

# AN OLD SCORE, <sup>1/2</sup>

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY-DRAMA.

In Three Acts.

BY

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Author of "Dulcamara; or, the Little Duck and the Great Quack;" "Allow me to Explain;" "Highly Improbable;" "Harlequin Cock Robin and Jenny Wren;" "La Vivandière; or, True to the Corps;" "The Merry Zingara; or, the Topsy Gipsy and the Pipsy Wipsy;" "No Cards" (German Reed's); "Robert the Devil; or, the Nun, the Dun, and the Son of a Gun;" "The Pretty Druidess; or, the Mother, the Maid, and the Missetce Bough," &c., &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

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First Performed at the New Gaiety Theatre, (under the management of Mr. Hollingshead) Monday, July 19th, 1869.

## Characters.

COLONEL CALTHORPE	- - -	Mr. Emery.
HAROLD CALTHORPE (his Son)	- -	Mr. Clayton.
JAMES CASBY (a Bombay Merchant)	-	Mr. Henry Neville.
PARKLE (an Attorney)	- - -	Mr. Maclean.
MANASSEH (a Bill Discounter)	- -	Mr. Eldred.
FLATHERS (a Footman, afterwards Harold's Clerk)	- - -	Mr. J. Robins.
ETHEL BARRINGTON (Colonel Calthorpe's Niece)	- - -	Miss Henrade.
MARY WATERS (a Nursery Governess)		Miss R. Ranoe.
MRS. PIKE (a Gray's Inn Laundress)		Mrs. Leigh.

ACT I.—Colonel Calthorpe's Villa at Teddington.

ACT II.—Harold Calthorpe's Chambers in Gray's Inn.

ACT III.—Ovington Grange.

Twelve months are supposed to elapse between the first and second acts, and six months between the second and third.

TIME—1868-9.

TIME OF REPRESENTATION, TWO HOURS.

MODERN COSTUMES.

## AN OLD SCORE.

### ACT I.

SCENE, a pleasant Drawing-room in Colonel Calthorpe's Villa at Teddington, doors R. and L., double doors (C.) opening on to lawn. *ETHEL discovered at piano—HAROLD lounging on sofa reading. (L.)*

HAR. Ethel, my dear girl, I'd stand a great deal from you that I wouldn't stand from any one else, but there's a limit to one's endurance even of musical torture. I've stood Verdi and Offenbach with the constancy of an early martyr—but Beethoven—oh, hang it, I draw the line long before I get to Beethoven.

ETHEL. (*leaving the piano*) My music did not bore you once, Harold.

HAR. Of course it didn't. You see, one don't begin by being bored. The word is an expressive one, implying a slow, gradual process, possibly very agreeable in its earlier stages, but degenerating, as it goes on, into an intolerable nuisance.

ETHEL. Gentlemanly! (*comes down and sits R.*)

HAR. Besides, in the remote period you delicately indicate by the word "once," not only was I foolishly in love with you, but (what is more to the point) that tinkling old box of music was an uncommonly decent cottage piano. When I fondly adored you, it was my duty to fondly adore your music also. But now that James Casby holds my commission, you must look to him for an efficient discharge of the duties attached to the office. I can't undertake the drudgery of an adorer, unless I'm permitted to benefit by the emoluments. In a month, James Casby will be your husband. If you want to play to him, take my advice and do so before the month is up.

ETHEL. (*quietly.*) Harold, you must speak with more respect of Mr. Casby—before me, at all events—if you do not wish us to quarrel.

HAR. My dear cousin, I don't want to say one word against James Casby as James Casby. Taken by himself, as a wealthy Bombay merchant, and setting his contemplated relationship with the family out of the question, I have no objection to James Casby. I think I could even endure James Casby. I will even go so far as to conceive a state of things under which I could almost like James Casby. You think me an enthusiast, I know; *c'est comme cela que je suis fait*. But looking upon him in the special capacity of my cousin Ethel's husband—viewing him through the trying medium of a contemplated relationship—I am forced reluctantly, to the conclusion that James Casby is—not to put too fine a point upon it—a failure. He's not worthy of you, Ethel. He's a straightforward fellow enough, I dare say, but in the matter of tact and gentlemanly culture, he's nowhere. He's the sort of fellow who, if he were dining with Barclay and Perkins, would call for beer.

ETHEL. Harold, I am sure that we—that is, that you—do not understand him.

HAR. I understand this at all events: that he owes every penny he possesses, his social position, his friends, the very clothes he wears (not that they are worth much), to my unfortunate governor, and that, wealthy man as he is, he repays the debt with a sulky close-fisted indifference at the very moment when open-handedness on his part would be the most acceptable attitude he could assume. I understand this: that the only way in which he will consent to help his benefactor out of his pecuniary difficulties, is by marrying his niece, my old flame, Ethel. There's no nonsense about family pride in me, but, hang it all, it's a mortifying thing when a fellow whose great grandfather sat in the Peers, is cut out by a fellow whose mother died in a ditch!

ETHEL. Well, for a man of your keen sense of injury, you appeared to submit to that mortification pretty patiently.

HAR. Yes. Perhaps I didn't feel it as acutely as I should. The right thing would have been to have got him over to Calais—shot him—come back—married you, and spent the remainder of my existence in dodging Mr. Pollaky and the Scotland Yard police authorities. The wrong thing was to grin and bear it. I chose the wrong thing; I generally do. It gave less trouble; it generally does.

ETHEL. Harold, let us come to a distinct understanding, Once I loved you very dearly; it would be ridiculous on my part to deny it; you have had many, too many proofs of it.

You won my love too easily, and when it had served to amuse you for a few weeks, you treated it as men generally treat a love they have had no difficulty in gaining, and which they have little fear of losing, and I accepted my position without complaint. My uncle's heavy losses—losses that threatened immediate bankruptcy—induced me then to accept Mr. Casby. I don't pretend that I love him as I once loved you, but I know him to be a good, upright, and honourable man, and if you dare to breathe another word to his disparagement, we are strangers from that moment. (*rising and crossing to HAROLD.*) Don't be angry with me, dear Harold, but you must see how difficult my position is, and how that difficulty is enhanced by the contemptuous tone you adopt in speaking of him.

HAR. (*aside*) Poor Ethel! (*aloud*) There—don't say another word about it; I forgive you! (*kisses her*) Hallo! here he comes.

*Enter CASBY, c., from garden,*

CASBY. Ethel, my darling! (*kisses her*)

HAR. (L.) There—now I'm off.

ETHEL. (R.) Where are you going, Harold? Stop with us; you are always out now.

CASBY. (*aside to ETHEL*) Let him go.

HAR. Well, it's slow here—I beg your pardon—I don't mean that.

CASBY. What do you call slow?

HAR. Slow? Oh, nothing to do—no one to talk to—no one to smoke with. You two wrapped up in each other—at least, James Casby wrapped up in Ethel, and Ethel wrapped round James Casby.

ETHEL. But it's absurd of you to suppose you're in the way. Now do stay, there's a dear boy!

HAR. (*aside*) Poor Ethel! (*aloud*) All right, I'll stay!

CASBY. (*aside*) He puts it as a favour! (*aloud*) Pray understand that if you want to go out, the interference with your movements comes from Ethel—not from me.

HAR. Ah, you're a genial soul! Sorry to go, Ethel, but that's such an evident hint that a mole would take it. (*aside, going*) Sulky brute! (*Exit HAROLD into garden.*)

CASBY. Ethel, I've been to see the house.

ETHEL. (*indifferently*) Have you?

CASBY. Yes. It's not a big one, but it will answer our purpose until we start for Bombay. My little Ethel! Do you know, I often wonder how it is that we happen to be thrown together as we are! I am a rough, ready-made

man of business of eight and forty—you are a young girl of eighteen. You are in the hey-day of the age of romance—I have long been consigned to the limbo of dull prosaic reality—Now, by every rule of romance, if not of common sense, you should marry a young man—a young fellow of two and twenty or thereabouts—penniless, but attractive—a strapping young fellow, with his way to make, and only you to help him make it, and not a dull matter-of-fact man of business, whose fortune has long been made—whose lot in life is a common-place certainty. Eh, Ethel?

ETHEL. You pay yourself a very poor compliment.

CASBY. Oh, I don't know that. It's not such a bad compliment from my point of view.

ETHEL. It's a very poor one from mine.

CASBY. Ah, you'll come to look at it from my stand-point one of these days.

ETHEL. Yes, when I am your age, perhaps.

CASBY. (*sits down.*) My schooling, you see, has been an exceptional one. At the age of ten, when I first began to sweep out Bounderby's office—a very small office, then, in Thames Street—the position of a junior clerk in that house appeared to me the very summit of human ambition. When, after five years' sweeping, I was made a junior clerk, I could conceive no dignity equal to that of senior clerk—until I became a senior clerk, when partnership in all its full glory opened out before me, and I fell down and worshipped it. Promotion in the house of Bounderby has been the be-all and the end-all of my existence. I have achieved my highest ambition: I have risen from nothing, to be the sole representative of a leading Bombay house—for Bounderby's has taken enormous strides since I swept it out—and when I, who was once an office lad, and before that, a beggar-boy, describe myself as a prosaic matter-of-fact Bombay merchant, I don't think the compliment is such a bad one, after all!

ETHEL. Of course it is infinitely to your credit that you rose as you did. I did not mean that your success is not a thing to be proud of. I meant that in instituting a comparison between yourself and a younger man to your own disadvantage, you do yourself—

CASBY. An injustice? No, Ethel; I know the full value of the sacrifice you are making for me, and I'm at an age when impressions of this kind don't readily fade. I know that you are going to give up house, home, relations, friends, country, everything for me. I know that you are going to leave all you love in England to spend a half-barbarous life with me in another world. It will be a great change for

you, Ethel. A new country, a new climate, new friends, new associations. So much that is new to learn—

ETHEL. Yes. And so much that is old to forget. (*rises.*)

CASBY. Why, what's the matter with you? You are going to cry.

ETHEL. No—nothing. I suppose I haven't quite reconciled myself to leaving my uncle and all my friends.

