

The Challenge of Nineteenth Century Theatre in Sheffield

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Please note that appendices C and D are only available in the print copy deposited in the University Library.

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Evidence from my research, detailed within the body of the thesis and in these Appendices, indicates that (unsurprisingly) the repertoire in theatrical venues in Sheffield was a varied one during the first half of the nineteenth century; but the plays were often the same ones that were seen in theatres around the country. In order to learn about the range of productions, I analysed the playbills held in the **Hudson Collection** (1832-1858). Playwrights were very rarely credited on the bills, and this collection is typically lacking such information. However, working from the information that is provided by these documents, it seems that the Sheffield audience were presented with mixed bills of tragedies, farces, comedies, pantomimes, spectaculars, burlesques, and occasionally comic operas. In addition to Shakespeare, dramatists such as Sheridan Knowles and Bulwer Lytton were popular, as were eighteenth-century playwrights such as Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Adaptations from the novels of Charles Dickens and Walter Scott abounded; Charles Selby, J. B. Buckstone and Douglas Jerrold provided many comedies; R. B. Peake and Edward Fitzball specialised in atmospheric melodramas and James R. Planché created dozens of extravaganzas.

Yet there were many other industrious writers who were obscured by these well-known names. These theatrical 'artisans' adapted stories (from novels or plays) that were already in the public domain; and sometimes they produced original plays. It can be difficult to determine which productions were entirely new, and just one example reminds us of a common pattern. In September 1854, James R. Anderson licensed his play *Schamyl; or, the Circassian Chief and the Prophet's Son*, for the Standard Theatre in London; in November of the same year John Palgrave Simpson's version, *Schamyl, the Warrior Prophet*, appeared at the Princess' Theatre.¹ When Coleman and Johnson produced yet another version at the Theatre Royal in Sheffield, entitled *Schamyl, the Warrior Prophet of Circassia!*, the critic for the *Sheffield Independent* thought that they had made a mistake, because although they had a good story, their adaptation was an inferior one.² This account indicates the way that theatre producers recycled and altered familiar material, and details how that practice affected the relationship between product and audience. There is more work that could be done on the repertoire in provincial towns such as Sheffield during the first half of the nineteenth century, in order to more fully understand these processes.

One of the aims of this project was to unearth some of these less well-known playwrights, particularly those who produced new work under their own name and took a particular stance on some of the issues of public concern during the period. In addition, I wanted to examine the distinctive aspects of theatre production and playwriting in Sheffield, as opposed to London or other provincial towns. Therefore, I focused on plays with an extant script which received their premiere at one of the entertainment venues; featured Sheffield as a specific setting or theme; and/or were written by individuals with a particular connection to the town. The following table presents some of my discoveries; and the information complements, and supplements, that which is already provided within the main body of the thesis.

¹ Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of Early Nineteenth Century Drama 1800-1850, Volume 2* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1946), p. 240 and p. 547.

² *Sheffield Independent*, 20 January 1855.

ORIGINAL PLAYS PRODUCED AT SHEFFIELD DURING THE PERIOD

This table lists a selection of new plays that premiered in Sheffield during the period, and I hereby provide some notes on presentation to assist the reader:

they are arranged in **alphabetical order**, using the name of the **PLAYWRIGHT**. Some of the plays are also listed within the chronological histories of the **Theatre/Theatre Royal (Appendix C2)** and the **Alexandra (Appendix C3)**. If I discuss the plays within the main body of the thesis, I have put the titles **in bold type** in this document. Likewise, if the playwrights have been previously noted, or are otherwise significant for this project, they are also marked **in bold**. When more than one play by the same writer is listed, the plays are listed chronologically, the **earliest first**.

The starting point for this aspect of the project was the meticulous documentation produced by Allardyce Nicoll, in his directories of nineteenth century plays and their authors.³ Kathleen Barker provides very useful additional material, particularly in the Appendix to her unpublished PhD thesis, because she includes a list of plays 1840-1870 which she claims had their premiere at Sheffield. I have subsequently conducted my own investigation and detail some of my findings here. It is likely that there were many more original plays, which were originally written for a Sheffield audience, but they are difficult to trace, and may have already disappeared. This area of research would benefit from further enquiry.

Abbreviations

LCP	Lord Chamberlain's Play Collection, held at the British Library. The BL catalogues all playtexts in the LC collection with the suffix 'Add. MS' but for simplicity I have omitted this here.
Nicoll	Indicates that the play is listed in one or more of the Nicoll volumes.
N/Ukn.	Nicoll has listed the play as written by an 'Unknown Author'.
KB	Indicates that the play has been listed by Kathleen Barker, but her initials are only added if it does not also appear in Nicoll.
SNT	Script Not Traced: indicates that the play is not in the Lord Chamberlain's Play Collection and has not been found elsewhere.

³ Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900, VI: Alphabetical Catalogue of Plays* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1959)
Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of Early Nineteenth Century Drama 1800-1850, Volumes 1 and 2* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1946)
Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama 1850-1900, Volumes 1 and 2* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930)

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary ⁴ References
Anderson, J. T. R. Unable to trace any information about this playwright.	<i>Victorian</i>	Theatre Royal	1884	Opera LCP 53325 E Nicoll Although Nicoll notes that this premiered at Theatre Royal, Sheffield, the licence is for the Grand, Birmingham. The script was published (London: Hutchings and Romer, 1884), and it was produced at Covent Garden Theatre. The libretto is by Anderson, based on 'the Spanish Student' by Longfellow. It is a 'romantic tale' of woman's virtue tested, love, betrayal, and 'heroic' behaviour.
Aylen, H., with Eldred, Joseph Unable to trace any information about Aylen . Eldred (d. 1884) was Lessee of the Theatre Royal 1872-1873 and had several plays produced there.	<i>Gaiété</i>	Theatre Royal	1874	Comic Opera / Opera Bouffe SNT Nicoll There is very little available information about this production.
Bloomer , John E. Journalist, employed at the <i>Sheffield Evening Post</i> . This appears to have been his only theatrical composition.	<i>The Squire's Daughter</i>	Alexandra	1879	Comic Opera / Opera Bouffe LCP 53225 J Nicoll Set during the reign of George III. The story is about class, love and money. The Squire wants to marry his daughter Isabella to a rich aristocrat, but she loves Harry, a poor-but-honest country boy. It eventually transpires that the Lord is in debt, and Harry inherits wealth. There are lots of songs about class aspirations and the need for money as well as love.

⁴ The attribution of genres to plays usually follows the classification system used by Nicoll, but is sometimes taken from the playtext or reviews.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Booth, George Journalist and drama critic. Worked for newspapers in Sheffield and later moved to Manchester. This appears to have been his only play.	<i>Hamlet, whether he will or no; or, the ghost's mistake, of which he must take the consequences</i>	Alexandra	1879	Burlesque, or 'after-piece' Uses the story of Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' as an opportunity for a light-hearted diversion about love, money, and the tribulations of managing a public house. Deals with topical issues such as: the difficulties of business and pleasure, adulteration of alcohol, the occult, war and patriotism, marriage and money.	LCP 53218 O Nicoll
Bright, Mrs. Augustus (Kate Coveney Pitt) B. 1844 D. 1906 Mrs. Bright's life and career is the subject of Chapter Two, and a résumé is at Appendix B1 .	<i>Not False but Fickle</i>	Alexandra	1878	Comic Drama Although Nicoll describes this as a comic drama, it is a rather poignant one-act play which portrays a woman's selfless act and its misinterpretation. The script was published (Sheffield: Pawson and Brailsford, 1878) and the copy in the B.L. is dedicated to 'Georgie' (likely to be her daughter Georgina). It was also published in an Acting Edition, by Samuel French.	LCP 53200 P Nicoll
	<i>Noblesse Oblige</i>	Theatre Royal (Exeter) Alexandra	1878	Domestic Drama Themes of class, money, and the sacrifice of love for duty. The play was well received by critics and published in an Acting Edition by Samuel French.	LCP 53209 I Nicoll
	<i>Bracken Hollow</i>	Alexandra	1878	Drama Adaptation of stories by May Agnes Fleming. Family drama in which the central character Helen Armytage is disinherited and jilted. She is thought to be dead, but runs away to America and has a successful career as an actress. She returns some years later, to the great surprise of all concerned, and marries the family doctor who had come to her assistance earlier in the story.	LCP 53209 J Nicoll

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Bright, continues	<i>Naomi's Sin; or Where are you going to, my Pretty Maid?</i>	Alexandra	1879	Drama As the title suggests, Naomi is a 'fallen woman' who can be redeemed only by death. However, the play presents the character in a sympathetic manner, and the part was often played, in touring productions, by Kate's sister, Fanny Pitt.	LCP 53217 K Nicoll
	<i>Dane's Dyke</i>	Theatre Royal	1881 Aug	Drama Adapted from the writer's own novel, <i>Unto the Third and Fourth Generation</i> , this is a family saga about money, class and inheritance.	LCP 53258 F Nicoll
Broughton, Frederick W. A prolific playwright (Nicoll lists 33 plays), but he appears to have had no special connection with Sheffield.	<i>Withered Leaves</i>	Theatre Royal	1875	Comedietta The <i>Era</i> notes that it was an 'oft-played comedietta', <i>Era</i> 19 June 1886. He also co-wrote <i>Once Again</i> , with George Walter Browne.	SNT Nicoll
Browne , George Walter B. 1856 D. 1911 He was born in East Yorkshire, in Hull, and lived and worked for a time in Sheffield. Worked as a journalist, dramatic critic and actor. He appeared with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and wrote many plays and sketches. Died in Connecticut, America.	<i>Helter Skelter</i>	Alexandra	1886	Farce This highly physical comedy was performed by members of the Majilton 'family', who were also members of the cast in John F. McArdle's <i>Round the Clock</i> . The characters called 'Squeak' (also known as 'Professor Punch and Judy') and 'the Electric Eel' are recognisable from sideshow entertainments and are required to be flexible and acrobatic. It is similar in form and content to <i>Flint and Steel</i> by J. F. McArdle although <i>Helter Skelter</i> was written five years later. It is set in the seaside resort of Yarmouth, and has a convoluted plot involving marriage, relationships, mistaken identity and even 'Fenian' terrorism.	LCP 53361 G Nicoll

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary References
Burbey, E. J. Unable to trace any information about this playwright.	<i>John Aylmer's Dream</i>	Theatre Royal	1886	Drama LCP 53364 D Nicoll A one-act play about morality and conscience, which seems to have been very short-lived. An advertisement in 1897 for a play with the same name attributes it to Josephine Rae and Thomas Sidney (<i>Era</i> , 25 December 1897), but the licensed manuscript in the LCP (dated 1886) is credited to Burbey.
Callender, Edwin Romaine B. 1845 D. 1922 Lessee of the Theatre Royal (1880-1885), with his wife Florence ; and oversaw extensive refurbishments. He had several other plays produced.	<i>Light</i>	Theatre Royal	1882	Comic Drama LCP 53288 B Nicoll Nicoll notes that this was afterwards played at the Gaiety in London as <i>My Darling</i> , but this later script has not survived. The text of <i>Light</i> is in a very poor material condition, so it is difficult to decipher. It is surprising that the play is described as a 'comic drama', as although it has some amusing moments it is rather serious in tone. It is set in the theatrical world, and tackles themes of respectability and class. Sampson, a circus performer, has a daughter Helen, who he sends away to school because he wants her to grow up away from the allegedly bad influence of his rather disreputable milieu. She matures to become a rather supercilious young woman; becomes involved with a supposed gentleman who is later revealed to be a brute; and all ends unhappily.
	<i>Cinderella</i>	Theatre Royal	1882	Pantomime Songs published in programme SA SY 128/Z Co-written with John F. McArdle . The programme boasts that the 'Entire production on a scale of Splendour and Magnificent Completeness never hitherto attempted in Sheffield'.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
<p>Capel, George</p> <p>He had several plays produced, but he appears to have had no special connection with Sheffield.</p>	<i>A Link o' Gold</i>	Alexandra	1882	Drama	LCP 53269 K Nicoll
<p>Capel, George</p> <p>He had several plays produced, but he appears to have had no special connection with Sheffield.</p>				<p>Set mainly in the countryside, some references to Yorkshire place-names, but nothing specifically about Sheffield.</p> <p>Complicated plot involving secret children and characters framed for murder. Shares some similarities in terms of plot with <i>The Squire's Daughter</i> by Bloomer. A farmer wants his child to marry the supposedly wealthy Sir Arthur, although she is in love with someone else. During the course of the play it is revealed that the supposed aristocrat is in fact a wanted criminal, who goes on to murder the farmer. The play features a dogged professional detective, called Darby.</p>	
<p>Clay, Cecil with Stephenson, B. C. and Yardley, W.</p> <p>Playwright and actor. Married Theodocia Rosina Vokes (1854-1894) one of the celebrated family of physical performers who often worked in Sheffield.</p>	<i>On the March</i>	Theatre Royal	1896	Musical Comedy	LCP 53602 K Nicoll
<p>Clay, Cecil with Stephenson, B. C. and Yardley, W.</p> <p>Playwright and actor. Married Theodocia Rosina Vokes (1854-1894) one of the celebrated family of physical performers who often worked in Sheffield.</p>				<p>The play exploits the humour which can be caused by mistaken identity, when a group of upper-class young ladies are mistaken for actresses by a group of soldiers who are about to mount a production of Gounod's opera <i>Faust</i>. There are songs and dances, and colloquial idioms, and plenty of jokes, but the play also reveals the changing attitudes of the 1890s.</p>	
<p>Coleman, John</p> <p>Actor, manager and playwright who lived and worked in Sheffield, particularly during the 1850s. There is evidence that he produced adaptations from well-known novelists (such as Harriet Beecher Stowe), and wrote sketches and other dramas, for production at the Theatre Royal. He also allegedly collaborated with Joseph Fox. Coleman's play <i>Valjean; or, A Life's Sacrifice</i> (LCP 53205 L) was elsewhere attributed to Fox (Joseph Fox obituary, <i>New York Times</i>, 1 September 1906). Coleman was certainly adaptable and multi-skilled and is included in this list because of his long association with Sheffield.</p>					
<p>Cooke, Charles</p> <p>Unable to trace any information about this playwright - according to Nicoll he wrote two other plays. No particular connection with Sheffield.</p>	<i>Madeline; or the Flag of France</i>	Alexandra	1874	Drama	SNT Nicoll
<p>Cooke, Charles</p> <p>Unable to trace any information about this playwright - according to Nicoll he wrote two other plays. No particular connection with Sheffield.</p>				<p>There is very little available information about this production.</p>	

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary References
Cross, A. F., with Elliston, J. F. Unable to trace any information about A. F. Cross.	<i>Keen Blades; or the Straight Tip</i>			See entry under Elliston
<p>Dillon, Charles</p> <p>Dillon was a successful actor who worked in Sheffield during the 1850s, and had a productive professional relationship with Joseph Fox. He occasionally wrote plays, or adaptations, but was best known for his achievements as an actor.</p>				
Earlesmere, Henry	<i>Shattered Fetters</i>	Cambridge Hall	1894	SNT Nicoll One-act play which appears to be the only one Henry Earlesmere wrote. The venue was a multi-purpose one (in Moorhead); it was used for balls, lectures, and meetings, so it seems likely that this was a one-off production. The review in the <i>Era</i> (10 July 1894) noted that it did not contain much originality, but was reasonably well executed. However, there was a different, and rather more radical outcome for the 'fallen woman' than is usually the case: she is forgiven by her husband and the seducer/blackmailer commits suicide. The playwright, Henry Earlesmere, played one of the main characters.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
<p>Eldred, Joseph Eldred was Lessee and Manager of the Theatre Royal 1872-1873, and produced the pantomime while he was there.</p> <p>Eldred wrote several other plays but nothing else specifically connected to Sheffield.</p>	<i>Gaiété</i>	See entry under Aylen, H.			
	<i>Sleeping Beauty; or Jack and Jill, and Harlequin Humpty Dumpty</i>	Theatre Royal	1872	Pantomime	<p>Programme Sheffield: Joseph Clowes, 1872 LSL Local Pamphlets, V. 231, 18</p> <p>Like many late nineteenth century pantomimes, the narrative is a mixture of many different stories and nursery rhymes. There are appearances by the Lilliputian Army, and a Grand Amazonian March and Combat, as well as a Big Boot Dance.</p> <p>It also contains the usual local satirical criticism about the ineffectual meetings of the town council; the ineptness of the police; the laziness of the 'pothouse politician'. There are some references to the fight for women's rights, strikes, and teetotalism.</p>
<p>Elliston, James Fyfe B. c. 1853 D. 1920 Actor and impresario, this is the only known play that he wrote. See Chapter Four, and Appendix B3.</p>	<i>Keen Blades; or the Straight Tip</i>	Theatre Royal	1893	Drama	<p>LCP 53524 F Nicoll</p> <p>Written with A. F. Cross, the play was licensed for the Theatre Royal Bolton, but it was not produced there until 5 June 1893 (it appeared at the Theatre Royal Sheffield in April of that year).</p> <p>Set in Sheffield, the play is about the popular sport of pedestrianism, and the plot combines elements of a mystery thriller with the drama of a spectacular sporting event (see Chapter Four).</p>

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Fox, Joseph B. 1833 D. 1906 Actor, playwright and theatrical producer. Born in Sheffield and died in New York. See Appendix B2 .	<i>Bravin's Brow</i>	Theatre Royal	1863	Drama	LCP 53019 O Nicoll This was Fox's first play, licensed for Leeds. Played at the Theatre Royal in Sheffield after Leeds and before London.
	<i>Spadra, the Satirist</i>	Theatre Royal	1869	Drama	SNT There is no trace of this script, but Fox later re-worked the story, and re-produced it, as <i>Ambition's Slave</i> (LCP 53287 I). It toured and went to London. This earlier incarnation starred Dillon as Spadra, and the <i>Sheffield Independent</i> commented that 'the dialogue was sparkling and bristling with satirical and epigrammatic point' (<i>Sheffield Independent</i> , 18 November 1869).
	<i>The Union Wheel</i>	Theatre Royal	1870	Drama	LCP 53084 H Nicoll Play written about the trade disputes in Sheffield (known as the Outrages) and their consequences. See Chapter Three.
	<i>That Lass O' Lowrie's</i>	Alexandra	1879	Drama	SNT Adapted from the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett.
Goldberg, Max	<i>Secrets of the Harem</i>	City Theatre	1896	Drama	LCP 53616 B Nicoll The play also toured, including to the Grand Theatre, Cardiff. It is subtitled 'a Romantic Oriental Drama', and it is a mixture of mystery thriller and farcical comedy. It features sword fights and spectacular scenes; and two 'Cockney Music Hall Stars', who provide much of the humour. Goldberg acknowledges his sources and states that 'This play is founded partly on the novel of Fortune du Boisecoby, <i>Saved from the Harem</i> and partly on <i>The Lovers of the Harem</i> by G. W. M. Reynolds, Esq. (Ms., front page).

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Greene, Clay M. B. 1850 D. 1933 American playwright who had great success with this play.	<i>Hans the Boatman</i>	Theatre Royal	1887	Musical Comedy The title page of the manuscript describes the play as 'an American comedy-drama in Three Acts'. Although Clay Greene wrote the play, the copyright was owned by its lead actor: the manuscript states that it is 'the property of Charles Arnold'. The actor would therefore have benefited in two ways, given its great success: from his own continued employment as an actor, and the royalties from productions. The narrative is a simple one, dealing with themes of love, class, marriage and money. The marriage between the poor and playful Hans and his pampered sweetheart Gladys is a mismatch, and she elopes with Darrell Vincent, who could be described as a cad. Once she has left the safety of her home, Vincent refuses to marry her and she becomes as lost and heartbroken as her deserted husband. After many trials, the couple are reunited, and Vincent accidentally, yet somewhat fortuitously, drowns.	LCP 53374 H Nicoll
Green, F. W. Wrote many pantomimes, including several for Sheffield.	<i>Jack and the Beanstalk and the Man in the Moon</i>	Theatre Royal	1876	Pantomime The text contains several topical allusions. For example, a local industrialist was, during this period, in the process of establishing Firth College (the precursor to the University of Sheffield) and one of the lines is, 'and like Mark Firth, I'll build a fine new college'. There are also references to taxation, the Licensing Bill, milk adulteration, bad meat and the arrival of the trams. The Walton family of acrobats provided spectacular feats of skill and strength.	Programme / partial script Sheffield: J. Clowes, 1876 LSL Local Pamphlets, V. 204, 10

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Hall, Henry Unable to trace any information.	<i>The Saxon</i>	Theatre	1841		SNT GTS ⁵ Very little known about this play or its author. He also allegedly wrote another play entitled <i>Waltheof</i> (1840) about events in early English history, which was also produced at the Theatre.
Hamilton, Henry B. 1853 D. 1918 Prolific writer and producer; a good example of a theatrical 'artisan', but he had no particular connection with Sheffield.	<i>No Coronet</i>	Theatre Royal	1883	Comedy As its title implies, this is a play about wealth and class, and marrying for love. It is set in a country house, and features the conflict between inherited wealth, and money made from business. Exchanged identities between two men of differing backgrounds highlight the foolish, yet deep-rooted, nature of prejudice. Eventually, it all ends happily and the character Muriel, who has learned an important lesson, acknowledges that it is the qualities of truth, courage, honour, generosity' that confer true nobility.	LCP 53300 J Nicoll
Harcourt, F. C.	<i>Clear the Way</i>	Stacey's	1892	Drama There is very little available information about this production.	SNT Nicoll

⁵ Sheffield Theatre History Research Group, *Georgian Theatre in Sheffield*, (Sheffield: Pickard Communication, 2003).

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Harvey, Frank B. 1841 D. 1903	<i>Built on Sand</i>	Alexandra	1886	Drama The play was licensed for the Tyne Theatre, Newcastle (11 March 1886) and it played at the Alexandra, in Sheffield, in May. The title indicates the theme of the story, which is about secrets and lies, and it examines a marriage which was forged in deception. One of the main characters, Valentine, laments at the end of Act Three: 'I built my house upon sand, and it has fallen in ruins'. The narrative has a global reach – the play opens with one of the characters, called Mark, in California, writing to his sweetheart Amy in Devon, letting her know that he is about to travel to Australia. His prolonged absence provides the opportunity for his rival, Valentine to marry Amy in his stead. There are complicated plots over five acts, but eventually the character Valentine learns that true, honest, love should be the strong foundation on which to build one's life, and he vows to put this into practice.	LCP 53354 L Nicoll
	<i>Shall He Forgive Her?</i>	Alexandra	1894	Drama This was actually licensed for the Princes Theatre, Bradford, and titled <i>The Woman He Married</i> . It is a domestic melodrama that relies rather too heavily on unlikely coincidences in order to create dramatic tension; and it is the type of play which was satirised in the 1890s in musical comedies such as Cupid & Co.	LCP 53543 J Nicoll
Hunt, Henry	<i>Seventeen Hundred and Ninety</i> (also referred to as <i>Seventeen Ninety</i>)	Bath Saloon	1894	Drama Loosely adapted from Dickens' <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> ; this is a rare example of an extant play which was produced at this small venue.	LCP 53560 C Nicoll

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Jefferson, Arthur ⁶	<i>The Bootblack</i>	Alexandra	1897	Drama Although Nicoll lists this play as having its premiere in Sheffield, the licensed copy in the LCP is for the Royalty Theatre, Blyth. Its title was later altered to <i>London by Day and Night</i> . It was a very popular piece and toured extensively. The play tells the story of a poor orphan, who is ill-treated and framed for a crime he did not commit, whose story eventually ends happily, after many trials and tribulations. It serves as a good example of the way certain plays capitalised on their commercial success. Souvenir products were marketed alongside the play; and it was described as 'an institution' (<i>Era</i> , 18 December 1897). The production team combined philanthropy with marketing: 'a novelty in advertising will be the presentation, in each town visited, of a dozen bootblack outfits to the poorest boys in the place' (<i>Era</i> , 5 December 1896). The main character of Billy, the juvenile bootblack, was played by a female actress, which perhaps also added to its attraction: 'Wanted: a lady ... part requires comedy, pathos, vivacity and Dramatic Treatment' (<i>Era</i> , 12 December 1896).	LCP 53618 A Nicoll
Jones, Wilton A playwright who wrote many pantomimes, extravaganzas, and burlesques.	<i>Sinbad the Sailor; or Roc, the Rock, the Terrible Shock, and the Wicked Old Man who got the Knock</i>	Alexandra	1892	Pantomime There are local references to Sheffield's sporting prowess, 'Its blades and football players are the best', and the script celebrates its industry. Some of the lyrics satirise socialism, and the overall message is that 'only work can win the day'.	LCP 53513 L

⁶ Arthur Jefferson is listed in the ODNB (although this play is not noted among his achievements). He was married to Margaret (Madge) Metcalfe, an actress who played the part of Olga Snake in *The Bootblack*. They had a son, Arthur Stanley Jefferson (1890-1965) who became better known as the comedian Stan Laurel.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Lennard, Horace Nicoll notes that Lennard was responsible for 25 productions, 18 of them pantomimes between 1882 and 1898.	<i>Cupid & Co.</i>	City Theatre	1894	Musical Farce The production opened under its original title at the City Theatre but its name was later altered to <i>The School of Love</i> . A good example of the new type of musical comedy that was popular in the 1890s (see Conclusion).	LCP 53555 A Nicoll
Macarthy, Charles Justin	<i>The Vow</i>	Theatre	1802	Comic Opera Very early piece, which remains obscure.	SNT Nicoll
Mackay, R. Fenton D. 1929 He had several plays produced, but he appears to have had no special connection with Sheffield.	<i>Spellbound</i>	Stacey's	1892	Drama A variation on the 'woman-with-a-past' story: this plot concerns George Westland, whose past comes back to haunt him. He is terrorised by a brother and sister duo, and he eventually dies from a heart attack brought on by stress. His daughter and her sweetheart are finally united and the 'Adventuress' and her brother are defeated.	LCP 53513 D Nicoll
Melford, Mark D. 1914 Melford had a career as playwright, actor and manager; he wrote many plays, but had no special relationship with Sheffield.	<i>A Brace of Gaol Birds</i>	Theatre Royal	1889	Drama A one-act drama about two rogues, one of whom impersonates a new employee at an old lady's house in order to rob her. The play had a short life in Sheffield and does not appear to have been repeated elsewhere.	SNT Nicoll

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
<p>McArdle, John F. He had a relatively strong professional connection with Sheffield; and collaborated on dramas and pantomimes: (he co-wrote <i>Sweet Revenge</i> with Joseph Fox (1876) and <i>Cinderella</i> with E. R. Callender (1882).</p> <p>He also wrote <i>Round the Clock</i>, sub-titled 'an eccentric Comic Drama' (LCP 53199 S) which starred the Majilton family of performers. This was produced at the Alexandra, Sheffield in April 1880, but it had already premiered at the Alexandra Theatre in Liverpool in February 1878.</p>	<p><i>The Grand Christmas Pantomime of Jack the Giant Killer</i></p>	Theatre Royal	1880	Pantomime	Programme LSL Local Pamphlets, V. 98, 7 J. F. McArdle co-wrote this pantomime with J. T. Denny, and the front page claims that it was 'Invented and written expressly for this Theatre by the popular London authors'.
	<p><i>Flint and Steel</i></p>	Alexandra	1881	Farcical Comedy	LCP 53252 J Nicoll 'Flint' and 'Steel' are two 'sharp' practitioners who set up a matrimonial agency. The play is a fast-paced physical comedy, which is set partly at the seaside (in Margate) and partly in London, and is a good example of the type of irreverent comedy that was popular at both the Alexandra and the Theatre Royal.
Moore, Reginald	<i>Waiting for the Dawn</i>	Theatre Royal	1870	Drama	SNT Nicoll Moore wrote several plays; but there little available information about them, or their author.
<p>Parr, F. C. W.</p> <p>This appears to be the only play he wrote, and he has no special relationship with Sheffield</p>	<i>Jack White's Trial</i>	Alexandra	1883	Drama	LCP 53290 Nicoll Privately printed. A one-act play set in Cornwall. A slight story of a doomed love affair, with no particular connection to Sheffield. The play formed part of a touring repertoire afterwards.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Patterson, G. This appears to be the only play he wrote.	<i>Fearless Fred, the Fireman</i>	Alexandra	1874	Drama	SNT Nicoll There is very little available information about this play or its author, and this appears to be the only play he had produced.
Pitt, Harry M. Son of Charles and Ellen; sister of Kate and Fanny. See Appendix B1 . Harry had several plays produced at the Theatre Royal in Sheffield and at various theatres in London.	<i>The Adopted One</i>	Theatre Royal	1866		SNT Era 18 February 1866 This was due to receive its premiere at the Theatre Royal. Harry's father Charles Pitt died unexpectedly in the same month (February) and it is not known if the production went ahead.
	<i>The Forty Thieves; or, Harlequin Ganem, Old Father Pantomime and the Magic Monkey</i>	Theatre Royal	1867-8	Pantomime	Programme (Sheffield: J. Robertshaw, 1867) The programme notes that the piece was originally 'written by H. J. Byron Esq. and altered to its present form by Mr. Harry Pitt'. It featured Theatre Royal regulars such as the Vokes family of acrobats and a popular clown named Oliver Cromwell .
	<i>The Fair One with the Golden Locks; or Harlequin Ulf and that Good Little Spirit Enchantment</i>	Theatre Royal	1868-9	Pantomime	SNT Advert, SI 30 December 1868
	Julius See-Saw; or, Dauntless Decius the Doubtful Decimvir	Theatre Royal	1869	Burlesque	LCP 53075 I Nicoll First performed Easter Monday 1869, and the form and content suggest that it was intended to be comedic holiday entertainment. It is written in rhyme, and has puns of varying quality, with some topical allusions, such as corruption in Parliament. Nevertheless, the writer is clearly educated and enjoys word-play ('I'm quite <i>esurient</i> this very minute/Not very <i>sure I ain't</i> there to begin it'), and there are plenty of Latin phrases interspersed throughout the text. However, mostly it is about racing, drinking, and speculation, using the rebellion against Caesar as a fairly superficial backdrop.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Pitt, Harry continued	<i>Returned</i>	Theatre Royal	1869	Comedietta	SNT Nicoll
Reeve, Wybert B. 1839 D. 1906 Actor and playwright who was connected with the Theatre Royal in Sheffield particularly during the 1860s when Charles Pitt was Lessee and Manager. He wrote at least sixteen plays and had a long career.	<i>The Dragon of Wantley; or, Harlequin Moore, of Moore Hall, and his Fayre Margery.</i>	Theatre Royal	1861	Pantomime	SNT Nicoll ⁷
	<i>Dead Witness; or, Sin and its Shadow</i>	Theatre Royal	1863	Drama	LCP 53027 N Nicoll
	<i>An Australian Hoax</i>	Theatre Royal	1863	Farce	SNT KB

⁷ This particular title, by Reeve, is not listed by Nicoll, but there are many versions of *The Dragon of Wantley* – the earliest was written by H. Carey in 1737. Nicoll, *Alphabetical Catalogue of Plays*, p. 128.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Reeve, Wybert /continues	<i>Anna of Norway</i>	Theatre Royal	1869	Drama	SNT Nicoll
Rolfe, Thomas This individual was possibly also known as 'Fourness Rolfe', an actor who was associated with the Royal Pavilion Music Hall.	<i>A Voyage to California; or, Sheffield in 1849</i>	Theatre Royal	1849	Burlesque This burlesque, about the perils of foreign travel, and the comforts of home, was possibly based on a play called <i>The Voyage to California; or, the True Test of Gold</i> , which played at the Victoria Theatre in London in February 1849. However, it used local colour and settings to appeal to its particular audience.	SNT
Saunders, George Lemon B. 1817 D. 1870 Actor, producer, musician, critic. Respected patron of the arts and philanthropist. Although he was originally from Bath, he made his home in Sheffield for many years.	<i>Elise; or a Tale of the Isle of St Lucia</i>	Theatre Royal	1862	Drama This was published (Sheffield: J. Pearce, 1862), and received favourable reviews, possibly partly due to the respect which its creator commanded in the town. Eliza Thorne took the lead role of Elise, and she was joined by Theatre Royal regulars Wybert Reeve and William Gomersal . Reviews from the three local newspapers (<i>Independent, Telegraph and Times</i>) were bound into the published copy. The critic for the <i>SI</i> commented: 'We may congratulate Mr. Saunders on having written a sensible little drama – one that will hold its place among many of much greater pretensions'.	LCP 53012 C N/Ukn.
	<i>£300 a Year</i> (sometimes referred to as <i>Three Hundred Pounds a Year</i>)	Theatre Royal	1863	Comedy Published (Sheffield: J. Pearce, 1863). The published edition includes a letter of thanks and dedication from Saunders to his patron, Alderman William Matthews. The play is a humorous examination of financial matters; set in 'the country' in 'the present day'. Names of characters indicate the broad comedy of the piece: Mr. Saveall, Mr. Horatius Squander, Seizeall (the bailiff).	N/Ukn.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Saunders, George L /continues	<i>A Lord for an Hour</i>	Theatre Royal	1863	Operetta	KB This 'entirely new operetta' was advertised in the <i>SI</i> (16 July) but there is very little additional information available.
	<i>Honour and Arms: A Tale of 1745</i>	Theatre Royal	1863	Drama	N/Ukn. Although the scene is 'laid in the North of England', this is not specifically about Sheffield and is a fairly standard romance.
	<i>An Election under Difficulties</i>	Theatre Royal	1865	Farce	N/Ukn. KB An advertisement in the <i>SI</i> confirms that this is an 'original farce, never before acted' but there is no further available information (<i>SI</i> , 12 May 1865)
Sorrell, Henry This seems to be the only play that he wrote, and I have found no further information about him.	<i>No Cross, No Crown</i>	People's Theatre Attercliffe	1897	Drama	LCP 53610 A Nicoll The Licence is for the Guildhall, Winchester, although it played in Sheffield. The plot of this melodrama is rather derivative, indeed it is rather old-fashioned for 1897 (it is set in 1792). It owes a lot of its narrative to <i>East Lynne</i> . ⁸ A woman, Lady Margaret, is persuaded that her husband, Sir Francis Luttrell, does not care for her. She runs away, and even though she does not have sexual relations with her would-be seducer (Austin Blake), she is ruined. There is a fire, it is supposed that she has died, and Sir Francis marries again. Much later, she comes back to the family home in disguise. Eventually the secret is revealed, but in a departure from the ending of <i>East Lynne</i> , it is Claire, the new wife, who dies, and the original couple are reunited.

⁸ There were many adaptations of Mrs. Henry Wood's novel which was originally published in 1861 (the British Library manuscripts catalogue lists seven between 1866 and 1900, including one by T. A. Palmer, LCP 53140 B). These were ones that had been sent to the Lord Chamberlain for licensing, so it is very probable that there were more unlicensed scripts and productions. The version by T. A. Palmer is published in Adrienne Scullion, (ed.), *Female Playwrights of the Nineteenth Century* (London: J. M. Dent (Everyman Series), 1996).

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Shemeld, Mr.	<i>Captive Queen; or Sheffield in the Olden Time</i>	Theatre	1835		Playbill, Hudson Collection This will have been about Mary, Queen of Scots, who was held prisoner in Sheffield Castle. This performance was a benefit for Mrs. Shemeld and was under the patronage of the Young Shakespeare Society. Mrs. Jerrold was also in the cast. No further information can be traced.
Stephenson, B. C.	<i>On the March</i>				See entry under Clay, Cecil Stephenson's penchant for comedy is evident in the nick-names that he chose to call himself and his writing partner, C. W. Scott, that is, 'Saville Rowe' and 'Bottom Rowe' (C. W. Scott & B. C. Stephenson <i>Peril</i> , LCP 53172 D)
Thorne, Eliza	<i>Bleak House; or, Poor Jo the Crossing Sweeper</i>	Alexandra	1876 April	Drama	LCP 53165 M Nicoll There were several adaptations of Dickens' novel in circulation, at least two of which focused on the character of Jo (<i>Only a Waif; or the Deadlock Mystery</i> (LCP 53166 G), <i>Dickens's Jo; or the Deadly Disgrace</i> (LCP 53170 E). Given the length and complexity of the original narrative, any stage versions would need to be much truncated. The playwright attempts to include as much as possible, and yet keeps the play of a reasonable duration, thus the play is often difficult to follow. It does not appear that Eliza Thorne wrote any more plays apart from this one, but she had a successful career as an actress.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary References
<p>Tresahar, John B. 1860 D. 1936 Tresahar wrote several plays but does not appear to have had a particular connection to Sheffield. He played the main role of Reginald Hampton in the production of his play.</p>	<p><i>Naughty Boys; or H.R.H.</i> Later titled <i>The Chinaman</i></p>	<p>City Theatre</p>	<p>1894</p>	<p>Farcical Comedy LCP 53552 M Nicoll On the manuscript, 'H. R. H.' is crossed out. In the plot, the initials stand for the 'Honourable Reginald Hampton', who gets up to all kinds of mischief. Perhaps the confusion with 'His Royal Highness' and thus the allusion to Prince Edward (soon to be Edward VII) was considered to be too discomfiting. The plot is about aristocrats behaving badly: Reginald Hampton has been in New York, where he proposed to Stella, a circus performer, even though he is already engaged. There are two sub-plots involving an English couple pretending to be Italian (which was altered to French in the staged production); and Hampton in disguise as a 'Rajah' from India; so there are plenty of opportunities to satirise the 'foreigner'. When it was produced at the Trafalgar Theatre in London it was titled <i>The Chinaman</i>, and the assumed disguise of the Rajah has been changed to one of a Mandarin. The text is littered with colloquialisms, fashionable in the 1890s and references to new technology (such as the Phonograph).</p>
<p>Twigg, Lieutenant James This appears to be the only play that Lieut. Twigg wrote. It is evidence that there were occasional productions by amateur writers in Sheffield.</p>	<p><i>The Ruined Merchant</i></p>	<p>Theatre Royal</p>	<p>1851</p>	<p>Drama LCP 43032 ff. 709-772 Nicoll The play betrays a lack of experience on the part of its writer. It is over-long, and the plot is very convoluted. The lovers, Alfred and Rosalina, are eventually united, but not before suffering many troubles.</p>

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
<p>Vandenhoff, Henry</p> <p>The Vandenhoffs were a theatrical family who had careers in acting as well as playwriting, and who visited Sheffield on many occasions. John M. Vandenhoff (1790-1861) is listed in the <i>ODNB</i>.</p> <p>Charlotte Elizabeth (1818-1860) was John's daughter, and she wrote a play entitled <i>Concealment</i>, which was produced at the Theatre Royal Sheffield, but the advertisement indicates that it had already been produced abroad (<i>SI</i>, 21 April 1860).</p>	<i>Conscience</i>	Alexandra	1877	Drama	SNT Nicoll
Vane, Sutton	<i>The Span of Life</i>	Alexandra	1891	<p>Drama</p> <p>Described on the front page of the manuscript as 'a sensational drama in four acts', the play certainly contains some graphic scenes. The play is set in the Devonshire countryside, by the sea. The gardener, 'Nuttty Brown' used to be in the circus, and his sparring partner in the household is 'Shrove Tuesday', the parlour maid. One of the characters, Dunstan Leech, is addicted to morphine, and actually injects himself with the drug on stage. There are revelations about corruption in the shipping business (deliberately sending unsafe vessels to sea), and exciting scenes at the lighthouse.</p>	LCP 53484 K Nicoll

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Walter, T. Norman Actor and dramatist	<i>The Mermaid</i>	Alexandra	1898 June	Musical Comedy Drama The description (musical comedy drama) on the manuscript attests to the 'hybrid' nature of this piece, and indeed it would have provided all-round entertainment, a 'summer holiday' production. Lots of costume changes, cross-dressing, songs and dances, comedy, villainous plots and love affairs. One indication of the many new innovations of the period is that the villain gets caught out when he is photographed with a 'Kodac camera'.	LCP 53661 R Nicoll
Wardroper, Walter Playwright	<i>The Miraculous Doll</i>	Theatre Royal	1886	Comic Opera From reading the review, this musical drama seems to have used a similar story to that of Coppelía, and the <i>Era</i> was complimentary: 'The little piece has enjoyed much success here, and promises to achieve no small popularity' (<i>Era</i> , 9 October 1886).	SNT Nicoll
<p>Webb, Charles, Actor, Manager and Playwright who was briefly Lessee of the Theatre Royal in 1857. He wrote several plays, and some of them were performed during his tenure. Often it is not clear if these were adaptations of plays already in the public domain, or if they were really original pieces.</p>					
Yardley, W. Listed as the lyricist for this musical comedy. Successful career as writer, but no particular connection with Sheffield.	<i>On the March</i>		See entry under Clay, Cecil		

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Young, Edwin Writer and playwright; spent time in Sheffield at the Theatre Royal, and wrote several pantomimes there.	Prologue to <i>The Rent Day</i>	Theatre Royal	1862	Prologue Melodrama This play was written by Douglas Jerrold in 1832 and Edwin Young wrote a special prologue 30 years later for the production at the Theatre Royal, which was performed as a benefit for the Mechanics' Institute (see Chapter One, when this production is further discussed). Some of the prologue survives on the playbill.	Extracts printed on playbill S-LSL 942.74S, Vol. 9, p. 132 LCP 42914 ff. 150-187
	<i>Harlequin King Diamond; or, High! Low! Jack and the Game</i>	Theatre Royal	1864	Pantomime The SI reported that the production was 'entirely original, and written expressly for this theatre by Edwin Young, Esq. of this town', SI 21 December 1864.	SNT
	<i>Harlequin Hey Diddle Diddle; his Cat and the Comical Fiddle; or, King Snowball and his Son Jack Frost</i>	Theatre Royal	1866	Pantomime Harry Pitt was credited, alongside Henry Frazer, with having produced the pantomime, under the supervision of Mrs. Pitt. Topical allusions include financial difficulties, the wrangling of the Town Council, and the campaign for electoral reform.	Printed Programme survives with some text (Sheffield: J. Robertshaw, 1866) LSL Local Pamphlets, V. 129, 11
	<i>Babes in the Wood; or Harlequin Tommy the True and Sally the Fair, the Cruel Uncle and his Ruthless Ruffians</i>	Theatre Royal	1870	Pantomime	SNT KB

PLAYS WITH UNKNOWN AUTHORS, Alphabetical order by TITLE

Kathleen Barker, in her study of theatre in Sheffield 1840-1870, lists 16 plays by unidentified playwrights.⁹ In his 'Hand-List of Plays 1850-1900' by unknown authors, Nicoll catalogues around 60 plays (including pantomimes) which had their first production at Sheffield.¹⁰ I have identified some of these (for example *Spadra the Satirist* is by Joseph Fox; *Honour and Arms* by George Lemon Saunders), but many more remain obscure.

