day, for the first time, met a person at your house, possibly introduced erroneously, let me describe him. Mr. Adolphus Abrams, alias Dolly Abrams, the flatcatcher, hundred per cent. vampire, pigeon plucker, hanger on at fifth rate clubs, black leg, and card sharper (*ADOLPHUS rushes to table, snatches a decanter to throw, but his arm is just arrested in time by TEMPLE*), a person of excellent address, but scarcely a fit companion for your son, Mr. Hunter, or an enviable associate for your daughters.

ADOL (*struggling to free himself from TEMPLE*), I will be level with you some day for this, if it costs me my life.

CAPT. If you had as much pluck, Dolly, as you have villainy, I might be in danger. Let him go Harry, he can only spit. Remember Dolly, I always promised you some little return in addition to the thrashing I gave you for swindling me with marked cards when I first joined the dragoons.

OLD HUNTER. Captain de Smythe I thank you for saving my boy. Mr. Abrams, you will see the necessity of leaving my house—do you hear—at once, before force is necessary.

MRS. HUNTER. I could not have believed the world contained men who so belied their words and appearance.

I now clearly see that men only are fit to manage matters outside. We have had a narrow escape, but no more warm friendships with accidental neighbours for me.

ADOL. Bah ! Your mighty fine power over your husband's fortune has not lasted long.

MAURICE (*steps forward*) Better for it to return to the man who made it (*points*), my father. Abrams, the money I fancied you had won from me (not robbed me of), is paid. I do not regard it as a bad investment, but I shall not send any more into the same quarter.

ADOL. You are lucky to declare in time, but don't be a minute late in meeting the bonds I hold, or you will regret it.

MATTHEW. And you need not exert yourself too powerfully you *need'nt*, with your friend about the little bill for me, on your disinterested recommendation—thank you—very disinterested—principal.

ADOL (*to MATTHEW*). You are a born fool, Matthew, and were always in the way.

MATTHEW. I am not far off one when I am near you.

GEORGINA. How lucky it is he is not a knave as well, like some people who hang on the fringe of society.

ADOL. You are well matched, you'll make a beautiful pair.

ADELINE (*clinging to TEMPLE'S arm*). And the monster absolutely proposed for me; the very thought makes me shudder.

TEMPLE. Make my compliments to your friend at the asylum, but luckily for me the lunatic did not succeed in doing Mr. Dolly's cowardly work. However, accept my thanks for the suggestive study of philanthropy and—villany—when next I visit you it will be in jail.

ADOL. Oh, you are all clever enough now, but you will appreciate me when you know me better.

ADELINE. Heaven forbid !

ADOL. Rebecca—let us leave these brilliant country Christians from Lancashire. They imagine their half sovereigns—pounds, and love to hear them jingle. So do I. Good by. (*Looks ferociously at CAPTAIN.*) Some of us will meet again on better terms, I hope.

CAPT. Dolly, I shall only be too happy to oblige you again.

MISS ABRAMS. Adolphus, do come along. Supper will be waiting. You surely never expected anything but craft from Lancashire.

MAURICE. Now, Miss Abrams, don't be *so* severe. You know you were always *so* very kind to me.

ADOL. Maurice, you've let go your head. *Au revoir.*
(*Exit with sister.*)

OLD HUNTER. And now as the peculiar person's sister said—supper will be waiting. Come, let us discuss it and our plans for the wedding, and congratulate each other on our miraculous escape from the danger which might have occurred but for my fetching Temple back.

MRS. HUNTER. Or my recantation. (*Shakes her head laughingly.*)

CAPT. Or my arrival.

MAURICE. And my investment.

SUSAN. And my plotting.

GEORGINA. And my sarcasm.

MATTHEW. And my little bill.

ADELINE. Or my ungenerous doubts.

TEMPLE. Or your excellent qualifications altogether, which have delivered us from one of the social traps set every day in REAL LIFE.

DISPOSITION OF CHARACTERS:—

	TEMPLE.	ADELINE.
	MRS. HUNTER.	OLD HUNTER.
MAURICE.		GEORGINA.
SUSAN.		MATTHEW.
		CAPTAIN.

CURTAIN FALLS.

ERRATA.

Page	19	<i>for dum</i>	<i>read</i>	DUMB.
„ 28 to 32 „	Mathew	„	MATTHEW.	
„29 „	only think of those	„	I THINK ONLY THOSE.	
„36 „	mee	„	MEES.	
„36 „	throw	„	THROWS.	
„38 „	nimly	„	HUMBLY.	
„47 „	ultimate	„	INTIMATE.	
„52 „	Inventer <i>speaks</i> War, war, &c., NOT Temple.			
„52 „	Inventor	<i>read</i>	INVENTER.	
„59 „	induced	„	INDUCTED.	
„61 „	confession	„	CONFUSION.	
„68 „	happy	„	HAPPIER.	



This book should be returned
the Library on or before the last date
stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred
by retaining it beyond the specified
time.

Please return promptly.

497.18.2.15
al life;
dener Library

002895570



3 2044 086 858 081