CASBY. There are friends awaiting Jem Casby's wife with open arms over there. It may seem strange to you, but I'm quite a favourite in Bombay.

ETHEL. No; everything is so different out there.

CASBY. You know I've lived there thirty years, and people have learnt to know my ways. There'll be no lack of friends, Ethel.

ETHEL. Yes; but one can't take one's friends for granted as one takes one's horses or carriages, you know.

CASBY. Ah, there's something wrong about you to-day. You've been annoyed—irritated. (*angrily*) Has that young cub, Harold Calthorpe—

ETHEL. (*indignantly*) How dare you speak so of Harold? How dare you? Do you think to reconcile me to the loss of my oldest and dearest friends by coarsely abusing them? You don't know me yet, Mr. Casby!

CASBY. Ah!—you don't know *me*, Ethel. You'll learn me in time, but it'll be a work of time. I must submit to be misunderstood at first. "Incomprehensible Jem Casby," they used to call me, out there.

*Enter COLONEL CALTHORPE, from garden.*

COL. Why what's all this?—quarrelling again? Come, come, Ethel—James Casby—

CASBY. No. Ethel is angry because I have set her a riddle that she can't guess at the first glance—that's all!

COL. Oh! nonsense—nonsense. Ethel, my dear! Touchy about a riddle! Come, this won't do! Come, make it up—make it up. What do the little birds do in their nests, James?

CASBY. Lay eggs?

COL. They agree, James—they agree. And how is that state of things brought about? By mutual concession under crowded circumstances. A beautiful lesson, James. Come—do as the little birds do—shake hands, and make it up.

CASBY. (*hissing* ETHEL) Oh, we're not very desperately estranged! There—now, if you will put your bonnet on, I'll drive you over to Putney Heath; I think you'll like the house.

(*Exit* ETHEL, L.)

*Enter FLATHERS, R.*

FLATHERS. Mr. Parkle, sir, is below, and would be glad to see you.

COL. (*annoyed*) Dear, dear! Show him in—show him in. My solicitor, James. (*to FLATHERS*) Stay—show him into the study.

CASBY. Oh, have him in here. I'll go and smoke a cheroot on the lawn. (*Exit FLATHERS, R.*)

COL. But you won't have time—Ethel will be down directly.

CASBY. Oh, no; she has gone to put her bonnet on. (*Exit CASBY, to garden.*)

*Enter FLATHERS, followed by Mr. PARKLE, R.*

FLATHERS. Mr. Parkle, sir. (*Exit FLATHERS, R.*)

COL. Parkle, my dear old friend—I'm very glad to see you. You—you're looking very well.

(*COL. CALTHORPE endeavours to conceal uneasiness.*)

PARKLE. Yes. It don't seem to make you very happy, though. If I'd ever given any post obits I should have thought, from your manner, that you'd bought 'em up. Now, what have I come for?

COL. Well, really, I—

PARKLE. Can't guess? Try.

COL. Perhaps money matters? (*uneasily.*)

PARKLE. Yes; money matters of all things! Strange, isn't it?

COL. Not at all; but really—just now—

PARKLE. Just now! Well, now, look here, Calthorpe. I'm a man of my word, as you know. I told you I must have that £2,000 by Wednesday, and I will, if I sell you up.

COL. (*with mild severity*) Mr. Parkle, I am a man of my word too.

PARKLE. You!

COL. Yes—I. I told you that I cannot pay you until my niece is married—and I can't. Unless indeed—

PARKLE. Well—unless—unless?

COL. Unless I can induce James Casby to advance me the money. That is just possible. His obligations to me are absolutely overwhelming. Parkle, I made that man.

PARKLE. I dare say!

COL. I did indeed—I made him. Thirty years ago I took him from the streets, a singing beggar boy, and placed in Bounderby's office. He is now the head of the firm, and the wealthiest man in Bombay.

PARKLE. (*incredulously*) Ha! Why did you take him from the streets?

COL. Why?

PARKLE. Ah, why? What was your motive?

COL. Motive? I was actuated, of course, by a desire to rescue him from the squalor, misery, and vice of the London streets? I shall never forget the boy's pitiable appearance that day—half dressed in men's rags, soaked with rain, and standing bare-headed and bare-footed in the melting December snow. It touched me to the heart, Parkle.

PARKLE. He must have been in a sad state indeed. But don't tell me that you'd no better motive than that. My good sir, I know you, back view, front view, inside out, and topsy turvy. You're a humbug—you always were a humbug—and you always will be a humbug. However, let us come to business. If you think you can draw this *protégé* of yours to the tune of £2,000, why have him in and do it.

COL. Sound practical common sense, Parkle. Now, do you know I really have a great mind to do as you suggest, if it is only to prove to you that James Casby, at least, does not share your unjust suspicions. It may serve to convince you that in his opinion at least, my conduct was disinterested.

PARKLE. If your object is to make me think James Casby a fool, you may save yourself the trouble.

(*CASBY has entered from garden and overheard this speech.*)

CASBY. Surely! It is a question that can have no possible interest for this gentleman. (*sits L.*) (*COL. and PARKLE much discomfited.*)

COL. James Casby, I want to speak to you on a matter of business. James, I am a man of honour—you are a man of honour. Mr. Parkle, my solicitor, here, is a man of honour. When three men of honour meet, they may talk without hesitation, and without disguise. James Casby—to speak plainly, I made you. Exactly thirty years ago, I took you from the streets, a singing beggar, and placed you in the office of Bounderby Brothers.

CASBY. You did. As office boy.

COL. Never mind the capacity; and now you are the sole representative of that wealthy house and the richest man in your presidency.

CASBY. Yes. It's quite true that, but for your interposition, I might at this moment have been holding horses for a living.

COL. You might have been a thief, perhaps a convict. Who knows?

CASBY. Ah, who knows? Thank you for the suggestion. I might.

COL. We are the sport of circumstances. The possession of wealth often constitutes the sole difference between the moral worth of an honest man and a—a—forgery.

CASBY. (*rising.*) Colonel Calthorpe, it is unnecessary to pursue this vein of speculation any further. In the absence of any direct proof to the contrary, we will assume, if you please, that under any circumstances I should have been an honest man. And pray believe that I am intimately acquainted with all the incidents of my rescue from the streets; that I have the full value of my obligation to you constantly before my eyes, and that I am not disposed to depreciate it one jot.

COL. (*rising.*) Nobly said! How like yourself—so blunt, yet so frank, and so directly to the point!

CASBY. (*rising.*) I generally speak to the point, and act to the point. What do you want of me?

COL. Eh? Ha—Yes. Well, in short, we are all the sport of circumstances. One man rises, another man falls—

CASBY. What do you want of me?

COL. I was saying, one man rises, another man falls—see, saw—up, down—in, out—like the old lady and gentleman in the barometrical cottage.

CASBY. What do you want of me?

COL. Well, then to be brief, I must pay off a heavy debt to—Ah! I beg your pardon; you know Mr. Parkle, I think? (*introducing them.*)

CASBY. What do you want of me?

COL. Two thousand pounds.

PARKLE. Which you can deduct from the sum you propose to settle on Miss Barrington at her marriage.

COL. Which you can deduct from the sum you propose to settle on Miss Barrington at her marriage. There!

CASBY. Colonel Calthorpe, although I'm a tolerably straightforward man, I don't altogether deserve the credit you give me for plain speaking. I speak plainly, simply because I can't help it—because I happen to be rather deficient in the art of elocutionary cookery. My cold mutton is always cold mutton. I can't make hashed venison of it, do what I will. If it is seasoned at all, it is seasoned with hot words, that I often regret having used.

COL. An agreeable pickle, my dear sir—nothing more! Parkle, an agreeable pickle.

CASBY. Very good. Now let us understand one another.

Colonel Calthorpe, I've already lent you a good lot of money, at one time or other: twice, £500; twice, £800; once, £2,050, altogether £4,650, not one halfpenny of which have you repaid.

COL. But, my dear boy, reflect. Charmingly put, but reflect. To whom do you owe it that you possessed the means of advancing me those sums?

CASBY. To you—indirectly.

COL. Pardon me—directly.

CASBY. Call it directly, if you like. Be that as it may, please understand that I don't consider that the sum of £4,650 at all represents the obligation I am under to you.

COL. I knew it—I knew it.

CASBY. But please understand, also, that although I intend to pay the balance in full—and it represents much more than £2,000—I don't intend to pay it by advancing you that sum.

COL. But, my dear young friend—

CASBY. (*going*) I don't intend to pay it by advancing you that sum.

PARKLE. But, my good sir, you—

CASBY. I don't intend to pay it by advancing Colonel Calthorpe that sum. (*Exit CASBY, to garden.*)

PARKLE. Well, how do you like the pickle?

COL. This is dreadful—dreadful. The villain—the cold-blooded, calculating villain. Parkle, for more than a quarter of a century have I warmed that young man in my bosom.

PARKLE. Yes; as I warm a comforter in mine on a cold day. Bah, you humbug!

COL. There's no security I wouldn't have given him! Why, Parkle, he might have had my note of hand for the amount!

PARKLE. Ah, perhaps he didn't know that!

COL. Yes—yes—he knew it! The dinners I've given that viper since his return—the cigars he's smoked!

PARKLE. Oh, he's dined with you?

COL. Often—often!

PARKLE. Ah, that's where it is, you see. You shouldn't have asked him to dinner. I dined with you once.

COL. And shall again—and shall again!

PARKLE. No, thank you. No. Well, as I said before, I can't wait any longer, and if I could I wouldn't. I *must* have the money by Wednesday. I'm not treating you hardly. I haven't alluded to those acceptances of Casby's that I hold—remember that.

COL. (*anxiously*) You—you haven't parted with them?

PARKLE. No.

PARKLE. Oh, I don't want to part with 'em. Casby's name is a good one, and as long as you pay interest I'm willing to renew. If the money isn't forthcoming, I shall sell you up. Remember—Wednesday! Good day!

(Exit PARKLE, R.)