The following table is a compilation of a very small selection of plays with unknown authors (in date order) to indicate the range of theatrical productions which premiered at Sheffield which are (as yet) unattributed to a particular playwright, and which could benefit from further investigation.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References
Unattributed	<i>Life in Sheffield</i>	Theatre	1842	Not known	SNT Unable to trace this script or much further information. 'Mr. A. Younge' was the recipient of a benefit performance of this play (<i>Sheffield Independent</i> , 12 March 1842).
A Gentleman of Sheffield	<i>Rose Smith; the Warehouse Girl of Sheffield</i>	Theatre Royal	1846	Drama	SNT PB LSL, M.P. 53 V.L., 1846 This was a fairly successful drama which ran for about five weeks (<i>Sheffield Independent</i> , 7 February 1846). The playbill details that the action takes place at the turn of the century (1795-1805) and entices the potential audience member with the promise that they will see local scenes (presumably painted backdrops) such as a 'view of the old church of Sheffield' and 'the old Wicker Bridge'. The promotional description also draws attention to the play's combination of 'London impudence and Sheffield wit' (Playbill).

⁹ Kathleen Barker, *The Performing Arts in Five Provincial Towns 1840-1870* (PhD, University of Warwick, 1982), Appendices.

¹⁰ Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama 1850-1900, Volume 2* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930), pp. 638-772.

Playwright	Title	Venue	Year	Genre /Notes /Plot Summary	References (if available)
A Young Lady of Sheffield	<i>Alice Copley</i>	Adelphi	1850	Drama Unable to trace any further details	SNT
Unattributed	<i>Amy Lawrence</i>	Theatre Royal	1851	Not known A musical drama called <i>Amy</i> by C. A. Somerset was written in 1847 and produced at the Bower, in London. It is not known whether this play shared a similar narrative.	SNT
Unattributed	<i>March Winds and April Showers; or, The Old Folks at Home</i>	Theatre Royal	1860	Drama This play was also produced at the Marylebone Theatre in London.	LCP Nicoll
Unattributed	<i>Effie's Angel</i>	Theatre Royal	1876	Comic Drama This comedy was produced in Liverpool, re-named <i>Silas Marner's Treasure</i> .	LCP Nicoll
Unattributed	<i>Be Sure You've Got on Your Own</i>	Theatre Royal	1880	Farce	LCP Nicoll
Unattributed	<i>Dr. Clyde</i>	Alexandra	1880	Drama This play was licensed for Bury Theatre, 26 August 1880.	LCP Nicoll
Unattributed	<i>In a Terrible Storm</i>	Alexandra	1897	Dramatic Sketch	LCP Nicoll

Naomi's Sin! Or Where are you going to my pretty maid?

A new and original Drama of Modern Life in 2 acts and 8 scenes

Playwright: Katherine Coveney Bright

Date of Licence, granted by Lord Chamberlain's Office: 2 May 1879

Licence granted for Alexandra Theatre, Sheffield

BL Catalogue No: 53217K, Vol. 5, 1879 (Licence No. 81)

First produced at New Theatre Royal, Bristol, April 1879 (*Era*, 20 April)
 Alexandra Theatre, Sheffield, 7 May 1879 (*Era*, 11 May)
 Music Hall, Lancaster, 19 May (*Era*, 11 May)

Notes

This play was handwritten in an A5-size booklet, in the same hand all the way through. Given the size of the original pages, I have not followed the original pagination in this transcript.

In the original MS, characters' names are underlined in red and centred on the page above each speech; but here, for ease of reading I have simply separated them out, into the margin, and not underlined each one.

I have, however, followed the writer's convention and underlined stage directions (which are also underlined in red in the MS). In the MS, sometimes the stage directions are in parentheses, sometimes they are not. Here I have put them all in parentheses, to differentiate from underlining for emphasis, which the writer does frequently.

Square brackets and question mark means that I cannot decipher a word or phrase, or have another query.

Spellings and punctuation are usually as they appear in the MS, I have sometimes added or omitted a comma if it aids clarity.

The word 'bus' is sometimes used: this usually refers to 'stage business' – some kind of action that is not always detailed. The detail may have been added during rehearsals, or left up to the actor to improvise.

Characters (as detailed in the MS)

Act 1

Lord Walton
Captain Julian Lefèvre
Charles Somerville, a Doctors Assistant
(he is referred to in the first act as Charlie or Charley)
Noah Sprout, a Page
Arthur Tregonning, an artist

Jenny Dacre, a dancer
(the spelling of her name varies, sometimes she is referred to as Jennie)
Mrs. Cox
Mrs. Brooke (a rich Widow)
Naomi Trevor

Act 2nd

Dr Somerville
Captain Lefèvre
Arthur Tregonning
Ethel Masters
Mrs Brooke
Mrs Carton
Baines, an old servant, formerly a soldier

Appropriate Music for the tableaux

Kept up through the waits, between the scenes which must be very short changing for the next scene

Act 1

- Scene 1 The Lodging at Lambeth
"Christmas Eve"
- Scene 2 The Studio at Chiswick
Spring
- Scene 3 The Studio
The Discovery
- Scene 4 Lambeth
The End of the Search

Act 2

- Scene 1 Sefton Park
The Heiress
- Scene 2 The Boudoir
"The Fever"
- Scene 3 Ante-Room at Sefton
The Poison
- Scene 4 The Boudoir
"New Year's Eve"

Act 1
Scene 1

(Chamber unpretentious but not poor. Door in flat, window with street backing, blinds down when curtain rises. Table C laid for supper, lamp on table. Jennie and Charlie discovered. She is sewing a muslin, or gaudy dress (for ballet) – he is standing near her, irresolutely twirling his hat in his hand. Music.)

- Charley But Jennie, this is so utterly ridiculous on your part.
- Jennie Be aisy now! Shure I can see the change thats come over yez – its only twice this blessed month, ye've fetched me from the Theatre.
- Charley I can't get away, so often as I [?] my position with Dr Wilson, is more important than formerly, and so – (hesitating)
- Jennie An so that's the raison ye niver have time to talk of our marriage, as once ye did!
- Charlie Now Jennie – would it not be the height of absurdity, for us to contemplate wedlock upon our present resources? You must be patient.
- Jennie It seems you are at any rate – niver mind, I'm not goin to quarrel on Christmas Eve too! Ye'll be comin to dinner wid us tomorrow Charlie of course?
- Charley (confused) I – I – the fact is Jennie, the Doctor has asked me out to Brighton for the day, and it would have been going against your interests, as well as my own, had I refused the invitation –
- Jennie (crying) An I've bin saving up for weeks to buy a goose: Shure it's myself is the goose to bother my head about yez – I've heard of the attentions ye're paying yer Mather's daughter.
- Charley Miss Wilson! What folly! As if a young Lady of her position would condescend to accept any from me!
- (Enter Mrs Cox with basket, speaking as she enters)
- Mrs Cox Here Miss are the groceries – (sees Charley) I ask pardon Sir!
- Charley No apologies – has Miss Trevor come in yet?
- Mrs Cox No Sir she'll be rather later than usual, no doubt it's a busy night. (Exit)
- Charley I don't know how it is Jenny, but I never feel quite at home with your friend.
- Jennie Naomi! Well ye see Charley, she's just a cut above yez.
- Charley Oh! Hang it! I don't see that, a dressmakers' assistant!

- Jennie But her Father was a clergyman and his father was a rare old English Squire.
- Charlie (looking round contemptuously)
Then how is it that she is content with this sort of thing?
- Jennie (drily) That's her business and nither yours nor mine. (Music) Hark! There's her step, here she comes.
- Charley I'm off then, so give me a kiss Jennie and don't make a little donkey of yourself. (Embraces her, enter Naomi) Good evening Miss Trevor, cold is it not?
- Naomi (removing her bonnet) Yes! But it's a lovely night (he is going) Don't let me frighten you away.
- Charley (looking at his watch)
Oh! Time's up, I'm overdue at the Surgery now, good bye Jennie – Miss Trevor. (Bows and exit)
- Naomi How did the rehearsal go off Jennie?
- Jennie Our pantomime? Oh! Smoothly enough.
- Naomi Smoothly eh? Then what is it that has ruffled you, for I can see that something is wrong.
- Jennie It's nothing particular, nothin fresh I mane (bursting into tears) Oh... oh Naomi I'm so miserable!
- Naomi (going to her) What about?
- Jennie Charley of course, I know he's carryin on wid that girl yonder!
- Naomi (caressing her) I wouldn't fret dear, if I were you, he's not worth it!
- Jennie (quickly) Yes, he is, and you'd fret too, if you cared for him as I do, but you've niver bin in love so you can't understand.
(Naomi winces a little and covers her face momentarily with her hand)
There, there, it's not for me to talk like this to you Naomi, but I'm regularly upset today and my little bit of native Irish will come out you see, shure it's my only, only inheritance.
- Naomi Never mind dear! I know how warm and unselfish is the heart that beats, beneath that impulsive tongue – and now listen to me Jennie – I have just met with an adventure.
- Jennie An adventure?
- Naomi Yes! As I was crossing Waterloo Bridge, some one – a gentleman stopped me, asking whether I had dropped anything. I was rather startled at first, but soon found that my satchel was unhinged and I had lost my purse.
- Jennie Oh! Naomi!

Naomi Well he – the gentleman – had picked it up and after restoring it, he – he walked home with me –

Jennie Lor! Naomi! I should niver have thought ye would have allowed such a liberty.

Naomi But he was so respectful, and kind, we became quite chatty – he told me he was an artist, residing at present in London, that he came from Cornwall and that his name was –

(Enter Mrs Cox, hurriedly)

Mrs Cox Miss Trevor, you're wanted please! There's –
(Enter Arthur Tregonning, following Mrs Cox)

Arthur Arthur Tregonning, at your service (bus. putting down his hat)

Mrs Cox Well! I declare, if he didn't take the words out of my very mouth (exit fussily)

Arthur Pardon this intrusion Miss Trevor, but (shewing [sic] ladies umbrella) this is my excuse.

Naomi My umbrella! How thoughtless of me!

Arthur Not at all! The fault is mine – I offered to carry it.

Naomi (laughing) and between us we forgot all about it.

Arthur Yes (aside) I didn't. I kept it on purpose.

Naomi Jennie, this is the finder of my purse.

Arthur Don't mention that (to Jennie) I presume that I have the pleasure of addressing Miss Dacre?

Jennie (curtseying) That is my name, but how do you come to know it?

Arthur Your friend told it me! And now that I see you let me venture to hope that you're as kind as you look! Because –

Jennie I know – you're hungry – Naomi, he'll take a bit of supper!

Arthur No! No! I couldn't think – that's not what I meant at all. Miss Trevor said something during our walk to the effect that you and she were going to church tomorrow.

Naomi Yes! At St Paul's – we settled that a month ago.

Arthur It's – it's a capital idea (aside) now for it (aloud) Suppose that I do escort duty on the occasion.
(Both look at him, then at each other and laugh)

- Naomi I shouldn't like to trouble you to come all the way from Kensington, on – on our account – ¹
- Arthur No trouble! Don't think it, besides I can bring a cab, if you'll allow me – that will save walking, won't it (they laugh). (Aside) I never felt such a hopeless booby in all my life.
- Jennie I'm shure you're very polite! We'd be ungrateful to refuse –
- Arthur (quickly) It – its alright then (Music) Miss Trevor I may come – may I not?
- Naomi (after very brief pause) Yes.
- Arthur (taking his hat) Good evening ladies! – and a merry Christmas to us all (aside as he goes off) If I have not met my wife tonight – I'll die a bachelor (exit)
- Jennie Shure he's charming – it's the lucky Girl ye are, Naomi.
- Naomi What do you mean?
- Jennie He's in love wid ye, its aisy to see!
- Naomi No – no Jennie, don't say it – don't think it.
- Jennie Why not? He's a gentleman, every inch. Ah. Ye'll not waste your loveliness in a drish-makers show room, all your days.
- Naomi Hush Jennie hush. Its good enough for me.
- Jennie Rubbish! You're far too modest, but sit down. I've done all the marketing so do get something.
- Naomi I am rather hungry, but Jennie won't you join me?
- Jennie I couldn't bite a morsel, darling (half crying) I've had my supper of, of tears!
- Naomi Poor, poor Jennie.
- Jennie There (wiping her eyes) Never mind me! I'll go straight off to Bed, and may be a good night's rest will make things look different – but Oh! Naomi treachery's harder to bear with than death itself! I left my father's roof, when he put a strange woman in my own Mother's place – while the sod was fresh above her – and if Charlie deceives me now, I shall die. (Music)
- Naomi (kissing her) No, no dear, the back will be strengthened to the burden, be assured of it. (Exit Jennie)
I wonder how the stars look now (going to window and drawing up blind, the moon is shining and snow falling lightly) Why it's beginning to snow (going to table and seating herself) We shall have an old fashioned Christmas after all (tries to eat but fails) I'm as bad as

¹ The geographical locations of Lambeth (poor working-class) and Kensington (affluent upper class) highlight the difference in status between the young women and Arthur.

Jennie, I can't eat anything – what has come over me? I feel so strange so – so – now (reaching book) I'll read awhile. (The lamp has gradually gone down) How low the lamp has gone! The oil is exhausted I suppose I must get a candle. (The moonlight pours in through the window, the snow still falling – she is going towards cupboard, when the children outside begin to chant the carol. Naomi listens, then clasps her hands and sinks upon her knees.)

Act drop or Tableau Curtains. End of Scene 1 – Act 1

Act 1

Scene 2

An artist's studio – tastefully arranged. Towards C a large easel supporting Picture. Noah Sprout discovered arranging furniture, he is whistling (Music)

(A woman's voice without – calling) Noah, Noah! Drat the boy – here's Master calling for his boots, like anythink! (He continues whistling) Noah I say!

Noah I know you say, but ye see I'm engaged (planting himself before picture) I'm a studyin the fine arts – Yes I likes it werry well – think he's 'ardly got the heyes blue enough though – (Tregonning enters from behind and takes him by the ear)

Arthur Where are my boots Sir?

Noah (innocently) Your boots Sir? Ain't you got them on Sir?

Arthur No Sir! Not the pair I want, as you are well aware Sir.

Noah Then I supposed, they're on the trees Sir!

Arthur What are you doing here Sir?

Noah I is a putting things straight Sir – You told me as Missus would sit for you this morning.

Arthur True! – and I say Noah – by the bye, what an abominable name that is of yours! What can have induced your parents to bestow such a venerable appellation upon an unoffending youngster?

Noah But I shan't always be a youngster Sir. I shall mellow by and bye, if I've luck howsoever, if you objects to "Noah" try my "surname" – let me be "Sprout" Sir.

Arthur Sprout! No, no that's worse, suggestive of early vegetables – you ought to have mentioned this when I engaged you – however. I've no time now, to go into the matter. Tell Eliza I'm expecting my mother today so she must do her best, you also now, be very particular. You understand?

Noah Yes Sir – would you wish to make hany change in my twoilett?

- Arthur (laughing) No you'll do (Noah is going) Stay, I want you both to spare Mrs Tregonning all that you possibly can. She's looking rather delicate I fancy!
- Noah (aside) Worrutin herself over the old party comin (Music) (aloud) Beggin your pardon Sir but we was a sayin in the kitchen as Mistress grew fresher and prettier every day.
(Naomi dressed for Picture, has entered during the latter part of this Speech)
- Naomi (curtseying and laughin) "Missus" is duly grateful for the compliment.
- Noah (aside) My eye! Don't she look nice!
- Arthur You may retire Noah – and prepare for a Second Christening.
- Noah I'm agreeable Sir!
- Voice (without as before)
Noah! Are you a comin?
- Noah (Sings) "Tis the voice of the charmer" (Exit)
- Naomi Are you ready for me dear?
- Arthur (arranging easel) Almost – so – that's better – and the title darling, the title for this creation of mine – of ours – I may say? Have you thought about it?
- Naomi (considering) What do you say to "Dolly Varden"?²
- Arthur (critically) Appropriate, but hackneyed.
- Naomi Olivia Primrose then?³
- Arthur Good! – but I prefer my own.
- Naomi Oh, you've got one! Do tell me what it is!
- Arthur It's only an idea, the decision rests with you. What do you think of "Where are you going to my pretty maid"?⁴
- Naomi Delicious Arthur, so original.

² 'Dolly Varden' is a flirtatious character in *Barnaby Rudge* by Charles Dickens (1841).

³ 'Olivia Primrose' is a character in the poem 'The Vicar of Wakefield' by Oliver Goldsmith (1766), who is seduced and then abandoned.

⁴ The song evokes scenes of bucolic courtship, and its exact origins are not certain. It was sung by the character Claire Ffolliott in the opening scene of *The Shaughraun* by Dion Boucicault (1875), and the words and music are provided in David Krause (ed), *The Dolmen Boucicault* (Dublin: The Dolmer Press, 1964), pp. 175, 240.

It is sometimes referred to as an 'Old English Dance', as in the published music by William Seymour Smith (London: B. Williams, 1888), or an 'old nursery rhyme' (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1957). There are many different versions, and some were published just prior to *Naomi's Sin*. For example, 'Where are you going to my pretty maid', Choristers' Album No. 48. Four-part song arranged and partly composed by Frank Pomer, price 6d. (London: Hutchings & Romer, 1875).

Arthur And inspired by this (softly touching her face)

Naomi Then (rather naively) "My face was my fortune".

Arthur How so dear?

Naomi Has it not won me, first – your notice – and since – your love?

Arthur Darling! Is my love so precious to you?

Naomi The earth contains no other treasure for me and if I ever lose it – I lose all.

Arthur Lose it? That can never be!

Naomi Never? –

Arthur Never! You are alone in the world Naomi – let me be husband, father, brother to you – (sits painting as she standing as model) Did you not tell me one day, something about an aunt? Your father's sister was she not?

Naomi Yes, but I have never seen her, she must be a hard strange woman. After my father's marriage, she refused to meet him again – so did my grandfather –

Arthur But your Mother was a Lady?

Naomi Yes but she had been a singer, as you know, and they were narrow minded prejudiced people

Arthur Never mind pet! We shall get on without them – thank Heaven! I am no beggar – and see here Naomi (taking letter from pocket) Lord Walton the great connoisseur, is coming down today, to view the picture.

Naomi Today (postman's knock heard) I – I hope he will be pleased with it.

Naomi (Enter Noah with letter, he reads the address aloud as he enters)
Noah Mrs A Tregonning, Hearstense / Heartsease [?] Lodge, Chiswick.
(delivers letter to Naomi) Oh! My ain't they fond of one another? Shouldn't I like ...

(Arthur looks up, catches him grimacing) Noah (exits hastily)

Arthur That boy's a regular character! What's amiss Sweetheart? You look worried. (Music)

Naomi Read this Arthur. (He takes letter from her and reads aloud)

Arthur Dear Madam
As you were good enough to leave your address I venture to send these few lines, being uneasy about Miss Dacre – She has run off to nothing, and looks awful! – I fear she is in trouble – not that she tells me her affairs but she has left the Theatre and I can see her clothes

are all going – so she must be parting with them. Asking pardon for the liberty, will you come over as soon as you can?
Your obedient servant, Mary Ann Cox

- Naomi What's to be done?
- Arthur Well I suppose you want to go and look after Jennie – cheer her up poor girl and tell her she must come and stay with us as soon as Mrs Tregonning shall have returned to Cornwall.
- Naomi Thanks Arthur! How good you are! Can I go to day, do you think?
- Arthur As you will dear! – the Mater is not due at Paddington before 6 o'clock – I might run up to Town with you.
- Naomi And the Picture – the Patron?
- Arthur I had forgotten – no – I can't go – you won't be long?
- Naomi No dear! I will settle the dinner with Eliza, change my dress and then – the sooner I am off, the sooner I shall be home again! –
- Arthur (fondly) Home! (leading her to door) Ah! Dear one! What a home you have made it – what a blessed day, was it for me, when first I met my darling!
(Kisses her as she exits, she accidentally drops her pocket handkerchief)
I – I can't bear to lose her even for an hour. Where's my Pipe? (finds it on table, fills it) I can smoke and work too (picks up handkerchief) her handkerchief (looking at it tenderly) "Naomi Tregonning" how well it sounds, how pretty it looks (kisses it and lays it down, double knock heard) Whom have we here? It is surely too early, for the swells to be out? I wanted to be quiet this morning. (Enter Noah bearing a salver, on which is a card, he looks very important)
- Noah The aristocracy is below!
- Arthur (taking card and reading) Lord Walton! So soon! – have you shown him into the drawing room?
- Noah Please Sir, there's two of 'em.
- Arthur Two what?
- Noah Lords Sir, leastways Gentlemen, but only this one gave me his card. T'other said he'd forgot his – "Never mind says this – I'll introjuce you" then he turns to me and says – "take that to your master" he says – and tell him time's precious. Time precious to a Lord! Now what can he have to do?
- Arthur Before we enter upon a discussion involving such knotty points, as may be comprised in a general view of the duties of the "upper ten",⁵ suppose you attend to the business in hand young man, and usher

⁵ 'The Upper Ten' is a shortened form of the 'Upper Ten Thousand', a phrase coined in 1852 by the American poet Nathaniel Parker Willis to describe the upper circles of the society of New York.

my guests into my presence – and here Noah, take your Mistress her handkerchief (giving it)

Noah I fly Sir (exit, Music)

Arthur (goes to picture, soliloquising) Heaven bless that bonny face! If my judges condemn the manner, they cannot refuse honour to the subject

Lord Walton (without) This is the studio eh? Rather an awkward step there! Nice little house though (enters) Ah! Tregonning. Howdy'e do? I've brought a friend (Enter Lefèvre) He's a bit of an amateur, and I told him about your picture (introducing them) Captain Lefèvre – Mr Tregonning (they both regard each other with disfavour)

Arthur (aside) What an evil countenance!

Lord Walton And how are you getting on? Almost ready for the Academy?

Arthur The picture is nearly finished my Lord, but I am not too sanguine of its success.

Lord Walton Humbug! Excuse my bluntness, also my early visit, but I'm on two committees this afternoon so there was no alternative

Captain I hope we shall be permitted to see you work Mr – Mr Tregonning? (superciliously)

Arthur I am too much honoured. (Music) Will your Lordship favour me?

Lord Walton Of course I will, haven't I come on purpose to do so (goes to picture and eyes it critically) It'll do – it's good Tregonning, it's very good!

Arthur (delighted) I am so glad to hear you say so, then you approve – (continues conversation in dumb show)

Captain It seems I'm rather left out in the cold here – confound the impudence of this artist fellow!

Arthur (aloud) You like the title?

Lord Walton It's charming, a most happy one! The – the maid is perfection – what lips! What eyes! – by the way – can it be? (Aside to Arthur) A little bird has whispered me something about a quiet wedding. Am I to offer my congratulations? (Arthur smiles and bows)

Captain May I be allowed to contribute my little word [?] of praise, to what is so evidently deserving a full paeon?

Arthur By all means – pray pardon my apparent discourtesy Captain-

Captain Lefèvre (bowing satirically)

Arthur And oblige me by inspecting the -

Lord Walton (laughing) The Picture of the Season! (Captain Lefèvre has gone slowly to the Picture, on reaching it, he starts violently)

Captain Found at last by Jove! (Arthur and Lord Walton astonished)

Arthur May I enquire, what you have discovered in the painting, to arouse the astonishment you evince?

Captain What! Why the woman I have been seeking all these years, the girl who ran away from me – Naomi Trevor!

Arthur (bewildered) Ran away! Ran away from you?

Lord Walton This is some muddle, some absurd mistake of yours, Lefèvre.

Captain Not at all! – there can be no mistaking that face! – how it has come down to be a painter's model is what I am waiting to learn.

Arthur Explain Captain Lefèvre, and – at once.

Captain The thing explains itself. Please tell me where the lady may be found.

Lord Walton This has gone far enough – too far indeed – Mr. Tregonning I am more than sorry.

Arthur I believe you my Lord, but I must trouble this gentleman to go on.

Captain And what personal interests may this matter possess for Mr. Tregonning?

Arthur I will answer that, when you shall have –

Naomi (without) Eliza! Eliza! (all listen)
(Arthur goes to door)

Arthur Naomi is it you?

Naomi (without) Yes dear, I am almost ready for Town –

Arthur Come here! I want you.

Naomi (without) Now?

Arthur Yes! At once.

Naomi (speaking as she enters) What is it Arthur, what? –
(Arthur retreats as she advances. Captain Lefèvre is centre. On seeing him Naomi screams and falls at his feet.)

Picture

Act Drop

Not more than Two Minutes' wait

Act 1
Scene 3

(The same. Arthur and Naomi discovered, they are standing apart from each other, both very pale – music)

Arthur This is all true of course – it was no vain revengeful boast on the part of your late lover?

Naomi Not my late lover, it is six years since – since I parted from him –

Arthur So much! Then how many more rivals have I yet to encounter? (She shrinks)

Naomi There is nothing more for you to learn – it was my first fault and my last.

Arthur How you have deceived, have lied to me.

Naomi I never lied – deceived you yes –
Arthur You told me that you had never loved any man but me –

Naomi (hanging her head) It was true! I never did.

Arthur Great Heaven! What then must I think of you?

Naomi What can you think? There lies my shame – my true shame – Arthur may I tell you all?

Arthur (nodding in a stupefied manner) Go on.

Naomi When my parents died, I was placed as pupil teacher, at a school in London. I had been educated beyond my years – my poor Father (breaking down a little) My Father did that – and my Mother (bursting into hysterical sobs) Oh! Gracious Lord! If you had only suffered me to die with her and so saved my soul, and this day's horror!

Arthur (advancing as if to soothe her) Naomi! (checks himself) No, no! I cannot. I trusted you so implicitly from the first – Why! We – we went to church together – on Christmas Day too! And you – you could sit beside me in the house of prayer knowing yourself to be the guilty thing you are!

Naomi (quietly) Had I not need of prayer?

Arthur (after a pause) Go on – go on.

Naomi I was only sixteen when I went out as nursery governess to – to Captain Lefèvre's sisters. I was miserable with them – he entreated me to elope, but I refused, not that I doubted his honour but I mistrusted my own feeling, till in an evil hour goaded by his mothers sneers, I consented to accompany him to Paris – we were to be married at Dover. You don't want me to go on – do you? You can guess the rest –

Arthur The old tale of villainy and weakness – still you remained with him!

- Naomi He told me that my name was gone and that he would marry me as soon as his means should justify the imprudence and so I waited on, until the sense of my degradation ever present drove me again to flight – I was always quick with my needle and gained employment.
- Arthur Then you left this man because –
- Naomi I was occupying an equivocal position – I was ruined in the world's eyes, but worse I had sinned against my faith, my dead Father's sacred calling, my lost Mother's spotless life! And for what, for whom? I did not love Julian (Arthur winces) and had only consented to the step he urged, believing I should return empowered to meet insult with insult, scorn with scorn. Motives unworthy as they were futile, my punishment was just and I accepted a life of poverty and atonement until ...
- Arthur Well Naomi?
- Naomi That evening when you asked me to be your wife, you remember how I would not answer you at first – all night I lay awake trying to bring myself to renounce what you offered me – and after all I could not do it – I could not lose you! – Oh! My love is there, can there be no hope for me?
- Arthur Hope! of what? You are my wife – I cannot undo that – this is one of the instances wherein the law provides no balm for a man's stabbed honour.
- Naomi (sinking upon her knees and extending her hands) Oh! Arthur for pity's sake, for Heaven's sake, have Mercy! I don't ask you to acknowledge me openly – put me anywhere you will, but don't give me up – don't oh! Don't cast me off love, as you value your own soul!
- Arthur (bitterly) My soul! And what have you done for my soul? You who have uprooted my belief in all purity and goodness who have blighted my life here, and hereafter! I want a wife, whom I can claim in the face of all men – a tender counsellor, a home divinity, not the occasional companion, of a brief hour's relenting [?] love, a woman I dare not own before the world!
- Naomi It – it is all over then?
- Arthur If you mean affection – fellowship, the interchange of thought and feeling, all that have blest and made perfect this one short month of wedlock – yes – all. That is over but you shall have every consideration – I will make ample provision for you.
- Naomi (calmly) I understand (goes towards door then turns) Arthur! May I kiss you? Just this once?
- (Music. He looks at her half pitifully then is stern again. She exits slowly.)
- Arthur And tonight my mother comes – what a welcome awaits her! – God help me, what a welcome!

(Sinks sobbing upon chair)

Act drop quick

End of Scene 3, Act 1st

Act 1

Scene 4

The lodging at Lambeth – same as Scene 1. Mrs Cox discovered arranging window curtains, takes card from table reads preparatory to placing it in window

Mrs Cox “Front parlour to let”! that’s been my song, for a month now! It seems likely to last too! I do wish things would look up a bit – not as I can ever expect to replace my dear young Ladies (Noah peeps in at door, she turning, sees him and starts) Lor! Bless us! Who are you? Where do you come from?

Noah (entering) Don’t be afeard Mum, I ain’t no robber, I’m a peaceful Man – I am

Mrs Cox (Laughing) Man – indeed!

Noah Well, boy then – you see, the area door was open – I exchanged civilities with your slavey, and here I am!

Mrs Cox And what may your business be?

Noah My business is of an highly importunate⁶ nature – I am hon the private inquiry tack, and I ave to hask you, Mrs Cox widow, what ave you done with Mrs Arthur Tregonning?

Mrs Cox Now don’t you come none of that, I’m fair worn hout with it – first there’s Mr Tregonning comes every day a worryin me with – have you heer’d anything of my wife yet? No Sir I answers. “She comes hin one night to see Miss Dacre, I asked no questions though I thought it strange, she should stay away from her home! And next morning they paid up all outstanding and off they both went, without explaining a word!”

Noah Well what next...

Mrs Cox Then there’s that there Somerville, (him as was keeping company with Miss Dacre), he’s married to someone else now, but he seems precious anxious to find his old sweetheart and now you begin a harassin me –

Noah Never mind me! I was only a larkin. I’m Mr. Tregonning’s – hem – Butler! Cook and me found your letter to Missus on her dressing-room floor, after she went away.

Miss Cox Did you see her go?

⁶ Presumably Noah means ‘important’ here, but perhaps the wrong word is deliberately used, in order to cause humour by his malapropism.

- Noah No – none of us seed her go – she did it so quiet like, but we should like to find her. Everything's topsy-turvy at the Lodge.
- Mrs Cox It's a mysterious thing! Did they, Mr & Mrs Tregonning I mean, have a quarrel?
- Noah I knows no more than you do! (Music. Knock without) Hallo! Visitors! Master praps! I'd better mizzle.⁷
- Mrs Cox (who has gone to door and peered out) It's a Lady (calls) Julia! Show the lady in (speaks as Mrs Brooks enters) This way please, ma'am, you'll find the apartment's werry convenient.
- Mrs Brooke You are mistaken in the nature of my visit my good woman – my errand is a spiritual not a temporal one.
- Noah (aside) Oh! My! Ain't she a corker – a reglar crusher I should call 'er.⁸
- Mrs Brooke (to Mrs Cox) Your Son, I presume (indicating Noah)
- Mrs Cox No! he ain't exactly my son –
- Noah (with assumed melancholy) No Mum! I'm a horphan (blubbering)
- Mrs Brooke It is astonishing how many of that order I encounter (takes a tract from her basket or satchel). Read this young man! It may gird and strengthen you for the fight!
- Noah Fight? Oh I don't go in for that sort of thing. Master wouldn't allow me.
- Mrs Brooke (severely) I mean your daily conflict with the demons of sin and discontent.
- Noah (aside) Oh! Lor! (aloud, reading) "The Benevolent Bookbinder or the Grateful Foundling" Thankee Mum – I – I'll take it home and peruse it at my leisure (advancing to Mrs Cox) Farewell! My more than Mother!
- Mrs Cox Oh! Get along! Do!
- Noah Repulsed! Rejected! I will seek consolation in the Embraces of Eliza (Exit)

⁷ A word meaning to 'go away suddenly; to vanish, disappear'. In use from the 18th century, of unknown origin, "mizzle, v.3". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. 13 May 2013 <<http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/120404>>.

⁸ A slang word in the period for 'something that closes a discussion, or puts an end to any matter ...Hence, something very striking or astonishing'. "corker, n.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. 13 May 2013 <<http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/41554>>.

A colloquial expression, meaning 'something which overwhelms or overpowers'. "crusher, n.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. 13 May 2013 <<http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/45275>>.

- Mrs Brooke A most excentric youth certainly (to Mrs Cox) I have undertaken at great inconvenience a portion of the work appertaining to this parish – but what are mere personal considerations, as compared with the welfare of your benighted fellow-creatures!
- Mrs Cox I don't know about "benighted" – Mum I tries to do my duty, I keeps my tongue from backbiting, my neighbours and my hands from meddling with my lodgers tea and spirits – and I don't thank nobody for poking and pryin into my affairs – I assure you.
- Mrs Brooke (indignantly) Oh! Very well!
- Mrs Cox (continuing) And it strikes me Mum, that if some folks as is so fond of interferin in other folks's business – would first remember, as "Charity begins at home" it would make things more comfortable for all parties. (Music)
- Mrs Brooke This is sheer impertinence, I will waste no more of my valuable moments in casting pearls before – (going)
- (Enter Arthur, he is very pale and his clothes are worn carelessly, he raises his hat to Mrs Brooke)
- Mrs Brooke Excuse me, but you appear wet, is it raining?
- Arthur (who has evidently not noticed the rain) Y-es – I – I – suppose so.
- Mrs Brooke (To Mrs Cox) Then I must trouble your housemaid to fetch me a cab (Mrs Cox is going) – a four-wheeled cab if you please and tell her to assure herself of the sobriety of the driver.
- Arthur (detaining Mrs Cox) No news, I suppose?
- Mrs Cox None. (Exit shaking her head)
- Mrs Brooke (who has taken book from table reading the fly-leaf) (Music) "Naomi Trevor" Trevor! And Naomi is an old family name with us – is it possible that at last I have obtained a clue? (turning agitatedly) Where – where is that woman? (Re-enter Mrs Cox) Speak! Tell me to whom does this book belong?
- Arthur (advancing) To my wife!
- Mrs Brooke Your wife! Are you then a Trevor?
- Mrs Cox No Mum, that was the name of the Lady he married.
- Mrs Brooke (to Arthur) For Heaven's sake, say – was her father –
- Arthur Benjamin Trevor, curate of St Silas' Wandsworth and Son of Sir Philip Trevor.
- Mrs Brooke Of the Rookery – the dear old home in Shropshire... Then she – your wife, is now the one creature in all the world with whom I can claim near kinship for I am a childless widow. My Father is long since dead – and Naomi is my niece – my only brother's only child!

- Arthur (regarding her curiously) So you are the Aunt, who during her early years, so cruelly neglected her.
- Mrs Brooke (haughtily) You may not be aware of the circumstances of my brother's marriage?
- Arthur (quietly) Yes – I am – I know them all.
- Mrs Brooke You surely could not expect that I should countenance such an alliance?
- Arthur I know that your pride, false and mistaken as it was, permitted his daughter to drag out her girlhood in poverty, surrounded by the temptations for which her beauty was a too certain bait – no one ever lent one ray of God's-cut [?] womanly compassion to stay her stumbling footsteps, or guide her helpless youth –
- Mrs Brooke (abashed) You – you are severe Sir – but I was only apprised of her parents' death a few months since, and have made many fruitless enquiries respecting her. I am a lonely woman now, and would be too thankful that she should share my home – and ...
- Arthur Minister to your comfort – too late! Too late!
- Mrs Brooke Because you have married her? (He shakes his head drearily) (To Mrs Cox) What does he mean?
- (Music. Enter Somerville with hand bill)
- Charley Excuse me I was not aware (sees Arthur) I – I'll call again (going)
- Arthur (detaining him) No! Stay – you bring tidings – tidings of her – I - I am sure of it.
- Charley (evasively) No. No. Tregonning – You – you mistake. Let me go!
- Arthur You shall not – give me that paper –
- Charley It can do you no good (Arthur has taken it) Tregonning for Heaven's sake don't read it.
- Arthur (Reading) "Found drowned"
May 5th the body of a young woman aged about 23
Height of 5ft 3in. Features unrecognisable in consequence of protracted immersion in water. Hair, etc.* Appears to have occupied a superior position wearing a silk dress of fashionable make** in the pocket of which was found a handkerchief marked Naomi Tregonning.

[The following directions are given on the facing page to the text in the MS.]

(*Hair etc. The mention of this must entirely depend upon the arrangement between the "Naomi" and the "Jennie".)

(** The description of dress will depend upon what the Lady playing "Naomi" may wear in latter part of Scene 2 and Scene 3).

Picture Act Drop

[END OF SECOND ACT]

Act 2
Scene 1

(Sefton Park with view of the house. Shortly before curtain rises children's voices are heard – they are playing “Kiss in the Ring”⁹ when discovered – all neatly dressed – Music)

(Enter Baines)

Baines That's right, that's right – laugh and play, I like to see the young 'uns enjoy themselves.
(Ethel laughs without)

There's another as does likewise – bless her dear heart – nineteen today! Lor, lor, how time gallops away with us! (To children) Now then – eyes right – remember your drill and salute your commanding officer (The children range themselves with military precision and as Ethel enters, raise a cry of “Many happy returns of the day – Long live Miss Masters!”)

Ethel Thanks my little subjects – I'm going to join you in a game of battledore¹⁰ by and by ...

Children Hooray! Hooray! (noisily)

Baines Silence in the ranks!

Ethel (laughing) As great a sticker for military discipline as ever Baines!

Baines (drily) Perhaps a trifle more so, Miss – there's something as we appreciate better, the further we gets away from 'em (Enter Lefèvre who goes at once to Ethel) and I believe, I do, the Captain here is one of that same kidney – Ugh! – I can't abide him – should think his Subs must have had a nice time of it – glad I wasn't in his company (Exit)

Lefèvre Can't you dismiss your protégées, Ethel? I want to speak with you alone –

Ethel They are going to have tea directly (looking off) Ah! Here comes Auntie (Enter Mrs Brooke – Ethel goes to her)

⁹ 'Kiss-in-the-ring' is described as one of several 'love-making games' for children, in Edwin Pugh, 'Some London Street Amusements' in George R. Sims (ed), *Living London* (London: Cassell, 1959), cited in Lee Jackson, *The Dictionary of Victorian London*, www.victorianlondon.org.

¹⁰ 'Battledore' is a game like badminton, "battledore, n.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University press. 13 May 2013 <<http://oed.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/16272>>.

- Lefèvre (Aside) Confound that old woman! (Aloud) I have a little business to transact in the village ladies, so, with your permission –
- Ethel Ah! Certainly – don't stand upon ceremony, this is Liberty Hall.¹¹
- Lefèvre Then for the present (bowing, aside) I could wish my respected elder friend in – in Paradise! (Exit)
- Mrs Brooke (looking after him) Have you heard from Mr. Tregonning today Ethel?
- Ethel Yes dear, he sent (breaking off) there! I'll tell you afterwards (to children) come here little ones – I have something very important to say to you (the children gather round her) your new schoolmistress arrives this afternoon.
- Children (rather dolefully) Thank you ma'am –
- Ethel (to Mrs Brooke) They don't seem very lively over it, do they? (to them) Listen to me dear children (music) You know that I am very fond of you all?
- Children (readily) Yes! Yes!
- Ethel And you also know the reason of my attachment do you not?
- Children (more faintly) Yes. Yes.
- Ethel It is because I am an orphan like yourselves. My mother died when I was quite an infant and whilst I was still a child, my dear father was killed in battle – I can remember the sense of desolation that crept over me, when I was told the news, yes, even now, and as I grew older and the responsibility of a great fortune fell upon me I could with heaven's help (looking up) to constitute myself the orphan's friend (a murmur goes round)
- Mrs Brooke And nobly you have performed your self-imposed task – Ethel – there is not such another school in the country.
- Ethel Have I not had the benefit of dear Auntie's counsel (to children) So you will all be good I am sure, and strive to please your teacher, for my sake. There run and play, enjoy your holiday – I will come to you soon.
(Exit children shouting [?] "Long live Miss Masters")
- Ethel (to Mrs B) And now let me show you Arthur's presents. (Music. Takes from rustic table a basket she has brought with her) See! A set of mosaics from Florence, and better still his own miniature painted by himself –
- Mrs Brooke (much affected) Yes – Yes – I see, I recognise his face – older – graver – but the same –

¹¹ "Liberty Hall" is notional place where one may do as one likes'. Used in Oliver Goldsmith, *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773), 'This is Liberty-hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please'. "liberty hall" OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. 13 May 2013 <<http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/107898>>.