COL. Two thousand down, besides interest on £7,000, and the bills themselves to take up, sooner or later. Suppose Parkle should want money some fine day, and refuse to renew! What would become of me? It was always a mystery to me how even brave men could make up their minds to suicide. It's no mystery now! (sits R.)

Enter HAROLD, C.

COL. What do you want, sir?

HAR. (sulkily) Money.

COL. Money, sir? you had five pounds a month ago.

HAR. Five pounds! I want fifty. (aside) And if that keeps Manasseh quiet I shall be very much surprised.

COL. You—you scoundrel! How dare you mention such a sum to me? Don't you know that I am all but ruined? Don't you know that you have already squandered more money in betting, and other dissipations, than should suffice even a dozen such sons as you? Don't you know it, sir? don't you know it?

HAR. No, I don't. I know that if I bet at Tattersall's, you bet at Capel Court, and that for every sovereign I've laid on a horse, you have laid five hundred on the rise and fall of speculative stocks. If you're a poor man, you've no one to blame but yourself. I'm sorry for you, but the only question between us is, which of us two is best able to raise fifty pounds? and, poor as you are, I think you are the one to do it.

COL. Now let us understand one another, Harold Calthorpe. I've ministered to your extravagances long enough, and I do so no longer. If you want money, earn it—honestly, as I—honestly, sir, honestly. I've given you half a dozen chances of gaining a livelihood for yourself, and you've refused them all. Beyond your bare board and lodging, you get nothing from me. If you are dissatisfied with this arrangement, you know the alternative. You can sever the connection between us at your pleasure.

(Exit Col. CALTHORPE, R.)

HAR. There's truth enough in what he says, though he says it. (sits R.) I suppose I am a scoundrel. Heaven knows I've been told so often enough, and by men—and women—who've had better means of judging than he has! Yet, scoundrels always seem to get on. I don't.

Enter MARY WATERS, with two little children, C.

MARY. Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Calthorpe. I thought Colonel Calthorpe was here; I wanted to speak to him.

HAR. No, Miss Waters, my father has just gone out, but he will probably return shortly.

MARY. Oh, then, I'll go upstairs, and take the children's things off, and perhaps he will be back by that time.

HAR. No doubt, but as I know that he is anxious to speak to you, and as I expect him back immediately, perhaps it would be as well to hand the children over to the nurse, and wait for him here.

MARY. Oh thank you, Mr. Calthorpe, I'm sure. Go along my dears, and tell Jane to take your things off. (Exeunt children, L.; she rushes to HAROLD'S arms). Harold!

HAR. Mary! at last we are alone again! why it's a week since I saw you!

MARY. Two! Time passes so much more slowly in the nursery than it does in the drawing-room.

HAR. I don't know that. I often envy you.

MARY. Envy me?

HAR. Indeed I do. I often wish we could change places.

MARY. Yes; there's a good nursery governess spoilt in you! What would you teach the children? Reading, writing, smoking, and betting?

HAR. And running into debt.

MARY. Are you in debt? So am I.

HAR. You? Nonsense! Impossible!

MARY. Oh, that's all you know about it. Look here (taking a bill from her pocket). "Miss Mary Waters to Ann Spin. To making of a dress, 6s. 6d. To trimming of it, 16s. 6d. To altering of it, 3s. 6d. Total of it, £1 6s. 6d." And where is all that to come from, I should like to know

HAR. Happy little Mary, if that's her idea of a debt!

MARY. And what's yours, pray?

HAR. Seven hundred and sixty-four pounds, thirteen shillings and seven pence! (sits.)

MARY. Oh my goodness, what a lot of money! Seven hundred and—why what in the world have you been buying? And haven't you got any money?

HAR. Two pound ten.

MARY. Oh come, that's something. One can do a great deal with two pound ten. Now I've only got three and fourpence to last me till next quarter! Oh, but your papa will pay it, surely!

HAR. No; my papa is a professional philanthropist.

MARY. But he's a colonel, isn't he? And colonels are

always rich, ain't they? Why he pays *me* twenty pounds a year!

HAR. He is a colonel on half-pay, with an embarrassed income of about a thousand a year, all told.

MARY. Well, now, that's a thing I can't understand. I thought colonels were always rich. He wears a cocked hat, don't he?

HAR. Yes, he wears a cocked hat.

MARY. How many men are there in the army?—common soldiers I mean?

HAR. Oh!—a hundred thousand, perhaps.

MARY. And do you mean to tell me that a man to whom a hundred thousand men go like that (*saluting*) whenever they meet him in the street, can't afford to pay seven hundred and sixty four pounds to save his son from prison? Why it's an imposition! Your papa don't drink, does he?

HAR. No; he don't drink.

MARY. Ah! then I can't account for it. But then I don't know much about fathers. I lost mine when I was ten years old. He was an artist—

HAR. An artist?

MARY. Yes; he drew valentines.

HAR. Poor little Mary; you must often think with regret of the happy days when your father and mother were alive and you all lived together!

MARY. No, I don't. *My* papa used to drink, and then he beat me. But he drew such beautiful valentines, and he wrote the poetry under them, too—beautiful little poems about eternal constancy—woman's love—and the happiness of married life.

HAR. Inspired, I suppose, by your mamma?

MARY. Oh! no; mamma had run away from him years before. It wasn't at all a happy home—I never had enough to eat, and I was always cold. I never was so happy as I am now! Oh! Harold, is not this wrong?

HAR. Wrong, my darling girl! What do you mean?

MARY. Isn't it what people call intriguing? Because it's all underhand. All secret, you know. Now, I wouldn't dream of doing this before Colonel Calthorpe.

HAR. Ha! ha! No, I should think not!

MARY. He'd be angry, wouldn't he?

HAR. Angry? My poor girl; he'd turn you into the street in five minutes.

MARY. Is that what's meant by being a philanthropist?

HAR. Yes; that's what's meant by being a philanthropist.

MARY. I see—he's such a good man, and he'd be so shocked. Well, that shows it's wrong, doesn't it?

HAR. It's not really wrong unless we make it wrong, Mary. I'm a great scamp—a reckless poor devil without a single prospect of success in any line I take up. I'm not much troubled by conscientious scruples, and I generally follow my own course without troubling myself about its consequences to any one; but, bad as I am, I'm not such an out-and-out cad as to deceive such a trusting little soul as yours.

MARY (*after a pause*). Harold!

HAR. Yes.

MARY. People who are as fond of each other as we are generally marry, don't they?

HAR. Marry? Oh, well, yes—it is sometimes done. But we're very happy as we are, you know.

MARY. Yes, Tom, I am; but I don't think *you* are. Besides, we needn't be afraid of meeting, as we are now.

*Enter ETHEL unperceived, L. She stands in astonishment for some moments. They become aware of her presence and start.*

ETHEL. Harold! Miss Waters! How abominable! How disgraceful! In your father's house—with one of your father's servants!

HAR. Really, Miss Barrington, your language is unparadoxically strong. May I ask by what right you use it?

ETHEL. True. I have no title to interfere with you now.

HAR. And no power to do so.

ETHEL. Of that I am sure. I leave you to yourself—but to this poor deluded girl—

HAR. Forgive me, Miss Barrington, but I cannot admit of your right to interfere even with her; you are my father's guest.

ETHEL. I speak to her by the right that is vested in every woman to stretch forth a hand to save another who is trembling on the brink of such a precipice as you have led this unhappy girl to. I know you, Harold Calthorpe.

MARY (*timidly shrinking towards HAROLD*). And I know him, Miss Barrington.

ETHEL. Fool! What is your knowledge of him to mine. You are but just entering on that path of pitfalls which I once trod so long and so trustfully. Do you know what this man's love is? It is an acted lie from first to last. Do you know what he means to do with you? Suppose the best—suppose that he is merciful—what can come of such love as his for such as you, but a broken heart and a tainted reputation.



MARY. Oh why does she say this to me? (*to HAROLD.*)

ETHEL. I say it to you because I believe you to be a good girl. I say it to you because I believe that a word of caution from one who is older than yourself in everything but years will not be utterly thrown away upon you. If you are a bad girl, my words have no meaning—he will not make you much worse than you are. But if, as I believe, you are an innocent imprudent fool, throw yourself from the nearest bridge, if you cannot avoid him any other way.

*Enter COLONEL CALTHORPE and MANASSEH, R. (MARY, unable to escape, shrinks timidly into a corner (R.) and is not perceived.)*

COL. So, sir, at last I know the full extent of your infamous behaviour.

HAR. (*aside*) Manasseh here!

MAN. Yesh, Mishter Calthorpe, I'm very sorry, but—no vishing to make this here public, don't you know—feeling for yer, don't you see—I thought it best to bring the matter of my little billsh under the notice of your respected and gallant governor.

HAR. By George, I'm done now!

COL. By heavens, this is too infamous—too disgraceful!  
£764!

MAN. Every penny of 'em in gold and shilver, sir. Not a box of cigars or a hold master among 'em.

COL. You, sir—you unmitigated scoundrel, sir; you have ventured to deceive this good, this trusting old man; you have obtained this money under false pretences, sir.

MAN. Ah, how nice it is to hear him speak!

COL. You have endeavoured to rob this worthy old gentleman of his hard earned savings—savings, sir, which would have gone far to have made his old age comfortable, if not luxurious.

MAN. Oh, its beautiful—beautiful. Vat eloquence, Oh, lor!

HAR. Father, what are you talking about? The fellow's a Jew bill discounter!

MAN. Oh there now! to hear that! oh ain't it too bad after all I've done for him! Oh, lor!—

HAR. Hold your row, man; we know you.

COL. I don't care what he is, sir. Look at his grey hairs, sir! look at his tottering gait, sir! look at his tears, sir! and tell me anything you can plead would speak so eloquently as those silent advocates!

MAN. Oh! never heard anything like it, s'elp me! Oh its beautiful, beautiful!

COL. If he had thought proper to bring his action for the amount, I should have left you to defend it. But he has been more merciful than you; he has not subjected you to the exposure of a public trial; he has generously laid the matter before me, and (*to HAROLD*) fortunately for you, sir—fortunately for you—for I should have left you to yourself. As it is, I am willing to submit to the only verdict which under the circumstances I am sure a British jury could conscientiously give. Sir, there is no doubt you owe this poor old man the money!