- Ethel Why Auntie! Do you know Mr Tregonning?
- Mrs Brooke I have met him only once, Ethel, the recollection is a very painful one to me.
- Ethel And you never told me of it?
- Mrs Brooke (quickly) Ethel – has Mr Tregonning ever spoke of – of a great sorrow, which clouded his former life? –
- Ethel He has hinted at some past misfortune – is it – can it be possible that you are acquainted with it?
- Mrs Brooke If he has not divulged the truth, it is not for me to speak, at least not yet.
- Ethel Well dear – I won't ask any more questions now you seem so troubled.
- Mrs Brooke (affectionately embracing her) My dear confiding child. Ah! Ethel – though I am not of your kindred only your neighbour, and old friend – my heart has long since gone out to you, as to a daughter and – and therefore (gravely) You must bear with the consideration due from your youth to my experience, what I am about to say to you.
- Ethel Certainly dear! – only – I feel rather nervous.
- Mrs Brooke Ethel! Does Mr Tregonning, your affianced husband, know of your cousin, Captain Lefèvre's presence here?
- Ethel (slightly confused) No Auntie.
- Mrs Brooke Is your cousin aware of your betrothal?
- Ethel No – to tell the truth dear –
- Mrs Brooke Yes child, pray be candid.
- Ethel Then to tell the exact truth, I don't suppose that either of them has even heard the other's name –
- Mrs Brooke How? (much astonished)
- Ethel You see dear, when I was staying with Mrs Hardman, Julian's sister in the Spring, when I first met Arthur Tregonning...
- Mrs Brooke Yes...
- Ethel Julian was then abroad – I had not seen him for 10 years, and cousin Jessie [? or Trixie] rarely, if ever spoke of him.
- Mrs Brooke (aside) I can well imagine that he has caused his friends sufficient trouble to estrange from him all home affection.

- Ethel Then came Arthur's proposal – shall I ever forget the day? How proud – how glad I was – had you been there, you would have rejoiced with me. But Mrs Hardman –
- Mrs Brooke Well Ethel?
- Ethel She is a cold, unsympathetic woman.
- Mrs Brooke (aside) So once was I –
- Ethel I could not tell her – dear – and before we had been engaged a week Arthur was summoned to the sick bed of his mother, with whom he has ever since remained –
- Mrs Brooke And Captain Lefèvre appears a self-invited guest at Sefton.
- Ethel Only during the past three days, but I will tell Arthur when I write again.
- Mrs Brooke Do so by all means – avoid sailing in troubled waters, if you can Ethel, for take my word child your cousin would fain he loves too –
- Ethel Oh Auntie! At his age!
- Mrs Brooke His age indeed! He thinks himself an Apollo! Hush – here he comes (Enter Lefèvre with small packet)
- Lefèvre Soon returned you see. I was expecting a parcel from Town, and it is here! Permit me to offer my small tribute, together with my birthday wishes. (Gives packet)
- Ethel (Opens case) Thanks Cousin, thanks. Look Auntie, what lovely earrings!
- Mrs Brooke (Aside) Too lovely for his pocket, I'm sure
- (Baines has entered during this with card on salver which he hands to Ethel)
- Baines The gentleman is waiting in the morning room
- Ethel (Reading card) The new Doctor going the round of his possible clients, I suppose (to Mrs Brooke) Will you see him for me dear? You know my dislike of strangers (She and Mrs Brooke whisper.)
- Baines (Taking up her last words – to himself) That's why she keeps my old drum-head to the fore – Lord! Love her! – What eyes she's got – and hair! Why it's as long and silky, as the dear old Colonel's charger's mane.
- Mrs Brooke Tell the visitor I will come Baines (he bows, and is going when Lefèvre detains him)
- Lefèvre See here my friend – I shall feel obliged if you will confine the execution of your duties to some other portion of the grounds during the next half-hour.

- Baines (Saluting with bad grace, aside) But I mean to keep an eye on you, all the same "my friend" (Exit)
- Mrs Brooke (Looking at card) Somerville! I seem to know the name – I will soon despatch him Ethel - (Exit)
- Lefèvre (Aside) You may stay a month if you please (Ethel is examining her presents) Now to make the running – my marriage with an heiress would "Sop" my hungry 'duns' and set me straight with fortune (approaches Ethel who has taken a garden chair and seats himself beside her) Don't you feel it a little slow here, sometimes all by yourself Ethel?
- Ethel Not at all! Auntie – Mrs Brooke I mean – often leaves her home, as now to cheer my solitude and last year when I came of age –
- Lefèvre Of age! At Eighteen!
- Ethel Yes, that was by poor Papa's wish. We had a regular house full – I am my own mistress you see cousin and indeed (seriously) I have been thinking (abruptly) ought I not to make my will?
- Lefèvre (Aside rapidly) She has not made it yet then (aloud) Ethel dearest – leave such dreary meditations, you are too young, too bright to (rising with simulated passion) Oh! Heaven why must this yellow idol ever clog and hamper our best, and purest feelings. Darling! Hear me! (she rises much disturbed) I am poor as you know – would that the wealth of which you stand possessed could crumble into ashes, that I might prove how loyal is the heart, that beats for yours alone, for Oh! Ethel, I love you (aside) that's rather commonplace, but as I have already told her, she is young –
- Ethel I - I'm very sorry you should feel like this Julian, because you see, it can't be –
- Lefèvre Can't be (approaching) Oh! My pet! Why not?
- Ethel Because I – I'm engaged already.
- Lefèvre (Astonished) Engaged! To whom may I enquire!
- Ethel (Bravely) To someone, I am very proud of – to Mr Tregonning, the celebrated painter.
- Lefèvre (Aside) Tregonning! (Turning to her with a forced and disagreeable smile) You are fortunate my dear Ethel (taking her hand) and though I lose a prize, permit me to congratulate you upon your conquest (bell without)
- Ethel There goes the tea bell (aside) what a relief (turning to him prettily, but half diffidently) adieu cousin, I must go to my little pensioners [?] (Exit - Music)
- Lefèvre (With fury) That man again! First the woman I loved, who died for him, for him. Now the one I would marry, who will dower him with the fortune I so dearly covet, curses on his luck!

- Baines (Without) This way, this way, I know she's hereabouts!
- Lefèvre Voices, that old idiot too – I don't care to meet anyone, in my present mood. (Picks up his cane, shaking it vengefully)
- Baines (Without) That's right! Mind the border – our gardener's too promiscuous with his virgenny [?] stock.¹²
(Enters with Mrs Carton. Lefèvre has back to them. Exits as they come on. Still muttering vengefully)
- Baines Why, she's gone! Ah, giving out the rations to the little squadron – I dessay – I'll see (going) What name am I to mention?
- Mrs Carton Carton – Mrs Carton, if you please the school mistress.
- Baines I'll tell her (aside) Shouldn't mind if my school days could come over again (looking at her admiringly) I like the build of this recruit I do!
(Exit)
- Mrs Carton What a charming place! If the mistress of it be only kind and gentle. Surely, surely I may find rest and quiet here. (Music)
(She is moving about among the benches, and whilst speaking the following line, accidentally overturns Ethel's basket) And how glad I shall be to settle down, and get to work once more (seeing basket) How awkward of me! (Kneeling and picking up articles) Have I found all? No there's still something (the miniature) I don't think there are any more (turning it round to put it in the basket, sees the likeness, gives a faint cry and swoons, the portrait still in her hand -)
- Lefèvre (Re-enters rapidly, as if seeking someone, seeing her on ground goes quickly and raises her) Whom have we here? (looks eagerly at her face) Great Heaven can it be? (sees the picture in her hand, releases it, an evil smile breaking over his face) Ah! My dear cousin Ethel, now more than ever do I felicitate you on the wisdom of your choice.

Picture

Act Drop

End of Scene 1 – Act 2

¹² Baines is referring to some kind of flowering plant – possibly 'Virginia Creeper' or 'Virginia Bluebells'.

Act 2

Scene 2

Ethel's boudoir – very tasteful – Mrs Brooke and Dr Somerville discovered standing near D.L. being supposed to have just emerged from Ethel's chamber (Music)

Mrs Brooke Then you agree with me, Doctor, as to the symptoms?

Dr Somerville Perfectly, Miss Masters is evidently stricken with the scourge which every autumn attacks some city, town or village in our island – the scarlet fever –

Mrs Brooke I feared it, and she is so lonely so friendless – Oh Doctor Somerville, what must I do?

Dr Somerville Telegraph, at once, to the nearest hospital for a nurse (reaching writing materials) allow me –

Mrs Brooke Thanks (writing) You do not consider her in danger? (Rings)

Dr Somerville Not yet certainly – we shall know more about that by and bye. (Enter Baines looking very dull)

Mrs Brooke Baines, take this telegraph to the station at once, why what is the matter with you?

Baines Oh! Ma'am – Oh! Doctor –

Dr Somerville Well – well!

Baines The poor little squad – the orphans –

Mrs Brooke What of them?

Baines They're mostly down with Fever!

Dr Somerville Scarlet fever?

Baines Yes Doctor. The true military tint.

Dr Somerville Then it is easy to see whence the infection proceeds.

Mrs Brooke This is most unfortunate - lose no time Baines in despatching off the message – Your Mistress is seriously ill –

Baines Her too? Oh dear Doctor, I begin to feel so – so you know – I shall be on the sick list next.

Dr Somerville Suppose you defer it a little, pending the telegram's issue –

Baines Right you are Doctor (to himself) Quick march.
(Bus and exit)

Mrs Brooke Poor Mrs Carton will have her hands full. Do you know her?

Dr Somerville The schoolmistress? No I have seen her at Church but she is always closely veiled and once or twice I have noticed her approach me in the lanes or country road, but she has invariably adopted some by-path on reaching my near neighbourhood. Indeed I could almost imagine she wished to avoid me.

Mrs Brooke (surprised) Really? Yet why should she?

Dr Somerville I don't know. Well I'll look in again by and bye – my wife will be sorry to hear of Miss Ethel's condition.

Mrs Brooke Pray remember me to her – is she quite brave?

Dr Somerville Oh! She was a doctor's daughter –

[This next line is attributed to the Doctor in the MSS, but clearly it makes sense for it to be Mrs Brooke who speaks]

Mrs Brooke Pardon me but you are aware, that I recalled our former meeting of ten years since upon your first introduction here – tell me – have you ever heard anything of that – that other girl – Jennie was she not?
(Music)

Dr Somerville (affected but quietly) Not a syllable – had the earth opened to have received her, she could not more completely have eluded my search – We – we won't discuss this now, Mrs Brooke but Heaven knows how gladly I would forego a moiety of my present affluence could I undo the cruel wrong I inflicted upon that poor loving heart.

Mrs Brooke (with feeling) I believe you (they shake hands) Good evening Doctor.
(Exit Dr Somerville) And now we must await with patience the arrival of the nurse.

(Enter Baines hurriedly)

Baines Oh, Mrs Brooke, Ma'am – she's coming –

Mrs Brooke How! Already?

Baines Not her as you sent for – I ain't sent the paper (showing telegram) Mrs Carton stopped me on the road and she's coming to nurse Miss Ethel herself.

Mrs Brooke But what will the children do without her?

Baines She'll tell you that for here she is.

(Enter Mrs Carton agitated and out of breath)

Mrs Carton You know my errand madam, you will not oppose my wish?

Mrs Brooke Are you quite certain of your efficiency of your nerve, for the task Mrs Carton?

Mrs Carton I am well-skilled in the malady, although I have not had it myself (they go on talking)

- Baines (to himself) Oh, you haven't had it – ain't you? No more ain't I – I'm sure to fall a victim, but as to deserting my colours, it ain't to be thought of. "Duty before all" was our Colonel's watchword and I'll stick to it, aye even if I sink, red as a mullet and flabby as a half-crimped cod-fish at my post. (Exit)
- Mrs Brooke And your scholars –
- Mrs Carton I have arranged for their comfort – Oh! Madam, Mrs Brooke, do not deny me!
- Mrs Brooke Deny you! (Music) No indeed, you are too valuable a requisition (Enter Lefèvre quietly, unperceived by either) I will see Ethel. (Exit)
- Mrs Carton (extending her hands upwards) My life for hers – Oh Heaven – if it might be so – how thankfully, how cheerfully, would I set forth upon my last, love pilgrimage. (Turning comes face to face with Lefèvre, shrinks) Ah!
- Lefèvre I have just returned from London, to hear that Ethel is ill, and you have volunteered to tend her!
- Mrs Carton (quietly) It is true.
- Lefèvre And you purpose, becoming an inmate here, relinquishing your quiet and seclusion for her sake?
- Mrs Carton (as before) Yes.
- Lefèvre Do you know what it is, that you are about to do?
- Mrs Carton Perfectly – I am going to try and save the life of the woman whom Arthur Tregonning loves. (Exit)
- Lefèvre Strange, inscrutable creature! To me at least (turns quite up and examines papers on table at back, enter Baines ushering in Arthur Tregonning)
- Baines Take a seat sir, if you please, I'll find Mrs Brooke (aside going) Miss Ethel's sweetheart I reckon seemed rare [?] uneasy, when I said she was a bit poorly - Well (looking contemptuously towards Lefèvre) in this case I prefers the civilian to the soldier I do (exit) (Arthur is sitting – his back to Lefèvre)
- Lefèvre (coming down a little and observing him) Who is the visitor I wonder? (Arthur turns, both start violently – pause)
- Arthur You – you here?
- Lefèvre (aside) At last! I knew that it must come (aloud) Yes. I am here. Captain Julian Lefèvre, late of her Majesty's Service and still very much at that of my chosen friends, amongst whom I need scarcely say, I do not rank Mr Arthur Tregonning.
- Arthur Scoundrel! You shall not remain another hour, beneath this roof!

- Lefèvre (insolently) Who shall dislodge me? (Enter Mrs B) You come most opportunely, Madam this gentleman, a stranger, is politely threatening to turn me out of my own cousin's house
- Arthur (astonished) Her cousin!
- Mrs Brooke (to him) Did you not know?
- Arthur Not one word.
- Mrs Brooke She wrote you on the subject to Florence.
- Arthur The letter must have arrived after my departure – I was summonsed hastily to England – but I apprised Ethel yesterday of my intended journey from St Austell hither.
- Mrs Brooke She is prostrate with fever poor child, we could not show her any correspondence this morning.
- Arthur Fever do you say! Oh! Let me see her!
- Mrs Brooke (crying) Alas! She is already delirious, she knows no-one – but you must not leave us, Mr Tregonning, you shall be housed with me, if you will accept my hospitality.
- Arthur And leave him (indicating Lefèvre) here! Never! Listen Mrs Brooke - for I recognise you, as you no doubt have already traced through Ethel my identity with that of the desolate bridegroom and widower, whom you encountered once so long ago in the little room at Lambeth.
- Mrs Brooke Yes – Yes – go on.
- Arthur I told you then, with bitter shame and grief – as also something of reproach of the sin which had blotted the early years of one, who should have proved in a different degree, dear to and treasured by us both. I also told you of the heartless treachery of which her too yielding nature had rendered her an easy prey, but I did not reveal the name of the dastard¹³ who capable of betraying the innocence of a child, suffered her to sink under the burden of her shame, rather than sacrifice one iota of his own self-interest to the tardy repairing of her smeared name.
- Lefèvre Have a care Sir!
- Mrs Brooke Great Heaven! Is it possible?
- Arthur There he stands – let him answer me if he can –
- Mrs Brooke (aside) Then my instinct did not deceive me – I felt that he was bad – (aloud with dignity) Captain Lefèvre after this revelation you cannot have the effrontery to dream of remaining at Sefton and in the

¹³ 'One who meanly or basely shrinks from danger; a mean, base, or despicable coward'. "Dastard, n. and adj.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. 13 May 2013 <<http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/47390>>.

unavoidable absence of Ethel, I must request your immediate withdrawal –

Lefèvre (Standing and regarding them defiantly – but speaking quietly) How! Show the white feather! No! I am alike fever and insult proof, and shall most assuredly remain here, as Miss Master's nearest male relative and self appointed guardian, during the period of her illness.

Tableau – Drop

Act 2

Scene 3

Ante or dressing room, supposed to open into Ethel's chamber R – Well and appropriately furnished – Bell rope towards C – a large table, on which are placed lighted candles in silver candlesticks. A jug, large soda water tumbler vials – a few hot house flowers etc. Towards L a practicable cupboard containing some lemons, basin of sugar etc. A filter for water is placed upon a shelf – and towards R a couch on which Ethel is lying. She wears a becoming wrapper, her hair is loose, and her face pale. Mrs Carton is sitting sewing near the table. (Music)

Ethel (feebly) Mrs Carton, have you leave to say how my little friends are going on?

Mrs Carton Some of them are recovering, whilst others are not so well – but we must have courage and patience, secure in the knowledge that they are well cared for.

Ethel (regarding her with interest) You wont' think me rude, but I've been looking at you such a long time, I often look at you when you don't know of it and I wonder what sorrow and anxiety you have to make your face so sad, as it often is.

Mrs Carton Sorrow – anxiety?

Ethel Ah! Dear Mrs Carton, don't be offended with me, you have been so good to me, that I want to know if there is nothing I can do towards removing any trouble you may suffer from – I want you to be as happy as I am.

Mrs Carton (rising and kissing her)
The best kindness you can show me is to get well, as soon as possible so don't tire yourself with talking – you were very sick this morning remember and I thought that the result of over-exertion.

Ethel No it wasn't dear – it was the milk – it doesn't seem to agree with me now – I felt ill after it yesterday. Ask Dr Somerville to order me something else, won't you?

Mrs Carton If you wish it (Enter Mrs Brooke in outdoor dress)

Mrs Brooke My dear dear child (going to Ethel and embracing her) You have done wonders Mrs Carton – how long has she been up?

- Mrs Carton Since 2 o'clock and as soon as the Doctor's visit shall be paid I must take her back to bed she is still very weak
- Ethel I shall get stronger every day though now – how are you auntie dear – and Arthur?
- Mrs Brooke As well as our care for you will allow us to be – he sends you all sorts of fond messages - (Mrs Carton places her hands before her eyes) and wants to know when he may be permitted to pay his court to the darling convalescent.
- Ethel (eagerly) What do you say Mrs Carton, may he come tomorrow?
- Mrs Carton (rising) Yes – I – suppose so (sinks rather heavily in chair)
- Mrs Brooke (going to her kindly) Ah! You've overdone yourself – we shall have you laid up next.
- (Enter Baines announcing)
- Baines Dr Somerville has a tolerable time of it, between that ere patient (indicating Ethel) and this ere nurse (to Mrs Carton) (Exit)
- Dr Somerville So we are feeling quite brave are we? Almost able to run down stairs, eh?
- Ethel (smiling) Not quite (rises a little) I'm rather shaky about any understandings [?] (taking Doctor's arm) See (walking feebly to Mrs Brooke and Mrs Carton and calling doctor's attention to the latter) This poor dear has knocked herself completely up and all with taking care of me!
- Dr Somerville (regarding Mrs Carton curiously) Is Mrs Carton not well?
- Mrs Carton Yes – yes –
- Mrs Brooke (interrupting) But it is not “yes, yes”, it is “no, no”. She is worn out and must give place to Ethel's maid, for tonight at least, whilst she takes her well earned rest.
- Mrs Carton (a little impatiently) I am not ill indeed – pray do not trouble yourselves about me (turns to Mrs Brooke & Ethel talking)
- Dr Somerville This woman is an Enigma – I could almost swear to the face, and quite to the voice – and yet her calm collected manner when with me – the testimonials received by Mrs Brooke from her former employees – I am bewildered – if – if – she is still living, who was drowned? There – I'm wool-gathering¹⁴ again
- Mrs Carton (advancing) Doctor. May I speak with you? – (takes him aside)
- Mrs Brooke (to Ethel) I see she can be very obstinate with all her mildness –

¹⁴ The phrase 'wool-gathering' means 'indulging in wandering thoughts or idle fancies', <<http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/230133>>.

- Ethel Don't say a word against her – you cannot imagine all that she has been to me –
- Dr Somerville So the milk upsets her does it? (Music) Too heavy perhaps – Is she as thirsty as ever?
- Ethel (interposing) Almost – and I have my champagne twice a day. I hate barley water and I don't care much for tea – can't I have some lemonade?
- Dr Somerville Of course you can (to Mrs Carton). Not the bottled mess though – manufacture her some, with fresh lemons and sugar – you understand – (crossing and taking Ethel's hand) You'll soon dispense with my services now (bowing) Au revoir Ladies (going)
- Mrs Brooke I will accompany you as far as the drive Doctor – my brougham waits my quest will be anxiously expecting my bulletin (kisses Ethel) goodbye pet – we have much to rejoice over in your recovery (to Mrs Carton) now do be careful, if you are invalided I shall never forgive myself for having allowed you to undertake so serious a charge. (Music) (Exit with Dr Somerville)
- Ethel (Coming up to Mrs Carton & nestling on her shoulder, as they stand R near chamber door) And I'll go bee-bye – I'm so sleepy – it's nice to be up once more though and it's nice to have you here – I shall never let you go away – auntie will have to find me another school mistress – you must live with me always – even when I am married (Mrs Carton shrinks from her) There you are hurt, grieved in some way – what have I done?
- Mrs Carton (a little wildly) What have I done? (Collecting herself) You were right dear – I – I am not myself tonight – Ethel come near (Ethel throws her arms about her) Nearer (they embrace almost passionately) Kiss me dear – and remember now and in the future that of all the love professed and felt for you there is none in the whole world so true so disinterested as that which fills the heart now beating on your own. (Music)
- Ethel My dear sweet friend. (Kisses her again and exeunt as Captain Lefèvre enters from opposite side)
- Lefèvre (Eyeing their retreat) Retiring to her chamber (Throws himself in easy chair) Then I will wait here for – Mrs Carton (Knock L) Come in (Enter Baines with letter)
- Baines Letter Captain (holding it towards him but so that he cannot take it) Perhaps you'd like to read it down stairs?
- Lefèvre Why should I? (Angrily) Quick give it me.
- Baines (delivering it reluctantly, aside) Like his impudence, sticking himself in a Lady's room – I feel so – so insubordinate (Exit)
- Lefèvre (reading) "Sir unless my a/c is paid by the 7th prox [?] I shall at once commence proceedings" this makes the 10th epistle of this kind I have received today and if that bill is not taken up by the 20th I'm ruined – a

prim [?] of countrymen will soon despatch me where I shall be lodged and boarded gratis (stretching himself in chair) not quite so luxuriously as I am here to be sure. (Musing) Swindler and forger bah! (shuddering) it – it's not to be endured "Desperate needs demand desperate deeds" (tapping his waistcoat pocket) and if it comes to the worst (sees Mrs Carton who has entered softly and gone straight to cupboard, whence she takes lemon and sugar and then draws water from filter) Ah! Good evening Mrs Carton.

Mrs Carton (Quietly cutting and squeezing lemon) Ethel has retired, you cannot see her now.

Lefèvre I am not anxious – I came to see you. Somerville says you are not well, is it true?

Mrs Carton As you and I can have nothing in common, I decline to answer any personal questions you may ask me.

Lefèvre Still so distant? (advancing) What is the beverage?

Mrs Carton Lemonade for Ethel (he starts)

Lefèvre (coming close to her) I want to speak to you and I will be heard (She has been moving but he detains her) I am told that Mr Tregonning pays his first visit to his fiancée tomorrow, how much further do you intend this farce to go? (Mrs Carton greatly agitated, seems unable to reply) Naomi you know what utter insanity is this affair. He cannot marry her so long as you live.

Mrs Carton (Excitedly) And you shall never marry her whether I live or die – for sooner than she shall be condemned to such a fate, be sacrificed to such an unprincipled villain as you are – I will tell her all!

Lefèvre Then you will have to confess –

Mrs Carton My own sin – yes – Arthur's ignominious suffering yes – but above these, and preeminent as their root and cause will I proclaim your base perfidy and ruthless betrayal of my early trust.

Lefèvre What's the use of harking back to the old trouble? – You know as well as I do, that I would have married you from the first if it had not been for the cursed money – you are the only woman breathing to whom I would willingly tie myself.

Mrs Carton Stop, not another Word.

Lefèvre (hoarsely) I tell you that I will speak – I have earned that right in the torture I endured when I heard of your supposed death – do you imagine that he mourned you, as I did? The honourable gentleman who gave you this? (Pointing contemptuously at her wedding ring) Or do you think I could have thrown you over, whatever your fault, as he your husband did? The husband who is now so anxious to make the heiress of Sefton Mrs Tregonning?

Mrs Carton (in great excitement) How dare you breathe his name? You are not fit even to think of him – I tell you that from the hour, in which I first saw

- him, I have loved, worshipped, revered him. When he spurned me I adored him and now I would walk blindfold to perdition if I could gain for him the happiness on which his heart is set!
- Lefèvre Come to me instead – can't you see the madness of persisting in this enmity? – Help me in my design – Win Miss Ethel for me and you shall see how good a friend I can be to you if not to her.
- Mrs Carton (Staring hard at him) Horrible! Most horrible! – (sinks gradually into chair, her back to him) (Music)
- Lefèvre (Aside) There is no other way – it must be done (aloud, pretending to listen) Hark Ethel is awake, she is calling you (Mrs Carton tries to speak but cannot – he offers to hand her to door R – she recoils and goes slowly off, directly she clears the threshold he produces small paper, little child's [?] powder, from his waistcoat pocket & empties contents into jug of lemonade – knock at door L – he starts then clears his throat twice before he can say – come in! (Enter Baines dangling large bunch of keys)
- Baines I've come to see whether you want anything Captain – I'm about to close the canteen –
- Lefèvre Yes! I'll have some brandy (snatches keys) You needn't wait up – I – I'll help myself (Exit R)
- Baines (Looking resentfully after him) Polite! You're improving. What! Rob me of my keys? No I can't stand that (about to follow, stops) Still he was a captain, is a captain and I was only a corporal. (Enter Mrs Carton L) Ah! Nurse – what would you like for supper nurse?
- Mrs Carton I can't take anything tonight, you know I seldom do –
- Baines (persuasively) Just a little morsel, the wing of a chicken or a slice of tongue? (she shakes her head) A sandwich then?
- Mrs Carton No indeed – nothing thanks.
- Baines I am aware the faculty is dead against suppers, but you be persuaded by me, you'll be so faint if you don't –
- Mrs Carton You are very thoughtful Baines, but I can't oblige you, good night.
- Baines If you requires any assistance you've only to ring remember – I'm always at attention (aside) Where duty & pleasure combines to make things agreeable (exit)
- Mrs Carton (solus) How, how shall I meet the morrow? How face the dreaded explanation? Heaven pity me I cannot rest – I cannot pray (putting her hands to her temples) My head is so hot and my throat so dry and parched (looking towards table) I should like some of the lemonade (Music) (Going to take it, stops) No she may wake & need it (Sits, slight pause) I think she will sleep through the night, though she is so exhausted at any rate, I can soon make her a fresh supply (rising) Yes I may surely venture (fills soda water tumbler and drinks, as if very thirsty) It is not nice after all, the lemons must have been stale,

although they were so juicy – I'll try again (She goes again to cupboard) (Enter Lefèvre from Ethel's room, being supposed to have passed through that way)

Lefèvre (Addresses Mrs Carton as she goes through former action of mixing etc) Always busy, and yes – I declare you're positively concocting a fresh brew, what an inveterate little tippler Miss Ethel has become (nodding towards chamber) I thought I'd wish her goodnight, but she's asleep again I find –

Mrs Carton (Quietly going on with her task) She has never stirred since 7 o'clock

Lefèvre (Stammering in bewilderment) But the – the lemonade – is not the first lot gone? –

Mrs Carton (Still mixing) I drank it.

Lefèvre (In great excitement, seizing her hands) You – You drank it – No – No – I'll not believe it – You're joking, trying to hoax me – say for the love of heaven, say that it is so – anything anything but that you have swallowed what was meant for her.

Mrs Carton (With protracted half scream, half moan, but not noisy) Ah, I see, I know, the milk, her sickness – and you the next of kin, her legal heir! (Seizing him half-savagely) Monster, seducer, murderer! You shall not escape (clutches bell rope, loud peal resounds)

Lefèvre (In great agitation) Do as you will – but remember that I am Ethel's cousin and that Arthur Tregonning loves her - ! –

(Enter Baines and other servants hurriedly)

Baines Oh! Mrs Carton! – what – what is the matter?

Mrs Carton (Looking hastily at Lefèvre) Go for Dr Somerville one of you and immediately – I have inadvertently taken poison –

Tableau – drop

End of Act 2 Scene 3

Act 2

Scene 4

Scene the last - The Boudoir, evening – the curtains are drawn across the window – lamp burning on table – couch C on which Naomi is lying – she is much changed since last scene – Arthur is kneeling beside her – Mrs Brooke and Dr Somerville are at table (Music) – Lights down

Dr Somerville (to Mrs Brooke) And the bottle containing the remnant of the poisonous lotion has not been found, you say.

Mrs Brooke No she cannot remember where she placed it, and it would be idle as cruel to question her upon the subject now –

Dr Somerville It has certainly proved a fatal error – at the same time one only too likely to befall when medicines and embrocations are kept together.

Naomi (Looking round) You are speaking of me – ah! Never grieve for my mistake – I am resigned, Doctor will you come here? (He advances to her as Arthur goes up to Mrs Brooke) You know now, who I am – I – I have a legacy to bequeath you – A tale of passion and despair.

Dr Somerville (very sorrowfully) I can divine it.

Naomi When you shall hear its details, take to your heart the story, not in weak sorrow or vain remorse, but in the safe assurance of an infinite mercy, extending to the sinner as to the just.

Dr Somerville (Raising his eyes solemnly) I will!

Naomi And now farewell (He takes her hands wringing them gently, but mournfully, Arthur comes down Dr Somerville turns to Mrs Brooke)

Mrs Brooke Have you no words of comfort for us?

Dr Somerville Not one! (Exit softly his head bowed)

Naomi Arthur – Aunt – was it more painful to think of me as having sought the death you believed to have befallen me than it is to see me as I am?

Arthur Oh, Naomi, this is piteous enough, Heaven knows, but I can still be thankful that you were spared the hopeless desperation which alone can urge to suicide.

Naomi Poor Jennie! Whilst I am still able, let me tell you both, how it came about.

Mrs Brooke No, No, my poor child – don't try to talk – husband your strength for all our sakes.

Naomi (pointing to Arthur) I want him to understand.

Arthur Let it be as she wishes. (To Naomi)

Naomi (to him) When I left you that day (he shudders) I found that Jennie had been forsaken by – by her lover – her grief, wild and frantic, at first appalled me – then after confiding to her my – my own misery we agreed to cast in our lot together, as before, and on the morning following we quitted the old place.

Arthur You left no trace though!

Naomi Because I did not wish you to find me – I could not accept material aid – whilst you withheld the treasure of your love – we did not go very far though we had not the means.

Mrs Brooke (with great feeling) This is retribution – oh! Naomi – say – say – that you do not curse me for the past.

- Naomi Don't please don't – it – it was all my fault.
- Arthur Not all (Music)
- Naomi I – I must get on – a friend of Jennie's proffered her a new engagement – I pressed her to accept, and lent her my dress that she might make a fair appearance when she set forth to sign her indentures, she left me arranging to return within the day – I never saw her again.
- Arthur Great Heaven!
- Naomi I discovered afterwards, that she had accidentally witnessed the marriage of – of Dr Somerville – and you know the rest – distracted with anxiety for her – I wandered over London in my dreary quest until I chanced upon the awful truth –
- Mrs Brooke But why did you not explain? Why not have denied the identity of the lost girl with yourself?
- Naomi We were so isolated, so friendless – I could afford to suffer for her.
- Arthur But ! Had you no thought for me?
- Naomi Only that you were right – I could not hope you would regret me. "Let him believe me dead" I said to myself – "it is better so".
- Mrs Brooke And Ethel? Could you not foresee that contingency?
- Naomi No I never dreamt of it (Arthur covers his face and turns away momentarily, Naomi beckons Mrs Brooke closer who puts down her ear to her) Dear Aunt will you leave us? I have something to say to Arthur (Mrs Brooke bows and kisses her) And bring Ethel to me – soon Aunt – soon (Exit Mrs Brooke) (Arthur has come close up to Naomi and taken her in his arms, resting her head upon his breast) Arthur what shall you do about him?
- Arthur (Huskily) Don't ask me.
- Naomi Dear you must not punish him – he is her cousin – (slight pause) Promise me – make him go away, anywhere, never to see you or her again – but spare her, and leave him the years wherein he may repent.
- Arthur (With an effort) Be it as you will (they embrace)
- Naomi Arthur will you say that you forgive me?
- Arthur Forgive you? I did that long ago – and oh my poor darling – when would be my hope of eternity (reverently) if I could not forgive you now?
- Naomi You will meet your reward, oh! be assured of it – through much tribulation have I journeyed, but at last I am happy!
- Arthur Happy! Oh Naomi – happy (with tears in his voice)

(Music)

- Naomi The – the picture! You – remember.
- Arthur It was never finished – it has its place amongst the many abortive efforts of my life.
- Naomi Take it out and hang it, not in one of your grand rooms, but in some quiet corner where you and she can sometimes look –
- Arthur Indeed I will.
- Naomi It was a pretty fancy (half-dreamily) “Where are you going” – Oh – beloved (raising herself and looking earnestly at him) Where, where am I going now?
- Arthur Where the martyr’s crown awaits the penitent.
- Naomi You – you tell me so? (Re-enter Mrs Brooke with Ethel – Ethel kneels near Naomi) Let me see the sky once more (Mrs Brooke draws the curtains and discovers the snow falling and the moon shining as in Scene 1... To Ethel) When you shall be – quite strong by and bye (very faintly) and the violets, (turning to Arthur, turns again to Ethel) My cherished flowers are springing they (indicating Mrs Brooke and Arthur) will tell – will tell you all! (The village bells are heard ringing) Hark! The New Year! (To Arthur and Ethel) May – may it be blest to – to you – for me the years – are – are done! (Dies)

Curtain

The Union Wheel

An original Drama in 3 Acts

Playwright: Joseph Fox

[The name of the writer is not actually written on the manuscript as submitted to the office of the Lord Chamberlain.]

Date of Licence, granted by W. B. Donne	14 April 1870
Manuscript received by the office of the Lord Chamberlain	12 April 1870

BL Catalogue No 53084H, Vol. 3, 1870

Produced Theatre Royal, Sheffield

First performance Saturday 16 April 1870
 [*Sheffield Independent*, Monday 18 April]

Closed Thursday 28 April
 [*Sheffield Independent*, Thursday 28 April]

Notes

Handwritten, A4, blue lined paper; I have not followed the original pagination in this transcript. The text is written in the same handwriting all the way through.

In the MS, sometimes the stage directions are in brackets, sometimes they are not: here I have put them all in brackets.

Square brackets and question mark means that I cannot decipher a word or phrase, or have another query.

Spellings and punctuation are usually as they appear in the MS, I have sometimes added or omitted a comma if it aids clarity.

The word 'bus' is sometimes used: this usually refers to 'stage business' – some kind of action that is not always detailed. The detail may have been added during rehearsals, or left up to the actor to improvise.

Characters (and actors from the Sheffield production, where I have the information)

		Actor in Sheffield
Mr Parker		Mr. Birchenough [SI 20/4]
Mr Alfred Parker	his son	Mr. W. Tennison [SI 20/4]
Mr Jack Summers	his nephew	Mr. Cleveland [SI 20/4]
Job Langton		Mr. Rogers [SI 20/4]
Harry Thomson		Mr. J. Dewhirst [SI 20/4]
Mr William Brumley		Mr. Alexander [SI 20/4]
Mr James Guite		
Mr Thomas Earnshaw		
Daft Jim		Mr. William Gomersal [SI 20/4]
Ted Saunders *		Mr. Harry Taylor [SI 20/4]
Paul Jenkins		
Edith	Niece to Mr Parker	Miss Mansfield [SI 20/4]
Mary Langton	Daughter to Job Langton	Miss Lizzie Reinhardt [SI 20/4]
Susannah Simpson		

* Note: The character appears to have changed his name to **Joe Stammers**, as that name is what how he is referred to in the reviews.

An earlier advert for the Theatre Royal (*Sheffield Independent* 1 January 1870), lists the 'Clown' to be named Ted Saunders. So perhaps Fox changed the name of the character to spare a fellow actor any annoyance or embarrassment.

The Union Wheel
An Original Drama in 3 Acts

Act 1

Scene 1 Drawing Room at The Elms. Gaslight.

Mr Parker discovered reading Newspaper. Summers and Edith playing Cribbage. Paul standing by Mr Parker.

Mr Parker Has Mr Alfred come in yet?

Paul No. Sir.

Mr Parker Half past 11. Did he say where he should spend the Evening?

Paul No Sir. Most likely Sir, he's at the Young Men's Xian [sic] Association.¹

Mr Parker Paul. You're impertinent.

Paul Beg pardon Sir, but how?

Mr Parker You know very well Sir that Mr Alfred's tastes don't lie in that direction. I wish they did. I'm afraid the Theatre's more likely to have tempted him from the family circle.

Edith Why afraid Uncle? Surely there's no harm in the Theatre.

Paul Not in the Theatre, Miss.

Mr Parker Why, Mr Goodson said, in Church on Sunday, it was a hotbed of corruption.

Edith Then, Mr Goodson should have more sense. Every institution is liable to corruption. Is the Church pure? Are your elections pure? Is commerce pure? If so, what need of Church reform? Why ask for bribery bills? And what of strikes and rattening?

Mr Parker Listen to her! Who'll say that women should not have a vote? If they were all like you, we'd have a parliament of women.

Edith Don't digress. The Stage might be the rectifier of abuses. Show virtue its own features – scorn its own image – the very age and body of the time its form and pressure. Show masters their own vices – bring them palpable before their eyes – spite of themselves they'd feel ashamed – and a ruffian work-man, seeing the scorn with which a blackguard's treated, get a lesson which neither Church nor press could give so well. What say you Cousin?

Summers I agree with you.

Mr Parker You generally do Jack. If I were Alfred, I should be jealous of you.

Edith Uncle!

¹ Christian.

- Mr Parker A good looking fellow – ah! you may blush, but he is good looking, isn't he Eddy?
- Edith What a question, Uncle.
- Paul Well he is so. so.
- Mr Parker Who asked your opinion? Go Sir! (Exit Paul) As I was saying 'twould almost serve Alf right – dawdling his time away – and leaving you night after night tête a tête with your cousin – to lose you altogether. However, as you don't seem to think there's any harm in places of amusement –
- Edith Not in Theatres. You visit operas. What a paradox! A good play is – or should be – intellectual; appealing to the reason. Music at best is sensuous, appealing to the passions – and that's the reason I suppose why so many visit the one, and keep away from the other. Don't you read Shakespeare, Uncle?
- Mr Parker Certainly. He is my favourite author; and so does Mr Goodson I'll be bound.
- Edith Then, why debar the poorer classes from what you take delight in?
- Mr Parker We don't debar them. They can read him.
- Edith Yes! But not understand, as when they hear some practised reader whose life has been the study of his author. By your rule, men might fashion for themselves their knives and forks but without apprenticeship, 'twould be a sorry piece of work. Mr Goodson's wrong; and 'tis the bigotry of men like him that weans men from the Church, and converts Theatres into singing rooms, with beer, cigars, and worse, ad libitum.²
- Mr Parker Why, I declare, you've half converted me. I only wish you would convert the Unions. Didn't you tell me Langton had had a notice?
- Summers Yes Sir.
- Mr Parker I'm sorry for it. He's a good workman, and an honest man. I received a letter from Brumley yesterday. Tomorrow I'm to have an interview. I shall be sorry to discharge Job Langton.
- Edith Job Langton? Is not that the gray haired man you call Old Honesty?
- Mr Parker The same.
- Edith Pretty Mary's Father?
- Mr Parker Yes.
- Edith Why do you talk of discharging him?
- Mr Parker Because it's dangerous to offend the Union.

² From the Latin, 'libitude', 'that it is pleasing'. Thus 'ad libitum' means 'according to pleasure', Pearsall and Trumble (eds), *Oxford English Reference Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

- Edith More dangerous to lose your self-respect. By what I've heard you say, this Brumley's honest – a pattern family man, and yet a tyrant.
- Summers He represents a tyranny.
- Mr Parker You are right Jack. Somehow, you always are. Trades Unions are the Tyranny.
- Summers Yes, when pushed too far. I quite agree with them in the broad principles.
- Mr Parker Eh! Eh! Why Jack, what do you call broad principles, not Brumley principles I hope. Eh!?
- Summers I'll tell you what I mean Sir. I think that Capital and Labour should be equally protected. That Labour has a right to form its combinations against the despotism of Capital.
- Mr Parker Why, Jack, you're a Trade's Unionist!
- Summers Hear me out Uncle. You say I'm often right. I may be so in this. Where I don't agree with them is this:- They should not arrogate the right to make a man join them will he – nil he. To say machinery shall not be employed, and dictate to a man how he's to do his work. The Masters might as well combine to hinder you from building two or three, or a dozen mills if you felt so inclined. That's mob tyranny – and were I in your place – if Job Langton liked to risk the consequences, I'd do my best to aid him and protect him, in spite of Mr Brumley or the Union.
- Edith Bravo Cousin! But you forget your game. That makes me 59.
- Summers 15-6, 15-8 & 4 are 12-6 in crib. Game. I win!
- Mr Parker You generally do. You are mighty clever, Jack in theory. They've taught you something at Christchurch³ – but what we want in business is practice, and if I were to go against the Union, Brumley's little finger, pointed from me, would take every man from my employment.
- Edith Let them go! Rather than lose your self-respect.
- Mr Parker You speak like a green girl, 'unsighted in such perilous circumstance'.⁴ You see, I'm quoting Shakespeare.
- Edith 'Be just and fear not' 'Corruption wins not more than honesty'.⁵ I'm quoting too.
- Mr Parker And deuced well you quote too, doesn't she Jack? If Brumley heard you two, he'd ratten you.
- Edith Of what?