MAN. O vat a noble old gentleman! Give me the harmy for honourable huprightness agin all creation.

COL. (*to Manasseh*) Worthy old man! It is most fortunate for you that your generous disposition prompted you to appeal to me, instead of making this discreditable business public. You have saved yourself the costs of a heavy action (which he could not possibly have paid), and at the same time, as I said before, I am willing to be bound by the only decision a jury could come to under the circumstances. My poor old friend, I am very sorry for you, but when he gave you those acceptances my imprudent boy was not of age.

MAN. Vot? not of age? Vell, I know he ain't of age; but vot of that? It's necessities—bills is necessities to such as him; you kep him short of money, and him the possible heir to a peerage!

COL. 'The heir to a peerage? Oh, quite a mistake, I assure you.

MAN. Vy, there's only two between him and the barony of Ovington.

COL. Very true, but, ha! ha! Lord Ovington's two healthy sons, are as little likely to die during the next forty years as (pardon me) you are likely to live during that period. Besides, I have reason to believe that the elder one has just contracted a secret marriage. I am afraid, my good fellow, that the contingency on which you rely is too remote to affect the verdict.

MAN. Done! done! done! brown as a crumpet! but I'll bring my action if it costs me £500!

*Enter CASBY from garden, c.*

CASBY. Come, Ethel, are you ready? Why, what's all this?

ETHEL. Oh, Mr. Casby, thank Heaven you are here, and in time to save poor Harold; he owes £764, and can't pay it; my uncle wishes him to plead infancy, but you will not allow that—you will not suffer that taint to be put upon

the family into which you are going to marry; you will pay it?

MAN. You'll never suffer that disgrash, my dear young friend. £764! Vat's £764!

COL. If I dared, my dear Casby, after what has passed between us, to hope that in the interests of this unhappy boy—

CASBY. Colonel Calthorpe, as I said before, I am deeply in your debt—

MAN. Ah!

CAS. But I am not going to pay it in money. I decline to assist you or your boy in this matter.

MAN. Not going to pay it in money? Vat, are you in the trade, too? Vants to pay it in old masters and champagne, like von of the tribe!

ETHEL. But don't you see the boy is going to prison—Mr. Casby, don't you see that they are taking him away?

CASBY. Ethel, you don't understand these things. He is not going to prison just yet. I don't know that it would do him much harm if he were. Colonel Calthorpe, you must contrive to meet this difficulty out of your own resources—mine are sealed to you. At the same time, allow me to suggest that such a scene as this should hardly be witnessed by one of your dependants (*indicating MARY, who not being able to escape, has shrunk behind a piece of furniture*).

COL. Miss Waters! How very discreditable! What are you doing here? Leave the room this instant; and as for you, sir—(*to HAROLD*)

HAR. As for me, sir—I intend to make you acquainted with one more piece of villany—one that you will probably not overlook as readily as you appear to have overlooked my money embarrassments. I am going to marry Mary Waters.

COL. What? Casby, what does he say? Great heavens! is this my son?

MAN. (*to MARY*) Don't believe him, my dear: he ain't of age, and his promise ain't binding!

HAR. You mistake. I am of age now, although I was not when I drew those bills—but don't suppose I intend to avail myself of the infamous plea my father suggests. If I live, I will pay you every penny of your money, vagabond as I know you to be. As for Mary, let me repeat to you, sir (*to his father*), for you don't seem to have grasped the full extent of the family dishonour, that Mary Waters is your nursery governess, and that I, your son, will marry her within three weeks.

COL. Leave my house, sir—and take that hussy with you. Leave my house, sir—you are no longer my son. Leave my house, sir.

ETHEL. Oh, uncle—forgive him—you will be sorry for this when you are calm. He did not mean what he said.

HAR. Ethel, I mean it most solemnly.

COL. Leave my house, sir!

CASBY. (*coming down*) Stop! Don't make a mistake, Colonel Calthorpe. The boy's right enough. Don't check the instinct that prompts him to be a gentleman.

COL. (*furiously*) I recognise no instinct ~~in~~ sir! (*to HAROLD*) Leave my house, sir, and if ever you enter it again, I'll place a mark on you that you shall carry to the grave.

HAR. Come, Mary. Heaven knows what will become of us, but come what may, we will brave it all together!

## TABLEAU.

MANASSEH. MARY. HAROLD. CASBY. COLONEL. ETHEL.

R.

END OF ACT I.

L.

## ACT II.

SCENE, *Harold Calthorpe's chambers, in Gray's Inn.* MRS. PIKE *discovered laying breakfast.* FLATHERS *cleaning shoes.*

FLATHERS. (L.) Yes, Mrs. Pike, as you say, vicissitudes make us acquainted with strange bed-fellows. Who'd have thought that a respectable man-servant like me would ever have come down to be a Gray's Inn clerk! It's a fall—ma'am—a fall!

MRS. P. (R.) Ah, well, it ain't hurt you much.

FLATHERS. No—at all events I'm getting over it now. But when the colonel's establishment was broke up through his being quodded along of Mr. Parkle's claims, I was turned adrift without so much as a character to my back. Who'd go to Cursitor Street for a servant's character, don't you see? So says I, "I'll look up Mr. Harold, who's always treated me civil," and after a time he took me on as his clerk, which in Gray's Inn means everything but a clerk.

MRS. P. Ah, that's their way in these hinns. They calls me a laundress; I'm sure I don't wash nothink.

FLATHERS. I'm sure you don't, Mrs. Pike. Lord, you should have seen him when he first come here a year ago. He was on the attic floor then, and a pound o' beef sausages lasted him four days. His boots was in such rags, ma'am, as they couldn't call their soles their own. This (*brushing*) is a very different pair of shoes!

MRS. P. And was you his clerk, then?

FLATHERS. No, thank yer. That was before they started "The Weekly Tormentor;" Lord, what a difference that made, all at once. He come down from the attic to the second floor at one jump—and engaged a clerk all at once, like a lord. If he hadn't been down on his back six weeks with scarlet fever, he'd been on the first pair by this time.

MRS. P. Ah, he was dreadful bad, surely! It was a bad business for all of us. He hadn't so much as a jint of mutton in the chambers for a month together!

FLATHERS. And if it hadn't been for that little trump, Miss Mary Waters, there'd have been no more jints o' mutton at all. He'd have been a jint o' mutton himself.

MRS. P. Ah, she's a nice young doose, she is.

FLATHERS. What d'yer mean by a nice young doose?

MRS. P. She's a bad lot, my dear—a thorough out and out bad lot—a artful designing 'ussy, my dear, as knows the price of everythink from boiled beef to black-lead. She cut six and fourpence halfpenny off my book only the week before last.

FLATHERS. Well, she was right. Look here—"Week ending 4th July: Milk, 1s. 9d., lucifers, 1s., one lb. sausages, 2s. 9d., a hegg, 3d., a bloater, 4d., six pounds boiled beef, 12s. Why, a shilling a week for lucifers would put a Rothchild's back up, and a swindling old hen who can't be induced to lay under threepence a egg cughtn't to be encouraged.

MRS. P. (*taking away book*) Go along, do; what might you know about such things? Ah! if the Benchers knew as much about some people's goings on as I do, some people would precious soon have the key of the street. It's 'ard for a respectable married 'oman to have to open the door to the likes of 'er.

FLATHERS. Mrs. P., the Benchers are deaf, dumb, and blind on all questions of morality, except one—the punctual payment of the quarter's rent. But if they was peacocks, the more they saw of Mary Waters the more highly they'd respect her. She nussed Mr. Calthorpe through a six weeks' fever, like a beauty; never leavin' of him night and

day except to take her meals. This here arm cheer deserves to be framed and glazed ever since she paid it the compliment of sleepin' in it. And if Mr. Calthorpe is a brick—and he ain't a bad sort, mind yer—he'll marry her right off as soon as he's strong again. And if he don't I will. (*knock.*) There she is. (*opens door.*)

*Enter MARY WATERS, with a small hamper, L.*

MARY. Well, Flathers, your master not up yet? Good morning, Mrs. Pike, your book is there, I see; all right, I will look at it presently. (*Exeunt FLATHERS and MRS. PIKE, L.*) (*aside*) Dreadful woman! How Harold can endure her about him, I can't think. A natural taste for the grotesque, I suppose. What an untidy place—dust everywhere! (*Sees glasses.*) Brandy and soda water again. Poor Harold! Ah! if he don't take care he'll have a relapse. Poor boy, it must have been very dull for him during my two days' absence. I suppose he found the time hang very heavy on his hands, and—Ah, well!

*Enter HAROLD, in dressing gown, from inner room, R.*

HAR. Mary, my love, I'm so glad to see you again. Why, your fresh little face, with all the bloom of a two-days ruralising upon it, is quite a refresher to a poor devil who's chained to his smoky chambers week after week. It's like a slice of country, packed in a pretty little parcel, and sent in fresh with my hot rolls for breakfast.

MARY. Indeed? I dare say you think that's a very pretty speech. Now I'll undeceive you. Look here; do you see that? (*showing hamper.*)

HAR. I do, distinctly.

MARY. Very good. Is it pretty?

HAR. No, I should not call it pretty.

MARY. Is it your idea of an agreeable companion?

HAR. No, it don't promise well.

MARY. Is it chatty?

HAR. No, not chatty.

MARY. Has it two bright eyes?

HAR. I don't see them.

MARY. Is it very, very fond of a great, stupid, shaky, convalescent, dissipated old goose?

HAR. I can't say. Probably not.

MARY. Now see what you've been comparing me to. That's a slice of country. See—butter (*taking out a packet of butter*), new laid eggs, cream, grapes, and a pound of home-made sausages.

HAR. Good gracious!

MARY. And whom do you suppose it's all for?

HAR. I can't form the ghost of an idea. Perhaps Mrs. Pike.

MARY. Mrs. Pike!

HAR. Not Flathers? Don't say it's for Flathers. If I thought it was for Flathers—

MARY. Jealous monster, it's not for Flathers. It's all for you!

HAR. For me? Is it possible? My darling Mary, how can I thank you?

MARY. By sitting down at that table and making a tremendous breakfast. Come, sir, sit down, and eat it all up.

HAR. What, all? and raw?

MARY. Of course not, you cannibal. Come, sit down, and I'll attend to the kitchen department. (*Prepares to cook eggs and sausages.*) Now, Harold, tell me all the news.

HAR. News? I haven't any news. Oh, by-the-bye, I saw Ethel Barrington yesterday, in the park.

MARY. (*much interested*) Did you? How was she dressed?

HAR. Dressed? My dear girl, I don't know. She had a bonnet—or a hat—and a shawl or cloak of some kind.

MARY. Oh, you men never have your eyes open. Now look the other way. (*he does so.*) There, now, which have I got on—my black silk or my Irish poplin?

HAR. I haven't the remotest idea. Something green, isn't it?

MARY. Green! And you call yourself an author.

HAR. No, I don't; I'm an editor—that's quite a different thing.

MARY. Miss Barrington isn't married yet?

HAR. No, there's a hitch somewhere; she's deferring it for some reason of her own, I expect. She never cared for him.

MARY. I suppose not—who could? Do you know, Harold, I used to think she was very fond of you? It made me so unhappy.

HAR. Of me?—oh, nonsense.

MARY. Yes, I know it was very foolish, but I couldn't help it. How's the Tormentor?

HAR. The Tormentor, my darling, is in full swing, and my editorial salary has been raised to ten pounds a week. There never was such a success. Everybody abuses it. The paper is only six months old, and its circulation has increased tenfold.

MARY. You've been wonderfully lucky, dear.

HAR. Yes, I've no reason to complain. Twelve months

ago I hadn't a penny in the world. Now I'm earning an income of at least £800 a year.

MARY. But how do you manage it? Because you're not clever, you know, and you're not steady; and—and—I don't think you're liked, are you?

HAR. My dear girl, I'm the editor of a journal of critical satire.

MARY. But if you're not clever, and not steady, and not liked, how do you manage to do so well?

HAR. My dear girl, it's the simplest thing in the world; a mere matter of rule and measure.

MARY. And the rule is—?

HAR. To go in at everything. Everything has its ridiculous side—except Shakespeare. And no one alive is equal to anyone who's dead. Those are the two golden maxims of satirical criticism.

MARY. Yes; but still—

HAR. But still you don't understand. Very good. To make it plain to you I'll put it in the form of a syllogism. Should you like to have it in the form of a syllogism?

MARY. (*innocently*) Yes, I think I should.

HAR. Very good. Major Premiss—

MARY. Who?

HAR. Major Premiss—Nothing is perfect except Shakespeare.

Minor Premiss—Nothing is Shakespeare, except Shakespeare.

Conclusion—Against everything except Shakespeare something may be said.

Corollary—Then say it and make the most of it.

MARY. But don't anything please you, then?

HAR. Nothing—except Shakespeare.

MARY. But have you ever read Shakespeare?

HAR. Never. Why should I? I can't say anything against him. He is sacred.

MARY. And never go to see Shakespeare?

HAR. Never. We have no actors who can play him.

MARY. Oh! But in your unfavourable criticism on Mr. Cribb's Comedy—here it is—you say, "It is not to the point that the piece was badly played. The talent of an accomplished dramatist is shown in his power of rising superior to the insignificant accident of an incompetent company."

HAR. Ha! Yes. You see that's Cribb's piece. You don't understand these things. I am the editor of a satirical journal, and a new piece is played. Very good. Remember it is a satirical journal and its power of satire must be

allowed full play. If the company is good I abuse the piece; if the piece is good I abuse the company. I've no alternative.

MARY. But if both are good?

HAR. The supposition's absurd—but if both are good I pitch into the degenerate audience. There I'm safe. From the satirist's point of view, the audience is always degenerate.

MARY. But is that quite fair?

HAR. My dear girl, all's fair in war.

MARY. But this is literature.

HAR. It's the same thing. Fifty years ago men fought with swords and pistols—now they use printer's ink and long primer.

MARY. Well, I suppose it's all right; but to me it seems very dreadful. However, there are two sausages, sir, and two new-laid eggs. You will be good enough to devour them on the spot.

HAR. I've not much appetite.

MARY. No; you look very pale—very dissipated. Look here, sir (*pointing to soda bottles and glasses*).

HAR. Yes; last night's soda and brandy.

MARY. Soda and brandy—brandy and soda, you mean. Oh! Harold, if you would only give this up! If you would only be steady! I should—

HAR. Love me more?

MARY. (*reproachfully*) Harold!

HAR. Then why should I? What should I gain by it?

MARY. Health, strength, and the respect of those who judge men by their outer lives.

HAR. Ah! Mary. We all have our little gluttonies. Mine is brandy and soda. Yours is penny ices. A fellow is very little the worse for an occasional indulgence in a social vice of this kind. The moon is sometimes eclipsed, but she's a very popular planet for all that.

MARY. Yes; but she can't help it. It comes over her.

HAR. My case exactly. It comes over me. (*MARY puts on bonnet.*) Where are you going?

MARY. To give a music lesson to the Briggs's in Bedford Square. I shall be back in a couple of hours. Now, promise me that you won't smoke until the evening. Promise? (*he assents*). There, then, I'm off. Good-bye!

HAR. (*lights a cigar*) Poor little woman! (*sees that his hand shakes, he looks at it.*) How it shakes! She's right in every word she says! (*throws cigar away.*) I must try and throw this off—it's undoing all the good she did me.

(*Exit MARY, L.*)

Where should I have been, but for her? In a black box, sure enough. Death! ugh! (*shuddering*). I was precious near it. Six long, long weeks; and not a day of it that isn't associated in my mind with her presence. Damn that cigar! what made me take it? Drunk last night—drunk the night before—drunk the night before that! And yet I'm getting on in the world. I've pocketed £620 in the last eight months; while Sapper, a double first, a steady worker, a clear thinker, and—a gentleman can't afford himself a new hat. I'm not clever; I'm not good; I've had no education; I've no originality; but, because I've the pluck to say things that other people only dare to think, I make money while scholars starve. I suppose it won't last. I'm discounting my reputation; my chums are dropping off, one by one, as I insult them in my columns, I'm buying sovereigns at the rate of a friend a-piece. It's too dear—they're not worth it. I'm a bad, bad lot—utterly, utterly bad. No—not utterly. There's Mary; a thorough scamp wouldn't have respected her as I have. Nine out of ten better men than I, if they had been associated with her as I have been, would have treated her as a toy—a plaything—a—a— No, damn it, not if she'd saved their lives as she's saved mine. (*knock*) Come in.

*Enter FLATHERS, L.*

FLATHERS. A lady, sir, to see you.

HAR. Show her in.

FLATHERS. There's—there's a gentleman with her, sir.

HAR. Eh? oh! I'm not at home. I'm not well enough to see any one. Tell 'em to go.

*Enter ETHEL and JAMES CASBY. Exit FLATHERS.*

HAR. Ethel—Mr. Casby—what does this mean?

CASBY. Harold, I'm sorry I'm here.

HAR. So am I.

CASBY. I came at Ethel's instigation.

HAR. Then go at mine.

CASBY. No, not till I've discharged my errand.

HAR. And that is—

ETHEL. To beg you—to implore you to be reconciled to your father. Harold, dear, dear Harold, come back to us! (*to CASBY*) You speak to him so harshly, how can you expect him to listen patiently to you? Would you if you were he?

HAR. I shall never come back, Ethel. The old gentleman and I never seemed to hit it off, even at the best of times. Neither of us has a very high opinion of the other, and we are better apart.

CASBY. Much. I think so too. But I don't come here to

enter into the merits of the quarrel between you and your father. I have only come, at Ethel's instigation, to suggest terms under which, if you please, and if he pleases, you may live together again.

HAR. You may spare yourself the trouble.

CASBY. Yes, but I shan't. The terms are these. If you like to return to your father's house, I will buy up all your bills, and hold them at my own risk.

HAR. I am much obliged to you, but I prefer Manasseh as a creditor.

CASBY. Why?

HAR. Blackguard as he is, he has some sense of gratitude. He knows that I am working night and day to pay off a debt, that, if I had chosen, I could safely have repudiated, and I believe he would sacrifice his debt rather than bring pressure to bear on me.

ETHEL. Oh Harold, do you know at whose instigation—

CASBY. (*to* ETHEL) Stop! (*to* HAROLD) You had better reflect before you decline my offer. I think you are right to refuse it, but I'm not sure. You see it's not altogether a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence. Your father is—your father. I don't justify his conduct to you; I don't justify your conduct to him. It is no business of mine to do so. At the same time there is this to be said for him, that he gave you life and breath; that he fed you, clothed you, and educated you for twenty years, and that perhaps he is hardly taking too high a stand when he regards those favours as a decent set-off for having turned you out of the house because you nearly ruined him.

HAR. You forget the social pressure that was applied to him. If my father hadn't fed me he would have been hanged; if he hadn't educated me he would have been cut, and if he hadn't clothed me, the police would have interfered.

CASBY. Ah well, I've done my duty, and I shall go. I did think that an appeal to your pocket might have been successful, although I didn't expect to make much impression by attempting to recall you to a sense of filial gratitude.

HAR. Gratitude! (*in a rage*) And are you the man to talk to me of gratitude!—you whom my father rescued from the streets—you whom he took from the river-mud, and launched on a tide that landed you safely in the comfortable haven of £50,000 a year? Why, you cur, you forget your origin! Who are you that talk of gratitude to a father? What do you know of such gratitude? What have you to do with fathers? Who was *your* father? Are

you grateful to *him*? If he, gipsy vagabond as he was, were to turn up now and claim your kinship, what would you say to such a father as he? What *did* you say to him who was five thousand times more your father than ever he was mine, when ruined, beggared as he was, he implored you to spare him one grain of the colossal fortune which you would never have made but for him? Why, curse you, you hound, you let him go to prison!