³ Presumably Mr. Parker refers to Christchurch College, Oxford.

⁴ This phrase is spoken by Polonius, in William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I, sc. iii.

⁵ Both quotes are from William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, Act III, sc. ii.

Mr Parker Your tongues. They clack like any mill-wheel.

Edith Mr Brumley visits you tomorrow. Could I not see him Uncle?

Mr Parker Why do you wish to see him?

Edith Oh! Merely out of curiosity. One hears so much of him.

Mr Parker Well, if you come down to the wheel tomorrow noon, you can, and give us your impressions.

Edith What are yours?

Mr Parker I hardly know. Ask Jack. He's seen him, and he's a judge of physiognomy. What's your opinion Jack?

Summers Judging from his looks, I should say his leading characteristics are, love of notoriety, great secrecy and dogged obstinacy, together with a rugged sense of duty.

Mr Parker What's duty got to do with rattening?

Summers He thinks he does his duty to the Union. Duty is oft perverted into crime. There's but one step 'twixt the sublime and the ridiculous, and the line is almost as fine that separates great scoundrels from great heroes. A man may give himself body & soul to some pet project nor scruple to commit a crime for that though he would scorn to act so for himself.

 (Enter Paul)

Paul Mr Alfred has returned, Sir.

Mr Parker Couldn't he announce himself?

Paul He's gone up to his room, Sir.

Mr Parker For the night?

Paul I think so, Sir.

Mr Parker Say, I desire to see him.

Paul But –

Mr Parker Obey me, Sir

Paul I would not be in Mr Alfred's shoes. (Exit Paul)

Edith Shall I retire, Uncle?

Mr Parker No. Sit still. Why should you go?

Edith I thought –

Mr Parker You think that Mr Alfred may be tipsy, and that I'm about to lecture him. You are wrong in one point, I'm afraid you'll prove right in the other. We'll hear what he has to say about Trades' Unions, Theatres

etc. I'm afraid he'll know much more about the latter, intellectual as you say they are. In vino veritas.⁶

(Enter Alfred drunk)

So Sir, you have come.

Alfred Yes Governor. Here we are.

Mr Parker May I, without being rude, ask where you've spent the evening?

Alfred At the club.

Mr Parker What club? The Stupid Club? Paul told us you'd perhaps gone to the Young Men's Christian Association. I doubted it at first, but I begin to think he spoke the truth.

Alfred What is the old Gent at? Why should I go there?

Mr Parker Why indeed! Only as a practical illustration how low and swinish a young man becomes when he departs from the first principles of temperance.

Alfred Two to one in fifties on the Governor. He hits out right from the shoulder. But I'm game.

Edith Uncle!

Mr Parker You are right. We will retire. I'll speak to you tomorrow. Tonight it would be useless. Good Night. (Exit Mr Parker.)

Alfred Ugh! Pepper! Cousin Edith...

Edith Good night (Exit Edith.)

Alfred Ugh, Vinegar! Come Jack. Help me to finish this.

Summers Good night. (Exit Summers.)

Alfred Ugh. Mustard! And I'm the green stuff. Oh yes! I'm very verdant, a pretty salad we should make well mixed. Fancy Master Jack doing the virtuous, and looking shocked at what they are pleased to term my irregularities. It's my opinion he's making up to Edith. Sneak – as if a woman was to be caught in that way. I know the way to do the business – tickle their fancy – they don't get over me. I'm a young man from the country, for the dark girl dressed in blue.⁷ What's here? Port wine! And yet the Governor had the impudence to lecture [me about] Brandy and water – a regular case of pot and kettle. I wonder how they'll mix. Pretty Mary Langton! She asked me to speak a word or two in favour of her father. Oh dear no, not for Joe – not for

⁶ 'Truth comes out under the influence of alcohol' a drunken person tells the truth', OED Online March 2013. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/92971> [accessed 13 May 2013].

⁷ 'The Dark Girl Dressed in Blue' is a song, and at least two different versions were published. Harry Clifton (1832-1872), 'The Dark Girl Dressed in Blue' (London: Edwin Ashdown, ca. 1900); 'I'm come in search of a nice young man. I'm the Dark Girl Dressed in Blue', 'Ladies Comic Song', W. Williams (London: 1863).

Joseph if he knows it. Let him go to smash – immortal smash.⁸ So much the better for my purpose. Gad I do like Mary Langton, and shouldn't mind taking a house for her and if Job gets ruined, there'll be a chance – for I don't think she cares a pin for that cad Thomson. How the room does whirl! There's Edith and there's Mary! And I'm between them. I wonder if I am changed to a tee-totum.⁹ I'm spinning – spinning round. Stop – I want winding up –

(Enter Paul)

Paul Come Sir, get to bed. Here's your candle.

Alfred Who are you?

Paul Only Paul sir

Alfred Only Paul. Why there's twenty Pauls and twenty candles.

Paul Here's a kettle of fish. Come Sir, do walk up to bed.

Alfred Walk! Not for Joseph! Oh dear no. I'm spinning. Give me another glass

Paul Oh Laws! The Supernaculum!¹⁰ All gone! What will Master say?

Alfred Master! I'm your master. Get the Brougham and take me up to bed.

Paul I'd like to get the Broom, and sweep you up to bed. Come Sir, get on my back.

Alfred "Rolling home?" Chorus, Paul. (After many ineffectual efforts gets on Paul's back.)

Paul Master will hear you.

Alfred "Rolling home in the morning Boys, Before the break of day".¹¹

(Exeunt)

⁸ 'Indicating some ruined condition' - as in the phrase 'go to pieces', OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/79544 [accessed 13 May 2013].

⁹ 'A circular disk pierced by a short peg, spun with the fingers, used as a toy'. OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/198596 [accessed 13 May 2013].

¹⁰ 'A drink to be consumed to the last drop; a wine of the highest quality'. OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/194414 [accessed 13 May 2013].

Paul is lamenting that Alfred has drunk Mr. Parker's best port wine.

¹¹ This was a popular music-hall song. Frank W. Egerton, 'Rolling home in the morning, boys' (Leeds: 1875).

Act 1
Scene 2 Across the Fields Daylight

Enter Harry Thomson and Mary Langton

Harry But Mary –

Mary Well, you've said 'But Mary' at least a dozen times. If I happen to be marketing, or coming from th'Alexandra, and young Mr Parker happens to come across, shall I refuse to walk at'side of him? I don't grumble when I see you walking with Lucy Walters.

Harry He means no good to thee.

Mary I don't expect he does, nor no harm neither. What can fine gentlemen like him think about workmen's daughters?

Harry Too little, and too much lass. For such as thee to play wi' such as him – why it's like children playing wi' gunpowder – one spark and there's a blow up. Let him keep to them of his own class. He's engaged, at least they say so, to Miss Grayson. She's much too good for him. What can he want wi' thee. Setting people's tongues wagging about thee.

Mary Let them wag. If yours wagged less sometimes, it would be better. You can speak bravely here. But I'll warrant you hadn't man enough¹² to vote against that notice my father got day before yesterday.

Harry Why did he leave the Union?

Mary Hasn't he the right to please himself?

Harry Well, scarcely! You wouldn't like to marry, would you Mary, if your father – mother – every relation that you'd got were dead against the match.

Mary No Harry. Why do you ask?

Harry The Union is a Father to us workmen. And if we disobey it we are punished, and right it should be so.

Mary A father punishes for his child's good.

Harry And so does th'Union. Trades'¹³ topics aren't for women to discuss. Let's talk of something else.

Mary But when strikes come it's t'women have to feel the consequences. I suppose today, my father will be discharged.

Harry Nay, perhaps not. We'll hope he'll make all right.

¹² 'Man' seems to be used here in the sense of an attribute and this particular phrase is repeated by Brumley in Act 2, scene 3, p. 27. However, Mary also says 'isn't man enough', ten lines down, so it would seem that the two phrases were interchangeable in terms of their meaning.

¹³ The punctuation is unclear in the MS. It could either be trade's, or trades' - the singular and plural forms of trade/trades appear to be interchangeable at this time.

- Mary They've roused him, and he'd rather starve than give up his machine, or, for that matter be dictated to. If Mr Parker isn't man enough to keep him on, he means to emigrate.
- Harry What, leave England, Mary?
- Mary Yes, his mind's made up.
- Harry But you'll not go with him.
- Mary If he goes. I go. The Union you are so proud of will transport us.
- Harry Damn the Union!
- Mary That's honest!
- Harry Nay. I don't mean that. All I mean is – Let's talk of another union that'll transport me, and make me the happiest dog alive. When shall I put up th'banns?
- Mary I thought you'd asked my father.
- Harry So I have. He says it all depends on thee.
- Mary I should lead a pretty life with you.
- Harry You'll lead a happy life. There's not a better lass walks Sheffield streets than thou art, and I don't brag, when I say, there's not a steadier workman than myself. Come now – shall I put th'banns up, say, on Sunday next?
- Mary That'll be too soon.
- Harry My lass, it can't be too soon. Tonight we'll go and pick a wedding ring.
- Mary I've not consented.
- Harry Yes, you have. Silence gives consent, all the world over. Thou'st made me very happy lass.
- Mary You'll be too late for work.
- Harry Hang work! I've a good mind to have a holiday. What say you to a drive to Froggatt Edge?
- Mary Nay, not today. When you've two mouths to feed, you'll have to work you know, harder than ever.
- Harry Thou'rt a good lass. (Kissing her)
- (Enter Daft Jim)
- Jim Simon says Wiggle Waggle.
- Harry (Threateningly) What art thou doing here?
- Jim Simon says Thumbs Down. Thou dursn't strike me Harry Thomson.

- Harry Why not?
- Jim Because thou know'st I'm daft, and it's only cowards strike them that's weaker than theirsens.
- Harry Thou'rt right lad, I dursn't strike thee.
- Jim (to Mary) You've soon found out which is the clean potato – Mr Alfred Parker - only let Simon say Thumbs up at him – I'll serve him out – the coward. He struck me with his cane – not once but twice – Simon said Wiggle Waggle and I did wiggle waggle, until I lipped him on his nose.¹⁴ Ho! Ho! Th'Union meets Monday, and Mary Anne'll have some work to do. Shall you be there?
- Harry Yes, Jim.
- Jim And Job?
- Harry He's left the Union.
- Jim Eh! I'm sorry for it.
- Harry Why so?
- Jim If Simon says Thumbs up –
- Harry You wouldn't hurt him Jim.
- Jim No. I dursn't. She wouldn't let me.
- Mary She! Who?
- Harry He means his mother.
- Mary She's dead.
- Jim Ay. But she often talks to me, and tells me to love Job. He wor so good to her. God bless him.
- Mary You're a good lad Jim.
- Jim And so is Harry. And good looking too. Don't you think so?
- Harry To be sure she does.
- Jim Simon says Wiggle Waggle. Daft Jim's not half so daft as people think. He can see through glass as well as any on'em. Yes, and hear wedding bells in kisses. Mind, don't kiss only through th'wedding ring.¹⁵ Good bye. Two's company. Three's none. Thumbs down. Simon says so. (Exit Jim)
- Mary Is Jim a Unionist?

¹⁴ Jim seems to be suggesting that he hit, or punched Alfred 'on the nose. A dialect, or colloquial meaning of 'lip' is 'to insult, abuse, be impudent to (someone)'. OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/108824 [accessed 13 May 2013].

¹⁵ Jim is reminding the couple here of the significance of a kiss at this time; it was an activity that only affianced couples should contemplate.

- Harry Yes.
- Mary He meant something when he said If Simon says Thumbs up.
- Harry Oh, it's his byword.
- Mary It was some threat. Is my father safe?
- Harry No harm shall come to him while I am by. I shall soon have the right to protect him and thee.
- Mary Good bye, Harry.
- Harry Good bye, lass, till tonight.
- (As they are parting, Jim's voice, outside: There's no one coming. Kiss again. Simon says Wiggle waggle)

Act 1
Scene 3

Mr Parker's room at the Mill Jack Summers discovered

Summers I'm afraid I shall have to cut it¹⁶, and it's a pity too, just as I was getting on so well. For Uncle's as good as gold. But if I stay much longer I shall prove ungrateful for, spite of myself I love my cousin Edith. I try to squeeze it back into my heart, but it's no use. It only gets additional pressure, and like steam it must have vent, or else the boiler's sure to burst.

(Enter Mr Parker)

Mr Parker Ha! Jack. Here you are, busy as usual. I'll be bound Mr Alfred's not arrived.

Summers Yes, Sir, he's been, and just gone out. He's had a talk with Job.

Mr Parker I'm glad to hear it. With Job eh! That reminds me. I've to see him – well – we'll get the disagreeable over first. Send Job Langton to me.

Summers Shall I leave you Uncle?

Mr Parker Certainly not. I may want your advice. I've a great opinion of your tact, and I shall need it all today.

(Enter Job Langton)

Ah. Good morning Job. I'm very sorry things should come to this pass. Are there no means of bridging over these little difficulties between you and the Union?

¹⁶ Summers uses this word to mean that he must leave. The phrase is included in a selection of 'Colloquial College Words' from 1856, and the meaning is given of 'intentional absence from or deliberate omission to attend (an event)'.
OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/46339 [accessed 13 May 2013].

- Job I'm afeard not Sir. They insist on my giving up t'machine wi' which four of five men's work can be done wi' a single pair o' hands. I spend t'savings o' a life to get it patented – you were good enough to give it a trial – and it works well. Don't you think so Sir?
- Mr Parker Very well, indeed Job.
- Job Well, I needn't say I shan't do that. I might emigrate but that's hard – to leave t'owd place where I was bred and born – especially at my age.
- Mr Parker Besides, you'd then leave your machine behind you.
- Job Nay Sir, I should tak' it wi' me, like one o't family and try if workmen i' other countries is as bigoted to their old ways as ours are.
- Mr Parker Then you can't think of any friendly means.
- Job No Sir, I've received a notice to gie up t'machine or tak' the consequences, and we all know what t'consequences is. I'm prepared to bide 'em, but I can't ask you to put yourself i' peril. Mary Anne's not over nice. She gives you a gentle nip at first as a reminder – but when she hugs you close a boa constrictor's but a joke to her.
- Mr Parker And yet Job, you are inclined to risk the hug. What do you think Jack?
- Summers I think Job's quite right.
- A voice Mr Brumley Sir.
- Mr Parker Shew him in. Job, if you'll step up again in a quarter of an hour I'll give you my decision.
- (Enter Brumley)
- Brumley Good morning, Gentlemen. Good morning, Job. You can stop and hear what I'm going to say to Mr Parker. I'm delegated by the Union Sir, to call upon you. They've come to the conclusion that this machine invented by Job Langton is hurtful to their interests. They make many sacrifices to keep their trade together, and they call upon their fellow workman Job –
- Job Who's made as many sacrifices as the best on'em.
- Brumley To do his part and –
- Job Give up my machine – but I shan't do it William.
- Brumley Very well Job. It lies wi' thee my lad.
- Job It doesn't altogether lie wi' me.
- Brumley Under these circumstances, I'm delegated –
- Job We know what delegated means. Come to the point at once.
- Brumley Keep thy temper Job, or else leave the room. I'm speaking now to Mr Parker. Since Job's obstinate the Union calls on you Sir, to give up the

use of this machine, or else your men, however sorry they may be, in their own interests will feel compelled –

Mr Parker To strike – although their wives and children –

Brumley They'll take their chance of that Sir –

Summers Mr Brumley, I take it you're a sensible man being of such mark among the Unions. Did it never strike you that Locomotives and Electric Telegraphs were but an incubus on labour, and should be done away with; or that our English farmers have just cause of complaint and would be justified in burning all the stores of foreign corn in all our seaports, in sinking trading vessels. By the bye, what are your politics?

Brumley I'm a liberal.

Summers And a freetrader.

Brumley Yes Sir, but this is from the question.

Summers Not at all. You'd have all trades free but the Sheffield trades.

Brumley All the Unions want is to protect the workman's interest. They want no knobsticks¹⁷ – no treason among themselves – They fight their battles fairly and openly.

Summers Oh! Mary Anne is very open in her dealings.

Brumley Well. You see, Mary Anne's a secret institution, the less she's meddled with the better. We've our Rules and we abide by them, as you do by the laws. Where there's capital punishment Calcraft's a necessity.¹⁸

Summers As Mary Anne is of the Unions Eh!

Brumley Nay, Sir, don't put words in my mouth I didn't say. I don't come to argue whether the Union's right or wrong, I'm not obliged to give our reasons. They've been well studied in Committee. We think we are right and since Job's obstinate, we, as a body, reluctantly call on you to discharge him.

Mr Parker And if I refuse –

Brumley I hope you won't Sir, as you know the consequences.

Summers You threaten -

Brumley No. I only give you a friendly warning. Job and I are friends, old friends – and I'm very sorry –

¹⁷ The original meaning of 'knobstick' is 'a stick, cane, or club, having a rounded knob for its head', but in industrial relations it came to mean 'one who during a strike or lock-out continues to work on the master's terms; a black-leg'. OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/104084 [accessed 13 May 2013].

¹⁸ William Calcraft 'was the most famous hangman of the century, and held his post for forty-five years'. G. C. Boase, 'Calcraft, William (1800-1879)', rev. J. Gilliland, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4363> [accessed 13 May 2013].

- Mr Parker So am I – so sorry that I don't intend to part with him. Job seems inclined to risk even Mary Anne's displeasure, so I shall risk it too.
- Brumley Mr Parker, in a friendly way, I'd have you think a little more.
- Summers My uncle has been thinking Mr Brumley, ever since he received your letter and he's determined. You refuse to give your reasons, I'm less reticent and will give you ours. My uncle does not wish to drive the saw trade from the town. By yielding to your wishes we should do so. If Job took his invention to America, or France, or Belgium, he'd make his fortune. The age is progressive. Inquisitions are abolished – always excepting Mary Anne. And you may as well try to sweep back the ocean as to stop progression. You as a man of sense must know this, and since Job prefers to stay here in his native town, and give us the benefit of his skill we intend to find him full employment, and what's more protect him, and mark me Mr Brumley, and I too speak it as a friendly warning – If any harm come to Job Langton or my uncle, I shall hold you accountable and by –
- Brumley Who threatens now Sir?
- Mr Parker Jack, be cool.
- Brumley I can excuse him Sir. He's young and rash. Mr Brumley's character will stand a closer scrutiny than he'll find time for. Am I to receive this as final Mr Parker?
- Mr Parker You are.
- Brumley I'm very sorry. Good morning Gentlemen. (Exit Brumley)
- Mr Parker Well Job. I think that I was pretty firm.
- Job I'm much obliged I'm sure Sir. For William's very dangerous when he's too friendly.
- Summers Then you think he's at the bottom of the outrages which have disgraced...
- Job Nay Sir, I don't say that. I only say that William there's as deep as the North Sea. I'll tell you what Sir. After next week, I'll give up my wheel here.
- Mr Parker What! After we've offered to protect you.
- Job You didn't hear me out Sir. It's for your sake not mine. I can get power in [blank] Wood,¹⁹ and if there should happen to be a blow up –
- Mr Parker You are a good fellow Job. But you take all the risk.
- Job You take your risk o't strike Sir. I'll work as usual for't week out. Maybe they'll come to reason.
- Mr P I doubt it Job. I cannot understand these Unions.

¹⁹ It seems somewhat strange that the name of the Wood (likely to be Endcliffe) is blanked out here, particularly given that all other local place names are given.

Job Oh, they're pretty good i'many things, but they're not perfect. William's not a bad sort in his way – but he'll stick at nowt where t'union is concerned. But I'm keeping you fro' better work, and keeping mysen' fro' mine. Good morning Sir – Good morning. (Exit Job)

Mr Parker Good morning Job. – As good and simple hearted a workman as ever broke bread. Where are all the letters. Come, we must make up for lost time.

(As they are busy reading, scene closes)

Act 1
Scene 4 A Room in the Milton Arms

(Brumley enters)

Brumley I'm very sorry Job's so obstinate. I shouldn't like any harm to come to him. But I must do my duty. The Union before all things is my motto. If Parker's men come out on strike – trade's not been over brisk and the Union funds are only low. We'll discuss it in Committee on Monday night. Meantime I'll give Job a small reminder how dangerous it is to go against us. Daft Jim's just the lad I want. I wonder if he is in the Tap Room. Jim Myers. (Enter Daft Jim)

Jim All right Guv'nor. Simon says Wiggle Waggle.

Brumley Jim. Here's half a sovereign.

Jim Fro' Mary Anne. Ho! Simon says Thumbs up. Daft Jim's the lad. Who is it Guv'nor? Is it a blow-up?

Brumley Hush! No. Only a band or two. It must be done tonight. Most likely the place is watched, but you are pretty sly. I needn't teach you how to act.

Jim Oh, trust Daft Jim for that. Not so daft but he knows sixpence from bits of gold. Where is it Guv'nor?

Brumley The Union Wheel. The lefthand window facing to the river will be unfastened. You can climb Jim?

Jim Like a cat.

Brumley Once in. You know Job Langton's wheel.

Jim Job Langton? Is it him 'at I'm to ratten – Here (offers back money). I dursn't do it.

Brumley Dursn't?

Jim No. She wouldn't let me.

Brumley She! Why you've not fallen in love wi' Mary Langton!

Jim Pretty Mary! No, it isn't her as stops me –

Brumley Who then? Your mother's dead

- Jim Ay. That's it. For Job wor good to her and she oft talks to me about him. I durstn't go agen the dead. No. Not for t'Union. Her white face 'ud scare me. No. I dursn't do it. Simon says Thumbs down, and I must keep 'em down.
- Brumley He trembles like a leaf. It's no use urging him. He'd only bungle. Mind, no blabbing Jim. Remember your oath. The Union has long arms.
- Jim Ay she has. When Simon says Thumbs up. No fear o'me.
- Brumley You can keep the money. Run over to Ted Saunders and say I want him.
- Jim He's in't tap room. He's a rank bad 'un he is.
- Brumley I don't think much of him, but he's useful sometimes. Send him to me, and remember mum's the word.
- Jim Oh! Ay. Simon says so.
- (Exit Jim and enter Ted Saunders)
- Brumley Ted, come up into my room. I want thee lad, to do a job for us at'Union Wheel.
- Saunders Job Langton – Eh!
- Brumley Thou'st hit it
- Saunders I'll do it. Is it to blow him up?
- Brumley Hush! No. I want his bands.
- Saunders Is that all?
- Brumley You owe him no good will. I remember he turned thee out of his house.
- Saunders Yes, I owe him one, and I should like to pay it. And for that matter, Mr Thomson too. He's a fine man. Well every cock to his own dunghill. I shall get a chance.
- Brumley Well, never mind that now. I only want his bands. Come up into my room. I'll tell thee how to act.
- Saunders All right Governor. I wish you wanted summat else. Maybe you will some day, and when you do, you may know for sartain Ted Saunders is your man. (Exeunt)

Act 1

Scene 5 The Exterior of the Union Wheel

Enter Paul and Susannah Simpson.

Susannah Well, Mr Paul. I must say, though you are a Gentleman's man, you're not much of a Lady's. When Joe Stammers or even Jenkins the Policeman takes me out he does it tip top. Supper at Raby's, and something short at the Strong Arms.

Paul Joe Stammers – Jenkins. How many more my Dear. Variety is charming. When I treat young Ladies it's not at Raby's nor Strong Arms.

Susannah You treat! You've come without your purse perhaps.

Paul Perhaps you're a genius. Your sarcasm completely overwhelms me and if I had not to meet Mr Alf at 12 precise – we'd go to Shapers, that's respectable.

Susannah Mr Alf. He knows a thing or two.

Paul Rather! By Jove, that's 12. I must go now. One kiss.

(Enter Jenkins)

Jenkins Come – come – move on.

Susannah Jenkins – as I'm a sinner.

Jenkins Susannah Simpson. I couldn't have believed it.

Paul Eh! Is this Stammers or is it Jenkins?

Jenkins Young man, it strikes me you are drunk. You'd best move on.

Susannah Yes, you know Mr Alfred's waiting.

Paul You don't mean –

Jenkins Exactly what she does mean. Come move on.

Paul But –

Jenkins No buts. Move on. I'll see the young woman home. It's suspicious lurking about the Wheel.

Paul But I say –

Jenkins Don't criminate yourself. Move on.

Paul Stop. I promised to take Susannah here to Shapers. Now you'll do just as well. Let me see if I've a shilling. Two plates of roast. You like roast, don't you?

Jenkins Rather. I see, Sir, you're as sober as a judge.

Paul Rather. Two plates of greens. Do you like greens?

Jenkins Ask Susannah.

Paul Then take all you see here – Oh Susannah, don't you cry for me, I'm going to Mr Shaper's with Susannah on my knee.²⁰ (Exit Paul)

Jenkins Upon my word – if public officers – I've a good mind –

Susannah To go to Shaper's – and you shall – See I've a shilling...

Jenkins But I'd forgot. I mustn't leave the beat. I was told to keep a sharp look out upon the Union Wheel.

Susannah Oh it's safe enough. It won't move till you come back I warrant. Come or they'll be shut.

Jenkins I never could withstand a petticoat. (Exeunt)

(Daft Jim enters)

Jim No, nor a hot supper my blue bottle. Ugh. Simon says wiggle waggle. There they go, and the Wheel's left here to look after itself. Eh! How my poor head whirls. It's been whirling round all night. Th'Union pulls me that way – Mother this. Th'Union says Thumbs up and mother says Thumbs down. Th'Union's got long arms, but th'dead's got longer. They reach down from the sky. She'd never come and talk to me no more, if aught should happen to Job. I might as well do'en as Ted Saunders. I dursn't tell. I'm sworn and if I worn't, I wouldn't blab again t'Union. But I might prove a match for Master Edward. There's t'window. I've a good mind – I've got my little pop gun – and t'stars wink at me to say, all's right. Gad. Here goes. I'll do't. Simon says Wiggle Waggle.
(Exit through window)

(Enter Ted Saunders)

Saunders I met t'bobby wi' a lass. I'll scroam thro't window while t'moon's behind a cloud. I'd like to leave my mark behind me Mr Job, wi' your fine daughter. She were too good for me. I'll fit thee out. Only let the Guv'nor gi' a hint – thou'lt see. Here's a willin' pair o' hands to do thee any mischief. Th'window's unfastened. T'Governor's a rum un. He mak's all easy for us. (Exit through window)

²⁰ Paul is quoting from a 'Negro Melody', 'Oh" Susannah, don't you cry for me', and the chorus usually continues with, 'I'm bound for Louisiana with my banjo on my knee'. S. C. Foster, arranged by H. Pell (London: H. White, 1854).

Act 1

Scene 6 The interior of the Union Wheel. Daft Jim discovered. Lime light playing through window.

Jim St. st. rats. ugh. (kicks something) What's that? Blest if it ain't a rat-trap. Eh! But t'cat had liken to been caught and if it had wouldn't Simon have said Wiggle waggle. I'll put it agen t'bands. There's a rat coming 'at may take a fancy to 'em. It's a new sort o'bait to catch rats wi'. They say there's nowt like leather. How t'moon shines! Mother's coming now to talk to me. (Stage dark) Eh! She's gone. I wonder if she's angry. What's that? A rat upo' two legs. Ted Saunders I'll be sworn. Ugh. Simon says 'Thumbs down' (Hides)

(Enter Saunders through window with Lantern)

Saunders Here we are, and none the worse. Let's see, there's t'wheel. I'd like to leave him t'bands and put a bit o'powder in his trough.

Jim I'd like to put a bit i'thy trough, thou damned Rascal but, thumbs down.

Saunders I will, some day. They're sure to think it's t'Union. What's that? T'rats – st. st. (Goes towards the stone)

(Jim sneezes) What the Devil's that? (Puts down light) that worn't a rat. (Jim mews like a cat)

Saunders Oh it's a damned cat. Puss. Puss. Puss. There's a foot outside. I mun keep t'light down. Here's t'bands. There's t'moon again. I mun look sharp. Here goes. Damnation.

Jim (Laughs)

Saunders I'm in a trap.

Jim It's caught a rat. Simon says Wiggle waggle.

Saunders I'm watched. Damn the thing! They mun look sharp to catch me.

(Rushes to window and scrambles through)

Jim Simon says Thumbs up. (Fires) (A splash heard). Ted, lad. Thou'rt warm behind. Thumbs up. Thumbs down. Simon says Wiggle waggle.

(Picture & curtain)

The Union Wheel

An Original Drama in 3 Acts

Act 2nd

Scene 1st Committee Room in the Milton Arms

Harry Thomson, William Brumley, James Guite, Thomas Earnshaw, Henry Leslie and another discovered

[During the following speeches, the dialogue in brackets is clearly intended to be spoken by the other men on stage, to create the atmosphere of a lively meeting.]

Earnshaw At a meeting of the Trades in March last, it was resolved that a Select Committee shall be formed, to enquire into the causes that had led to a rupture between the Saw Grinders Union and Mr Parker, Sons & Company, they, the said Saw Grinders, refusing to acknowledge Parker's right, to introduce machinery, without the full consent of the said trades. In accordance with that resolution the above Select Committee commissioned William Brumley to call on Mr Parker and Job Langton, the inventor of the said machine. The interview not proving satisfactory, we now have to resolve what future means can be decided on, to bring things to a speedy settlement. (Hear, Hear!) Before sitting down I've one or two remarks to make, which I'll make as brief as may be, for my motto is action not words. I needn't tell any here what a depression there has been in the saw trade for a long time past, and consequent on that very many hands have been short timed and, in fact, more than a few almost dependent on th'Union so that our funds are not as buoyant as we should like to see them. Under these circumstances I think the case before us is in a nutshell. They talk about infernal machines (of which I've no doubt all here have a horror) but to my mind the most infernal machine is that that cheapens labour and robs a working man of bread. For if, as Job Langton brags, he can do as much with it as four good pair o'hands I think it doesn't need much logic to prove that where one is now short handed or idle, we've only got to introduce machinery to multiply into four. Under these circumstances I move that every man in Parker's Wheel give notice, and that no saw grinder shall take employment, where this machine is used to cheapen labour. We may have a hard fight, but if we stick together, we shall conquer.

Harry Before that motion's seconded, I've one or two remarks to make, though I'm hardly in a position to speak out as I should do, knowing as you do the relations between me and Job Langton, who for thirty years and more has been respected, and by none more than those who are sitting round the table. I should have retired (No – No) only I knew I was placed on the Committee with the good intention that Job should have fair play. But has he? (Yes). Well, I hardly think so. Job's 56 years old, and for years and years he's been an honest member of this Union (Hear, Hear). For 14 years he has been at work inventing the machine that you complain of. He completes it – spends the savings of a life to get it patented – and when it's finished, we coolly go to him and say 'Job, it's very good, but it's a monster as will destroy our trade, so you may make the best of circumstances and destroy the monster. We coolly ask a man to sacrifice the savings of

a life. I wonder if Will Brumley would burn down the Milton Arms because they wanted to examine the books. (Question! – order!)

- Brumley I'd burn th'books – If need were, th'house itself – (Hear Hear)
- Harry Well, thou'rt not called on William. I hope there's nowt in the books to make that necessary. (Order). You think a workman's worthy of his hire (Hear). I think th'Inventor's worthy too. I'm for Free Trade, no sham free trade, but Free Trade pure and simple, and it's a poor trade we've got between our fingers, if a machine's to scare us – Why th'iron horse –
- Creswick Has driven every coachman off the road.
- Harry But where there were one coachman, we've 50 Engine Drivers and 50 stokers, and hackney coachmen are multiplied by dozens. Besides there's such a thing as th'public. The cheaper we make saws the better the market we shall find for them. There's other countries run us pretty hard, and depend on't we want a 2 or 3 men like Job to give us a fresh start. I'm no spokesman, and I've had my say. I may be wrong – I may be right, but I'm not afraid of this machine, and I'm not afraid o' finding work i' the owd town as long as health and strength shall last me. I've done.
- Brumley I'm sorry I should be obliged to differ from our friend Thomson. He says he's no spokesman, we all know he's good at work, and I'm inclined to think he's almost as good a spokesman as he is a workman. You'll say I'm hard to please, but I differ also from our friend Creswick's resolution. I admit that it's a natural sequence to some of his remarks – but not to all. When Masters feel themselves aggrieved or put on, what is the consequence? A lock out! When men feel so – a strike! That's all right, and the natural sequence is: feeling ourselves aggrieved or put on now, as far as Parker's is concerned, we strike. But as friend Thomson says, there's such a thing as the Public, and shut our Eyes to it as we may Public opinion's the best arbiter, and there's another thing we can't shut our eyes to. Public Opinion's in favour of machinery; and it may think in this case we are the aggressors. We don't think so – but there's another point to be considered, where I don't think Friend Creswick is quite as logical as usual. He says the Saw Trade's been depressed – it has – and that the Union funds are very low – we know it – well then, what is the natural sequence of such a state of things? - Is it a strike? I think not. I leave it to some one else to move such amendments as they shall think proper.
- Guite I perfectly agree with our friend Brumley, who, I will say, has always proved himself the staunch friend of the Unions (hear, hear) and I move as an amendment that this meeting be adjourned to Wednesday fortnight and that William Brumley shall, in the meantime have full power to act as he thinks best for the interests of the Union (Hear, Hear!)
- Harry I second that with pleasure –
- Creswick I'm sure you'll give me leave to withdraw my motion in favour of th'amendment, which is now the motion, and to add to it, that the sum of £10 be placed in William Brumley's hands for any purposes he may think proper to apply it to in this transaction (Hear Hear).

Leslie I second it.

Creswick Signify in the usual manner. Carried: nem: con: I move as a last resolution that the best thanks of this meeting be given to William Brumley (Hear, hear, hear). That needs no seconding, so we'll adjourn to the Bar-parlour.

Harry I'm much obliged to you Brumley, for throwing oil on troubled waters. You'll join us.

Brumley Yes, directly – I'll just make up my books. – (Exeunt all but Brumley, who puts away books, unlocks a small sliding shelf and whistles, Ted Saunders shows his head)

Saunders Well, Governor, am I wanted?

Brumley Yes.

Saunders Job Langton?

Brumley Yes.

Saunders Is it a blow up?

Brumley Hush! Yes.

Saunders Where? l'Endcliffe Wood?

Brumley Yes, his machine's there. Mind! He's not to be hurt.

Saunders He mun take his chance I reckon.

Brumley No blood, mind –

Saunders We can't help accidents. You're cool.

Brumley Because I but perform a simple duty. I've no spite against him.

Saunders But I have –

Brumley Here's two sovs. for the bands you didn't get.

Saunders But I got summat else. Damn him. I'll be even. Two can play wi' powder.

Brumley Hush! Be careful this time. Good night.

Saunders Good night. Gov'nor.

[The stage direction reads: (**Broomhead** slides the shelf and Exit)]

Act 2**Scene 2 The Garden at the Elms. Enter Jack Summers.**

Summers It's deuced hard, when a fellow's in good quarters, he can't enjoy them. I'm happy and unhappy – happy when with Edith – unhappy in her absence – unhappy when with Edith - and happy in her absence. I don't know how I feel, but I know the sooner I quit Sheffield, the better for all parties, for I'd pluck my heart out rather than prove ungrateful to my Uncle. Here he comes, I couldn't have a better time to break it to him.

(Enter Mr Parker.)

Mr Parker Well, Jack, horticultural? I've been watching you from the Library window, looking at nothing in particular, & wondering if you could be in love, but you've no time for love-making. You really ought to give yourself a little leisure Jack. Edith's plaguing me to take her to the Theatre – Will you go?

Summers Uncle!

Mr Parker Well, lad, go on! Thou'st generally the gift o't'gab, what's amiss? Aren't you well? Shall I send for?

Summers No, I'm well enough, but what I'm going to say I know will surprise you.

Mr Parker What is it lad, the Union?

Summers No, quite different, a separation – I've made my mind up to leave Sheffield.

Mr Parker To do what? Why the lad's mad.

Summers I should be if I stayed.

Mr Parker You've not been bitten, have you Jack?²¹

Summers Uncle, I'll speak the truth – the honest truth. I can't do less to you, for since my mother –

Mr Parker Never mind that – come to the point lad.

Summers My cousin Edith – I know it's been the dearest wish you have that Alfred –

Mr Parker Ugh! I guess what's coming.

Summers I'm glad of it. You'll make my task more easy. I've been thrown in Edith's company. To know her is to love her, and it's this fight between my duty and my love which makes me wretched. I've tried to force it from me, but I can't – for Uncle, love's like grass. Sunshine

²¹ Incidences of rabies were fairly common at this time, and could easily be transmitted from dogs to humans by a bite from an infected animal; Mr. Parker's question alludes to this possibility. Several cases of 'hydrophobia' or rabies, were reported in the *Sheffield Independent* on 25 January 1870; and the number of recent deaths from the disease was described as 'distressing', *Sheffield Independent*, 13 May 1870.

may wither it, but water it with tears – trample on it, it only grows the stronger –

Mr Parker Perhaps you're right – perhaps you're right lad.

Summers I'm sure I am – and you'll consent –

Mr Parker Don't be in a hurry. Does Edith know?

Summers Nor ever will from me. Don't think so meanly of me. I'm not ungrateful.

Mr Parker Yes, you are – You are ungrateful, to want to leave me. Silence! When my sister Lucy died, she sent for me and asked me to provide for her poor little orphan – I promised –

Summers And nobly –

Mr Parker Don't interrupt me Sir, I was not very rich then, but with you, it seemed as if I'd brought a blessing to my house. Every day, every week – month, year, you twined yourself about me as much as my own son – and today –

Summers Uncle!

Mr Parker Today, you prove your gratitude, your honesty, by breaking my old heart, and being the cruellest, dearest, most upright, best principled young scoundrel, but you shan't go. It's very true my dearest wish was – but what you say's as true. Sunshine may wither love. And Mr Alfred seems of late to have had too much sun. I'll speak to Eddy.

Summers My uncle!

Mr Parker Don't look hypocritical. Men don't die of joy – nor sorrow neither. We leave broken hearts to women. We've enough to do with broken heads, especially when we're antagonistic to the Union. There – go and leave me to myself a bit.

Summers You are not angry Uncle?

Mr Parker (Shaking him by the hand) Angry! Bless the lad! I'm proud, Jack, proud! There. Go! And with thee goes an honest, truthful, manly Englishman. (Exit Jack Summers) and I only wish I could say as much of my own son. Here he comes, and not too sober – early as it is – Well Sir. (Alfred enters). Your cousin Edith has been waiting for you to take her to the Theatre.

Alfred What! To see Richelieu – Not if I know it. One goes there to be amused. We can read Shakespeare in our closets.

Mr Parker And very much you read him, if one may judge from your acquaintance with his plays – Shakespeare write *Richelieu!*

Alfred And why not?

Mr Parker Don't expose yourself. Don't you think he wrote 'Sir Robert Peel' or 'Queen Victoria'? I've no patience. Your cousin wishes, as I said, to go. I'm engaged on public business.

- Alfred And I on private – so Eddy must postpone her visit.
- Mr Parker No Sir, she shall not.
- Alfred But I'm engaged –
- Mr Parker Engaged. Mr Summers will find time.
- Alfred Oh! I'd forgotten Jack – the pattern boy – the young man ticketed as sample goods – he's just the ticket. It will improve his mind –
- Mr Parker It might improve your manners, which sadly smack of Vance and Champagne Charley. But enough of this. Listen Sir, to what I'm going to say –
- Alfred Of course, the usual lecture. Shall we sit down Sir?
- Mr Parker No, Sir. I'm in a hurry.
- Alfred And so am I. You can postpone it, can't you?
- Mr Parker No. Sir, I can't. You are insolent and drunk Sir. I had intended that Edith Grayson should be your wife.
- Alfred Oh, time enough for that.
- Mr Parker No, Sir, there isn't time enough -
- Alfred Why, dad, would you be proud to have a grand-son.
- Mr Parker Certainly not, Sir, if he resembled you. I've changed my plans. Edith shall remain as she now is – my niece.
- Alfred And die an old maid – all forlorn. Poor Eddy!
- Mr Parker No, not exactly that.
- Alfred You talk, Dad, like the Sphinx, and are quite as hard to comprehend. And as I've no time to solve your riddles, Good bye. (Exit)
- Mr Parker A heartless coxcomb. He shan't have her – no – Edith shall remain my niece and Jack, he shan't leave England. There I go, talking as if the Book of Fate were all at my disposal. We wiseacres form plans – what are they? Clouds – Castles in the air – the slightest breath puffs them away. They say that marriages are made in Heaven – but when we dull old fools meddle too much, they seem to be fashioned in the other place. There is an old proverb, Man proposes, but God disposes. It's true – it's very true.²² (Exit)

²² This quotation is a translation from a work of devotion by Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471). John Wesley was an early translator of his work, and his version reads: 'The purpose of just men depends not so much upon their own wisdom as upon the grace of God, on whom they always rely in whatsoever they take in hand. For man doth purpose, but God doth dispose, neither is the way of man in himself'. *An extract of the Christian's pattern: or, a treatise on the imitation of Christ*. Written in Latin by Thomas à Kempis, abridged and published in English by John Wesley M.A. (London: 1800). Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Gale, University of Sheffield, 10 November 2012.

Act 2

Scene 3 A Room in the Milton Arms

Enter Mr Alfred and Susannah.

Alfred Can I see Mr Brumley?

Susannah Yes, Sir, I'll send him to you.

Alfred Thank you, what's your name?

Susannah Susannah Simpson, at your service Sir.

Alfred Susannah Simpson, a very pretty name, a romantic name, just the sort of thing for a 3 Vol Novel, and do you know Susannah, you're a deuced pretty girl?

Susannah Yes Sir, I've been told so.

Alfred Well, it's true. Your lips remind me of a pair of cherries. I'm deuced fond of cherries. And what's more, I like to pick them off the tree. (Kisses her) Bring me a glass of brandy and water.

Susannah Yes Sir. What a nice, civil spoken gent he is (Bus & Exit)

Alfred I'll sound him, for I'm pretty sure he's had a hand in all the outrages. Why do they go to him for bands when they are lost? It's the Unions that gain all by their establishing a reign of terror.

(Enter Brumley, to whom) Ha! How are you, Brumley?

Brumley Mr Parker, you are the last person I thought of seeing. I hope your father has come to see things in a different light.

Alfred I don't come from him. My business is private.

Brumley Private, Sir!

Alfred And yet in its results it may be public. Mr Brumley, I believe I'm right in saying you have the good of the Unions very much at heart.

Brumley You are Sir, quite right.

Alfred And have come to the conclusion that the Machine invented by Job Langton is detrimental to the interests of working men.

Brumley Yes, we are unanimous on that point.

Alfred Well – we'll speak now of my business. Job Langton has a daughter.

Brumley He has, and a very pretty girl she is.

Alfred I think so, and in fact I have such a liking for her –

Brumley She's engaged to Harry Thomson.

Alfred So she tells me. That's of no consequence. Of course I couldn't think of making her my wife.

- Brumley Really, Sir, I don't see what I have to do with this.
- Alfred You will soon. I believe you waited on my father and Job Langton to desire that this machine should be destroyed, or, say, disused –
- Brumley I can't catch your drift. What's Mary got to do with the machine?
- Alfred Much! If Job Langton were to lose his daughter. I beg your pardon. Will you take a glass of wine with me?
- Brumley Not yet, Sir, thank you.
- Alfred I'm going to be outspoken, Mr Brumley. It's my opinion that you've had a chief hand in all the outrages which have taken place in Sheffield for a dozen years or more –
- Brumley Mr Parker, you're a bolder man than one would give you credit for from your looks, to tell me this in my own house –
- Alfred Oh! I don't speak it as a reproach, I dare say you simply do your duty and in your place, very likely, I should do the same. But *revenons à nos moutons*;²³ if Job Langton lost his daughter, 'twould almost break his heart, he'd think no more of his machine than you would, and as for Parker, Son & Co, I'll guarantee to help you in that quarter.
- Brumley Never mind beating about the bush. You begin by telling me I'm a scoundrel, that I'm a rattener, that I've shot a man, blown up a house or two – don't trouble to excuse yourself, what I want to know is, how does all this affect Job Langton's daughter?
- Alfred Don't you see? You're a man of intelligence –
- Brumley My intelligence is either too small or too great to dive into your thoughts. Plain speaking suits me best. Use that, and we may come to terms.
- Alfred Now you talk reasonable. I love Mary Langton. If by your assistance she could be waylaid and forced –
- Brumley Exactly. I understand you now, if, as you say, she could be waylaid and forced into the arms of a seducer and a libertine –
- Alfred Mr Brumley -
- Brumley Why, what do you take me for?
- Alfred A man of the world.
- Brumley You take me for a villain, ripe for anything, even the dirty work of Mr Alfred Parker. You've come to the wrong shop. Why, were I what you think me, nay, if what were worse, the world had branded me as such, in my lowest degradation I'd still have man enough²⁴ to spit upon a scoundrel who could act as you do. Leave the house! –

²³ The literal translation of this French phrase is 'let us get back to our sheep', but it is used to convey the meaning of 'let us return to the matter in hand'.
OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/164729 [accessed 13 May 2013].

²⁴ See note about this phrase in footnote 12.

- Alfred I beg your pardon. I have paid for this, and I shall stop & drink it –
- Brumley Very well, then I'll leave you.
- Alfred I'm very sorry. Your company's a treat.
- Brumley Don't rouse me, I'll have that chair burnt when you're done sitting in it.
- Alfred Oh, with pleasure, so I'm not in it. Rouse! I think I have done. I didn't think so cool a card could give out so much heat.
- Brumley I'll warn Job Langton –
- Alfred To be sure you will, and be as virtuous as the heroine in a three-act melodrama. Why Brumley, I thought you had more sense. Didn't you see it was a joke? Ha! Ha! Ha! Jack Summers bet me odds there was no villainy I could propose would benefit the Union that you would not agree to. Jack's lost. He'll be astonished.
- Brumley At your impudence! As I am, Mr Parker. Mr Summers is a Gentleman, however much he may be opposed to me. You are not. Good night. (Exit)
- Alfred He's got the odd trick and honours are divided.

(Ted Saunders taps at the window and opens it.)

Who the deuce are you?
- Saunders Meet me in half an hour by the Union Wheel.
- Alfred You've heard.
- Saunders Yes! Hush! Not a word to William, I'm your man – You'll come?
- Alfred Yes – (Exit Saunders). Is it a trap? No, he's just the man, and a £5 note won't be badly spent in the transaction. Damn Mr Brumley. He'll burn the chair! I'm philosophical and will burn nothing, but a fresh cigar. (Exit)

Act 2
Scene 4 Exterior of the Union Wheel

Enter Daft Jim.

- Jim Here's the'wheel. I wonder what they call't the'Union for – when it's agen t'Union. I like to come and look at it and watch it for she comes here and talks to me more than ever sin' that night I warned Ted Saunders. I wonder how he feels behind. It wor' but dust shot, but it'ud smart I reckon, and didn't he look smart when he wor peppered. I'll bet he hasn't sat much, now he'll not want drawers to keep him warm. Why, I'm blessed, if yon's not him. Is he going to try again? Eh, Simon says Thumbs up. Ugh! There's young Parker wi'im. What's up I wonder? They're hatching summat. Thumbs down Simon. (Hides)

Enter Ted Saunders and Alfred

Alfred I can depend upon you.

Saunders Rather. Th'chink o'these maks me gam' for owt. She goes thro't wood to tak' his supper, for he watches th'Wheel. He may watch. If you can 'tice her, we'll have the trap ready, and I shan't heed her squealing. I'll mak' all square. But where's t'place we are to take her to?

Alfred You shall know that tomorrow.

Saunders That'll do, but we'd best not be seen together much. You didn't know much o'William to come to him. Why, bless you, he's a chary o'his character as we are. Mr Harry Thomson will have a spoke in his wheel. I worn't good enough for her. I'll kill two birds wi' one stone. Come Sir, we'll just see Paul and make all right. (Exeunt)

(Jim reappears)

Jim They've put me all over in a sweat. I mun do summat. I mun find Harry Thomson, he doesn't think that I'm so daft. He knows I've sense enough to speak t'truth & he's often told me it's only thieves and liars 'at is daft. Simon says Thumbs up. Thou wert warm i't trap, but thou'llt be hot when th'terrier gets hold. Egad, thou'llt wiggle waggle. Mr Parker. Mr with Esquire. He caned me. He mun tak'care that he's not caned hissen'. Simon says Thumbs up. Gad I'll wiggle-waggle. (Exit)

Act 2

Scene 5 A room in Job Langton's house

Job and Mary discovered.

Job There, thou'rt getting t'marriage dress all ready & Harry I'll warrant is as busy, thinking more o'Monday fortnight than o'his work.

Mary It's only once in a lifetime you know father.

Job Only once! Yea, lass, it's sometimes two or three times. Widows are the very deuce for getting married. 'Gad I know there's more o'them get married than owt else.

Mary Ha! Ha! How stupid of you father.

Job Eh! Why so?

Mary They must be married before they're widows.

Job I'd forgotten that.

Mary And surely all widows don't get married.

Job Very near. They're like moths, when they've burnt their wings, they can't keep off t'candle.

Mary It can't burn them much, for they say a burnt child dreads the fire.

Job I don't think thou'll be burnt. Harry's a good lad, just the sort that I'd ha' picked mysen'

- Mary But he's a Unionist.
- Job He's none the worse for that. I've been a Unionist for 30 years.
(Harry enters and places his hands before Mary's eyes)
- Mary Now father, don't be tiresome, I've so much to do.
- Job I mun' ha' forfeit.
- Mary Well, take it and have done. (Harry kisses her) Oh! It's you! I'm sure you've plenty of assurance Harry Thomson.
- Harry Hallo! What's this under the door?
- Mary Some new bookshop I suppose, that's opened in the neighbourhood.
- Harry It's something of the sort. 'Night Thoughts or Death and Pleasure'.
- Job Why, it's a sermon.
- Harry Not exactly. 'The bugs! The Bugs!! They shall die and ere long be extinct. To obtain a good night's rest is to destroy these disgusting insects, the Bugs, and the only remedy to cleanse a house of them, is by using Hunt's Bug Specific, the only acknowledged and efficacious destroyer in the market. Sold!'
- Job Thank goodness we've no vermin.
- Harry There's something here written 'tween the lines, makes it read rather different. Why it's a threatening letter. "Night Thoughts. Job's death will give us pleasure. Both him and his machine shall die and ere long be extinct. For workmen to obtain good work in Sheffield they must destroy 'em and the only remedy to cleanse the town of them is by using gunpowder, the only acknowledged and efficacious destroyer."
- Mary Father! Harry!
- Job Don't tremble lass.
- Mary They are sure to do it.
- Job Who can ha' sent it?
- Harry Some damned coward. I only wish I had him i'my grip. I'll come and live here, till we're married, Mary. Then, Job can live wi'us.
- Job My lad, what's th'use? One's enough to be killed or maimed for life. But I'll tell thee what lad. Mary shall go and live wi' Mr Parker. He offered t'other day to take her as a sort of companion to Miss Grayson.
- Mary And leave you father. Never! We've lived together and scarcely ever known a moment's sorrow. If danger comes, we'll share it. Let these cowards who plot against your livelihood have the additional satisfaction of blowing up an old man and a girl.

- Harry Thou'rt a brave lass, but I'll tell thee what. We'll be married by special license the day after tomorrow. You and your father shall come and live wi'me. They know I'm a good unionist and won't dare to try their tricks.
- Job Yea, lad, they will. I have been a good Unionist, and am one still in most points. But men 'at can send this'll stick at nowt. I should only get thee into trouble lad.
- Mary Harry Thomson, If I'd never loved you before – I should now, and I love you too much to drag you into trouble; nor will I trespass on Mr Parker. My duty's here with him. I had promised to be your wife on Monday fortnight, but now I put my wedding dress aside till happier times. Till my father's safe, I must be his companion. He claims me altogether, and I'll not shirk the responsibility.
- Job
and Harry Mary!
- Mary I'm but a woman, but if they harm him –
- Job Nay, nay, it's only mischief. I mun go to th'Wheel. Harry, lad, persuade her into reason. She's a good dear lass, but she's as obstinate –
- Harry As you are Job, or you'd gie up the machine for her sake.
- Mary Not if all Sheffield came to ask him he shouldn't Harry Thomson. For her sake – Why, for her sake!! He's worked when other men have been asleep; for her sake he's grown old almost before his time. I've seen him when he's little thought I have been watching for hours and hours, toiling, inventing – robbing himself of sleep and of little comforts, and when worn out and almost fit to drop from sheer fatigue, he'd come to my bedside, thinking I was asleep, as I pretended, to make him happier, he'd kiss me as he said "It's for thee darling" till at last it grew to shape, and we watched over it, like a son and brother, and yet you Harry Thomson can say now, 'for her sake give it up'. If he does, I'll give him up and you, and stick to the machine in spite of all the Unions or Masters in the town.
- Harry Well, well, thou needn't get so warm. Since it is thy brother, I must watch over it as well. We three'll form a Union among ourselves. Come Job, I'm going thy way towards the wheel. Mary, wilt thou go?
- Job No, lad, let her get on wi' the dress. I'm not to have th'wedding put off for t'sake o' this. We should be the laughing stock o' all t'neighbours.
- Mary But father –
- Job There, there, we are not children. We don't think there's a bogey in every wall. Why, I declare, thou'rt as white as th'dress. Thou'llt bring my supper and see, as t'cellar grate's well fastened. There – (kissing her) Why Harry, thou doesn't mean to say as thou'rt going without one. Eh! Lors Eh! Lors! Young men aren't what they were i'my time. They didn't need telling then. (Harry kisses her.) There, thou see'st thou'st fetched t'roses back into her cheeks. Come, lad, thou'rt best doctor after all. (Exeunt)

Act 2
Scene 6 Endcliffe Wood

Enter Alfred Parker and Ted Saunders

Saunders She's just crossing over Fulwood Road. If she's as fond of you as you pretend – there'll be no need of violence. If not, 'tice her to the trap and we'll make all right. You have another sov. about you, have you?

Alfred No! I've kept my promise and given you £5. Wait till the job is finished. You are too greedy.

Saunders All right Gov'nor. I can wait. (Exit)

Alfred I don't like this fellow. It needs some nerve to trust oneself alone with him in such a place. Mary little thinks what trouble she has cost me. I must turn over a new leaf, or my respectable old parent, my senior partner will soon grow rusty; and I've got deucedly into debt of late, and Master Summers is trying to cut me out. Jack is good looking, but so am I for that matter, and Jack's a spoon. No woman worth her ears cares for your pattern men. They like a bit of devilry – all men are scoundrels, and their instincts tell them they who pretend to virtue are only hypocrites. Here's Mary. Pretty Mary!

(Enter Mary Langton)

Mary Mr Parker!

Alfred At your service, Mary.

Mary What are you doing here Sir?

Alfred Can't you guess? Mary, I hear you are to be married.

Mary Yes, Sir, it's true.

Alfred It almost broke my heart when I first heard it – I had hoped –

Mary But you are engaged you know Sir, to Miss Grayson.

Alfred Yes, but –

Mary It's much better so, Sir. Better to marry in our own station.

Alfred Of course it is. As you say Mary, when one thinks of it, it is much better. I promised you I'd speak for Job, and you see in spite of all the Unions he's kept in his employment.

M Thank you, Sir.

Alfred Don't you think a nice silk dress –

Mary No Sir, you'll make me proud. Dresses like this are more befitting a workman's wife or daughter.

Alfred Yes, but if I prefer –

- Mary Well, never mind Sir, I must not stop listening. It's dark.
- Alfred Nay, stay a moment. Why, you don't think I'd hurt you Mary?
- Mary No, Sir, only –
- Alfred Only what? If you'd consent to live with me –
- Mary With you Sir? You said just now it would be better for me to marry Harry Thomson.
- Alfred Exactly, so it would; but don't you see. You could marry him and -
- Mary Live with you? I understand you Mr Parker. Please to let me pass.
- Alfred Nay Mary.
- Mary I have been very foolish. But you have been as much deceived in me, as I have been in you. Harry told me what I might have known. But I am punished.
- Alfred Harry told you. Oh. Harry Thomson!
- Mary Yes; he does not wear kid gloves, nor patent boots, but he wears that about him which stamps him – what you are not – a Gentleman.
- Alfred A Gentleman!
- Mary His are the true credentials – an honest workman's hand, and honest workman's heart. He's offered them to me, and put you into the balance Sir, 'gainst them, with all the gold of Parker, Son & Co to weigh you down, you'd only be a feather in the scale, for cowardice is light.
- Alfred Cowardice!
- Mary What's that which insults women and strikes children?
- Alfred Really, one would imagine –
- Mary That I was virtuous. I haven't you to thank, Sir.
- Alfred If you are wise, you'll have a lot to thank me for. Fancy those fingers scrubbing floors, or burnishing spoons – perhaps stewing tripe and baking hot potatoes. Why Mary, I can give you...
- Mary Infamy! Go and ask Job Langton, what he thinks of your proposition.
- Alfred Why, of course -
- Mary He'd spit on you: as every honest man and woman should. Let me pass to him.
- Alfred Not yet.
- (Enter Harry Thomson.)
- Harry And why not Mr Parker? –

- Alfred Thomson! What are you about?
- Harry I scarcely know. I'm just considering.
- Alfred Considering? –
- Harry Yes! What I shall do with thee. Whether I shall chuck thee into the dam or not. I reckon thou can swim.
- Alfred Have a care.
- Harry Of what? Of thee? Here, strike me, why, thou dursn't. It's only women thou dares tackle. Among thy College tricks, didn't they teach thee muscular Christianity?²⁵
- Alfred That's right. Show off before Miss Langton.
- Harry I should like – shall I? I'll give thee all thy lessons from Tom Sayers.²⁶ Nay, I'll give thee Mary into the bargain, if thou'lt just stand before me for five minutes.
- Alfred Fight with a ruffian!
- Harry You are right. Cowards are ruffians, and when I think of it, it would be *infra dig*.²⁷ They say a man is known by the company he keeps, and if I'm seen in yours, I shan't find work for months and months to come.
- Alfred (Striking at him with his cane) Scoundrel! (Harry wards off the blow and knocks him down) You shall remember this.
- Mary Don't hurt him Harry. Mastiffs don't worry curs. One stroke with the paw and they pass on.
- Harry Thou'rt right lass. Come. Let it be a lesson & remember next time thou'lt not get off so easily. (Exeunt Harry & Mary)
- Alfred It shall be a lesson. Tomorrow, you shall leave your work. No, he shan't. He shall stop, and when he's married – Yes, I'll remember. If I don't serve you out for this night's work may I be – How the scoundrel has ruffled my cravat. Mr Harry Thomson, I owe you something, and I'll take care to pay my debts in full. (Exit)

²⁵ This phrase was popularly associated with the ideal of robust, religious character and Christian life supposedly expressed in the writings of Charles Kingsley, although the term is not his. OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/124042 [accessed 13 May 2013].

²⁶ J. P. Bean writes that 'Tom Sayers ...was...one of the great bareknuckle fighters. His later fight with the American Tom Heenan – styled as the first 'world championship' and for a £5,000 purse – would be the last gasp of a dying prize ring.' J. P. Bean, *Bold as a Lion: the Life of Bendigo – Champion of England* (Sheffield: D&D Publications, 2002).

²⁷ This is a colloquial abbreviation of a Latin phrase and means 'beneath one's dignity; unbecoming one's position; undignified'. OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/95617 [accessed 13 May 2013].

Act 2
Scene 7 Another part of the wood

Enter Daft Jim

Jim Simon said thumbs up, and down he went. Well done Harry. He wouldn't let me go, but I watched him from this tree. I'd like to give Ted Saunders just one turn. It's like setting a terrier pup to worry rats. I remember 'whistle, and I'll come to thee my lad'. Young Parker'll not whistle. He's whistled home, I think. I will (whistles). Here's Harry. There'll be some stirrings soon. (Enter Harry.)

Harry Jim!

Jim Hush! Wait a bit, where's Mary?

Harry At the wheel.

Jim Hast thou got a stick?

Harry No.

Jim Cut a good stiff'un.

Harry What for?

Jim Thou'll see. Thou'st nobbled t'weasel. Thou moant let t'rat get off.

Saunders (outside) Mr Parker.

Jim Here!

Saunders (entering) Is all right?

Harry (seizing him) Yes, all's right.

Saunders What art thou baun' to do?

Harry To give thee such a hiding, as'll last thee for thy life.

Saunders Take care: I'll ha' thee summoned.

Harry I'll give thee leave. I've got a bit o'brass i't' savings bank, and I'll spend some i'pleasure.

Saunders Let me go.

Harry Stand still, or I'll screw thy neck. I don't know what prevents me. It's no sin to rid the world of vermin. There's one or two for thee. (Beats him)

Jim Hit him behind, Harry. He's sore there. Ho! Ho! Simon says wiggle waggle.

Harry Now, thou'rt marked, and mind thou doesn't cross my path again. Come Jim, follow me to the Wheel. (Exit)

Jim All right! Simon says thumbs up, and didn't Edward wiggle-waggle. Here, Thumbs down. Simon says so. (Exit)

Saunders Thou's marked me, hast thou? and I'll mark thee. He's going to the Wheel, and I've got orders to blow it up. Fine Mr Thomson! Mind I don't blow thee up. Thou mun tak' thy chance. William will send me out o't country, if owt happens. He said no blood, but I can say it was an accident. I've got t'machine all ready. What wi t'shot, and what wi' t'stick, I'm pretty sore. Damn him. I'll be quits, if I be ta'en for it. (Exit)

Act 2

Scene 8 The Wheel and Dam in Endcliffe Wood

Enter Ted Saunders, with infernal machine

Saunders They're i'the'wheel, both Job and Thomson. I'll just light t'slow match, and then contrive to get it in. I'five minutes there'll be a blow up –'ll make more noise i'Sheffield when t'papers come out tomorrow morning, than it will here tonight. It's pretty dangerous Mr. Thomson, thrashing a man like me thou'lt find. I shall ha'time enough i'five minutes to be far enough out o't'way. Here goes. (He goes quietly, and put it into the Wheel, and as he's coming back meets Jim.)

Jim What art thou lurking here for?

Saunders Damn thee, thou's been watching. I owe thee one. Now tak'it. (Desperate, but short struggle. Jim trying to shout. Saunders prevents him, as Jim cries 'Murder', Saunders strikes him on the head with flask and he falls into the water. Exit Saunders.)

(Harry, Job and Mary rush on.)

Job What is it?

Harry There's nothing here –

Mary There's been a struggle and see there's poor Daft Jim.

Harry There's been foul play. (Dives in.)

(As he rises with Jim, the Wheel blows up, illuminating the whole scene.)

Job What's that?

Mary God's providence that we're not blown up into Eternity. Let us thank Him on our knees.

Job His name be praised.

Picture, Act Drop – End of Act the Second.

The Union Wheel

An Original Drama in 3 Acts

Act 3rd

Scene 1st The Garden at the Elms

Enter Jack Summers and Edith Grayson.

Summers Everything's arranged, and Harry Thomson's to marry Mary. Uncle is a Trojan. But for him, I should not have dared to address you as a lover.

Edith And two fond hearts would have been blighted by your reticence. But how am I to excuse myself to Cousin Alfred? I really have behaved most shamefully, and it's only that he's somewhat cosmopolitan in his attentions to our sex, that I can bring myself – to – instal you in his place.

Summers I'll instal him in mine, as Traveller to the firm – it will suit his cosmopolitan ideas. He wonders how you could prefer a spoon as he calls me to such a blade as he is.

Edith I thought that he might prove too sharp –

Summers And knowing that I was spooney –

Edith Don't talk slang – You know it's my abomination – I'm very glad that Mary Langton is my companion to the church tomorrow. That was a near escape at Endcliffe Wheel. Is there no suspicion who was the assassin?

Summers None to give a clue. Poor Jim has been suspected.

Edith What – Daft Jim as they call him. Why so?

Summers He's known to be a staunch Unionist, and it's thought by some he lighted the machine and threw it in the Wheel, and then, afraid of what he'd done attempted suicide.

Edith He is so harmless. I should suspect myself as soon. Does Harry Thomson think that it was him?

Summers No! Harry's suspicions lie altogether in another direction but we'll hope the Commission of Inquiry will investigate the matter thoroughly.

Edith Is Brumley implicated?

Summers I think not. I met him the morning after. He seemed horrified, denounced it in the most emphatic manner as diabolical, wrote to the papers and offered a reward for the discovery of –

Edith Do you think the Commission will do any good?

Summers It can't do any harm. In many cases now, masters and men look on each other as natural enemies.

Edith We'll hope...

- Summers ...that tomorrow will prove a glorious day. Happy is the bride that the sun shines on; and by all appearances he'll do his duty well.
- Edith Don't you think we were premature? The Commission may want you -
- Summers Oh! Cousin Alfred can take my place. It's but fair, I've taken his, you know.
- Edith Do they debate the legality of Unions?
- Summers No. They take evidence.
- Edith That's well, or Cousin Alfred might find some just cause or impediment against ours.
- Summers No. Cousins are exempt. The Church does not ban them. There'll be a famous crowd at the Church gates.
- Edith You'll pass through the small sieve.
- Summers And you'll be quizzed.
- Edith Miss Smith, Miss Brown, Miss Jones, Miss Robinson will all be there. Which Bridegroom is best dressed? The Workman, or the Gentleman? I really think the workman! He's more distingué. You'll have to mind your p's and q's. Uncle has given carte blanche for Harry Thomson's fit out, and he is just the lad to do it justice.
- Summers And then there'll be young Spooner and his set. Which is the prettiest bride? The Tall or Short? By Jove, both are stunning really I don't know which to envy most, that snob Summers or his friend the Grinder.
- (Enter Alfred Parker.)
- Alfred Bravo! Bravo! A few more lessons, and you'll be able to appear in public. Rehearsing for tomorrow? Arrange away. Don't mind me!
- Edith You'll accompany us to church?
- Alfred No! 'Pon my honor [sic], my feelings won't allow me, I've had serious thoughts of blowing up the Elms, and all that it contains, myself included, and laying it to the Union. Yours – of course. You can't imagine what a blow it is, and Mary Langton too, another girl they say that I was sweet on – to lose two sweethearts in a day. I must needs wear the willow. Ah, well-a-day, there's sunshine after rain, and the old gentleman, singular nominative hic parens a parent²⁸ has gilded the bitter pill I've had to swallow with as pretty a looking cheque as you are a girl – and that's saying a good deal – isn't it Jack?
- Summers Here comes poor Jim to offer his congratulations.

²⁸ It is not clear why Alfred uses a Latin phrase (meaning 'this parent by parent') at this juncture. He is making a comment on his treatment by his father, who has given him some money. Alfred seems to be satisfied with this compensation for losing his potential marriage partner, but as is later revealed, he is actually angry and bitter.

Alfred A paragon!²⁹ Is he to be your groomsman Jack?

Summers I might have one more envious –

Alfred Meaning me! No! No! I am not envious of curtain lectures.³⁰ Make the most Jack of your liberty. It finishes tomorrow. What? Going? I'll give you your cue how to spend your time.

They sat them down beneath a shady tree
 He on the ground, and she upon his knee –
 He held her there awhile – she gently ris³¹ –
 And whispered in his ear – her heart was his -
 He whispered back to her – Sweet, say no more.
 It's no use telling – what I knew before
 When he ris too, and oh, supremest bliss
 Their lips met and – exploded in a kiss –

Edith There's hope of you – you study poetry. We'll leave you to it – love rhymes to dove.

Summers And Mary to contrary.

Alfred And what does Edith Grayson rhyme to, Cousin?

Summers I'm no poet.

Alfred Exactly so, we know it. But her best part rhymes with Jack Summers, of course I mean her heart. (Exeunt Summers and Edith). If hearse would rhyme to curse, I'd curse my fill – I smile – but here there's gall and wormwood. Thank goodness the old man thinks I'm a sort of hero – to repress my feelings, and's given golden salve to heal my broken heart. (Daft Jim enters) Broken! Yes, one half belongs to Mr Summers, and one to Mr Thomson. What are you gaping at? Have you come to blow the Elms up as you did Langton's Wheel? Couldn't you try your hand at the Parish Church tomorrow? You'd do some good there! What do you want? Your swim in Endcliffe Dam seems to have washed away what bit of sense you had. Can't you speak?

Jim You've lost your sweetheart – but don't lose your temper.

Alfred Be off! How dare you?

Jim I dursn't.

Alfred Dursn't what?

Jim Wiggle waggle. I'll ask you a riddle. Which is worst, him as does owt bad, or him 'at pays for it bein' done? Whisht, whisht. Let me ask her.

²⁹ The handwriting in the manuscript is difficult to decipher, but 'paragon' seems to be the most likely word. Alfred hails Jim, rather sarcastically, as 'a person of outstanding merit'.

³⁰ These words are difficult to decipher. 'Curtain lecture' is defined as 'a reproof given by a wife to her husband in bed', so perhaps Alfred is making clear that he is relieved that he is not to be married, as he imagines Edith would have been critical of him. OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/46179 [accessed 13 May 2013].

³¹ Alfred uses 'ris' rather than the grammatically correct 'rose', so that the couplet rhymes, and he uses the word again in line 8.

Which is t'biggest scoundrel, young Parker or Joe Stammers³² – Here, Thumbs down.

(Mary enters – Jim screens himself.)

- Alfred Mary, don't shield him. He's insolent.
- Mary He's helpless. When you strike, strike those who can defend themselves. Beg Mr Parker's pardon, Jim.
- Jim What for? He's no friend o' thine.
- Mary Yes he is and Harry's. Yours too.
- Alfred Am I to put him in my list of friends?
- Mary Those who are bereft of sense, should find friends everywhere.
- Alfred Here! I won't hurt you. There's a sovereign.
- Mary Take it Jim.
- Jim Won't I? Jim's not daft. She tells him what to do. Have you seen her come and make the water shine. She always comes at night and Jim feels that he can walk on't water and lie down with her. Hark! How t'birds are singing, but Jim likes night best. She comes to him then. She says Thumbs down & Jim will keep them down. (Exit)
- Alfred Stop Mary. Say that you've forgiven me.
- Mary Here's Harry.
- (Enter Harry)
- Harry You needn't have run away Sir. I'm not jealous.
- Alfred Thank you. So you'll excuse my being polite to Mary.
- Harry Your father is a gentleman every inch. For his sake I'll try to think th'same o' his son. Besides you've excused my being rather unpolite to you.
- Alfred Rather unpolite! A very striking illustration. But there I was to blame and I'll not rest satisfied till I've repaid Mary for the outrage to her feelings and you Mr Thomson for the lesson you then gave me.
- Mary Mr Parker, this is noble.
- Harry Come Mary. I wonder how the Commissioners are going on. They are making 'em speak out. I shouldn't wonder something'll come out about the Wheel outrage.
- Mary It would be a good thing if Commissions of Inquiry were established in more cases.

³² Joe Stammers is the name used for the character once the play went into production – see the cast list at the beginning of this play-text for notes about this change.

Alfred To enquire into the characters of people before wedlock.

Harry It's necessary in some cases, Sir –

Mary It might do good in all.

Alfred Right, Mary. Your Davids and your Josephs were not perfect.

Mary There would be few unhappy marriages –

Harry Perhaps there'd be no marriages at all – Then what would th'women do?

Alfred Mary can answer the best.

Harry Mary thanks you and your father Sir, for all your kindness and should you ever need a friend depend on Harry Thomson. (Exeunt Harry & Mary.)

Alfred And should you ever need one – don't depend on me, till I've repaid you for the blow you gave me. Tomorrow you'll be married – tomorrow – I'll not anticipate. But if all goes well – tomorrow we'll be quits. (Exit.)

Act 3

Scene 2 The Parish Church from St James's Street

Crowd of people. Daft Jim, Paul and Susannah discovered. Jenkins keeping the crowd back.

Jenkins Here you fellow. Keep back.

Paul Let him alone! Can't you see he's an invited party.

Jim No, he's blind, he is. Don't squeeze that young woman, th'crowds enough.

Paul It's really disgusting when Policemen –

Jenkins I say, young man –

Paul Are you going to marry that young woman?

Jim Whoever saw a Bobby married? Do they get married in their uniforms? Don't wiggle waggle –

Paul There go the Bells (Bells ring.)

Jenkins Make a road –

Jim Come, come, wiggle, waggle – Thumbs up. Policeman Simon says so. Here comes Harry Thomson.

Jenkins Which is prettiest?

Jim Not thy Susan! – (Hurrah!)

(The bridal parties come through the gates, Paul and Jim help policeman to keep crowd back as carriages are got ready.) (Hurrahs.)

(Scene closes.)

Act 3

Scene 3 A Room in Brumley's

Enter Brumley and Ted Saunders

Saunders They say th'Commission'll be hard on th'Unions. If I'm summoned, what mun I do?

Brumley You'll not be summoned. The Union's going to send you from the country.

Saunders They mun gi' me summat to live on when I get there.

Brumley They'll find you work.

Saunders Ay, and summat else.

Brumley Yes, safety –

Saunders Oh! I'm safe enough – there's a free pardon for all them as splits.

Brumley Only for offences committed by the Union.

Saunders Well, that's my sort.

Brumley Not all I think.

Saunders We mu't as well split – if we can get off.

Brumley Not altogether – Men's characters are at stake –

Saunders Let 'em be tarred wi't'same brush as mysen – what's difference between us?

Brumley Only the difference between Judge and Hangman!

Saunders And that's not much, I reckon, only 't one gets well paid.

Brumley That's matter of opinion.

Saunders And so's my leaving England.

Brumley Just so, but I think your opinion'll coincide with ours.

Saunders I don't. These sort o'jobs has made work none so easy. I mun ha' fifty pounds.

Brumley You'll have ten pounds, besides your passage, and not another penny. If that won't do – take the risk – the Unions blot you from their book, and mind you're not caught in as pretty a web –

- Saunders If I am – others as well as me –
- Brumley Don't be too sure of that, You've got no proof – we have.
- Saunders What proof?
- Brumley Your spite against Job and Thomson –
- Saunders There's proof enough 'gen t'unions – You're a witness –
- Brumley I was the judge – you were the hangman. The unions are not responsible.
- Saunders Ten pounds! Why I should starve.
- Brumley How is it you don't starve here?
- Saunders But I know people here –
- Brumley Are they proud of your acquaintance?
- Saunders Well – they are acquaintance.
- Brumley Will you take my offer – yes – or no?
- Saunders I reckon that I mun. It's hard on a poor chap! –
- Brumley Very, you'd sell your soul for five pounds!
- Saunders I wouldn't – I haven't one to sell. You bought a lot on it and t'other followed suit long since. Will t'commission find owt out?
- Brumley I don't know. Meet me here at 6 tonight. You shall be off tomorrow.
- Saunders All right! I'm going to th'Union Wheel to see young Mr Parker. There's stirrings there. Job Langton's a big man, and Mr Thomson – Damn 'em. I'd like to ha' fitted them before I'd gone.
- Brumley Remember six – tomorrow you'll be safe. (Exit Brumley.)
- Saunders All right! Young Parker's down at'Wheel, looking over t'workmen feasting. He's a nice cur to help at t'wedding o'his own two sweethearts. I'd ha' helped 'em to an ounce o'lead. Damn the Commission! I might ha' made as nice a little game o'him as need be. I'd gotten hold o't'handle, and might ha'pumped and pumped until I'd sucked him dry. When a chap wants to do summat right, there's always something or another comes to stop him. (Exit)

Act 3
Scene 4 The Interior of the Wheel

(Alfred Parker discovered. Shouts etc)

Alfred Shout and drink away. You'll change your notes before the day's over. There they go again, drinking my Father's health, Jack's, and his wife's. Job Langton's – Harry Thomson's. Curse him. I said that I'd be quits. The blow he gave me shall be paid back with compound interest. (Shouts) Shout again! They are drinking my health now. I've played my cards first rate – the men think me a sort of hero. Jack's friendly – Edith more than kind – Thomson and Mary grateful as they can be – and my father is so pleased that he presents me with a cheque for £200, thinking, as they all do, that I'm a deuced good fellow at the bottom – Idiots! They forget that in a game of chance, we give to take. Now Mr Thomson –

(Ted Saunders enters and seeing Alfred's purpose quietly retreats.)

A little powder in your trough will pay your debt in full. Trades' Unions have broad backs – I can put this to their account. One crime more or less won't break it. (Shouts.) Here is the wedding party asking for me. Miss Edith would like to see the Wheel. That answers my purpose to a hair. I wish both Jack and Thomson could grind at the same time.

(Enter Mr Parker – Jack Summers – Edith – Job Langton – Harry Thomson – Mary etc. Ted Saunders and crowd of workmen at back.)

Mr Parker So Alfred. Here you are! How is it you have left the workmen?

Alfred I thought I heard some one here. I was mistaken, but the men will tell you they have not been neglected.

Mr Parker No, you've behaved so well all through, that I am proud of you. 'Gad, I'm proud of you all, and weddings seem to be contagious. I've been seriously thinking for some time of taking to myself a wife.

Edith You! and pray whom will you marry?

Mr Parker Mary Anne – (Laugh)

Alfred Mary Anne what?

Mr Parker There's only one Mary Anne.³³

Harry You'll commit Bigamy. She's the Trades Unions' wife.

³³ The symbolic character of 'Mary Anne' would have been familiar to an audience with knowledge of trade union activities, as this was the name usually used to sign anonymous threatening letters. There is a history of using pseudonyms in popular protest to maintain anonymity in dangerous times; and a symbolic character also potentially removes individual responsibility and guilt. J. C. Hotten notes that Mary Ann is 'the title of the dea ex machine (sic) evolved from trades-unionism at Sheffield, to the utter destruction of recalcitrant grinders. She is supposed to do all the "blow-ups", steal all the bands, and otherwise terrorise over victims of the union'. J. C. Hotten, *The Slang Dictionary* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1887, reprinted E. P. Publishing 1972), p. 223.

Mr Parker We'll sue for a divorce. This Commission of Inquiry perhaps will help us. My men – I've a few words to say. I've come to the conclusion that the best Trades' Unions are Unions between masters and their men – (Cheers). There's union now between us (Hear Hear) It shall continue – I mean something more than mere convivial union. A partnership between Capital and Labour. From this time forth the Union Wheel shall represent masters and men shall have fair wages according to their labour and effects³⁴ – with prosperity equally divided between the Labour and the Capital, and each man here will have an interest in the introduction of improved machinery, and the prosperity which beams on all. Mind, I don't debar you from joining the Trades Unions, or any other unions. In fact, I sincerely trust before the year is out, to see every bachelor of five and twenty bound in a union that no man can put asunder (cheers).

Mary So this is your stone Harry.

Harry Yes, it was your father's.

Edith I'm ashamed to say, I hardly know its purpose.

Alfred It's for grinding saws.

Edith I'm ignorant of the process.

Mr Parker Are you? You shall be shewn [sic] at once –

Alfred Who'll volunteer to show Miss Grayson?

All I will – I will – I will –

Alfred We must give Harry here the preference. Besides, he's the best workman.

Harry There's plenty Sir, as good as me. I shall be proud I'm sure –

Mr Parker Nay! Nay! You young fellows have been shewing off all day. Now let an old man have a turn. I've not forgotten my old handicraft – I'll volunteer (Hurrah!)

Alfred No, father – no.

Mr Parker Yes. I'm not ashamed lad, of my trade. Now Harry, where's the apron?

Alfred Father, you shall not –

Mr Parker Pooh! Pooh! I've no foolish pride.

Alfred I dare not 'criminate myself – Let Harry –

Mr Parker Harry! Nonsense! You young fellows fancy yourselves Grand Turks.

(Mr Parker sits at wheel) Let me see – this is the way.

³⁴ The punctuation here is ambiguous; the addition of a comma would make it clearer: 'From this time forth the Union Wheel shall represent masters, and men shall have fair wages...'
If Fox intended to suggest the rather more collective notion of: 'the Union Wheel shall represent masters and men', the sentence does not make sense (unless more words have been accidentally omitted).

Saunders Things look awkward Sir.

Alfred What do you mean? You here!

Saunders In another moment your father – what'll you stand if I can save him and not implicate you?

Alfred £20 - £100 – Quick – how?

Saunders Dust t'trough –

Alfred Stay father –

(At the same moment the wheel has revolved and the explosion takes place.)

Mr Parker Good Heaven! I'm blind –

Summers Quick! A Surgeon!

Edith Uncle!

Harry Send for the Police!

Job Another outrage!

Summ The Trades' Unions –

Harry No! There's private malice in this. 'Twas meant for me. (To Saunders) What art thou doing here? –

Saunders I've only been a two or three minutes, to see young Mr Parker. He'll answer for me.

Harry I'll not.

Alfred Father!

Saunders Meet me by the Porter Falls at 8 tonight.

Alfred Father! –

Saunders I shall go to 'Merica a rich man after all.

(Scene closes.)

Act 3

Scene 5 The Road between the Elms and Porter Falls

(Enter Daft Jim)

Jim Another sovereign – I'm gettin' rich. Everybody gies summat to Daft Jim. This makes £10.10s. I'll put it i'th' bank – not George St nor t'Hallamshire, no, nor t'Union – but in a bank nobody knows on but Daft Jim, by th'Porter falls – Jim can lay him down and sleep on it, and nobody's none the wiser. I wonder who put th'powder i'Harry's trough.

Joe Stammers owed him one, and he wor there. Harry didn't give him half enough – Poor owd chap! I'm sorry for him, and dash'd if I didn't pity th'young un, he wor i'such a funk. It's spoilt t'weddin' day. If ever I get a chance at Mr Stammers – Simon'll say Thumbs up. Mary thinks sometimes, I know she does – that it wor me that blowed up Job's wheel. I'd rather ha' my hands cut off, and yet I dursn't tell. I swore never to blab agen t'Union and I won't. She tell'd me never to tell a lie, and so Jim holds his tongue, and then they say he's daft – not daft enough to part wi'these. Jim needs nowt to make him happy, so long as she talks to him and she's coming now. She's peeping thro' them trees. She always meets me at Porter Falls and talks to me and sings me to sleep as she used to do when I wor' a little 'un. Mary Langton's voice is sweet, but not like hers. I munna keep her waitin', but I ma' wiggle waggle – Simon & her both says so. (Exit.)