ETHEL. Silence, pray; you are mad, you don't know what you say.

HAR. I know what I say, and I mean what I say. Casby, I've always hated you; but I gave you credit at first for something like the common instinctive gratitude that we find in dogs and cats that have been well treated. Why, you haven't even that!

ETHEL. Stop, stop; for heaven's sake, stop; Harold, dear Harold!

HAR. Be quiet. (*to* CASBY) I'm not prejudiced in what I say, for my father is rather less to me than my clerk; but, by heavens, if you were my best friend, and you'd behaved so to my worst enemy, I'd have cut my right hand off before I'd have shaken yours again.

CASBY. Ah, it would have been a terrible revenge, but I should have deserved it, I dare say. Well, Ethel, you see our mission is unsuccessful, and there's nothing left for us but to take ourselves home again.

ETHEL. One moment. Harold, dear, dear Harold—I know more of these matters than you do—Mr. Casby does not deserve all you have said against him. He had been a better friend to you than—than—dear Harold, I know how hardly you were treated by your father—I knew his indifference warped a disposition naturally good, upright, honourable. I know the temptations that you were exposed to—I knew that thousands of men whose lives are without reproach have been guilty of greater follies than even could be laid to your charge. You are not happy here. I have heard of your connection with that paper—you cannot be proud of it, dear Harold, although it brings you money. I don't blame you for the profession, you have chosen—follow it honourably, and it will lead to honour—but Harold, is this worthy of you—is this worthy of a gentleman? (*showing newspaper.*)

HAR. Ethel, I had no alternative; I was penniless.

ETHEL. I know you were; I can't blame you for your association with it, for you acted under pressure. But that pressure shall be removed. Lord Ovington, your father's uncle, has promised to interest himself on your behalf.

HAR. Lord Ovington? Why they haven't spoken for years!

ETHEL. No; they don't speak now, but—

HAR. But what?

ETHEL. But—I must tell the truth—he felt it disgraceful that any one bearing his name should be associated with such a print as this. Harold—dear Harold—brother—let me implore you by all the old ties between us to come back to your father and to me. *(He is about to relent when MARY enters. ETHEL looks indignantly at her and at him.)*

ETHEL. *(taking CASBY'S arm)* Come; we've been wasting words. I did not know of this. I trust that Mr. Calthorpe will do me the justice to believe that when I urged you to come here I knew nothing of this wretched girl. Not a word—We are strangers for ever—Come!

*Enter COLONEL CALTHORPE, breathless, L.*

COL. Stop; hear what I have to say. *(he sinks exhausted into a chair.)*

HAR. You here!

COL. Yes. You must come back!—*must*, I say! I have just received news—great news—marvellous news. Lord Ovington and his sons—

ALL. Yes—yes.

COL. Lord Ovington and his sons and his son's wife were crossing the channel in his yacht this morning—a sudden squall upset the vessel, and he with all hands—

CASBY. Drowned?

COL. Yes; drowned—drowned—drowned!

CASBY. Are you sure of this, Colonel Calthorpe?

COL. *(proudly)* Lord Ovington; sir. Lord Ovington. There is no possibility of mistake, sir. We shall still be happy to see you, sometimes—at the Grange, sir—at the Grange.

CASBY. *(aside)* How will Ethel bear this?

COL. Harold—the Honourable Harold Calthorpe—

CASBY. *(aside)* Snob!

COL. You are heir-apparent, sir, to the peerage, and to £15,000 a-year. Our family differences must be healed up—you must come back. The eyes of England will be turned on to the House of Ovington, and its heir must be in a position to meet the ordeal. Fifteen thousand a-year and a seat in the Peers! I heard of it only an hour ago, and I ordered my robes as I came along!

ETHEL. But this woman—*(indicating MARY)*.

COL. That is an affair that can be arranged. Expense

is a matter of no consideration. Boys, my dear, will be boys.

HAR. You are labouring under a serious mistake, sir. When I was dreadfully ill, this young lady, Miss Barington, saved my life. She is a good, virtuous, upright girl; and no one shall breathe a word to her disparagement in my presence. *(MARY weeping)*. Don't cry, Mary, I shall not leave you.

COL. But, Harold, pray bear in mind the fact that we are father and son; that this estrangement between us is not only disgraceful and unnatural, but positively inconvenient; that we are bound to regard each other's shortcomings—I have my shortcomings—with affectionate leniency; that we are compelled to this by every moral consideration, and especially by that holy link of kinship—parental duty to a son and filial duty to a father—at all events until the estate is administered!

*(HAROLD irresolute.)*

MARY. Harold, your father is right, you must go. You must go—you must. Don't think of me, dear. I can bear this *(she shows by her motion that she is disguising her real feelings)*. It will not be for long; go, dear Harold. I shall be quite happy—indeed I shall. I shall be quite—quite—happy! *(she falls sobbing into his arms.)*

HAR. Mary—bear up—I can't see you cry. I feel you are right. As soon as our family affairs are settled I will return, and claim you for my wife. Don't cry, darling—indeed, indeed, I will return to you.

MARY. *(reproachfully)* Oh! Harold, do you think I doubted that?

TABLEAU.

MARY. HAROLD. COLONEL. ETHEL. CASBY.  
R. L.

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE, *Handsomely furnished library in Ovington Grange. Table with inkstand, taper, and writing materials.* (L.) *Enter FLATHERS (a groom of the chambers) showing in Mr. PARKLE, from door, c.*

PARKLE. But it was an appointment—an appointment, Flathers. His Lordship made it himself.

FLATHERS. I think there must be some mistake, sir, as his Lordship and Miss Barrington are at the drawing room, and will, in all probability, not be home before five o'clock.

PARKLE. Dear me! My appointment with his Lordship was for four. Damn these mushroom swells! The insolent devils have no respects for a busy man's time.

FLATHERS. Four o'clock, sir? Indeed, sir! Perhaps it were four a.m.

PARKLE. Nonsense, man; don't be a fool.

FLATHERS. No, sir, I won't. I never would. The temptation has been great; but I've always resisted it. I once knew a party, sir, who was a fool, and very much respected he was in that line of business, and a very good thing he made of it, too. He was such a fool, sir, that he once found two bills—one for £3,500 and one for £5,000 (PARKLE starts), drawn, sir, and accepted by two names, as shall be nameless, and would you believe it, sir, he took 'em both to the acceptor instead of the drawer! The fool got a hundred for his trouble, sir!

PARKLE. (*breathlessly*) What bills? Whose bills?

FLATHERS. Well, sir, I am hardly at liberty to say.

PARKLE. (*aside*) This is very extraordinary! The very sums for which James Casby's bills that I lost eighteen months ago were drawn: (*aloud.*) Whose bills? Whose bills? (*giving FLATHERS money.*) Drawn by Lord Ovington, and accepted by Mr. Casby?

FLATHERS. (*much surprised*) Well, sir, since you put it in that way, yes. Drawn, that is to say, by Colonel Calthorpe, now Lord Ovington.

PARKLE. Who found them? If you'll give me the information I want, I'll make that sovereign ten!

FLATHERS. Well, really Mr. Parkle—

*Enter CASBY, c.*

FLATHERS. Mr. Casby, sir.

CASBY. Ah! Mr. Parkle. I didn't expect the pleasure of seeing you here. (*Exit FLATHERS, c.*)

PARKLE. (*aside*) Now or never! (*aloud*) Mr. Casby, eighteen months ago I discounted two bills drawn by Lord Ovington, (then Colonel Calthorpe) and accepted by you. I lost those bills, and they have been traced to your possession.

CASBY. Indeed! I'm sorry for that.

PARKLE. Do you admit, sir, that they are in your possession, or do you not?

CASBY. I admit nothing.

PARKLE. I shall make it my business to see Lord Ovington on the subject this very day.

CASBY. Oh! no you won't. You are much too good a lawyer to take steps in a matter of this kind until your chain of evidence is complete. You've got to trace them to my possession, you know, and if Lord Ovington learns that you've lost the bills before you're in a position to prove where they may be found, he will simply repudiate them, and where will you be then?

PARKLE. By to-morrow or the next day at latest, I shall be in a position to prove that. And before I go, let me give you my opinion of your conduct in this matter.

CASBY. Oh, Mr. Parkle, don't give yourself that trouble. I know what you are going to say: I was always an ungrateful scoundrel, and an unscrupulous liar, but you had no idea until to-day that I was also an accomplished swindler. Charges of this kind don't affect me, at all: you see, I've been birched so often with the same broom in the course of the last twelvemonths that my skin has become callous. But with respect to your tracing the bills to me, let me tell you this as a friend—to-morrow or next day will be too late. Unless you can make it evident that those bills are in my possession within the next half-hour, you may spare yourself the trouble of doing so at all.

*Enter LORD OVINGTON, c.*

LORD O. Ah, Mr. Casby. Mr. Parkle, I'm afraid, I've kept you waiting.

PARKLE. Not at all, my lord. Happy at all times, to wait your lordship's convenience.

CASBY. Lord Ovington, I want a few words with you on a matter of some importance, but if Mr. Parkle's business is pressing, I can—

LORD O. Parkle's business pressing? Oh, dear, not at all. Parkle can wait. Go in the next room, Parkle. I'll join you there presently. (*lights taper, and writes at table.*)

PARKLE. Certainly, my lord. Pray don't hurry yourself. My time is your lordship's. (*aside*) Oh, if you had treated me like this a year ago! (*Exit PARKLE, l.*)

LORD O. (*at table*) Now, Mr. Casby, I can listen to you. CASBY. Lord Ovington, I want to speak to you on a matter that intimately concerns the curious relations that have existed between us for many years past. In three weeks I marry your niece, Ethel, and it is fit that what I have to say should be said before that event takes place.

LORD O. Well, really, Mr. Casby, now that you have



broached the topic of your approaching marriage with my niece, you must forgive me saying that it has always appeared to me extraordinary that a man of your professed delicacy should take advantage of a fact that Ethel is bound by a sense of honour to fulfil a promise that, in short—

CASBY. (*amazed*) What do you mean?