(Enter Edith and Mary.)

- Edith It is a beautiful night. But that was not the reason you asked me to take a stroll while my uncle slept. You have looked so strange all day.
- Mary Am I the only one whose conduct has been strange? Your Cousin –
- Edith Alfred. Yes, he has been stranger still. I really did not think he had so much feeling. Three or four times he's fairly given way and sobbed – then drinks as if to drown his sorrow.
- Mary And his guilt! Have you no suspicion who put the powder in the trough?
- Edith No! Have you?
- Mary Yes, but 'tis so horrible, I scarcely dare to give it words.
- Edith You frighten me!
- Mary It was put there by an enemy of Harry Thomson, to blind him. He has but two in Sheffield. Joe Stammers and your cousin.
- Edith You do not mean –
- Mary I mean that one of those two men placed the powder in the trough and I grieve to say, suspicion points most strongly to the latter.
- Edith It's frightful – horrible – you cannot –
- Mary What was he doing there when we went in? Why was he so eager for Harry to grind the saw when twenty others volunteered to do so? Why so earnestly endeavour to dissuade his father, the accidental victim of his son's guilt?
- Edith He could have stopped him –
- Mary Yes, and stamped his guilt. He selfish fears restrained him.
- Edith 'Twould break his father's heart –
- Mary He must not know it. Heaven only knows how I pity him and you. My motive in asking you to come was that you might persuade your husband to let it rest.

Edith Is not that Alfred going toward the wood? I must follow him. He is not fit to be alone – he might –

Mary He has not the courage -

Edith You are harsh.

Mary Can I be otherwise? He would be murderer of my husband.

Edith I'll go alone.

Mary No, we will go together. Persuade him home, and if you can – to quit the country. (Exeunt.)

Act 3
Scene 6 The Porter Falls

Enter Alfred Parker.

Alfred This is the place where Stammers was to meet me. Wild enough to be a murderer's glen, proper trysting place for two such scoundrels. Since that cursed explosion, I'm scorched as if my entrails were on fire. Not all I drink allays the thirst. The very water seems to murmur 'Murderer', 'Parricide'. Oh! Curses on this hand that put the powder there – curses on my tongue too cowardly to tell him of the danger. It must not be known. I should be execrated. Saunders saw me. I'm in his power and cursed thoughts come thick and fast – if he were silenced – No! I've no nerve for further crimes. Heaven keep me from temptation. I'm in no humour for being bullied. Who comes here? My cousin, and Mary Langton.

(Enter Edith and Mary.)

What do you want here? Can't I take a stroll, but I must have two women spies set upon me? What does she want? She's looked at me with those eyes all day long.

Edith Your father's asked for you.

Alfred His eyes are gone. He can't look at me. I wish that I were dead.

Edith You have been drinking.

Alfred Then keep clear of me, for drunken men are dangerous. Edith, go straight home and when you pray, pray that your uncle's sight may be restored, and thank God who has saved you from a villain.

Edith What have you done?

Alfred What's that to you? What right have you to ask? I'm not your husband. So much the better for you. Go! Leave her. She's not afraid – She can take care of herself. I want to speak to her. Go! Are you frightened?

Edith Not for myself.

- Alfred No need for her – send Harry Thomson. He can defend her. He's stronger than I am. He struck me once before. Damn him! That blow did all. Why can't he strike me now? Go leave me, let her stop. Don't raise the devil in me. Go. Go. Go.
- Mary Go and send Harry. Perhaps 'tis for the best.
- Edith I'll not be long. (Exit.)
- Alfred Well, have you looked at me enough to see what you have made me? You've been my evil spirit. But for you Edith Grayson would have been my wife.
- Mary Don't speak so.
- Alfred How shall I speak? Tell you I love you! Bah! All that is past. It was you and none but you that put that powder in the trough. Your pretty full-mooned face – don't deny it. I say it was – Mary, it was an evil hour when I first looked at you.
- Mary Mr Parker, it is an evil hour for all men, when their bad passions get the mastery as yours have done. Let me go on. You never loved me, but you fancied me as a child might fancy any toy – to amuse it for an hour, then to be thrown aside broken and uncared for. What have your passions led you to? To Murder!
- Alfred Who says so?
- Mary You placed that powder in my husband's trough, reckless of consequences. Heaven, who sees not as we see, ordained your Father should be Harry's substitute. He lies yonder – blind – by the act of his own son. Your mother who is in Heaven sees you weep and intercedes for you. The Evil hour is past, these prayerful tears may wash away all stains of guilt. Your father will forgive. Heaven is kind and will have mercy –
- Alfred Go. Go. Leave me – Leave me!
- Mary Not yet.
- Alfred Mary. I'd drown myself, but I'm afraid to die with his curse ringing in my ears. Go. Go. –
- Mary He blesses you.
- Alfred His blessing is a curse. Leave me awhile. The spirit you've invoked may give me strength to earn his blessing; but I must pray alone. You will not hinder me from praying Mary.
- Mary You'll follow.
- Alfred Yes. (Exit Mary.)
- (A pause. Enter Ted Saunders)
- Saunders (Striking Alfred on back) Well, I'm here you see.
- Alfred What do you want?

Saunders Well, I like that – some tin.³⁵

Alfred Leave me fellow!

Saunders Fellow! Perhaps I may when I've gotten th'brown.³⁶ Look here! I'm in a hurry, for I've a lot to do. I'm going to emigrate. Things today have gone queer at the Assembly Rooms. Governor was as white as any clout, when he paid me my passage and a Tenner.

Alfred What do you want with me?

Saunders Come, cut it short, or else my tongue'll be as long as fro' here to th'Town Hall. I see'd thee put that powder i'the trough, and I mun be well paid to keep t'secret. What are you goin' to stand?

Alfred Nothing.

Saunders Well, I'm shivered.³⁷ Look you here, young chap. My name is Joe, and I am consequently a hard 'un to get over, though I'm not hard i'my dealins wi' young swells. Perhaps t'owd chap keeps you light. You've been a rummy sort, that fathers isn't proud on. But if you'll write a cheque out for – we'll say £150 - and put t'old man's name to it. I'll be satisfied. What say you?

Alfred Rascal.

Saunders Same to you, and many on 'em. It's only forgery! What's that to attempt to murder. Go and ask t'old chap – or shall I go mysen? You don't look so stuck up.

Alfred No. I am humbled.

Saunders Right you should be so. Fork out, or come and make a cheque all right.

Alfred You do not understand. I have money, more than £200, but if one penny piece would save me from the gallows, I wouldn't give it you.

Saunders £200. Come, don't be a fool. I'm summat desperate. Am I to go to th'old one, and tell him what a precious son he has. I don't want to do owt ungentlemanly, but if you force me to it –

Alfred Scoundrel!

Saunders We're a pair. We should look well, tagged together i'this fashion.

Alfred Don't tempt me, I am dangerous.

Saunders Don't you tempt me. Let's go shares on ten to one we shall be –

Alfred Villain! (Striking him.)

³⁵ Slang word for money. OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/202173 [accessed 13 May 2013].

³⁶ Slang word for 'copper coins', or money. OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/23848 [accessed 13 May 2013].

³⁷ This word has the meaning of 'broken, shattered'. OED Online, op. cit. /Entry/178357 [accessed 13 May 2013]. If Saunders cannot get enough money, he is in deep trouble.

- Saunders Is that thy game? Take one fro' me (strikes him with knife). What have I done? He's still enough! What's that? It's nobbut t'water. You'd not go shares. I'll have it all. (Meets Jim) What! Thou's been spying has thou? Thou may join him. (A desperate struggle. Jim gets the pistol which goes off in the melee. Saunders throws him off as Mary enters and seizes him.)
- Mary Murderer. (Another struggle. He is about to stab Mary, when Jim seizes knife. Saunders succeeds in throwing both off and is leaping over stile, when Harry enters and seizes him by the throat.)
- Saunders Let me go.
- Jim Simon says wiggle-waggle. Hold him, Harry!
- Harry Oh! He's in a vice. Stand still! Another move, and I'll shake the life out of thee. What's happened?
- Saunders Well! What has? There's somebody committed suicide.
- Harry There's somebody committed murder, more like. Mary, lass, what is it?
- Mary Young Mr Parker.
- Harry Dead? (Enter Summers, Edith and Policeman)
- Jim Well, I'm blessed. There's a bobby when he's wanted. Put th'handcuffs on.
- Edith My cousin! Who shall tell Uncle?
- Saunders You make a pretty fuss. You ought to be precious glad he's killed hissell'. It wor him put t'powder into t'trough. Don't throttle me.
- Harry No. I should be robbing Calcraft of thy clothes. Every word thou speakest, only puts the noose tighter round thy neck.
- Saunders Don't be sure o'that. The Commission offers a free pardon for all as split again' t'Union. I'll split tomorrow. How I blowed up Langton's Wheel. Brumley and all them's as bad as me.
- Harry You are scoundrel enough for anything. Thank Heaven splitting won't save you from the hangman.
- Mary What is Jim doing? (The moon shines on the dead man.)
- Jim Hush! He's asleep, and see his mother's come, as mine oft does, and kisses him. Look at him how he smiles. Don't speak. He's going to her.
- Harry Poor fellow! If all our hearts were simple as is thine, we should be nearer Heaven.
- Mary Let his words be our prayer, that he has gone to her where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.
- (End. Curtain.)

Keen Blades; or, the Straight Tip¹
An Original Three-Act Sporting Melo-Drama²

Playwrights: Messrs. A. F. Cross and J. F. Elliston

Date of Licence: April 8 1893 (Licensed for the Theatre Royal, Bolton)

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Notes

The script

The script submitted for licence is typed, and appears to be a carbon copy of the original. The characters' names are written in the margin, and the stage directions are underlined in red ink. I have put the stage directions in brackets, and dispensed with any changes to ink colour.

New characters are introduced, and 'exits' are noted, in CAPITAL LETTERS and I have followed this convention.

There are only two acts of the play filed in the volume of plays, and there is no explanation as to why the final act is missing.

The script was typed by Morris's Typewriting Offices in Bolton, and is an example of the growing trend for type-written scripts.

Language

It is a common feature across drama that characters are defined by their speech: their idioms and pronunciation usually betray their class. Like *The Union Wheel*, many of the characters in this play use slang and dialect words, and idiosyncratic pronunciation. Characters like Dick Truefitt often miss out consonants – for example 'gie' instead of 'give'; and they also use t' (the definite article reduction) for 'the', and 'thou' for 'you'. These idioms are common across Yorkshire, but the origins of some words have been more difficult to trace. The lower-class characters also add an 'h' in front of words which do not require this, for example 'haristocratic', instead of 'aristocratic'. This was a common feature of servants' speech in nineteenth-century plays.

The footnotes give explanations for obscure language where possible.

I have not added 'sic' to every word that appears to be spelt wrongly. The script was typed, so I have assumed that the spellings were as the playwrights intended.

¹ See the Introduction to Chapter Four (pp. 293-296) for a full discussion of the words that were chosen to create this title.

² Although the word 'melo-drama' is written on the title page using a hyphen, which appears to emphasise the musical aspect of the genre, in fact no music cues are suggested throughout the text. It would appear simply to be a variant spelling.

Front page

The label from Lord Chamberlain's Office been affixed over the first section of text

Label = No. 89
Lord Chamberlain's Office
Keen Blades
Play
Theatre: Royal, Bolton
Date of Licence: April 8 1893

AN ORIGINAL THREE-ACT SPORTING MELO—DRAMA
By Messrs. A. F. Cross & J. F. Elliston

Synopsis of Act 1

Act 1

SCENE 1

The uneaten breakfast at Cadeby Manor – “Thank you dad for the kick-out” ---
A nice college chum – Dick Trufitt's³ advice – The straight Forradest chap in
Sheffield – The resolve –

SCENE 2

The lovers' parting – A forcible suggestion from the squire – A chip off the old
block – But not a word to Harry –

SCENE 3

Mrs. Titcomb's little joke – A stranger at the “Ring o' Bells” – a Big
Commission – The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing – Only fit for a fine lady's neck –
Paws off scoundrel – The old man's protector

MORRIS'S TYPEWRITING OFFICES; 146, St. George's Road, BOLTON: LANCS.

³ This character is referred to as 'Truefitt' all the way through the text, so this spelling of 'Trufitt' is likely to be a typing error

Keen Blades

**Act 1
Scene 1**

(Breakfast room at Cadeby Manor. POLLY CHATTERLY discovered putting the finishing touches to the breakfast table. Enter DICK TRUEFITT.)

Dick Good morning, Polly.

Polly Oh! Good morning, Mr. Truefitt, really you almost startled me – Nice morning, isn't it? Did Mrs. Truefitt send any message about the new bonnet? And by-the-bye, how's baby?

Dick I think the Missus intends to stick a pair o' wings on it – a nice pair that keeper⁴ Pratt gave her about a month ago, tha' knows!

Polly Lor! Mr. Truefitt, you don't say so! it's the sweetest little baby that ever I saw, but surely you don't want to make it into an angel yet awhile?

Dick Angel? What d'ye mean? You were talking about the new bonnet?

Polly The bonnet! No! I was talking about the baby to be sure!

Dick That's a horse of another colour, tha knows! Some folks are wonderfully clever at getting the reins mixed – But sithee Polly tha must come round and see the missus about the bonnet yerself – Is t'owd squire down?

Polly Down! I should just think he is down – he's down on everybody he meets this morning – never saw him in such a temper in my life before!

Dick Another 'tack o' the gout, I suppose? I thought I noticed him going a bit dotty yesterday on the orf hind!

Polly No, I don't think it's gout this time, Mr. Truefitt, I am afraid he's very, very angry with Mr. Harry about something or other.

Dick Oh! If that's all, the storm will soon blow over! Master Harry's sweetheart, tha' knows has a rare knack of bringing t'sunshine into the owd man's face, however cantankerous he's been.

Polly Did you want to see him? I believe that's the library door he's just banged – if so he will be here in a minute.

Dick Yes lass, I came in for orders, but I think I'll let someone else have the rough side of the Guvnor's tongue and pop in again when he's cooled and after Miss Blanche has smoothed down his coat a bit. When I've a vicious nag to tackle I first put a strong wristed lad on his back, but when it comes to taking the nonsense out of a fiery tempered specimen of the male sex, Polly, then I always says, "put a lady in the saddle". She may ride under six stone nothing, but

⁴ Given the rural setting, presumably 'keeper' is a shortened form of 'gamekeeper'.

she's bahnd to settle him in the long run. Dick Truefitt's not been wed 20 years come next grass for nothing tha knows! (EXIT.)

Polly Well! All I can say is this, if the old squire wants to make mischief between Mr. Harry and my sweet tempered young Missis he deserves to have an attack of the gout every day in the week and twice on a Sunday. (EXITS.)

(SQUIRE BEDFORD ENTERS, flourishing a bundle of bills in his left hand, followed by BLANCHE.)

Blanche Don't open any more of those tiresome bills before breakfast, uncle, they always affect your appetite, and these cutlets will soon be quite cold.

Squire (Excitedly) Why, Blanche, you would expect me to sit down and quietly eat my breakfast if the bailiffs were in the house. (Waving bills, and laughing derisively.) Eat indeed! while for these last two years I have been slowly eaten out of house and home by that idle good for nothing son of mine.

Blanche (Standing) Now uncle you are losing your temper again, or you would never be so unkind as to call Harry an idle fellow. Who was it that pulled stroke oar when Oxford won the Boat Race, last year? Who gained the college prize for the highest batting average and who beat all his opponents at the inter-varsity athletic meeting? As a runner your son stands without a peer among the gentleman amateurs of England and if you are not proud of him, I am.

Squire (Ironically) Oh! Quite so, I admit everything you put forward on behalf of your champion's running powers, it's his marvellous powers of running into debt which threatens to make his father a pauper.

Blanche A pauper? What nonsense. (Seats herself at table.)

Squire (Reading a bill) "Twenty five boxes of cigars at £5/-. £68 15/-" Ah! What's this? "Three G-r-" girls I suppose. Yes. "Little Beauties" at £3. 12. 0. Total £10. 16. 0. Ah! Ha! Ha! Little Beauties. I suppose we shall find his dressmaker's and his milliner's bills next.

Blanche (Rising) Surely you're mistaken, Uncle!

Squire (Handing the bill to her) Here, look for yourself – what can't speak can't lie – That's shaken the faith in your idol, has it? I thought you were proud of the manner in which he cut out the pace: (reading another bill) Henry Bedford Esq. to Messrs. Viney and Co. 12 gallons of John Jamieson's Best Irish, &c. &c. – Total £256. 3. 4d. His tailor, £169. 10. 0. Boot and Shoe Maker £54. 5. 0. Hire of horses and traps, two hundred and odd pounds. His saddler –

Blanche (Handing back bill) There's nothing about girls, uncle, the words "Gross" and "Little Beauties" means cigarettes.

Squire It means extravagance, Blanche, extravagance, and if I go through the whole of these bills on an empty stomach I shall be doing something desperate.

- Blanche Then try a cutlet, uncle? (SQUIRE BEDFORD seats himself at table and picks up knife and fork, then pushes plate away and walks to C.)
- Squire No! it sha'n't be said that Jack Bedford let his appetite stand in the way of his duty. A square⁵ meal plays the devil with a man's temper (turning to Blanche) Where is the reckless heartless spendthrift? In bed I suppose – the lazy dog.⁶
- Blanche No indeed. Harry heard me say last night that I wanted some silk matching and the dear good fellow's gone down to the village to get it.
- Squire You call him a good fellow – I call it a good excuse for him to get down to the "Bedford Arms" for a drink, and a chat with the pretty barmaid there.
- Blanche I don't believe it. In trying to uphold the honour of a family name at college, Henry may have been a trifle extravagant, but some follies of his father's youth he does not imitate.
- Harry (ENTERS. Dressed riding breeches &c. carrying whip in one hand & a small parcel in the other) By Jove, Blanche, that ride's made me as hungry as a hunter. Here's your silk. (Bus. Kisses) Good morning Dad! (Catching sight of the bills – aside) Hullo! What does this mean? If Rayne Chalcraft has failed to fulfil his promise and these bills are still unpaid I shall be for ever disgraced, perhaps ruined.
- Squire If you have finished breakfast, Blanche, you may retire (Bus. Bills).
- Harry (Aside) Ah! The storm's brewing, but I have done nothing yet to shame the name of Bedford and the old governor must not expect to find his son either a whining baby or a cringing cur.
- Blanche (Crosses to Harry) The Governor's in an awful temper this morning but don't mind him he'll be alright after breakfast, dear. (EXIT. Bus.)
- Squire (Advancing with bundle of bills) And now, sir, what explanation have you to offer for this reckless business and most atrocious conduct. Be quick and let me hear it.
- Harry Well father, in the first place –
- Squire How dare you interrupt me Sir? The sum total of these shameful bills amounts to one thousand four hundred and odd pounds and if

⁵ 'Square' is used in several different ways throughout the text (see footnotes 30, 34, and 43). 'Square meal' is 'a satisfying meal that fills you and provides you with all the different types of food that your body needs', *Cambridge English Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) <<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/>> [Accessed 18 March 2014].

⁶ 'Dog', when applied to a person, can be derogatory, but it can also be used playfully. It is usually used 'in humorous reproof, congratulation, or commiseration'. It often refers to 'a gay or jovial man, a gallant, a fellow', *OED*, p. 921. The word is used several times throughout the text.

you think I am fool enough to pay one penny piece of the money all I can say is that you are most infernally mistaken Sir.

Harry Excuse me, Dad, but you remember the line of the old song – “Nobody axed [sic] you Sir, she said”.⁷ I’m sure I didn’t –

Squire Silence, Sir. I’ve only a few more words to say, but they shall be to the point. Three years ago at great personal inconvenience I yielded to your wish and sent you to Oxford. What use you have there made of your time is best known to yourself. A man can’t transform himself into an acrobat and put knowledge into his brain pan at one and the same time.

Harry Not an acrobat father, you mean an athlete.

Squire And what is the difference, Sir?

Harry There is a vast difference, Sir. Who was it said the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing grounds of Eton?⁸ And if you will allow me to say so, I consider the lowest working man’s love of football reflects infinitely more credit on the nation than the more lordly (Princely) pastime of Baccarat’.⁹

Squire That’s neither here nor there, Sir.

Harry Quite so, but I thought you were desirous of speaking to the point.

Squire Yes, Sir, this is the point. What the devil do you mean by living fast and loose, and overrunning the constable to the tune of a thousand

⁷ This could refer to the ‘old song’ titled, ‘Where are you going to my pretty maid’. The last line is: ‘Nobody asked you, Sir, she said’. It is sometimes referred to as an ‘Old English Dance’, as in the published music by William Seymour Smith (London: B. Williams, 1888), or an ‘old nursery rhyme’ (London: Boosey and Hawkes, 1957).

⁸ The more common wording of the phrase was ‘the playing fields’, rather than ‘grounds’, but there seems to be no particular reason for, or significance due to, the alteration.

⁹ Baccarat was one of several fashionable card games, which, along with roulette, rouge et noir, and chemin de fer, were played for money by wealthy, often aristocratic pleasure-seekers, and might be collectively described as ‘gaming’. They are effectively games of chance, as much as skill. Clapson, *A Bit of a Flutter*, p. 1.

The game had also been the subject of scandal which began in 1891 and involved the Prince of Wales, and the baronet and socialite Sir William Gordon-Cumming (1848–1930). They had been playing at a house party at Tranby Croft, near Hull, when Gordon-Cumming was accused of cheating, and one of the guests, Edward Lycett-Green threatened to publicly expose him. Given that playing the game had been illegal since 1885, this risked compromising everyone involved, including the Prince. Gordon-Cumming was pressed to sign a pledge never to play cards again in return for total secrecy. He duly signed, but the story still emerged, and although he later went to court to try to prove his innocence, his reputation was ruined. The case became a popular sensation inspiring not only extensive press coverage, but also several music-hall songs and jokes about ‘backing a rat’. Jason Tomes... Jason Tomes, ‘Cumming, Sir William Gordon Gordon-, fourth baronet (1848–1930)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, May 2005; online edn, Jan 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/39392>, accessed 14 Feb 2013]

The recent scandal (only two years before the production, and still fresh in the collective memory) is likely to have inspired this reference, and probably also accounts for why the word ‘princely’ is in brackets. A reference to the Prince in this context was probably a little too risky, and ‘lordly’ was a safer choice.

a year? While your father is being dragged slowly into the workhouse?

Harry I trust not, Dad.

Squire Trust? Trust, be hanged. The people who trusted you must have been infernal idiots.

Harry I beg your pardon. They trusted me because they thought I was the son of a gentleman – but you need not unnecessarily alarm yourself. I contracted these debts without your knowledge and shall discharge them without your assistance.

Squire Ha! Ha! A likely tale indeed. Where's the money coming from? As you are such a clever runner perhaps you'll run a penny show and advertise yourself as the great amateur clown and gymnast.

Harry Don't say those nasty things, Dad!

Squire But I will say these things, Sir Impudence, if you think you are going to marry my ward, Miss Middleton, with a notion of squandering her fortune, you sadly deceive yourself, as her guardian I say you shall not touch one shilling of it.

Harry And as your son, I say you have no right to taunt me with being an adventurer and a fortune hunter. My love for Blanche is not coupled with any mercenary motives and you know it.

Squire I know nothing further than this (pointing to the door). You can go and settle your money affairs as best you can, never presuming to enter this house again until you have wiped your hands of these disgraceful debts and cleaned off every penny. (Moves towards R. U. E.)

Harry Thank you, Dad, for the kick out. (Puts down his whip and seats himself at table) but you don't mind me trying a wing of this pheasant before leaving. (Taking up knife and fork) by Jove, that ride's made me simply ravenous.

Squire (At R. U. E.) Brazen to the last, but it's like a Bedford not to whimper, thrown on his own resources for a time and he will learn to appreciate the proper value of money. (Glancing towards Harry) God bless the lad! He'll come back again as soon as ever he's hungry. (EXIT)

Harry (Putting down his knife and fork and pushing plate away.) What a mockery! My appetite's gone for one day. (Walking to C.) I never thought the old dad would have been so hard on me as to turn me adrift. What will poor Blanche say? And what am I to do?

(TRUEFIT crosses window)

Here Dick! A thought strikes me.

Dick (ENTER L. U. E.) How did Deerfoot carry you this morning, Sir?

- Harry Splendidly! She's a grand mare, Dick, but it will be a long time before I cross her again.
- Dick You don't mean that Sir? What's amiss?
- Harry The Gov'nor and I have had a few words this morning and he's told me to clear out, that's all.
- Dick You're a-jokin', Sir! (Laughing) I knows you of old.
- Harry It's as true as you are standing there Dick!
- Dick But what about Miss Blanche? It'll break the young Missis's 'eart, Sir, if you go a leavin' on her like that. (ENTERS) And if I'm not inquisitive like, what are you going to do for a livin'?
- Harry That's what I want to see you about. I've no business at my finger-ends and devilish little money in my pocket.
- Dick Well! I've got a trifle laid by Master 'Arry, and if fifty'd be of any use to you – well you'll forgive me Sir, but it's there, tha' knows.
- Harry (Slapping him on the shoulder) You're a good hearted little chap, Dick, and always were; but I think you can be of greater service to me than by lending me fifty pounds out of your hard earned savings. Do you remember what you often used to say to me as a lad about running, and Sheffield Handicaps? You once lived at Sheffield I believe?
- Dick I did Sir, and if I'm not mistaken, Master 'Arry, you've been doing some fastish times lately at t'College Sports?
- Harry Yes; with a month's training from now, I should like to stake a fortune that I could run a hundred yards inside the ten seconds; and what you once said in jest about my winning a big Sheffield Handicap I now mean to try and fulfil in earnest.
- Dick Hooray! I'm sure you can do it: but what will t'owd squire say? There's some rum¹⁰ characters mixed up wi' a Sheffield Handicap, tha' knows.
- Harry Yes but if I didn't care any more about "t'owd squire" as you call him, than "t'owd squire" seems to care about me, there, no matter – Do you think you could enter me for the next Handicap under an assumed name?
- Dick Of course, I can, providin' you let the 'andicappers in the know, you can just run under what halias you like. I'm no scholar, but how would Ned Deerfoot do, Master Harry. If you could only satisfy your

¹⁰ Dick's use of the word 'rum' (which since the 1800s had the double meaning of 'bad' as well as 'odd' or 'peculiar') acknowledges that there are unscrupulous characters involved in pedestrianism and that Harry will need the protection of a 'good gaffer' - a reliable trainer and manager - who will look out for him, J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 235.

- gaffers¹¹ as well as that mare satisfies me, why you'll win in a canter, sir.
- Harry Yes, Ned Deerfoot will do admirably; but what do you mean by "gaffers"?
- Dick Well, you say you 'aven't much money, Sir! Excusin' me!
- Harry Very little, but it's not necessary for a professional runner to be a millionaire exactly is it?
- Dick Certainly not, Master 'Arry, but of about a 1000 runners, I only knowed one as tried the dodge of training on air; and he trained so fine, that a 'igh wind came one day and blowed him into 'eaven. What you wants is plenty of mutton chops with the fat orf and plenty o' good old bottled port with the cobwebs on. Then there's your trainer's expenses 30/- a week at the lowest. Suppose I chucks up this job and trains you myself.
- Harry No, no, Dick. The governor can very well dispense with his only son, but as for his groom – why Dick, it would break the old Squire's heart, if you were to leave him.
- Dick Ah! Now you're joking again now, Master 'Arry.
- Harry Well, well, when is the next handicap run?
- Dick Oh! Let me see, it will be in the Whitsuntide 'andicap, and what you'll have to do is first to go to Sheffield and find a good gaffer. There'll be plenty glad enough to keep a lad who can do even time, but go first of all to Sammy Titcomb, of 'the Ring o' Bells'. He is about the straight forrardest chap I knows in Sheffield.
- Harry But I must first of all go down to Oxford and look up that scamp of a Chalcraft.
- Dick Chalcraft, Sir?
- Harry Why you don't know him?
- Dick If it's Luke Chalcraft he's one of the biggest book-makers in Sheffield and unless he's altered, the biggest scoundrel too. But it won't be the gentleman you're speaking of?
- Harry No; the name of my man is Rayne Chalcraft; but he may be a relation of your Sheffield friend, for he's swindled me out of £2,950.
- Dick Nay! Tha' does' na' say so. I thought 'as 'ow you were a bit flyer¹² than that, Master 'Arry.

¹¹ 'Gaffer' usually means 'master or governor' (*OED*, p. 308), but it seems to be used here to mean trainer, coach, manager.

¹² 'Fly' as an adjective means 'aware, knowledgeable, smart, sharp' (from the noun 'fly', meaning a trick or a dodge), *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 527. This is an early indication that Dick is more worldly-wise than Harry, and that he can be of assistance to his 'master'.

- Harry So I ought to have been, but most of us get taken in some time or other. This is how it was done – Rayne Chalcraft was at the same college as myself and his people must have been well off, for he had always plenty of money to throw about. But at the same time there were very few of the fellows who cared for him. I don't know why, exactly, but somehow or other you could see he was no gentleman. However he took a great interest in my running and he used to back me rather heavily at all the sports I went to. Between us we potted a lot of money, but he used to do all the handling and it was not until the day I came away from Oxford that I asked him for a general straightening up.
- Dick Aye! Master 'Arry, but you never was partikler enough wi' your brass. I've seen yer as a lad gi' your last shilling to the idlest scamp in the village, but they'll teach you how to manage things differently at Sheffield, tha' knows.
- Harry (Fetching out a pocket book) Well according to this book I was entitled to the little sum of £2,950.
- Dick Sir! But you must a' slated¹³ 'em.
- Harry Chalcraft hadn't his cheque book about him at the time, so I said, "Well, Chalcraft, I want to get away to-night, if you don't mind doing me a favour, just settle these bills for me and send on the receipts to Cadeby, with the balance." He promised to do so and even now something unforeseen may have happened and I may be misjudging the fellow.
- Dick Not if his name's Chalcraft, Sir. I'm afraid you'll see no more of that money than I shall.
- Harry Don't say that Dick. Money I must have and if by no other means, than by winning a big Sheffield Handicap! So go and get the dog cart ready, for the eleven o'clock express, and remember not a word to a living soul about what I've told you. (EXIT)
- Dick Right you are, Master 'Arry. That lad's all grit, and as cool as a 'cumber, which they must be who runs at Sheffield. (Meditatively) By gow, but it almost seems too good to be true. I loves a good hoss, but I loves a good man better and that's why I'd sooner train the winner of the Sheffield Handicap than I'd train the winner of Derby. I've seen some good straight lads toe the mark¹⁴ in my time, but I've never seen a downright thorough bred 'un like the young Squire and whether he wins or loses, I know he will do one thing, he'll prove that a man can run in a Professional Handicap without sacrificing his titles either of a Sportsman or of an English Gentleman!

(CLOSE SCENE)

¹³ The most convincing meaning of 'slate' in this context means 'to lay heavily against a man or horse in a race', Albert Barrère and Charles G. Leland, *A Dictionary of Slang, Jargon and Cant* (London: The Ballantyne Press, 1889-90), p. 254. If Rayne and Harry were properly working as a team, both men should have benefited from the gambling, but Chalcraft has kept all the profits for himself.

¹⁴ 'Toe the mark' refers to a runner setting off on a race; they had to literally put their foot against the correct mark on the ground.

Act 1
Scene 2

(THE GROUNDS, Cadeby Manor. HARRY BEDFORD ENTERS R.U.E. with BLANCHE smiling.)

- Harry You seem to take your lover's banishment very cheerfully Blanche.
- Blanche You would not have me weep like a school girl, Harry?
- Harry No!
- Blanche Or throw myself at your father's feet and there implore forgiveness for the repentant son?
- Harry You know I wouldn't, but at the same time I don't see why you should choose the fact of my leaving home – and under such circumstances too – as a fit or proper subject for mirth.
- Blanche Why you dear silly goose,¹⁵ it is those very circumstances which do amuse me. I can't for the life of me help looking at the ridiculous side of the question. Here am I your affianced bride with an income of something like three thousand a year, having to suffer another enforced separation owing to a few paltry college debts, why can't I pay off these tiresome bills, make myself useful for once in a way? And everyone around me happy and contented?
- Harry Blanche! You would be good kind fairy if you could, I know you would, but there are one or two obstacles in the way which even a fairy cannot surmount.
- Blanche And what are they?
- Harry Well, in the first place, my little fairy is not her own mistress and her careful guardian – my father – has insinuated that the wicked Prince – which is myself – cares not so much for the person of his ward as for her money bags. Without his sanction your proposed kindness is an impossibility. No doubt he takes the correct view of the case.
- Blanche Fiddlesticks! That's a very unfairylike expression I know - but – but (crying) Don't be away long Harry, and you will write to me?
- Harry I will write to you my darling, but only on condition that my father is kept in total ignorance of my whereabouts, so now dry your eyes Blanche, it is but a few minutes ago since I was half angry with you for your gaiety and smiles. We are not parting for ever.
- Blanche And need not part at all – let me go and speak a word to your father – I'm sure he will –
- Harry No! No! My darling. My father has denied me the shelter of his roof but my pride is equal to his own and with your love to guide me

¹⁵ 'Goose' used as a noun can mean 'a fool', as well as the water bird. *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 628.

through the stormy night, I shall yet return with an honoured and stainless name, to claim you as my bride. (EXIT L.)

(ENTER DICK R. with envelope in hand)

- Dick The trap's ready but where's the young master? I shouldn't wonder if Miss Blanche isn't with him somewhere a trying to make him change his mind. It's fair surprising how them two loves each other, but when Master 'Arry's once made up his mind to do a thing, tha' knows, the devil himself can't turn him, fancy quarrelling with a lad like that. (SQUIRE APPEARS R.) What a dunderheaded old fool the Squire must be. (The SQUIRE takes a running kick at DICK. DICK turning hastily round, and touching his forelock.) I beg your pardon Squire. I'm pleased to find that your last attack of the gout has disappeared.
- Squire Go to the D----I, Sir. What was that you were saying?
- Dick (Rubbing the affected portion of his anatomy) The gout Sir; glad that you are better Sir.
- Squire (Approaching in a menacing attitude) Come here Sir. What were you saying before I suggested that I was present?
- Dick (Aside) Very forcible suggestion. Why Sir, if you'll listen to me a minute, I'll tell you. I had just come in to receive Master Harry's orders about the dog cart. He wants to catch the eleven o'clock express Sir.
- Squire Well?
- Dick Yes, Sir; begging your pardon; and he told me that there had been a little unpleasantness this morning and that he was going away for a time, and when he had got outside, I said to myself, fancy a lad quarrelling with such a good home and such a kind father as he's got. What a fool the young Squire must be.
- Squire Ah! You're right Truefitt. I hope I didn't hurt you?
- Dick Thank you, not at all sir, not at all.
- Squire (Putting his hand in his pocket) By the bye, Truefitt, I don't think you had your usual Christmas Box. (Puts money in his hand)
- Dick (Touching his forelock) Oh! Thank you sir.
- Squire And I know that Harry is very confidential with you, at times, come now did he tell you where he was going? Mind you are not to let him know that I asked.
- Dick No, Sir, I can't say as Master 'Arry did give me any information on that point, but it was very easy to see how cut up he was, Sir. Tears in his eyes the whole of the time was a talking to me, Sir.
- Squire (Turning aside and blowing his nose) Poor fellow, I've half a mind to forgive him and pay those confounded bills at once. (To Truefitt) He was brazen enough before me, Truefitt.

- Dick Asking your pardon, Squire, but he wouldn't have been a Bedford to have eaten humble pie.
- Squire No, he's a true chip off the old block; but when the keep's too good, Truefitt, a horse is inclined to grow a bit vicious and unmanageable – he'll perhaps be all the better for a few weeks on short commons,¹⁶ Eh?
- Dick Quite true, Sir.
- Squire You'll drive him down to the station, Truefitt, and if you come back and tell me where he has made for – mind there'll be a sovereign for you, Richard, but not a word to Harry. (EXIT L.)

END OF SCENE

Act 1
Scene 3

(Bar parlour at the Ring O' Bells – Time - evening. Mrs. Titcomb discovered knitting. – Sammy smoking a long clay [pipe]. Felix at the table conning "The Tissue".¹⁷)

- Mrs. Titcomb Lor! Felix, what a funny thing it is; as I was a sayin' to our Sammy this morning, that some people should be born so lucky. Look at the difference now, between you and young Chalcraft, who's a been here the last night or two a courtin' of our Madge. He seems to be –
- Madge A conceited stuck up ass, Mother, and don't take any notice of what she is saying, Felix; she's only funning.¹⁸
- Mrs. Titcomb That I'm not child. Didn't he try to slip a gold bracelet on your wrist last night?
- Madge When I get married, it will be to an honest straight forward Yorkshire lad, tha' knows, and not to a smooth tongued deceitful jackanapes, like Rayne Chalcraft.
- Mrs. Titcomb Ah! But an honest man is another name for a fool nowadays – your father and Felix have both learned that to their sorrow. Go and get supper ready.
- Felix Yes, but there'll be a turn of the tide, some day, Mrs. Titcomb, and for the present, I'd sooner be poor Felix Brock than either Luke Chalcraft or his son Rayne – with all their brass.

¹⁶ 'Short commons' means 'without money'. In contemporary language, the more usual expression is simply 'short'. Albert Barrère and Charles G. Leland, *A Dictionary of Slang, Jargon and Cant* (London: The Ballantyne Press, 1889-90), p. 235.

¹⁷ Specialist sporting newspapers proliferated at the end of the nineteenth century. *Ford's Sheffield Sporting Tissue and Daily Sporting Bell* was an actual publication that began in the late 1860s and lasted until the 1920s. <<http://www.worldcat.org/title/fords-sheffield-sporting-tissue-and-daily-sporting-bell/oclc/751725961>>.

¹⁸ 'Funning' is a variation of joking, having fun. The *OED* defines it as 'to make fun or sport; to indulge in fun, to fool, to joke'. *OED*, p. 262.

- Madge And if he comes here again, talking about his friend, Lord Juggins¹⁹ and his dear Alma Mater²⁰, whoever she is, I'll just fetch Felix to him straight. (EXIT.)
- Sammy (Taking pipe from his mouth and bringing his fist on the table)²¹
Now Mrs. Titcomb, will you be good enough to tell me what your little game is?
- Mrs. Titcomb Why! What's t'matter lad? Thou looks fair riled.²²
- Sammy And ain't I bahnd to be riled? What's mean by encouragin' that jawin' young wastrel of a Chalcraft to come a courting that lass of ours?
- Mrs. Titcomb Shame on you Sammy, for calling a nice spoken young gentleman such bad names. I'm surprised at you!
- Sammy (Excitedly) Mrs. Titcomb! Thou's known me for twenty four year!
- Mrs. Titcomb Aye! Wuss luck, lad.
- Sammy And there's not been many rows between us –
- Mrs. Titcomb It's because I've bin too good tempered wi' thee, Sammy!
- Sammy Good tempered, be hanged! Thow'd rile a saint – but list to me a minute – if I catch you encouragin' that oily, sneakin', cub of Luke Chalcraft's to come here again I'll break (bringing his fist on table) I'll break –
- Mrs. Titcomb Not the glasses, Sammy?
- Sammy (Impressively) Mrs. Titcomb!

¹⁹ "Juggins" is a slang name given to a fool, a dupe, especially someone who is so foolish that they can be prevailed upon to buy every round of drinks (this name is a variation on "Muggins"). The derivation of the word is from a real person called Henry Ernest Schlesinger Benzon, who was better known as "Jubilee Juggins". Benzon, the son of a Birmingham umbrella frame maker, went through an inheritance of £250,000 in less than two years. His last pennies went in 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, thus earning him his nickname. Only the kindness of his fellow patrons of the raffish Romano's Restaurant in the Strand, who established a fund that sustained him on £7 a week for life, saved him from absolute penury'. *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 815. Given that *Keen Blades* was produced in 1893, the antics of this character and his so-called friends would be quite recent news.

²⁰ 'Alma Mater' is how ex-students refer to their old college or university. Carlyle referred to 'my dear old Alma Mater' in his inaugural address at Edinburg in 1866. OED Online, Oxford University Press, March 2014. <<http://www.oed.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/view/Entry/5563>> [Accessed 17 March 2014.] It is not clear if Madge is consciously making a joke, or if she is simply repeating what Rayne Chalcraft has said to her, and betraying her ignorance at the same time.

²¹ The word in the script is definitely 'bringing' but it may have been a misprint of 'banging', considering how angry Sammy is in this scene.

²² 'Riled' is from the verb 'to rile', and means to annoy, irritate, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1193.

- Mrs. Titcomb (Placing the knitting on her knees and laughing aloud) Thou two simple-sighted gawmines.²³ What's thou been thinking about – both on ye? Does suppose I'd let our Madge wed Rayne Chalcraft? Nay lads, I'd sooner see t'lass buried that I would!
- Sammy (severely) Mrs. Titcomb! Thou's been makin' a fool on me again?
- Mrs. Titcomb (standing) Nay lad, I couldna do that, thy father and mother's saved me the trouble. (EXIT)
- Sammy What didst thou make all that ado for Felix? Thou aughtst to have known t'owd gal by this time. Couldn't you see how calmly I took all her gammon?²⁴ We'll have to take another wet²⁵ after that I'm thinkin'. (SAMMY replenishes glasses, FELIX resumes the "Tissue") Aught fresh in the betting tonight Felix?
- Felix Crabtree's advanced a point twice yesterday. Jimmy Crouch and Luke Chalcraft usually know what they're about but I think they're going a bit far in making Seth such a hot favourite.
- Sammy Well nobody would be more pleased than me, to see his number taken down – but who can beat him?
- Ned (WALKING ON, long overcoat and travelling bag) Good evening Mr. Titcomb, I think I can. (ENTER MADGE)
- Sammy Well I don't know who you are, young man, but you're big enough if you're only good enough.
- Ned This note will explain who I am – if you will kindly let me have a wash while you're reading it.
- Sammy Certainly Sir! Madge, show this gentleman to Number 5.
- Ned Thank you! In times past I have fallen amongst some keen blades from this smokey town of yours but if I'm not greatly mistaken I'm now in the midst of friends. (EXIT)
- Sammy Here! Thou's a better scholar than me Felix, read it up.
- Felix (Reading) To Sammy Titcomb, Ring O' Bells Sheffield.

²³ 'Gawmines' seems to be a very old provincial word. According to the *Dictionary of Archaisms and Provincialisms*, the word had fallen out of use at the time of its publication (in 1889). That dictionary gives the word 'gawmin' as an adjective, meaning 'vacant, stupid', and states that it was used in the north. James Orchard Halliwell, *Dictionary of Archaisms and Provincialisms in Two Volumes* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1889), Vol. 1, p. 395. The *OED* lists 'gaum', meaning 'to stare vacantly' (p. 404), and then the linked (though seemingly contradictory) words 'gaumless' or 'gormless', meaning 'wanting sense or discernment', *OED*, p. 695. Mrs. Titcomb uses 'gawmines' as a noun plural, and it is clear that she means Sammy and Felix are stupid.

²⁴ 'Gammon' as a noun means 'nonsense', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 564 (see footnote 61)

²⁵ 'Wet' is a slang word for a drink, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1516.

Dear Sammy

You will no doubt be surprised to receive this letter from your old friend Dick Truefitt...

Sammy Dick Truefitt!

Felix (Reads) And you will be more so when I tell you that the bearer is the only son of my Marster Squire Bedford of Cadeby Manor. Unbeknowin' to his friends he has decided to have a go for the next Handicap. I have entered him as Ned Deerfoot, and if they put him on the 73 mark or anything over, he'll win hands down.

Sammy (Looking at "Tissue") Why he's got 73 and three quarters, Felix.²⁶

Felix Then according to this, he's got a good chance, listen (reads). He's beat evens at his college sports and the lad's all grit. Now Sammy, this is a right good tip, and I needn't tell you to keep it dark and so no more from your old pal, Dick Truefitt. (Felix speaking) Why Sammy! We live! My boy! The Sun's beginning to shine again.

Sammy (Seriously) Give me that letter, and remember, Mum's the word. If this lad can do evens our fortune's made, but do as I do, keep calm.

Ned (Dressed in a loose jacket and small black silk cap) I feel much better now Mr. Titcomb.

Sammy That's right. I hope you'll make yourself at home, this is no grand hotel, but you're welcome to what we've got – What'll you take? Most of my friends call me Sammy.

Ned Got any good old ale?

Sammy That's sensible. I'll fetch you some, and this ere young man is Felix Brock, my chief trainer, and future son-in-law. (Bus. with ale) Have you read the letter?

Ned No! I'm completely in the dark as to what Dick's said about me.

Sammy Well! He says as how you wants to win a Sheffield 'Andicap. But as there's not many swells amongst Pros,²⁷ I should like to know what your notion is.

Ned Simply to make money, if I win, I shall expect to clear £3,000.

Sammy Have you done even time by a reliable watch?

Ned I have and can do it again with a month's training.

Sammy That'll do for me, and you'd like to stay here and let Felix train you?

²⁶ Runners started from different points on the course, depending on their past form. The complicated set-up of the races, and the way in which money could be won, required time, effort and a certain sort of intelligence.

²⁷ Sammy is making the point here that gentlemen are not usually to be found among professional runners.

- Ned Yes, that would suit me exactly.
- Sammy Now, Felix, we mustn't give anyone the slightest chance to forestall the market. I've only got your word to go by, young man, and Dick Truefitt's but I'm going to send out a big commission tonight on the strength of it.
- Ned What I've said is perfectly true.
- Sammy I can read it in your face my lad. Now Felix, there's an hour before the telegraph office closes. You know where to send and fill every large out of town at all you can get over twenties. Then take a cab and fill all the big books in Sheffield at the longest shots you can get. By eleven o'clock, I shall expect you back with five thousand pounds worth of business done. Tell 'em Sammy Titcomb will cover all bets tomorrow morning, but take this (giving pocket book) in case there should be any flinching.
- Felix Right you are Sammy. If I'm not mistaken this will be the best night's work I've ever done in my life. (EXIT).
- Ned That's soon settled – but how about my three thousand? Owing to the roguery of one of your keen Sheffield blades. I'm left without a cent to fly with.
- Sammy Ah! Someone been a bestin' of ye? ²⁸
- Ned I suppose that's what you'd call it. Being a Sheffield man yourself perhaps you've heard of Rayne Chalcraft Esquire, late of Oxford, and can put me in the way of meeting him.
- Sammy Rayne Chalcraft? Why there's even money on his being in this very room within the next half hour.
- Ned What! You don't mean to say that he's a friend of yours?
- Sammy Heaven forbid! But he's been round here pretty regularly of late – a sneakin' after my daughter, but if he comes much oftener, I'm thinking he'll get a taste of Sammy Titcomb's number nines. By gum! That sounds like the very man. Quick! This way! (EXIT L.)
- Rayne (Entering R. E., dressed foppishly) I could have sworn that I heard familiar voices in this room but it must have been fancy. That old ass Sammy and young Brock are out of the way together – so now for the sweet warfare of love.
- Madge (ENTERING R.E.) I thought my father was here: Have you given your orders Sir?
- Rayne No, my sweetness of Hebes, I wish to be served by your own fair hands. I'll take a glass of sherry.

²⁸ The use of 'best' as a verb is colloquial, from the idea of 'getting the better of'. The *OED* defines the word as 'to get the better of, get an advantage over, outdo; to outreach, outwit, circumvent', *OED*, p. 141.

- Madge With a dash of bitters? Yes, Sir. (EXIT.)
- Rayne Ah! The jade²⁹ is as witty as she is beautiful, a prize which makes her better worth the winning. She refused my bracelet last night, and I have changed it for this diamond locket. It cost me a hundred guineas but if I can once get her to accept it, the game's half won.
- Madge Your sherry, Sir.
- Rayne (Giving her money) Thank you.
- Madge Have you no smaller change?
- Rayne Yes, here's half a crown.
- Madge I suppose the fop wanted me to know that he was worth a sovereign. (EXIT.)
- Rayne Magnificent creature! What a wealth of passion was in those eyes, when they were raised to mine.
- Madge Change, Sir.
- Rayne (Retaining her hand) I say Miss Titcomb, I wish I could gain your heart as easily as I have gained your hand.
- Madge I should be much obliged if you would let it go, Sir.
- Rayne Why will you call me Sir?
- Madge Because you pay for civility and have a right to demand it.
- Rayne Madge, do not treat me so cruelly! Sarcasm scarcely suits that sweet voice of yours.
- Madge Will you loose my hand please?
- Rayne Not until it has accepted this small token of my friendship (holding locket out).
- Madge How lovely! (Bus.)
- Rayne (Dropping her hand.) You'll take it?
- Madge No, thank you, Sir, that is only fit for a fine lady's neck. People might say I'd stolen it.
- Rayne And you wouldn't like to be classed as a thief, Madge!
- Madge Sir!
- Rayne Then give me back my heart again.

²⁹ 'Jade' is defined as a 'term of reprobation applied to a woman, which can also be used playfully', *OED*, p. 176. Rayne suggests that Madge is somehow in the wrong, but through his use of language, he betrays his own reprehensible character.

Madge Now you are talking nonsense and I must leave you.

Rayne Not until I've snatched one honied kiss. (Seizes her)

Madge Help! Father!

Sammy (Rushing out L. E.) Take your paws off, you scoundrel!

Rayne Ah! So you've been eavesdropping, fellow.

Sammy Yes, fellow! And you'll be damned lucky if I don't drop on you with a heave of this ere toe (Threateningly)

Rayne Bah! A gentleman sometimes forgets himself so far as to lay his cane about the shoulders of a bully (In the act of striking Sammy, when NED rushes on. Seizes cane. Breaks it and dashes it on the floor.)

Ned You cowardly hound! Before you strike an old man, there's a little account to square off³⁰ with me.

CURTAIN
End of Act 1.

Act 2
Scene 1

(JIMMY CROUCH'S Sitting Room. JIMMY discovered seated, reading a newspaper and smoking a cigar. Tables with bottles and glasses. MARK PUNCHARD and SETH CRABTREE enter.)

Jimmy How's the lad been running today Mark?

Mark Alreet, Gaffer, he's in first rate nick.

Jimmy Well, sit down for a minute, and give Seth a glass of port.

(Bus. MARK pours out a glass of wine for SETH, and gin for himself.)

 Anyone else on the grounds? (Bus. Newspaper)

Mark Aye! Owd Sammy Titcomb and Felix wor down wi' a dark 'un looking like a reg'ler swell-cove.³¹

Jimmy Who was it?

Mark Dunno.

Jimmy Do you know Seth?

³⁰ 'Square off' is used in this context to mean 'settle, put right', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1351.

³¹ 'Swell-cove' means 'gentleman', or 'dandy', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1398. Mark knows straightaway that Harry is not the usual type of person to be found in pedestrian contests.

- Seth No, but whoever he is he can go. I measured his stride after they'd gone and he clears a good six foot if he clears a hinch.
- Jimmy (Jumping up) Aha! I must get to know who he is and pretty sharp too – clear off to bed both of you.
- Seth (To Mark.) That seems to have riled the Boss.
- Mark Why didn't yer keep yer mug³² shut? Until I'd finished this bottle o' gin.
- Jimmy Now then arn't you goin'? You'll get no more of that gin tonight Mark. (Bus. Newspaper.)
- Mark (Pocketing the bottle) Well don't you go drinking it all and makin' a beast o' yersen, Govnor. Good neet. (Exit with SETH.)
- Jimmy It's no use Sammy Titcomb trying to be a knocker out³³ when me and Luke Chalcraft's made up our minds to win, if Seth only keeps square³⁴ he'll canter home.
- Mark (Pushing his head inside door.) I say Guv'nor.
- Jimmy What is it?
- Mark A lady downstairs wishes to see you.
- Jimmy A lady? Devilish few ladies who wish to see me. Tell her I'm out of town and shan't be back for a month.
- Lilith (Pushing past Mark.) Wouldn't it be better Jimmy to tell your darned lies yourself?
- Jimmy Lilith Bilton!
- Mark Strikes me that young woman's a flyer.³⁵ Jimmy's a got somethin' to be goin on wi', tha' knows. (EXIT.)
- Lilith And is that the best welcome you've got for an old friend?
- Jimmy Well, strike me lucky, Lilith, but I never thought you'd face Sheffield again. You're a game 'un.
- Lilith What do you mean?

³² 'Mug' is a slang word for 'mouth', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 974.

³³ 'Knocker out' means (somewhat literally) 'a redoubtable prize-fighter', *A Dictionary of Slang, Jargon and Cant*, p. 525. Jimmy seems to intend the phrase to mean a broader sense of 'champion', or 'winner'. Sammy is not running the race himself, but is attempting to achieve success through Harry.

³⁴ 'Square' here means 'even, straight, level', OED Online /Entry/188194 [Accessed 18 March 2014].

³⁵ 'Flyer' is a word used to describe 'an attractive young woman', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 528.

- Jimmy Well, it's only five or six years ago since you – but you don't need your memory jogging.
- Lilith I thought you knew me better than to beat about the bush. Come, what is it you're driving at?
- Jimmy Well, if that ain't cool! Do you mean to say that you don't remember a young toff being decoyed to a certain house in Sheffield about five years ago where he was drugged and then fleeced of a diamond ring etcetera?
- Lilith I remember some talk of the affair certainly.
- Jimmy I should think so, and can't you remember a reward being offered for the apprehension of a good looking woman named Lilith Bilton?
- Lilith Well, if you're so anxious to discuss old times. We may as well do it comfortably. (Seating herself in Jimmy's armchair) and as you've not been polite enough to ask, I may as well tell you that I'm dry.
- Jimmy What'll you take?
- Lilith A drop of the old sort.³⁶
- Jimmy You've not forgotten Old Jimmy's white-blossomed aloe? (Assists her to a drink.)
- Lilith No much, there's no gin like it in London. (Leisurely sipping.)
- Jimmy And what's the best news from London? Excuse me Lilith, but you must be sharp, for I'm expecting company.
- Lilith (Cocking her legs on a chair.) Don't apologise Jimmy, I shan't mind 'em in the least.
- Jimmy (Aside) She evidently means to be a sticker, so I'd better make the best of it. (Seats himself) Well, Lilith, and how have you been getting on lately?
- Lilith Oh! Just tol-lolish,³⁷ I find the jays³⁸ are to be caught just as easily in London smoke as in smoky Sheffield, but to be candid Jimmy, I'm tired of catching 'em.

³⁶ 'The old sort': although I have been unable to find this phrase in any dictionary, it would seem to refer to an alcoholic spirit, gin in this instance.

³⁷ 'Tol-lol-ish' means 'tolerably', from 'tol-lol' which means 'tolerable, bearable', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1448.

³⁸ 'Jay' is a slang word which means 'person who does something foolish'. In his *Dictionary of Slang*, Jonathan Green claims that the word was used on US campuses from the late 19th century to the 1920s, but evidently it was used in Sheffield in the 1890s, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 790. Eric Partridge defines 'jay' as 'simpleton', and the fact that his dictionary of slang refers to both Britain and America indicates that the word was used in both countries. Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of the Underworld (British and American) - Being the Vocabularies of Crooks, Criminals, Racketeers, Beggars and Tramps, Convicts, the Commercial Underworld, the Drug Traffic, the White Slave Traffic, Spivs* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 3rd edition 1968), p. 362. The *OED* confirms this definition and usage, *OED*, p. 203.

Jimmy Made yer fortune, eh!

Lilith Not exactly – a rolling stone gathers no moss – but I’ve come to the conclusion it’s quite time I settled down to play the part of the virtuous wife. Think it’ll suit me?

Jimmy (Aside) Wife! Dem’ it. I hope she don’t think Jimmy Crouch’d make her a suitable husband, but I say Lilith, you’ll catch your hare before you cook it, eh!

Lilith Don’t alarm yourself, Jimmy, that’s been done years ago.

Jimmy (Sitting) What! You don’t really mean to say that you’re married?

Lilith That’s just it, as the Yankees say.

Jimmy Wedding take place in London?

Lilith No, here in Sheffield, five years ago.

Jimmy Ah! Was Mr. Juggins a young ‘un or an old ‘un?

Lilith Young and innocent of course.

Jimmy Just so. Any brass?

Lilith Not much at that time, Jimmy, or I shouldn’t have left him, you bet, but I guess he’s in clover now, and very soon I mean to be nibbling myself.

Jimmy Anybody I know?

Lilith Well, I rather think you do. Seeing that he’s the son of your particular crony – Luke Chalcraft.

Jimmy What! Was young Rayne Chalcraft ever idiot enough to marry you?

Lilith You’re not very complimentary, Jimmy, but you’ve guessed it. I have the marriage lines in my pocket, if you’d like to see ‘em.

Jimmy (Aside) And this is the end of all Luke’s schemes to make his son a gentleman. Say you’re joking Lilith, --

Lilith I guess you wouldn’t have me tell a lie, after an absence of five years. I’m dying to see what my dear husband’s developed into. And I thought this would be the best place to hear some news of him.

Jimmy (Aside) They’re coming, but for God’s sake don’t blow the gaff³⁹ in my house Lilith, when Luke hears of it he’ll go stark staring mad.

 (Enter LUKE CHALCRAFT, R. C. followed by RAYNE. The former walks up to C. The latter starts back, catching sight of Lilith.)

³⁹ ‘Blow the gaff’ or ‘blow the gab’ is a slang word which means ‘to expose, betray, inform upon’, *OED*, p. 317.

- Luke Ah! Jimmy, caught for once, you sly dog.
- Jimmy Merely an old friend of mine – Miss Bilton – Mr. Luke Chalcraft –
- Lilith (Getting up) How d'ye do old boy?
- Luke (Stiffly) H'm. How d'ye do?
- Lilith You needn't be so stand offish, introduce me to your young friend.
- Luke This is my son – just come from college, refused the invitation of six Lords a purpose to come and see his old dad. Didn't you Rayne?

(LILITH and RAYNE shake hands, then sit, Bus. with JIMMY.)
- Luke (To Rayne) Hang it all Rayne, you needn't have shaken hands with her, she's not one of your sort my boy.
- Rayne I know what I'm about dad. Don't try and teach your Grandmother to suck eggs – (Seats himself tête-à-tête with Lilith.)
- Luke (To Jimmy, confidential bus.) You've spotted a good looking 'un, Jimmy, but you needn't feel jealous of Rayne, the young dog's only amusing himself – he's a regler lady smasher, ah, ah, ah.⁴⁰
- Jimmy So I heard, but business before pleasure. Who's this dark 'un that Sammy Titcomb's got hold of? They tell me he's a flyer.⁴¹
- Luke Ah! Then you've heard about him?
- Jimmy Yes, but he's not in the Handicap, is he?
- Luke He is, and Rayne thinks he's fast enough to win.
- Jimmy Who is he?
- Luke Harry Bedford Esq. alias Ned Deerfoot, he was the champion amateur at Rayne's college and can do evens like a top.⁴²
- Jimmy You don't mean it? But if Rayne's a pal of his, perhaps he can square⁴³ him.

⁴⁰ Luke seems to be using 'lady smasher' to mean the same as 'lady killer', that is, 'an attractive, charming man who habitually seduces women'.
OED Online /Entry/105011> [Accessed 14 May 2013].

⁴¹ The word 'flyer' here is used in its more obvious sense, that is, someone who runs fast, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 528.

⁴² The exact meaning of this sporting phrase has been difficult to ascertain. It would seem to indicate that Harry is capable of winning races (see also three lines later, when Jimmy worries about Deerfoot's ability to 'do evens').

⁴³ 'Square' is used in this context to mean 'settle, put right' (as in Act 1, scene 1, p. 19), but with the added layer of 'to deal with problems, often by using influence, bribes, threats etc.', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1351.

- Luke I'm afraid now, there was a bit of a dust between 'em, sometime ago. Just look at the young dog, he knows 'ow to get round the ladies.
- Jimmy Hang the ladies! If this ere Deerfoot can do evens, we're flumaxed⁴⁴ any minute. I shall back him up.
- Luke That's no use. Sammy's been piling it on pretty thick, and the lad's come down to short odds.
- Jimmy Then what's to be done?
- Luke Well, between me and you, Rayne there is a devilish cute fellow, I've talked the matter over with him and if we can't square the book, he says we must do it by chicanery! Chicanery, my boy! Chicanery!
- Jimmy Who're you a coddling eh?⁴⁵ Chic – what? How much a pound is it?
- Luke Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! See what yer miss by not being eddicated, it means gillory-poke, Jimmy, gillory-poke!⁴⁶
- Jimmy H'm! I suppose you mean we shall have to do a bit of nobbling.⁴⁷ You and me didn't 'av to go to college to learn that trick. Is he fond of the ladies?
- Luke Are you joking, Jimmy? (Bus.) Look at him!
- Jimmy Damn him - - I don't mean Rayne, I mean Deerfoot.
- Luke Oh! Yes, he's been to the same college, sure to be fond of the petticoats, and being a gentleman born, Sammy lets him out without a trainer.
- Jimmy Then we must get Lilith to help us, she knows how to catch the greenhorns⁴⁸ better than anyone I know.
- Luke Unless they've been to college, eh? Jimmy!
- Jimmy We'll chuck that in. Lilith must meet him somewhere and under some pretence get him to accompany her home and then dose⁴⁹ him. She's used to that game.

⁴⁴ 'Flumaxed' is a variant spelling of 'flummoxed', and is colloquial for 'to be done for', in other words, to be thwarted, or ruined, *OED*, p. 1102.

⁴⁵ 'Cod', slang word, meaning 'to hoax... to humbug, impose on'. *OED Online* /Entry/35558 [Accessed 14 May 2013].

⁴⁶ I have been unable to find any reference to 'gillory-poke' in the dictionaries that I have consulted, but it is clearly another slang word for 'chicanery'.

⁴⁷ 'Nobble' has the dual meaning of 'to tamper with (usu. a horse or greyhound) to prevent it from winning a race'; and 'to swindle, cheat'. The Chalcrafts and Jimmy are prepared to do both. *OED Online* /Entry/127464 [Accessed 14 May 2013].

⁴⁸ 'Greenhorn' means 'a raw, inexperienced person', *OED*, p. 817.

- Luke That's it. Chicanery, my boy! Chicanery! (Turning to Lilith) Take no notice what that gay young dog's a saying to you, he's going to be married to an heiress in a week or two.
- Lilith Indeed!
- Rayne Dry up dad.
- Luke Excuse me my boy, but I've got a little business with this young woman. (Bus. with RAYNE.)
- Lilith (Aside) Jimmy's evidently told him about the marriage and he wishes to pay me something to clear out, that will suit me if the figure's all right.
- Luke Now young woman should you like to make a nice little fortune?
- Lilith It depends under what conditions it's offered.
- Luke Oh! I thought young women of your stamp⁵⁰ didn't bother about conditions so long as it was anything in the line.
- Lilith Do you wish to insult me Sir? What do you mean?
- Rayne Tell the lady what you want to say dad. Straight out and don't be rude.
- Luke But she needn't give herself such airs my boy, five hundred pounds ain't to be sneezed at.
- Lilith Hah! If you're short of five hundred I'll lend it you.
- Luke (To Jimmy) She's a devilish independent young woman. Can you trust her?
- Jimmy Yes, but you'd better let me talk to her. Look here, Lilith, we want a private little affair carrying out, it will be no trouble and will just suit a pretty woman like you.
- Lilith I don't think either Jimmy Crouch or Mr. Luke Chalcraft is in the habit of giving something for nothing.
- Jimmy Certainly not, Lilith, business is business. We want you to meet a certain young fellow that's running in the next handicap and if you can get friendly like and so managed to give him a dose⁵¹ that'll knock him back a yard or two, well there'll be five hundred for you and you can't say that wouldn't pay you well.

⁴⁹ Jimmy is suggesting that Lilith administer a drug to Harry. 'Dose' as a noun means a definite quantity of medicine or a drug, but it also has the slang meaning of 'an unpleasant experience', *OED*, p. 966-967; *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 434.

⁵⁰ 'Stamp' is here used figuratively from its original meaning of 'the mark, impression, or imprint made with an engraved block or die'. Lilith is clearly 'marked' as an unscrupulous woman. *OED Online* /Entry/188919 [Accessed 18 March 2014].

⁵¹ See footnote 48.

- Lilith And who's the party?
- Luke Oh! No! young woman, you must first say whether you'll undertake the commission, yes or no.
- Lilith Then no, Luke Chalcraft and Jimmy Crouch can do their own dirty work.
- Jimmy (To Luke) Dam it, you've spoilt the deal. What are we to do? (They confer. Bus.)
- Lilith (To Rayne) And as you seem afraid to acquaint your precious father with the news of our marriage, I suppose I must.
- Rayne Don't be a fool. It would be simply madness at present. I have been gambling heavily and losing damnably, and I swear I've not a penny left in the world.
- Lilith Then you must find it. As your wife I object to keep myself any longer. I'll give you one minute to consider whether you are to tell your father or I am. (Moves up)
- Luke (To Jimmy) Nonsense, I tell you Rayne can get her round in no time. Ask him to try. (Jimmy crosses to Rayne and then returns to the rear with Luke.)
- Rayne (To Lilith) Listen to me Lilith, if our man, Crabtree, wins I shall net five thousand pounds and nothing can stop him but this fellow Deerfoot – Dose him you must, kill him if you like but win the Handicap he shall not.
- Lilith Indeed and have you no objection to your wife being mixed up in such a shady piece of business?
- Rayne Under these circumstances, no. If you prevent Ned Deerfoot winning, I shall be independent of that old fool yonder and I will then acknowledge you as my lawfully wedded wife.
- Lilith (Aside) The temptation is great and it will only be one more mark to the long score already chalked up against me. (To Rayne) This business goes against the grain, my dear husband, but on those terms I agree to help you, try to play me false, however and you will only repent once but that will be for the remainder of your life. (Bus. EXIT.)
- Rayne Miss Bilton has promised me to do what we want her, so come along dad. (EXIT.)
- Luke Hear that, Jimmy? The ladies can't refuse him anything. I knew he'd do the trick for us – he's a clever lad, Jimmy – a clever lad. (EXIT.)

Jimmy Well, I suppose it's only natural for a chap to be a bit gone on his own bantling.⁵² Every fond mamma thinks her own precious little gosling will turn out a swan, but dem it what a precious shindy⁵³ there'll be when Mr. Luke Chalcraft finds out that his clever son has let him in for such a haristocratic daughter-in-law. Ha! Ha! Ha! (EXIT.)

Act 2
Scene 2

(Front Scene – the Lawn at Cadeby Manor, as in Scene 2 Act 1. POLLY and DICK ENTER L.)

Polly What is it you want me for Mr. Truefitt? I hope Mrs. Truefitt and the two children are quite well.

Dick Very well indeed, lass! Thank you. What I wants is to have a little talk about that mysterious visitor who's been staying at the Manor since yesterday. He seems to me a very inquisitive sort of gent, tha knows.

Polly Ha! He's been speaking to you then?

Dick No, but I hear as how he's been cross examining all the indoor servants very closely about something or other and this morning I saw him and the head gardener a jawing together for above half-an-hour. I reckon it will be my turn next, but before he tackles me, I should like to know what his little game is tha knows.

Polly Oh! He's such a nice pleasant spoken gentleman. His name's Mr. Lynx, and he comes from London. I'm sure you'll like him.

Dick That all depends, Polly. There's various kinds o' links, tha knows. There's the links in a chain of evidence which the lawyers sometimes fasten so tight around a poor devil's neck that it chokes him. Can't say as how I should like them. On the other hand there's a nice fat round links o' sausages which nobody objects to, and then there's the missing links we sometimes read about in the newspapers, these are a kind of mysterious high class monkey I understand, which nobody appears to know anything at all about (jerking his thumb over his shoulder) Think yon chap's one o' them.

Polly (Laughing) Oh! Mr. Truefitt it's quite a relief to hear one of your jokes, there's been nothing but tears and long faces at the Manor since Mr. Harry went. Both the old Squire and Miss Blanche are dreadfully put about at not having heard a word from him. I don't know which is cut up the most. Miss Blanche is looking as white as a lily and poor master has aged wonderfully this last week or two.

Dick Yes, I've noticed the change in t'owd Squire, myself and I feel downright sorry for him, still it was his own fault, tha knows. He shouldn'a try to force a tit that's mettlesome into the shafts of a coal

⁵² The definition given in the *Oxford English Dictionary* for 'bantling' is 'a young or small child, a brat, often used depreciatively, and formerly as a synonym of bastard. *OED*, p. 938.

⁵³ 'Shindy' means 'noise, disturbance, commotion', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1265.

cart, but see thee Polly, tha's not told me what this Mr. Lynx is stopping here for?

Polly How should I know. I must be going.

Dick Why you know, because your good looks and nice manners have made you such a favourite with Miss Blanche that she tells everything. Now, Polly, Mr. Lynx is –

Polly Mind! It's a secret but he is a Detective, engaged by the Squire and Miss Blanche, to try and find out Mr. Harry's whereabouts; and for the sake of the kindest, sweetest mistress in the world I hope he'll succeed! (EXIT.)

Dick It wouldn't take him long to do that if he could only catch sight o' this letter (reads):

The Ring o' Bells, Sheffield, May 9th

Dear Dick

I am very grateful for your long letter informing me how matters are progressing at Cadeby. I am improving daily under Sammy's guidance and although Felix finds me plenty of work to do, not a day, nay, scarcely an hour passes, without my thoughts fly back to my dear old home and the loved ones who are there. I should be sorry to think, however, that Miss Blanche, and my Father are taking my absence to heart quite so keenly as you seem to imagine, for I have quite determined to remain here until I have paid off every penny I owe and proved to my father that I did not deserve to be taunted as a fortune-hunter. The longer I am away the greater will be the pleasure of meeting. Continue to keep my secret, therefore, and write to me as often as you hitherto have done.

Yours etc. Harry Bedford.

My Horders are plain enough there. Dick Truefitt's got to keep his ears open and his mouth shut! (Replaces letter in his pocket) and he'll do it!

(ENTER BLANCHE R. She carries a small basket on her arm covered with a white cloth from one corner of which peeps the neck of a bottle.)

Blanche Good morning, Dick.

Dick Mornin' Miss Blanche, mornin' shall I take the basket, ma'am?

Blanche No, thank you, I am merely going across the Park to see poor Marshall's wife, who is down with the influenza – have you heard whether it is spreading in the village?

Dick No as 'ow I'm aware on, but Dr. Prosser's man was a-telling me yesterday that it was a werry catching sort o' complaint this here infloenza – s'pose I sends the barskit down, Miss Blanche with one o' the stable lads!

- Blanche No, no, Bob or Charles would be quite as liable to contract the disease as I, and then you would be a hand short in the stables. Influenza draws no distinction I believe between master and man mistress or maid, and whether they perform them or not, rich people have their duties and responsibilities as well as the poor!
- Dick Aye, Aye, Miss Blanche, you will excuse me a-sayin' so, but if all the gentry'd only take a few leaves out o' your book we shouldna hear quite so much now-a-days about poor folks kicking over the traces,⁵⁴ tha knows! There's t'owd Doctor Prosser, for instance, he's neither chick nor child, and they do say in t'village as how he's a-rollin' in money and yet if a poor labourer's wife goes to him for a bottle of physic for her sick babby the old skin-flint allus says 'I hope tha's got t'half crown – if not you must go and fetch it – no money no physic at this shop!
- Blanche Yes, as you say, Dick, old Dr. Prosser has neither wife nor child, no one to love and care for, and so he has but one aim and object in life, and that is to heap a useless fill of gold on the spot where his heart should be. But if he had ever loved, and the object of his affection had been taken from him, then his heart would have opened wide to the misery and sufferings endured by others –
- Dick (Aside) She's a-thinking of Marster 'arry now!
- Blanche Dick, there's a whisper going round the Servants' Hall to the effect that you know where Mr. Harry's gone, and that you are in communication with him – is it true?
- Dick Lor'! Miss Blanche, you don't say as 'ow anybody takes notice of the cackling which goes on in the Servants' 'all! Why half a dozen servant maids is calculated to set a whole regiment of soldiers by the hears is less than no time – we shall have news of Marster 'arry before many weeks are over I'll be bahnd!
- Blanche Then you know not whether he is in England still, or whether he has gone abroad, as I fear, to seek his fortunes in the gold diggings, or the Diamond fields? The dangers of such a wild life would prove only too attractive for his brave, adventurous spirit!
- Dick Nay, Miss Blanche, Marster 'Arry's got too great a treasure at Cadeby to leave behind him the shores of old England yet awhile.
- Blanche Ah! The value he places upon anything at Cadeby must indeed be small. Whatever his Father may have said I have never quarrelled with him in my life, I therefore know of no reason why he should treat me with such studied coldness and neglect. (Bus. with handkerchief.)

⁵⁴ 'Kick over the traces' is an informal idiom which means 'to behave badly and show no respect for authority', <<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british>> [Accessed 18 March 2014]. Dick is clearly stating here that those with money must take responsibility for social unrest, and not blame those who are without.

Dick (Aside) Dick Truefitt, you are a tamashun⁵⁵ coward to stand by and see a sweet young creature a-suffering like that. I should like somebody to come behind thee, lad, and gie thee a right good horse-whipping, dang me⁵⁶ if I shouldn't! (To BLANCHE) Come, cheer up Miss Blanche, you'll excuse me a-speaking so familiar, but I loves the young Marster as though he were my own flesh and blood. Since the time I first taught him to ride the old Shetland which is still grazing in the meadow yonder, I allus found Marster 'arry as true and honest as the day and dash me if I think he'll begin to deceive people now he's developed into the 'andsomest gentleman and the finest cross country rider in the Shire. (Bus. with BLANCHE.)

(ENTER SQUIRE and LYNX)

Squire I am truly sorry Mr. Lynx that your enquiries amongst the servants have proved so unsuccessful, but there is one chance still left to you. To make a discovery at Cadeby, the man you see speaking to Miss Middleton is Dick Truefitt, my groom, he was always a great favourite with my boy and if you should fail to gain any information from him then I fear indeed that your quest will be in vain. Blanche, are you going this way? (EXIT SQUIRE and BLANCHE.)

Lynx (To TRUEFIT, as latter is walking off) Mr. Truefitt, I believe. Can you spare me a minute?

Dick (Coming down C.) Forty if yer like, Guvnor. The Squire pays us set wages, and if a gentleman like you cares to waste his time a-talking to us, why his time's simply wasted and there's an end on't tha knows.

Lynx Ah! You seem to be an accommodating sort of a chap, long in the head, probably, if short in the leg eh?

Dick That's as you finds me Guvnor. I may be a bigger fool than I look but I comes fra Yorkshire, tha knows.

Lynx Well! That's honest, to put me on my guard; bye the bye, the Squire seems uncommonly cut up about his son's absence. Don't you think it's very foolish for the young Squire to keep away when he's got a good father and a pretty sweetheart dying to welcome him home again?

⁵⁵ The meaning of the word 'tamashun' in this context is difficult to ascertain, as it does not appear in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, or in a number of slang dictionaries. In his *Dictionary of Slang*, Eric Partridge cites N. W. Bancroft, who asserts that the roots of the word 'tamasha' can be found in the Hindustani language, and means 'anything entertaining or exciting; an entertainment, a display, ca. 1840-1940'. N. W. Bancroft, in 'From Recruit to Staff Sergeant', 1885, cited in *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, by Eric Partridge, edited by Paul Beale (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 8th Edition, 1984), p. 1202. If 'tamashun' is related to this word, it would seem to be there for emphasis - Dick is stressing that he feels extremely cowardly, and that this must be obvious to an observer.

⁵⁶ 'Dang' appears to be another word for 'damn': the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives its first usage as 1906, but this instance provides evidence that it was in use before that time. *OED*, p. 240.

- Dick What I think on that 'ere question I keeps to myself, Guv'nor, but I don't mind telling you one thing.
- Lynx And what's that?
- Dick Why, I don't addle my brass⁵⁷ wi' poking my nose into other people's business, and it's not everybody who can say that.
- Lynx (Aside) I shall get nothing out of this little Hop o' my-thumb by beating about the bush, so I may as well go straight to the mark. (To DICK as he is walking off R.U.E.) Here Dick, I've got no time to waste so I may as well tell you at once that I am a detective employed by the Squire to discover the whereabouts of his son and you know where he is!
- Dick But I say Guv'nor is that what you do for a living?
- Lynx Yes, that is my business.
- Dick Lor! And do you think you could find me a son?
- Lynx Decidedly, providing you paid me, of course I don't work for nothing.
- Dick Certainly not, and what's yer figure?
- Lynx Well, it varies according to the circumstances of the case.
- Dick Just so. I suppose you alters yer figger according to the size of the article provided. Now we've got two gels, nice little things in their way, but I've told the missus I'm determined we'll have a son that can take my place in the stables when I'm gone out to grass. You find him for me, Guv'nor but mind he'll have to stand five foot one and a half, neck a quart o'beer, and fight a rough round wi' any lad in the country, and s'help me Moses, I'll call him Dick Truefitt Junior. (EXIT)
- Lynx Ah! A difficult card to deal with, and he knows where young Mr. Bedford is staying, I am convinced, and before another twenty four hours have passed I hope I shall be able to devise some means of wringing the secret from him. (EXIT.)

END OF SCENE 2.

⁵⁷ I could not find an exact reference to, or definition of, this phrase. 'Addle' can mean 'to acquire for oneself, to earn', and 'brass' is often used as a slang word for cash, or money in general, *Oxford English Dictionary*, p. 145 and p. 493. The *OED* notes that the use of 'addle' in this manner is 'found only in northern writers, and now exclusively dialectical, but used everywhere from Leicestershire to Northumberland'. It would seem that Dick is saying that he does not earn money by snooping, in other words that 'poking his nose into other people's business' is not rewarding for him. Dick uses this phrase to criticise Lynx and to contrast the two men and their different methods of earning money.

Act 2
Scene 3

(Bar-parlour, Ring o' Bells. Time – morning. Madge discovered dusting etc.)

- Madge Why, it must be nearly breakfast time it's strange that Felix and Ned haven't started yet for their morning's walk. (FELIX ENTERS, R. E.) Oh! There you are Mr. Lazy Bones.⁵⁸ Where's Ned? And how awfully sleepy you look. What time did you go to bed?
- Felix Not till two o'clock this morning, Madge, but if you give me a kiss I shan't feel sleepy again today, they're so awfully refreshing. (Bus.)
- Madge What will father say, if he gets to hear that you kept Ned up so late as that, a nice trainer you are.
- Felix It's not my fault that the lad's been out all night.
- Madge All night!
- Felix Yes, he started out last night about eight o'clock and said he was going to the Theatre, and I've not seen anything of him since.
- Madge Well, I couldn't have thought it of him, that's how father's served for being so trustful of people. Runners are a bad lot, Felix, but I never thought that Ned Deerfoot would have gone sweethearting, gentlemen or no gentlemen they're all alike.
- Felix For shame, Madge, it's my opinion that something must have happened to the lad. He would no more think of going after the girls than I should. Didn't I tell you he was engaged?
- Madge No! You tell me nothing that's likely to interest me.
- Felix But he is, and to one of the nicest sweetest girls in the kingdom.
- Mrs. Titcomb (ENTERS, R.E.) Breakfast ready, Madge?
- Madge Not quite mother.
- Mrs. Titcomb Then see about gettin' it. Where's Master Ned? Gone out of the road as usual, I suppose, to give you two spoonies⁵⁹ a chance. Why don't you speak lad? Where is he?
- Felix That's what I should like to know. He's not got home from the Theatre yet. I sat up till 2 o'clock this morning for him, and –
- Sammy (ENTERS, R. E.) Get me a drop o' rum and milk, Madge! Who was that sitting up till 2 o'clock in the morning?

⁵⁸ 'Lazybones' is a slang word which has been used since the sixteenth century to describe an idler or a loafer. *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 866. It is unclear whether the prefix 'Mr' was a common feature at this time.

⁵⁹ 'Spoonie' seems to be a variant spelling of 'spooney', and means 'someone who is sentimentally in love', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1347. Mrs Titcomb is referring to Felix and Madge.

- Felix I was.
- Sammy More fool you Felix; you didn't keep Ned up till that time, did you?
- Felix No, but he kept me up.
- Sammy What!! Got card playing I suppose after he came from the theatre?
- Felix (Aside) How am I to tell him?
- Sammy Mind it doesn't occur again Felix. It'll perhaps knock the lad back half a yard I don't like these late hours.
- Felix He didn't come home at all, worse luck!
- Sammy Didn't come home at all! You don't mean to say he was out all night?
- Felix Very sorry Sammy, but I've not seen anything of Ned since eight o'clock last night.
- Sammy Don't say that Felix! Only a week before the Handicap too! (Groans.)
- Mrs. Titcomb Don't take on like that, Sammy. It'll perhaps be all right.
- Sammy If what Felix says is true, we are ruined! We are ruined!
- (MADGE ENTERS R.E. with a glass of rum and milk. TUBB enters L.E. meets Madge in C. and takes the glass.)
- Tubb (Holding up the glass) "There's a providence which shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will". Now ain't that funny? (Drinks off the contents) No sooner does a policeman feel thirsty than his wants are immediately anticipated by some kind and good looking young woman like this. (To Sammy) I say Guv'nor, you looks bad and well you may, you'll never get to Heaven if you drinks rum and milk before breakfast. (Nodding his head.) I wants you half a minute. (Sammy crosses over R.U.E. and Tubb inquires confidentially) Have you a young swell named Harry Bedford staying here?
- Sammy Yes, do you know where he is?
- Tubb I guess I do, as well as the young man knows himself, he's in the stone jug⁶⁰ – cell No. 16 – corridor 5. Deposited there by P.C. Tubb, No. 119; at 11.30 pm last night.
- Sammy You don't mean to say he's locked up?
- Tubb And is likely to be for the next fourteen days.
- Sammy Fourteen days?

⁶⁰ 'Stone jug' is a slang word for 'prison', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1347.