LORD O. I mean, of course, that neither you nor I can be blind to the fact that Ethel—in short—that she is not—that she can never, in fact—

CASBY. (*seizing his arm*) Speak out, man, in heaven's name.

LORD O. Mr. Casby, you forget yourself. Be good enough, if you please, to remember that you are not addressing one of your clerks.

CASBY. (*excitedly*) Lord Ovington, don't mince words with me. Speak openly and plainly. I am not a man to be trifled with, and I'll get your meaning from you if I have to choke it out. What do you mean, man? (*holding him down in chair.*)

LORD O. I mean that Ethel is wholly insensible to the advantage of an alliance with you. I mean that you are thrown away upon her. I mean that she don't appreciate you. I mean that she so misinterprets your conduct to me that she looks upon you as an incarnation of brutal ingratitude. I mean that if you offered to release her from her engagement, she would go mad with happiness. That's what I mean. (*shaking CASBY off.*)

CASBY. (*with forced calmness*) Lord Ovington, it may be as you say. I don't know. I can't quite realize it yet—you say that I cannot be blind to the fact that Ethel does not love me. If it is a fact, I have been blind to it. It has never occurred to me to doubt her love.

LORD O. Come, Mr. Casby; I have put it harshly to you, but it was better to be open and above board. Think the matter over. It is for you to consider whether you will take advantage of the fact that she has entered into an engagement with you under pressure, and that she is only actuated by a sense of honour in adhering to the terms of it.

CASBY. It is a question that requires no consideration. If it is as you say—and what you have said has thrown a new light on many incidents in her demeanour towards me, my course is clear. It is my duty to release her, and I will do my duty.

LORD O. Bravely said. Believe me, I have not spoken without authority. Why, remember how coldly, how formally she speaks to you. Contrast her affectionate behaviour

to me, her uncle—even to Harold, her cousin—with her behaviour to you whom she is about to marry.

CASBY. True—true! Oh, Ethel!

LORD O. Come; I will send her to you, and you shall sound her. I hope—I sincerely hope—I may have been mistaken, but I am afraid that is hoping against hope. With respect to the business matter on which you wished to see me—why another time will do for that. When you are calmer—when (*with affected emotion*) when we are both calmer!

(*Exit LORD OVINGTON, R.*)

CASBY. (*on sofa*) Yes. It's true enough. I feel that. Oh, Ethel, Ethel, I never doubted you! I know at what value this London world prizes men of my uncouth stamp, but I little thought that Ethel looked upon me as a mere investment.

*Enter ETHEL, R. U. E.*

ETHEL. Mr. Casby, my uncle tells me you wish to speak to me. (*sits L. of table.*)

CASBY. I do, Ethel, seriously; very seriously.

ETHEL. (*half alarmed*) Yes.

CASBY. Ethel, in three weeks we are to be married.

ETHEL. Yes, in three weeks.

CASBY. In three weeks, Ethel, we are to be made one. In three weeks we are to have but one mind, one purpose, one existence. We are to live for each other, and in each other. We are to devote ourselves wholly, solely, and utterly to the other's happiness. (*sits*) This is to last for life. Ethel, marriage is our first death, and as we are prepared to meet it, so shall we awake to a life of inexpressible happiness or of inexpressible sorrow.

ETHEL. Your metaphor is a very gloomy one, Mr. Casby. Compare it rather to a second birth. We are born, by marriage into a new existence, with new associations. We are still at the world's mercy, and may sink or swim as it pleases.

CASBY. No. There are accidents of birth, but there are no accidents of marriage. A man who rashly enters into that solemn bond, does so with his eyes open to the consequences, and he must hold himself responsible for them, whatever they may be. A husband and wife are not at the world's mercy, Ethel; they are at the mercy of each other, and Heaven help them if that mercy is found wanting.

ETHEL. Amen!

CASBY. I'm a rough commonplace fellow, Ethel, but my career has been an exceptional one. The accident of my singing under your uncle's window one cold December day, thirty years ago, determined the whole tenour of my life.

That accident, and its singular consequences, have taught me to set a higher value on the importance of the turning-points of life—to look more earnestly, more solemnly into the future than men of the world commonly do.

ETHEL. Oh, I am aware, Mr. Casby, that you are always ready to bring your valuable mercantile experiences to bear upon every action of your life. But I think you overrate your tendency to weigh the value of your actions. I have found that gentlemen of your calling are accustomed to balance probabilities, and keep a debtor and creditor account with Fate.

CASBY. You speak lightly, but your words are not the echo of your heart—you feel as I feel, you think as I think—

ETHEL. Really Mr. Casby—

CASBY. (*cheerfully*) Come, let us be frank with one another, Ethel; I know we shall not be happy as man and wife; our tastes, our positions in life are so widely at variance. If we marry, where shall we look for that unity of thought, feeling, and action, which are essential to married happiness? You are a young girl; I am a middle-aged man; you are impulsive, impassioned; I am a hard, stern man of business; your associations are English, mine are Indian. You twitted me just now with my mercantile way of looking at things; look at this engagement of ours from a mercantile point of view; you have youth on your side; I have wealth on mine; would you barter your youth for my wealth if it were in your power to do so?

ETHEL. No.

CASBY. (*with assumed gaiety*) No, but in marrying me you are doing so!—you, who need my wealth no longer! Don't you see what a bad bargain you are making? Come, Ethel, let us cry off. I shall make you a terrible husband; you have no idea what you are escaping.

ETHEL. (*contemptuously*) So expert a theorist in married life, and yet so doubtful as to your power of reducing your theories to operation!

CASBY. Oh it's much easier to preach than to practise. Why your butler would detect, in a moment, any solécism in the behaviour of a guest at your uncle's table; but put him in the guest's place, and he would commit himself at every turn. (*cheerfully*) Come, Ethel, we've made a mistake. Let us acknowledge it cheerfully, and do our best to remedy it.

ETHEL. So be it, Mr. Casby. I never loved you; but having entered into a solemn, a sacred engagement with you, I felt bound in honour to keep it. I would have married you. I would have been a true and faithful wife

to you. I never loved you, but I would have suffered every misery rather than have spoken to you as you have just spoken to me. (*weeps*)

(CASBY, *deeply touched by her tears, stands as though about to speak to her. He thinks better of it, and leaves the room, L.*)

ETHEL. Free again! free again! with a heart to give to whom I will! Oh Harold! Harold! Harold!

*Enter FLATHERS, C.*

FLATHERS. A letter, Miss.

ETHEL (*taking letter*). From Mr. Calthorpe! Is he not at home, then?

FLATHERS. He left three hours ago, Miss, in a hansom.

ETHEL. But where has he gone?

FLATHERS. I can't say, Miss, but he drove to London. There was no direction on his portmanteau.

ETHEL. His portmanteau! Then he has gone for some days?

FLATHERS. Probably, Miss. He left this note for you, and told me to be very particular that you had it when you were alone. (*Exit FLATHERS.*)

ETHEL. Strange that Harold should have left home without saying "good-bye" to me! (*She opens the letter with some trepidation and reads*): "Good-bye, Ethel. I am leaving home for ever. No need to tell you why I go or to whom I am going. Ethel, she is a good girl, and I have treated her shamefully. I promised to return and marry her, but I have neither seen her nor written to her since we came here. I am going to her now. Break this to my father. I dare not tell him myself.—HAROLD CALTHORPE." Gone! gone! Harold! my own old love, gone from me! Oh, Harold, a love like mine that has survived not only your indifference to me, but even your preference for another, should have some better end than this. (*She falls sobbing on the sofa, then springing up.*) Fool! why are you crying? Whom are you crying for? Remember what you have to do. You have to show him that you can repay indifference with indifference—contempt with contempt.

(*She goes towards the door, R. U. E., as if going out. She meets*

MARY WATERS. MARY is very nervous, but determined. ETHEL is, of course, much astonished.)

MARY. Miss Barrington!

ETHEL. Miss Waters! You here? What do you want with me?

MARY. I have come all the way from London to see you.

ETHEL. I am at a loss to understand what business you can have with me. I am very ill, and must not be intruded upon without good cause.

MARY. Miss Barrington, I first went to Singleton, but he was not there.

ETHEL (*breathlessly*). Has your visit any connection with Harold Calthorpe?

MARY. It has.

ETHEL (*eagerly*). Speak out—don't be afraid; let me know everything.

MARY. Miss Barrington, he loved me—you know he loved me. Give him back to me. Oh! Miss Barrington, have mercy on me!

ETHEL. He loved you!

MARY. Oh! so well; but that was long ago, when he was poor. He left me, on his father's coming into the peerage, promising to come back and marry me, but he never came and I have been so ill. (*weeps.*)

ETHEL. You should not have come here to seek your paramour. (*MARY indignant.*) I beg your pardon, I spoke in hot anger. Mr. Calthorpe is not here. It will, perhaps, be some consolation to you to learn that he and I are utter strangers from this day. To-day he left Ovington Grange, and will never return.

MARY. He has left you!

ETHEL. He has left me; it is enough for you to know that. If it will tend to restore your peace of mind to learn that Mr. Calthorpe is nothing whatever to me—(*she struggles vainly with her tears; she bends on the sofa, L. and cries bitterly.*)

MARY (*creeping timidly to her side*). Miss Barrington, you are a lady of rank and fortune, I am a poor, humble, little music mistress—don't let me forget that in what I am going say. I loved Harold—I must call him so—devotedly; I love him still, or I should not be here. Before he left me, each day was an earthly life that died and left me in heaven. He was so good to me—so kind to me—so true to me, who am so silly and so common-place. He left me six months ago for Ovington Grange, and I have never seen him since. I have been true to him, Who would not be? I have waited for him, Who would not? I have waited humbly and trustfully; through the long dreary days and the cold black nights, through a long, long illness that nearly killed me; through my slow recovery—even through the knowledge that he was on the point of being married to you. I loved him in my quiet simple way as

dearly, as devotedly as you love him now. I suffered when he left me as you suffer now. Dear Miss Barrington, I came here in hot anger to upbraid you for having torn my love from me. I remain to tell you how well I know how to sympathize with your deep, deep grief, and to beg of you to pardon me for having broken upon with my selfish sorrow at such a time. (*ETHEL, overcome by MARY's sympathy, falls on her neck, and they weep in a long embrace.*)

*Enter HAROLD, R. U. E.*

HAR. Mary!