- Tubb Well, he might get off wi' seven – it depends whether Stipendiary Hawkfinch is in his usual bad temper this morning (giving glass to Mrs. Titcomb.) That's the sort of milk Shakespeare had in his eye when he spoke about The Milk o' Human Kindness.
- Felix But I say Tubb, what's the prisoner charged with?
- Tubb Assault! Street brawling and interfering with P. C. Tubb in the hexecution of his duty – likewise drunkenness.
- Madge I don't believe it.
- Mrs. Titcomb S'sh! Shall you try another glass Mr. Tubb?
- Tubb Thank you, Mum. (EXIT MRS. TITCOMB R.E.) What you believe young woman is neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red 'errin' as the poet says. When young swells like this 'ere Mr. Bedford gets on the booze there's no accountin' for what they does.
- Felix Now Mr. Tubb, I know you of old. This young fellow didn't leave here till eight o'clock last night for the theatre. He was then perfectly sober, say you're joking, and I'll give you the straight tip for the handicap.
- Tubb It's no use you trying to gammon⁶¹ me, Felix. Tubb always does his duty without fear or favour, bribery or corruptin'
- Mrs. Titcomb (ENTERS L.E. with a glass) You may as well wet t'other eye, Mr. Tubb.
- Tubb Sartinly mum, good stuff should never go a beggin' as a cove⁶² said the other day, when he was summoned for knocking a cadging parson down! (drinks and returns glass to Mrs. Titcomb) and as to you givin' me the straight tip for the 'andicap, Felix, you're too late my boy. Tubb's got all his pieces down on this ere dark horse of yours, Ned Deerfoot. (SAMMY & FELIX exchange glances.)
- Madge Could you drink another glass Mr. Tubb?
- Tubb Could a cow eat a carrot? If your mother had axed [sic] me, now I should have said decidedly no! You never find Tubb a trespassing on generosity. (MADGE EXIT as TUBB gives SAMMY a note.) Perhaps you'd better read this ere note.
- Sammy Who is it from?
- Tubb Why, the prisoner, Sammy, to be sure.
- Sammy (Handing note to FELIX) Here read it up, Felix.

⁶¹ 'Gammon' as a verb means 'to pretend, to tease amicably', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 564 (see footnote 24)

⁶² The meaning of 'cove' is given as a 'fellow' or a 'chap', sometimes 'a customer'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* asserts that it has a similar meaning as 'chap', except that 'cove belongs to a lower and more slangy stratum of speech', *OED*, p. 1068.

- Felix (Reading) Dear Sammy, - As I was leaving the theatre last night, I was accosted by a woman who gave me a note which purported to be from an old college chum who lay ill in the town and needed assistance. I said I would visit him with a Doctor in the morning, but the woman commenced to scream, and a policeman arriving on the scene this vile creature at once preferred a charge of assault against me. Immediately on receipt of this note send me the best lawyer in Sheffield to see me, and if he can only obtain my release the handicap may yet be won by,
- Yours faithfully,
Ned Deerfoot.
- Tubb What's that? Ned who? Has the mighty Tubb been trapped, rolled about and made a Cat's Paw⁶³ of?
- Felix No, you've only made a slight mistake Mr. Tubb. Ned Deerfoot last night was as sober as you are.
- Tubb: Ned Deerfoot! Why the prisoner himself gave his name as Harry Bedford.
- Felix But Deerfoot's the name he runs in.
- Tubb Then why the d - - d didn't he say so? If I'd known that I wouldn't a run him in for twenty five pound notes – Ah. Tubb smells a rat!
- Sammy (Aside) And so does Sammy Titcomb. Who gave you this five pound note Mr. Tubb?
- Tubb Now Sammy, I didn't say that anybody gave me one!
- Sammy No, but a wink's as good as a nod to a blind 'oss tha knows.
- Tubb (Enter Madge with a glass which Tubb negotiates) Well, as you've always acted like a Father to me Sammy, I'll tell you the truth – it was Rayne Chalcraft!
- Madge The wretch! (EXIT)
- Felix The scoundrel! (EXIT)
- Sammy The villain!
- Tubb He's all that and a bit more! It was a plant and I shall be proud to prove it.
- Sammy But do you mean to stick to that five-pun note which Rayne Chalcraft gave you?
- Tubb To say that I shall wouldn't be professional Sammy.

⁶³ The meaning of a 'Cat's Paw' is given as 'a person used as a tool by another to accomplish a purpose, in other words, a dupe', *OED*, p. 992.

- Sammy And to say that you'll give it him back again wouldn't be exactly true?
- Tubb You are quite right there, Sammy, it wouldn't.
- Sammy Then go and shove it on Ned Deerfoot at the best odds you can get, for he'll win the Handicap as certain as I'm now off to the lawyer's. (EXIT)
- Tubb Right you are Sammy, that is if he ain't nobbled again by the Chalcraft stable, but if they try on their little game a second time, they'll find it won't be quite so easy to tap⁶⁴ Tobias Tubb. (EXIT)

Act 2
Scene 4

(Fargate, Sheffield, Front Cloth. RAYNE and LILITH ENTER L.)

- Rayne Holloa! Here's the pater coming. (LUKE ENTERS R.) Good morning, Dad!
- Luke Ah! Good morning, you young dog; just off to the Police Court. I suppose to persecute Deerfoot for committing that aggravated assault last night on this ere hinnercent young thing, eh! Aye lad, but it wor a clever trick. (Walks towards L.U.R. laughing.)
- Lilith (To Rayne) I wish you would induce your worthy parent to adopt a more respectful tone towards his daughter-in-law. I detest vulgarity!
- Luke By-the-bye, young woman, how did you manage it? I should like to hear full particulars.
- Rayne Oh, never mind the particulars, dad! (LILITH walks towards R.U.E. shrugging her shoulders).
- Luke Well she is a high-stepper⁶⁵ and no mistake! (To LILITH as she returns to C.) I suppose you'll condescend to explain the fakement⁶⁶ to me and Jimmy when we 'ands over the five hundred quid?
- Rayne Look here Dad, isn't is sufficient to know the trick done – thanks to the ingenuity of this lady and a well-spent five pound note which I

⁶⁴ There are two definitions of 'tap' which have a bearing on Tubb's dialogue. The word was used in the nineteenth century to mean 'to rob, steal from', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1415, but also it can mean 'to get the upper hand', *A Dictionary of Slang, Jargon and Cant*, p. 335.

⁶⁵ 'High-stepper': 'a fashionably dressed or smoothly mannered person; (from late nineteenth century), a hedonist, *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 715. Given that Lilith walks away 'shrugging her shoulders', the use of the term here also implies that she is insouciant as well as stylish.

⁶⁶ 'Fakement' is slang for 'a piece of manipulation, contrivance, "dodge", OED Online /Entry/67779> [Accessed 17 March 2014].

slipped into the willing palm of a thick-headed policeman named Tubb!

- Luke Aye! There's nowt like a colledge eddication arter all – is there missy? (Chucks Lilith under the chin.)
- Lilith Well Sir! Judging by the way you behave to ladies I should imagine your education was picked up at the college where they sleep on plank-beds and dine off skilly.⁶⁷ (To Rayne) I will walk on slowly until you overtake me. (EXIT R.)
- Luke Jeroosalem!!! I never, never did –
- Rayne Now look here, dad – (ENTER JIMMY excitedly, L.)
- Jimmy Oh! There you are, dem it! a nice sort of fix we're in now!
- Rayne What's the matter?
- Luke Has Seth broke down?
- Jimmy No, but Ned Deerfoot's bailed out of prison, and what's more he'll stop out, dem it, until after he's won t'Handicap.
- Rayne Don't you believe it! If he's not in the Court this morning the case will be tried in his absence and he will get an extra seven days for not putting in an appearance!
- Jimmy Extra Devil! Who's going to prove the charge? Dem it!
- Rayne Miss Bilton and myself.
- Jimmy Pooh! If you want to get three months apiece, the sooner you starts on that job the better.
- Rayne Nonsense, man, what do you mean?
- Jimmy Simply this. P.C. Tubb has given us away over that five pound note you were fool enough to part with, and he swears that if ever you go near the Police Court he will out with all he knows and prove to the beak⁶⁸ that the whole affair was a put up job!
- Rayne Damnation!
- Luke Then we are simply ruined!
- Jimmy Thanks to your clever son, dam it! and to his habit of throwing about five-pun notes which somebody else has worked for. And that's not all dem it! As soon as Deerfoot was arrested last night I told my clerk to lay against Deerfoot to all comers and to any amount.

⁶⁷ 'Skilly' is a kind of thin, watery porridge, gruel or soup, commonly made from oatmeal, and traditionally used especially in prisons and workhouses. OED Online /Entry/180883 [Accessed 14 May 2013].

⁶⁸ 'Beak' is a slang word for magistrate or justice of the peace, OED, p. 14.

Luke (Groaning) What's to be done?

Jimmy Why, between us, we have now overlaid our books, to the pretty tune of £9,500!

Luke £9,500?

Jimmy That's the exact sum! (Bus. with book)

Luke Then the game's up. (Aside) Here's one for Ameriky tomorrow!

Jimmy (Aside) If I can't see a way out of this hole Luke and his clever son will turn tail and leave me in the ditch to be shot at!

Rayne What do you propose doing, Jimmy?

Jimmy I propose going to college for a year or two to learn how to make a blasted idiot of myself!

Luke Can't you see any way out on it, Jimmy?

Jimmy There's only one thing to be done as I can see – We must try and get Sammy to let Deerfoot run loose.⁶⁹

Luke It can't be done.

Jimmy Not unless we make the offer tempting enough. Some years ago we booked him out of £3,000 over Shoefly, yer remember!

Luke Yes, and he'll never forgive us for it.

Jimmy Stop a minute, we'll offer to repay the £3,000 in Bank of England notes on condition that Deerfoot is pulled. That will be clear bounce⁷⁰ and with the money he'll be able to back Crabtree to any amount. I know that he is on a dead certainty.

Luke It's a big lump to part wi'.

Jimmy But not so much as £9,500 dem it!

Luke You'd want the agreement in black and white, Jimmy?

Jimmy Yes, Rayne shall take the notes with the receipts ready to sign – and if Sammy refuses to take 'em t'owd chap's got less sense even than I give him credit for. (EXIT)

Luke Come away, Rayne, Jimmy's been rather hard on the lad, but thou shalt draw up the receipts and let him see that eddication is some use after all. (EXIT)

⁶⁹ 'Run loose' here would seem to mean to deliberately lose the race by running badly.

⁷⁰ The word 'bounce' could have several meanings, but it is most likely that in this context it means 'persuasion'. Used as a verb, 'bounce' can mean 'persuade', or as a noun, 'a tool of persuasion', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 168. Jimmy is certain that their offer of £3,000 will convince Sammy to comply with their scheme, and ensure that Deerfoot will not win the race.

Rayne The old imbecile. (EXIT)

END OF SCENE 4.

Act 2
Scene 5

(Bar Parlour, Ring o' Bells. Time evening. FELIX and MADGE discovered, seated vis a vis, each with a copy of one of Dick's Penny Acting Plays open. They are learning their parts for some amateur theatricals. (To account for Ned's disguise in the house))

Madge (Laughingly) Now, Mr. Pirate, look sharp and let us get the scene finished before Sammy and Ned come in. You must put a little more tragedy into that last speech – Like this for instance – (glances at book) “Fair Maiden, I can no longer tarry, that signal tells me that my master awaits your answer beyond the castle walls.”

Felix “Fair Maiden, I can no longer tarry, that signal tells me my master's coming and I must kiss you once again behind the castle walls. (Bus.)

Madge Really, Felix, I don't believe you will ever shine as an actor, you are too frivolous. I dare bet twopence, you've not thought another word about procuring the pirate dress you've got to wear –

Felix You'll bet me two pennies, will you? Make it kisses and I'll take it –

Madge Done!

Felix Well, I've all the piratical toggery stowed away in my room safe enough since yesterday, so just hand over the wager, Miss Madge.

Madge I thought pirates never condescended to ask for anything but always took what they wanted.

Felix They don't want to be asked twice, you bet. (Bus.)

(ENTER SAMMY and NED)

Ned Caught again, Felix.

Sammy And it's glasses round every time tha' knows. Bring me a drop of t'owd sort,⁷¹ Madge. (MADGE bus. with glasses, EXIT) Sit thee down, Felix (all sit). I was just a telling Ned how the Crouch and Chalcraft stable served me the hottest trick I was ever served in my life.

Ned I hope they didn't introduce you to the inside of Sheffield prison!

Sammy Worse than that. Some year ago they saved a lad called Shoefly for the Shrove-tide Handicap.

Felix Aye! That was a scorcher.

⁷¹ Earlier, Lilith used the phrase 'the old sort' (Act 2, scene 1; footnote 35), and Sammy imbues it with his Yorkshire inflection, thus 't'owd sort'.

- Sammy But by some means they got forestalled by the public and couldn't back him at anything like decent shots, so what do you think they did?
- Ned Pulled him I suppose.
- Sammy No, the handicappers knew Shoefly's form and he would never have got such a good mark again, so Jimmy Crouch came to me and said: "The public has spoilt the market for us over Shoefly. What are we to do?" "Please yourself" I answered "My book's full, and if Shoefly wins I shall probably drop a hundred or two." "Just so" said Jimmy "But how if he doesn't win? So and so have promised us a hundred apiece to let him run loose. Are you willing to do the same? The public is still hedgy on Shoefly and you'll soon see your money back. Well I didn't like that sort of business, but as Jimmy mentioned a lot of straight uns who had promised a hundred and as I thought it was rather hard cheese for 'em. I paid my share like a lamb and it was just as Jimmy prophesied, there was a regular rush on Shoefly a day or two after, and as I thought he wasn't a trier I overlaid my book to the extent of £3,000.
- Ned But Shoefly didn't win?
- Sammy Yes, he did, and I had to pay the money, and not till nearly six months after did I learn that it was the Crouch and Chalcraft agents who had backed him with me. Think of that.
- Ned Whew! That was a roasting and no mistake – chicanery with a vengeance.
- Sammy Chic - what? I calls it roguery – d--- roguery, and now let me give you a bit of advice, never take or drink anything outside this house till after the Handicap and on no account talk to strangers. Experience they say makes even fools wise. Holloa! Who's this?
- Madge (ENTER R.E. followed by LYNX) This gentleman wishes to speak to Mr. Deerfoot.
- Sammy (To NED) Beware on him. Beware on him! (LYNX advances and gives NED his card)
- Ned (Reading) Mr. Joseph Lynx. Pray take a seat Mr. Lynx. (LYNX seats himself) And what's your business with me?
- Lynx Of a strictly private and confidential nature, not of the slightest importance to anyone else in the world. (Bowing towards SAMMY who eyes him suspiciously.) I assure you.
- Ned But I have no business which I wish to keep private from my friends here.
- Sammy (Aside) That's reet, lad; that's reet!⁷²

⁷² Sammy means 'right', but gives it a Yorkshire variation.

- Lynx (Looking round) If these are all Mr. Bedford's friends, then I'll (to MADGE) take a drop of brandy and soda, if you please Miss. (To SAMMY) Fine growing weather, Mr. Titcomb!
- Sammy Oh! Aw! I'm told the geese⁷³ are coming on uncommon well.
- Lynx Indeed? I'm a stranger in these parts but I understand Sheffield's quite a noted place for 'em (surveying the apartment) I've already seen some very fine specimens, I assure you!
- Sammy But they don't come up to Lunnoners, do they Mr. What's your name? Slinks? Or Blinks?
- Lynx My name is Lynx Mr. Titcomb, and you are quite right, there are some remarkably fine birds in town, but you mustn't take them on appearances, Mr. Titcomb, you'll find them deucedly tough, I assure you!
- Ned Well, the time's slipping on, Mr. Lynx, and there's one bird here who's off to roost pretty quick.
- Sammy (Aside) That's reet, lad, the sooner the better.
- Lynx Aw! When you're in training for a Sheffield Handicap you find it necessary to cultivate methodical habits, eh! Mr. Bedford? You'll find Sheffield different to Oxford and Cadeby, eh?
- Ned Do you know Cadeby?
- Lynx Aw! Yes, and the Squire and Miss Middleton likewise, nice girl Miss Middleton.
- Ned What business had you at Cadeby?
- Lynx I shall have great pleasure in telling you providing (looks at the other occupants and shrugs his shoulders) I assure you.
- Ned (Aside) Confound the fool! (To Sammy) Do you mind leaving us a minute?
- Felix & Madge Certainly! (EXIT)
- Sammy (Aside to NED) Go to bed my boy and let me talk to this ere cove.⁷⁴ He's one of Jimmy Crouch's spies. Have nothing to do with him, Ned.
- Ned He won't get the best of me, you bet. Leave us for a few minutes, there's a good fellow.
- Sammy I'll go, but I don't like the looks of him, Ned. Beware on him, my lad, beware on him! (EXIT suspiciously)

⁷³ 'Geese', as the plural of 'goose' can innocently refer to the birds, but it can also be used to mean 'fools', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 628.

⁷⁴ See footnote 62.

- Ned And now, Mr. Lynx?
- Lynx You'd like to know who and what I am? (Assuming a business tone of voice) I am a private detective in the employment of your father.
- Ned A detective!
- Lynx And naturally I do not care to let my business be known to everybody although in discovering your whereabouts I may as well say that it is nearly finished.
- Ned Ha! My father was anxious enough to lose sight of me. I don't see why he need put himself about to find me again.
- Lynx Nay, Sir, you wrong your father. My instructions are "Tell Harry, I will pay all his debts and forgive and forget everything, if he will only come back again to a miserable and a lonely old man".
- Ned (Aside) poor old dad. But I say Mr. Lynx, I can't leave Sheffield for another week.
- Lynx Not till the Handicap's over in fact?
- Ned No! I've pledged my word to do my best to win and by Heaven's –
- Lynx You will, unless the Crouch and Chalcraft firm are successful in a certain little plot they are hatching against you.
- Ned A plot?
- Lynx Yes I'm a particular friend of Rayne Chalcraft's. I've only known him for twenty four hours, but he already loves me like a brother.
- Ned A friend of Rayne Chalcraft's!
- Lynx You know what I mean. I've been practising my old masher⁷⁵ trick on him and he thinks he's got a pigeon⁷⁶ to pluck. Twig?⁷⁷
- Ned Oh! I see, and I can rely on your assistance?
- Lynx Yes, and in proof of it I am going to invest £50, which I shall receive from your father, on yourself for the Handicap. I want you to get me the best price you can.
- Ned I'd better call Sammy. (SAMMY appears at the rear and listens.)
- Lynx No! It will be best to keep Sammy in the dark. I don't like my work nipped in the bud. Here's the money. (Gives NED notes which he places in his pocket book, and places it on the table in order to

⁷⁵ 'Masher' means 'a fashionable young man of the late Victorian or Edwardian era especially one fond of the company of women; a dandy', OED Online /Entry/114595 [Accessed 17 March 2014].

⁷⁶ 'Pigeon' is another word for 'fool' or 'dupe', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1089.

⁷⁷ 'Twig' means 'to understand, to work out', *Cassell's Dictionary of Slang*, p. 1480.

shake hands with LYNX) and I must now be off to see Mr. Rayne Chalcraft at once. (Shakes hands and EXIT R.E.)

- Sammy It's as I suspected! (EXIT)
- Ned Poor old dad! Then he's repented for having turned me out of doors and wants to see me back again, I didn't think he would be angry for long.
- Sammy (Entering) Who was he Ned?
- Ned Why you needn't look so very serious, old boy. It's all right – I assure you - (mimic)
- Sammy But he wasn't the fool he looked, Ned! Don't tell me he was a fool! I know better!
- Ned You're quite right, Mr. Lynx is no fool, as you'll learn later on. (FELIX, MRS. TITCOMB and MADGE enter) I think it's quite time I went to roost, good night, Sammy; good night, Mrs. Titcomb; good night all. (EXIT)
- Felix
Madge Good night, Ned, good night!
- Mrs. Titcomb What's the matter wi' thee now, Sammy?
- Sammy Matter enough! The Chalcrafts have sent that 'ere Blinks to buy Ned over, and he's put us through the mill at last. Oh!
- Felix Bah! What are you talking about, Sammy?
- Mrs. Titcomb Are you dreaming, man?
- Madge For shame, father!
- Sammy But seeing's believing, ain't it? I'd got my suspicions of this 'ere Mr. Slinks, Blinks, or whatever he calls himself, and I stood behind the bar and watch him give Ned the money, and the last thing he said was, "Now I must go and see Rayne Chalcraft".
- Felix You don't mean that?
- Sammy Yes, and I also heard him say, "Don't tell Sammy, I don't like these things nipped in the bud" and what did Ned mean by saying, "Lynx is no fool as you'll find out later on". It's all as clear as daylight, he's put us through the mill at the last pinch, oh!
- Mrs. Titcomb It's strange! I could have wagered my life on that lad's honesty!
- Felix And I can still!
- Madge (Bus.) Why, he's left his pocket book on the table!
- Sammy Ah! Let's see if that'll convince you Felix. Give me the book. (Takes it.) He put the Judas money in here. I'll show it you and then you'll perhaps be satisfied. (In the act of opening the book, when MADGE

snatches it out of his hand, at the same instant NED appears at the door.)

Madge No! You shan't, Father! Be the honest, straightforward man you always have been. That pocket book is the private property of Ned Deerfoot, and we've all seen enough of him to know that he's a lad who would rather lay down his life than do a dirty action.

Sammy You are right, Madge, and I am wrong. Appearances certainly look black against him, but what a suspicious fool I am! Anybody with a grain of sense in his yed⁷⁸ must know that Ned Deerfoot's as honest as the day!

Ned (Walking swiftly down C. and slapping Sammy's shoulder) God bless you for those words, Sammy. In coming back for my pocket book I've heard all you've said. If you had doubted me Sammy, you'd have taken the heart clean out of me, and the Handicap could have gone to the Devil!

(BOY ENTERS with a note.)

Mrs. Titcomb What do you want, my boy?

Boy I have brought this note for Mr. Titcomb. I ought to have come this morning, but don't let my master, Mr. Chalcraft know or he will thrash me till I can't stand. (EXIT)

Sammy Alright my lad. (Reading envelope) "Private and confidential." We don't want any more of Mr. Chalcraft's confidence tricks in this house. (Opens letter and reads.)

Dear Mr. Titcomb –

A few years ago my father and Mr. Crouch drew a sum of £3,000 from you over a lad named Shoefly, it was not a very straight deal, and they are anxious to make amends by refunding the money on condition that Deerfoot does not go for the Whitsuntide Handicap. If Deerfoot is not a trier nothing can stop Crabtree winning and with £3,000, you would be able to back the latter to an unlimited extent, all we should require is a receipt for the money and your word of honour that Deerfoot will not win. I shall bring the notes and a receipt ready for your signature tonight, shortly after eleven o'clock, when I hope you will have a favourable reply ready for me.

Yours faithfully, Rayne Chalcraft.

Felix Why, it's close on 11 o'clock now!

Ned Yes, and an idea strikes me. I want to meet Rayne Chalcraft and if I had only a disguise –

Madge There's your Pirate's dress, Felix!

Felix Aye! The very thing.

⁷⁸ 'Yed' would seem to be a colloquial variant of 'head'.

- Ned Quick, then! The time's nearly up. (To SAMMY) Say I'm your commission agent. (EXIT)
- Felix Come Madge! (EXIT all but SAMMY, who lowers the lights, as he does so the clock strikes 11. RAYNE ENTERS)
- Rayne Good evening, Mr. Titcomb. You received my note alright?
- Sammy Yes, I've got it reet enough.
- Rayne And you are prepared to accept the offer?
- Sammy Well, I'm not quite decided on that point. If you don't mind we'll hear what my Manchester Commission Agent has to say on t'matter. (Calling off) Aye! Mr. Crawley.
- (ENTER NED, disguised, black beard &c.)
- Sammy Mr. Crawley – Mr. Rayne Chalcraft!
- Ned I am pleased to meet you.
- Rayne (Aside) Surely I have heard that voice – Manchester? Must have been on the racecourse.
- Sammy You see Mr. Chalcraft. Sammy Titcomb's allus been known as a straight un and I think it's too late to begin swindling the public at my time of life.
- Rayne I don't see what the public has got to do in the matter at all. The public doesn't pay your training expenses, or refund the money lost when you get a knock out.
- Ned Quite true!
- Sammy Do you advise me to accept the money then, Mr. Crawley?
- Ned I do decidedly. I think the offer's too good to be lost.
- Rayne With Deerfoot out of the road, Crabtree is a moral certainty.
- Sammy That's true. – Hand over the money!
- (RAYNE produces the notes and a receipt and hands them to SAMMY)
- I'm not quite so used to this sort of business as some people and it's fair made my hand shake – Do you mind Mr. Crawley, signing the receipt for me?
- Rayne Certainly not! (SAMMY hands receipt and notes to NED who turns to table, crumples it in his hand and signs another, which he hands to RAYNE.)
- Ned (Counting the notes) The money is all right. But you want fifty pounds change, Mr. Chalcraft!

Rayne What for?

Ned Read the receipt!

Rayne (Reads) "Received the sum of £2,950 from Rayne Chalcraft, which money was owing to me, over certain betting transactions at Oxford." Who the Devil are you???

(LIGHTS UP)

Ned (Taking off disguise) I am Harry Bedford!!

CURTAIN

END OF ACT TWO.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF KATE (CATHERINE COVENEY) BRIGHT (NEE PITT)

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Kate (Catherine Coveney) was the DAUGHTER of **Charles Dibdin Pitt** (1819 - 1866) and **Ellen Coveney** (1822 - 1897)

Charles was probably SON of **George Dibdin Pitt (1795-1855)** and BROTHER to **Cecil Pitt** (D. 1879) and **W. H. Pitt**

Ellen was SISTER to **Jane Coveney** (1825 – 1900) and **Harriet Coveney** (both actresses)

Kate had **7** siblings, who all worked in the theatre as actors, and her brother Harry M. was also a playwright

Harry M. (Dates unknown)	Charles (c. 1842 – unknown)	Fanny Felicia Dibdin (1847 – 1898)	Jane (1852 – unknown)	E. Bulwer Arthur (1854 – unknown)	Charlotte (Lottie) (1856 – 1885)	Felix William (1857 – unknown)
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Kate married Augustus Bright (1830 – 1880) in 1861

His brother **Maurice** (1826 – 1902) was a music conductor for the orchestra of the Hallamshire Rifles and their uncle **Maurice** (1797 - 1848) was one of the Proprietors, and the Treasurer, for the Theatre (he was elected to the Committee for the first time in 1837)

My research has revealed much information about how a theatrical family operated, and the ways in which they connected with other professional networks. The following table lists some of the significant dates in the life of Kate Pitt and her relations.

Date	Event
1844	Kate Pitt born.
1860 May December	Charles and Kate Pitt performed together at the Theatre Royal, Warrington. Charles Pitt takes position as Lessee and Manager at the Theatre Royal, Sheffield. Kate Pitt plays the part of Lydia Languish in <i>The Rivals</i> , under the patronage of the Hallamshire Rifles.
1861 June	Kate marries Augustus Bright, in Cardiff.
1862 August	Birth of a daughter, Dora Estella, to Kate and Augustus.
1866 February	Harry Pitt completes 'an original drama' entitled <i>The Adopted One</i> , scheduled to be produced at Theatre Royal, Sheffield. Charles Dibdin Pitt dies, aged 47, and Mrs. Ellen Pitt takes over as Lessee and Manager.
1867 December	Mrs. Ellen Pitt Lessee and Manager of Theatre Royal, Sheffield. Revival of <i>The Colleen Bawn</i> , which featured the 'two married daughters' of Mrs. Ellen Pitt, namely Mrs. Augustus Bright, and Mrs. Pitman.
1870 May	Harry M. Pitt wrote <i>The Merton Pet</i> , produced in London, and <i>How we spent Christmas Day in 1869</i> , Surrey, 31 January 1870. ¹
1871 April (Census) May June	Kate C. Bright in London, lodging in St. George Bloomsbury. Mrs Charles and Miss Fanny Pitt in Grantham 'with a very talented comedy and burlesque company'. Harry M. Pitt working with Mdlle Lilian, 'The Great Equestrian Actress'.
1873 March	Birth of a second daughter to Kate and Augustus, named Georgina.

¹ Nicoll, *Nineteenth Century Drama 1850-1900, Vol. II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), p. 526.

Date	Event	Theatre	Genre	Reference
1878	<p><i>Not False but Fickle</i></p> <p>Although Nicoll describes this as a comic drama, it is a rather poignant one-act play which portrays a woman's selfless action and its misinterpretation. The script was published (Sheffield: Pawson and Brailsford, 1878) and the copy in the B.L. is dedicated to 'Georgie' (likely to be her daughter Georgina). It was also published in an Acting Edition, by Samuel French.</p> <p>The production at the Alexandra was under the management of Miss Carlotta Leclercq and Mr. John Nelson.</p>	Alexandra	Comic Drama	LCP 53200 P
1878	<p><i>Noblesse Oblige</i></p> <p>Received its first performance at the Theatre Royal Exeter, before moving to the Alexandra in Sheffield. This production was also with Miss Carlotta Leclercq and Mr. John Nelson, and the actress played the main role of Haydée. Lottie Pitt (Kate's younger sister) in the production, playing the role of Victoria.</p> <p>Themes of class, money, and the sacrifice of love for duty. The play was well received and published by Samuel French.</p>	Alexandra	Domestic Drama	LCP 53209 I
1878	<p><i>Bracken Hollow</i></p> <p>Adaptation of stories by May Agnes Fleming. Family drama in which the central character Helen Armytage is disinherited and jilted. She is thought to be dead, but runs away to America and has a successful career as an actress.</p>	Alexandra	Drama	LCP 53209 J
1879 May	<p><i>Naomi's Sin; or Where are you going to, my Pretty Maid?</i></p> <p>As the title suggests, Naomi is a 'fallen woman' who can be redeemed only by death. However, the play presents the character in a sympathetic manner, and the part was played in its premiere production, and often in subsequent touring productions, by Kate's sister, Fanny Pitt.</p>	Alexandra	Drama	LCP 53217 K
1879 January	<p>Short story, 'Grandfather's Little Actress', published by the <i>Era Almanack</i> of 1879.</p>			

Date	Event
1880 November December	Death of Augustus Bright, aged 50 <i>Unto the Third and Fourth Generation</i> published by Samuel Tinsley – a novel by Mrs. Augustus Bright.
1881 August	<i>Dane's Dyke</i> Adapted from the writer's own novel, this is a family saga about money, class and inheritance, produced at Theatre Royal, Sheffield with Mrs. Bright in the lead role; followed by a tour of various towns and cities in the UK.
1882	Mrs. Bright's touring with her own production company (Business Manager Henri R. French).
1883 December	Mrs. Bright continuing to tour; sometimes with her own company, sometimes as a member of other companies. Mrs. Bright at the Theatre Royal, Coventry, working with Mr. William Bennett the proprietor, to produce the pantomime, <i>Little Bo Peep</i>
1885 April-May June December	Mrs. Bright in a season of plays at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, and the company included her brother Felix. Mrs Bright at the Pavilion Theatre, London in <i>Adrienne Lecouvreur</i> . Death of Lottie Pitt (aged 29) in a theatre: she fell through an open trap door.
1887 October	Dora Bright makes musical debut with her own composition in Sheffield.
1889 September	Harry M., and Arthur Pitt touring in South Africa.
1901 June	Kate Pitt Bright has accident at theatre in Kent.
1906 January	Death of Kate Pitt Bright.
1908 January	Miss Georgie de Lara (Mrs. Bright's daughter) in <i>The Soldier's Wedding</i> by Walter Melville.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF JOSEPH FOX

The obituary article for Joseph Fox in the *New York Times* (1 September 1906) describes him as a ‘prolific playwright’. If this was true, then many of his plays have vanished since they were written. The table below lists plays for which there is definite evidence, but others are more difficult to trace. The *New York Times* suggests that he wrote *Valjean* (and John Coleman ‘presented’ it, but the licensed copy of this play in the LCP credits Coleman as sole writer. Even when *Valjean* was produced at the Theatre Royal Sheffield, none of the reviews mention Fox, and indeed the *Sheffield Independent* writes that Coleman played the part of Valjean, but notes that the ‘adapter or dramatist’ was Mr. A. Willoughby (SI, 22 June 1879).

Fox also allegedly wrote *Love and Fortune* for the American actress Lillian Olcott, but I have not been able to prove that this was the case. The only text with such a name is described as ‘a dramatic tableau in one act’, was written in 1859 and produced at the Princess’s Theatre (LCP 52984 P). No author is noted on the manuscript, but Nicoll credits it to Planché (1859). Miss Olcott died young (at age 27) and although I have found several reviews of her plays, *Love and Fortune* is not one of them, and indeed there is nothing to link Fox with this text.

Nevertheless, Fox did have a successful career as actor, writer and producer over several decades, both in England and the United States.

Date	Event
1833 February	Born in Sheffield. His parents, Joseph and Mary, were in the retail trade. They were fishmongers and game dealers, and had a shop in Fargate, in the bustling heart of the town.
1852 August	Aged 19, he married Anne Woollam, the daughter of a doctor from Ashton-under-Lyne (<i>Manchester Times</i> , 21 August 1852) at Trinity Church, Sheffield.
1856	Working as an actor. He played the eponymous hero in Shakespeare’s tragedy <i>King Lear</i> , at the Theatre Royal, Sheffield. This was quite a young age (23) to attempt the role, given the maturity of the character. He received a brief review: ‘ <i>King Lear</i> was performed for the benefit of Mr. Joseph Fox, who essayed the arduous character of the much-injured monarch’ (<i>Era</i> , 3 February 1856). He took this role during the tenure of Charles Dillon at the Theatre Royal, and they maintained a cordial professional relationship (see for example, a letter from Dillon to Fox, written 1862, published <i>Era</i> , 23 July 1881).

Date	Event	Reference
1861	<p>Living in London (Census 1861). His wife Ann was living with their two children and his mother in Sheffield.</p>	
1863	<p><i>Bravin's Brow</i></p> <p>This was Fox's first play and was allegedly 'founded upon the well-known romance of "Marie Jeannie" (SI, 28 April 1863). A playbill in the Hudson Collection advertises <i>Marie Jeanne! Or, the Child of the Foundling Hospital</i> at the Theatre Royal in January 1856. No writer is credited, but the title indicates some similarities with Fox's play. In the later play, Mary Bertram is married to Robert, and she is left destitute by her wayward husband. Mary dies outside the Foundling Hospital with her baby in her arms, and the baby girl is rescued.</p> <p><i>Bravin's Brow</i> was licensed for the Princess's Theatre, Leeds, opened there in January, and was given fulsome praise by the local press: '<i>Bravin's Brow</i> – the Beautiful... the Stupendous ... the Marvellous ... the Unapproachable ... the most perfect triumph of histrionic art ... the most wonderful combination of artistic genius and mechanical skill ever witnessed' (<i>Leeds Mercury</i>, 17 January 1863).</p> <p>It transferred to the Theatre Royal Sheffield in April-May 1863. Although the <i>Sheffield Independent</i> acknowledged that it was founded 'upon the well-known romance', it also noted that it had 'a good deal of originality and dramatic interest'. <i>SI</i> 28 April 1863. John Coleman had taken the lead role of Robert Bertram when it was produced in Leeds, but Fox himself took over when the play was revived in Sheffield, toured to York, and reached the Marylebone Theatre in London (<i>Era</i> 28 June 1863). Although the play was not specifically set in Sheffield, some of the settings (woods and small mill buildings) would have been familiar ones: 'Mr. Lennox, the scenic artist, materially contributed to the appearance of the stage by his excellent representations of the "Haunted Elm" and the "Mill-wheel". The critic for the <i>Sheffield Independent</i> acknowledged Fox's local connection: 'Most of the frequenters of the Theatre will doubtless avail themselves of judging the merits of another local dramatic author and actor', <i>SI</i>, 28 April 1863.</p> <p>Fox gained the patronage 'of a number of gentlemen' at this time, (<i>SI</i> 8 May 1863), so this play was decidedly a success for him. He even managed to please a London audience, who gave the production 'perfect hurricanes of applause' (<i>Era</i> 28 June 1863).</p> <p>The play may have been a popular success, but the story, as evidenced by the text, is rather derivative and predictable in its depiction of a faithful wife wronged by her husband Robert. Although he tries to be a good person, he is led astray by those of bad influence, and comes to 'an unhappy end' (<i>Era</i> 28 June 1863).</p>	LCP 53019 O

Date	Event	Reference
1866	Possibly wrote Henry Dunbar , adapted from the novel by Mary Elizabeth Braddon of the same name. The play was produced at Theatre Royal Sheffield, but Fox is not specifically mentioned. An adaptation by Tom Taylor had been produced at the Royal Olympic (3 December 1865) and Lacy published an acting edition in 1867. In the London production, Henry Neville played the main character, with support from Kate Terry, Ellen Leigh and E. Farren.	SNT
1869 November	Wrote Spadra the Satirist . Produced at the Theatre Royal Sheffield, the role of Spadra was played by Charles Dillon. The play was re-produced fourteen years later and re-titled <i>Ambition's Slave</i> . <i>Spadra the Satirist</i> was described in the <i>Sheffield Independent</i> as 'a new and powerful Romance'. Charles Dillon played the lead role, and several members of the <i>Union Wheel</i> (1870) company took part: Lizzie Reinhardt, Mr. Birchenough, and Mr. Alexander (review <i>Sheffield Independent</i> , 19 November 1869). The newspaper also noted that 'the dialogue is sparkling and bristling with satirical and epigrammatic point' <i>Sheffield Independent</i> , 15 November 1869.	SNT
1870	Wrote The Union Wheel . Produced at the Theatre Royal Sheffield.	LCP 53084 H
1876	Co-wrote Sweet Revenge; or, All in Honour with John F. McArdle. Produced in Liverpool; the production then toured to several towns, including Sheffield, where it appeared at the Theatre Royal in July 1876, (<i>Era</i> , 23 July 1876). The play inverts the story of Othello, in that a jealous officer kills his wife when he sees her 'in the embraces of a Moor', and after a convoluted plot (involving Philip III of Spain), the contrite husband finally realises her innocence and she is miraculously restored to him, not dead after all. Although the <i>Era</i> described the play as 'much superior to the average of sensational dramas', the summary of the plot indicates that it was a rather hackneyed one, and there is no surviving copy of the text to test the judgement of this critic (<i>Era</i> , 30 June 1878).	SNT
1878	<i>Sweet Revenge</i> produced at the Pavilion, London.	
1879 September	Wrote <i>That Lass O'Lowrie</i> , adaptation from the novel by Frances Burnett. Produced at the Alexandra Theatre, Sheffield.	

Date	Event	Reference
1881	Fox had achieved a comfortable level of success by this time. The <i>Era</i> reported on a celebratory dinner for Mr. Thomas Chambers of the Theatre Royal Manchester. Fox was among the guests, described as 'gentlemen of more or less celebrity' (<i>Era</i> , 30 July 1881).	
1882	Touring as Stage Manager with a production of <i>Youth</i> (Holt and Wilmot Company).	
1883 Licensed January	<p>Wrote <i>Ambition's Slave; or, a Game of Chess</i> (a re-working of earlier <i>Spadra the Satirist</i>).</p> <p>On the title page of the licensed copy, 'Spadra' is crossed through, and the new title added: <i>Ambition's Slave; or, A Game of Chess</i>. The setting is Modena, in an unspecified ancient historical period, and the plot is a tangled web of love and intrigue centring on Lucrezia, the 'adventuress' who is the titular slave to ambition, and her former husband Spadra.</p> <p>The play was licensed for the Theatre Royal Leicester, although it was produced at the Royal Opera House, in that town in 1883. Advertised as 'a romantic, realistic and sensational play' (<i>Era</i>, 6 January 1883, reviewed <i>Era</i>, 20 January 1883). It was produced by Clarence Holt, who also played the lead role. Fox had previously worked with Holt and his partner Wilmot, and they also took it to London. It opened at the National Standard on Saturday 24 March and although Holt was praised for his acting, the review was not enthusiastic (<i>Era</i>, 31 March 1883). It transferred to Astley's for a short run (and possibly the Princesses') and then toured from the autumn (<i>Era</i> 14 April 1883), and into 1884.</p>	LCP 53287 I
1884	<p><i>Ambition's Slave</i> on tour.</p> <p>Fox travelled to America, where he worked on the campaign for the Democratic politician Grover Cleveland in the Presidential campaign. Cleveland was successfully elected.</p>	
1896	Fox worked on the campaign for the Democratic politician William Jennings Bryan in the Presidential campaign, and Bryan was elected.	
1906	Death of Joseph Fox, aged 73.	

BRIEF RESUME OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF JAMES FYFE ELLISTON

Date	Event
1854	Born in Scotland
1875	Went to Bolton and worked under Charles Duval at the Theatre Royal, eventually became sole manager. He was described as the 'uncrowned king of the Bolton theatre'
1880	Acting Manager at Bolton Theatre Royal Produced pantomime at Blackburn Theatre Royal and Opera House and performed the part of 'Simple Simon'
1881	In Bishop Auckland, profession noted as 'Theatrical Manager'
1893	Wrote <i>Keen Blades</i> with A. F. Cross, produced at the Theatre Royal, Sheffield
1894	<p>Arthur Shirley <i>In Old Kentucky</i></p> <p>Elliston produced this horse-racing melodrama and it was a great success. It was licensed for the Theatre Royal Hull (10 February), produced at Elliston's Theatre Royal in Bolton in May of that year; and was revived several times there (twice in 1895, twice in 1896, twice in 1898), as well as benefiting from runs in London (Pavilion 1898, Princesses' 1899).</p> <p>Elliston built a new circus and theatre in Bolton, the Grand. He maintained the management of both theatres until his death in 1920.</p>

Date	Event
1898	Produced the pantomime <i>Babes in the Wood</i> at Theatre Royal, Sheffield
1920 December	Died in Bolton 'The esteem in which the late Mr. James Fyfe Elliston was held, both in Bolton and in the wider sphere of the theatrical profession was demonstrated today ...'