MARY. Harold! (*She is about to rush to his arms, but she is restrained by the recollection of ETHEL.*)

HAR. Ethel, I must account for my abrupt return. I left home because I felt that my heart was elsewhere—I left because—

ETHEL. Harold Calthorpe, I do not reproach you; how can I when *she* does not?

HAR. Mary, I don't know how you came to be here, but—

MARY. I came here, Harold, in utter despair, to beg her to give you back to me. I did not know of her great sorrow.

HAR. To beg *her* to give me back to you? I don't understand.

MARY. I heard you were going to be married to her—

HAR. Oh no, no, Mary. I have been villain enough to you, but not so bad as that.

ETHEL. Mary Waters, Harold speaks truly; he was not about to be married to me.

HAR. Ethel, I can say little in defence of my conduct to you.

ETHEL. It is not necessary that you should say anything. But to this poor girl who loves you, you owe the amplest reparation it is in your power to make, and if we are to continue friends, you will make it without delay.

HAR. No need to urge that upon me. I left you this morning with my heart full of the old memories, to return to Mary, to beg her forgiveness—to tell her that as I once loved her, so will I always love her. Mary, I started for London this morning to find you, and tell you all this, but when I arrived at your lodgings, I found that you had just left on your way hither. Blinded—stupefied—and knowing nothing of what I was doing, I hurried back here to find you, and to tell you how dearly I love you, and how bitterly I despise myself. (*They retire up, conversing, and eventually go off together, c.*)

ETHEL (*looking at them*). Yes, it's better that it should be so! He will be happier with her than he could have been with me; perhaps I shall be happier as I am than as Harold Calthorpe's neglected wife. The blow is heavy, but I will bear it bravely. Neither of them shall ever know how deeply it has wounded me.

*Enter CASBY, L. prepared for journey. They gaze at each other in silence for a few seconds.*

ETHEL. Mr. Casby, I did not expect this.

CASBY. Miss Barrington—this meeting is not of my seeking. It was to see Lord Ovington I came.

ETHEL. Lord Ovington shall know that you are here.

CASBY. Stop! I am not sorry that we have met. Miss Barrington—Ethel—I am going away. I am going to India to-morrow. I shall never return. (*ETHEL bows acquiescingly.*) I should be sorry if I had left without saying "Good-bye" to you. Good-bye, Ethel (*a pause*).

ETHEL. I wonder you should think it worth your while to trouble yourself to be reconciled to one who has treated you as I have.

CASBY. No, Ethel, you do yourself an injustice.

ETHEL (*angrily*). I do myself no injustice, Mr. Casby. I treated you disgracefully—not in consenting to break off an engagement that I should never have entered into, but in entering into an engagement that I knew I should regret. I never loved you, James Casby.

CASBY. Never! And yet I used sometimes to think that I could discern in you evidences of a genuine regard which, fostered as I would have fostered it, might have developed into something almost like love. But our relative positions underwent a change, and it was not to be.

ETHEL. It was not to be, James Casby, not because our relative positions underwent a change, but because your unfeeling conduct to my poor uncle in his time of need, utterly disgusted me—utterly alienated me from you. You are about to sail for India. If the pleasure you must feel at returning to a sphere of action where your motives will be properly understood—properly appreciated—is dashed by any recollection of the love you once professed for me, I am sorry—I am sincerely sorry, for I would not cause pain, even to you, if it were in my power to avoid doing so. Good-bye.

(*Exit ETHEL, C.*)  
CASBY. Ah, well, that's over. I am glad I saw her. I have one more "Good-bye" to say; and I would give half my fortune if she could hear me say it! Now for it!

*Enter LORD OVINGTON, R.*

LORD O. Now, Mr. Casby, the business matter that you wished to speak about this morning. If it has any reference to Miss Barrington—(*seats himself at table and lights taper to seal an envelope.*)

CASBY. It has no reference to Miss Barrington. It refers to the debt I owe you—a debt I have come to discharge in full.

LORD O. Mr. Casby, this is painful to me. This is extremely painful. Let the matter rest. You force me to say that which I would willingly have left unsaid. You force me to say that your conduct towards me has rendered it impossible for me to enter into any further transactions with you. I cannot recognise your existence. I would prefer to think that you and your surroundings had utterly passed away. (*rises and crosses to sofa, L.*)

CASBY. No doubt. Still you must hear what I have to say. Eighteen months ago, when you proposed to borrow £2,000 of me, I told you that, although I considered that £2,000 by no means represented the full extent of the debt I owed you, I did not intend to pay it by advancing you that sum. I am here to discharge that debt in my own fashion.

LORD O. I have no wish, sir, to magnify the exceptional obligations you are under to me, but I must confess I am at a loss to know how you propose to wipe them off.

CASBY. When you took me from the streets, Lord Ovington, thirty years ago, you were courting the wealthy but weak impressionable lady you eventually married. You were under a cloud just then. Your character was not a particularly good one. You had just been tried by court-martial for several brutal acts of tyranny over the men of your company, and although you had been acquitted, the admitted evidence against you was of a character that damaged you in the eyes of your private friends, though it did not suffice to convict you of the cruelties laid to your charge. To reinstate yourself in the eyes of your friends, and particularly in the eyes of the weak, worthy lady you hoped to marry, you took me from the streets, one winter morning; you clothed me, you fed me, and you sent me to a day school, in order that I might pick up the rudiments of an education which would fit me to fight my own way in the battle of life. By this simple act of charity, which you took care to exploit, you succeeded in rehabilitating your character in her eyes, and you married her. It cost you a twenty-pound note, and it brought you in twenty thousand pounds.

LORD O. (*taken aback.*) Nay, Mr. Casby, be just. If my motive in assisting you had been a purely selfish one, my kindness towards you would have ceased when its object was accomplished. But did it cease? Did I not, *after* my marriage, get you a valuable appointment in a leading Bombay house?

CASBY. As office boy, in the house of Bounderby Brothers, to whom you owed a grudge.

LORD O. True. Thank you for that admission. As you say, I owed them a grudge. I disliked Bounderby, but did I allow that consideration to stop me when I had an opportunity of doing him a material service? No. I gave you to him, nevertheless.

CASBY. Very good. Left entirely to my own devices—for you had quite done with me, and I neither saw you nor heard of you for many years after—I succeeded in gaining the confidence of my employers, and passed through the various subordinate grades until James Casby, the ex-beggar boy, became the sole representative of that wealthy firm. I believe I have set out, pretty accurately, the full extent of the debtor side of my account with you.

LORD O. If I had not taken James Casby out of the streets—

CASBY. If you had not taken James Casby out of the streets, you would never have married £20,000.

LORD O. James Casby, with all your faults, there is a charming frankness about you that I really like. I do, indeed. You are wrong, of course, quite wrong, but you speak openly and according to your belief. If I had really been influenced by the contemptible motives you attribute to me, it would have been your duty—your bounden duty—to have set the enormity of my conduct before me in its proper light. Casby—your hand. (*Offers his hand.*)

CASBY. Stop—hear me out! Lord Ovington, notwithstanding the debt I owe you, I have never liked you. I don't know anyone who ever did. The fact that you took me from the streets simply to serve your own private ends; that the good you intended to do me is infinitesimal compared with the good that you have actually done me, are facts that, to my thinking, don't at all affect the debt I owe you. My obligations to you have been constantly before my eyes, and at each successive increase of fortune I have winced to think that my good fortune came to me saddled with the curse of an increased obligation to such a scoundrel as you. But I knew—I felt—that sooner or later my turn would come. I did not know how—I did not care how—but I knew it would come. At length, after a weary

waiting, it came! Eighteen-months ago a bill for £3,500, purporting to have been drawn by you, and accepted by me, came into my London agent's hands. He saw at once that the bill was a forgery, but he said nothing to that effect. He rewarded the bringer and sent it out to me. Armed with the document, I came to England to avenge on you the agony of mind that the sense of my debt to you had occasioned me for so many years. On my arrival, I learnt that a second bill, for £5,000, bearing the same names, had crossed me on my way home, so, to make my revenge complete, I determined to wait until it reached my hands. Owing to a series of delays which I need not now detail, that bill reached me only three weeks ago. (*Producing bills.*)

*Enter ETHEL, c. She listens unobserved.*

LORD O. What are you going to do to me?

CASBY. I am going to pay off my debt in full, and to take satisfaction for the mental torture that your instrumentality in my change of fortune has occasioned me for many years. (*rising—takes out pocket-book*) Lord Ovington, you are a wealthy man, and a peer of the realm. It is in my power to take you from the brilliant position you occupy; to clothe you in a felon's dress; feed you on felon's food, and set you to felon's work for many, many years to come. Oblige me by supposing, if you please, that I have exercised that power—that you are now occupying a cell in Pentonville, and moreover that you have (*say*) fourteen years of convict labour to work out. Good (*placing the bills in candle, and allowing them to burn slowly*). I take you from your cell; I restore to you your position in society; I restore to you your ample fortune; I take you from an infinitely lower depth than I ever descended to, and I place you on an infinitely higher social pedestal than I can ever hope to occupy—and we are quits!

LORD O. Mr. Casby, you have acted nobly—nobly. I have not deserved this consideration at your hands. How can I atone for my conduct to you in respect of Ethel Barrington?

CASBY. In that matter, Lord Ovington, no atonement is called for. You were right. Miss Barrington never loved me, and in cancelling the engagement she acted less at my instigation than at her own. It is better as it is. To-morrow I sail for India, never to set foot in this country again!

ETHEL. (*comes forward*) Stay; I have heard all! (*LORD OIVINGTON falls back, overcome, into his arm-chair.*) Never

