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1857

No. CXIV.

THE MINOR DRAMA.



A DECIDED CASE;

A DRAMATIC SKETCH, IN ONE ACT.

BY JOHN BROUGHAM.

WITH CAST OF CHARACTERS, STAGE BUSINESS, COSTUMES,
RELATIVE POSITIONS, &c., &c.



AS PERFORMED AT THE PRINCIPAL THEATRES.



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[Catalogue continued, on third page of cover.]

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A

DECIDED CASE.

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DRAMATIC SKETCH, IN ONE ACT.

BY

JOHN BROUGHAM.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

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Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the
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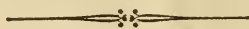
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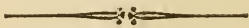
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WALLACK'S THEATRE, N. Y.

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<i>Mr. Percival</i>	Peters
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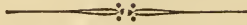
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L. means *First Entrance, Left.* R. *First Entrance, Right.* S. E. L. *Second Entrance, Left.* S. E. R. *Second Entrance, Right.* U. E. L. *Upper Entrance, Left.* U. E. R. *Upper Entrance, Right.* C. *Centre.* L. C. *Left of Centre.* R. C. *Right of Centre.* T. E. L. *Third Entrance, Left.* T. E. R. *Third Entrance, Right.* C. D. *Centre Door.* D. R. *Door Right.* D. L. *Door Left.* U. D. L. *Upper Door, Left.* U. D. R. *Upper Door, Right.*

* * * *The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.*

ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty-Seven, by JOHN BROUGHAM, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New York.

A DECIDED CASE.



SCENE I.—*Elegant boudoir in the house of LADY ANGELA VILLIERS—
Centre doors in flat—Fireplace with fire alight—China vases, &c., on
mantel—Centre-table covered with articles of vertu, &c.*

Enter STUBBS, C. D., ejected from room.

Stubbs. Oh! very well, just as you like; but if you ain't the pig-headedest customer I ever laid eyes upon, never trust *me*, and not one of *us* either—only a retired fishmonger from Leadenhall market! I told my lady how it would be when her ladyship took it into her head to let her house, while this exhibition was going on—just for the sake of charity, too. I wish she hadn't; it makes me perfectly savage! Why, he hasn't got no respect whatever for the owner of this house, because she made me promise not to tell who she was, but to say that her name was Brown—and to make matters worse, that's the confounded fishmonger's name! Pshaw! It gives me a stitch in my side every time I mention the word. Calls her the landlady until my feelings is almost too much for my waistcoat. But, thank fortune, it will be all over with Mr. Impudence to-day. My lady is a-coming here herself, and then won't he have to start! I have given him notice to quit a dozen times already, by my lady's order, and not one step will he budge! Won't she be in a jolly temper! I wouldn't be in his boots for a trifle, when the meeting does take place!

Enter CAPTAIN DUDLEY VERE (Dressing-gown, pipe, &c.)

Capt. What are you soliloquizing about, friend Stubbs?

Stubbs. Good gracious! Tobacco in this apartment—and my lady coming home to-day! Sir! you mustn't smoke here! Do you know where you are, rash fishmonger?

Capt. In a very pleasant and comfortable snuggery, it would seem.

Stubbs. You're in my lady's—Mrs Brown's—boudoir, where nobody ain't allowed to intrude, let alone pipes! And she with a nose like any pointer—she'll smell the tobacco, and—oh, law! please, young man, go to your own room!

Capt. To show you the deference I invariably pay to the angelic sex, I won't smoke. There's a sacrifice! But you will permit me to remain and examine the many evidences of taste I find in the worthy Mrs. Brown's sanctum sanctorum?

Stubbs. Unhappy fishmonger, I can't! I don't know the instant she may arrive!

Capt. You expect Mrs Brown home then? I'm delighted to hear it! I shall have an opportunity of seeing my excellent landlady, at last!

Stubbs. You'd better not, my fine fellow, that I can tell you!

Capt. Why, is she such a Tartar?

Stubbs. Well, not exactly that—but——

Capt. Oh! I know! like the generality of her class, she's a little peculiar in temper, eh? Ah! they're all the same—from the controller of a bare first floor, to the conductor of a well-filled mansion! I think I can draw a clairvoyant picture of my landlady, from my experience of the genus. A fine, broad, portly dame, is she not—with small, sharp, cunning eyes, a ruby nose, and very tight lips. Her impracticable fingers, fat, stiff, and saucy, choked with inexpensive rings, lie cushioned on a pair of crimson velvet arms, while, as she waddles along, in duck-like dignity, a ponderous bunch of keys clanking at her side, proclaims her to be the rigid and inflexible jailor of small groceries.

Stubbs. [*Aside.*] My wig and slippers! if Lady Angela was only to hear that 'ere description! She that's as shapely as a hock-bottle, and as delicate and airy as a three quarter bred angel! [*Aloud*] But, good gracious! I tell you that if she knew you had even squinted at this boudoir through the circumscribed orifice of the key-hole, my place would be in danger! And as for you——

Capt. Well—and as for me?

Stubbs. Well—[*Aside.*] Oh, I wish I could tell him—but I daren't. No, he must bust in ignorance, as the immortal bard says. How that there door came to be unlocked, I don't know.

Capt. I do. I had a key that fitted it, and naturally revolting at the tyranny which would confine me to the narrow limits of my inconvenient quarter, I determined to follow out the doctrines of Manifest Destiny, and annex this enviable region.

Stubbs. What! You don't mean to tell me that you are going to stay here?

Capt. Yes!

Stubbs. Oh! this is coming it a little too strong, Mr. Brown! Patience is no longer a virtue, so I say, old chap, you'll have to mizzle, if I have the luck to light on a stray policeman. [*Going.*]

Capt. Wait a minute. Mr. Stubbs! Sit down—pray do—I want to amuse you a little—I won't keep you long. I gave you a slight sketch of Mrs. Brown, the landlady, just now, that appeared to tickle you by its truthfulness. There might have been the slightest touch of imagination in that picture, but I can draw another, whose veracity I can vouch for! Listen, Stubbs:—On Tuesday morning last—let me see—it must have been about three o'clock, when I came home—I vainly endeavored to make myself heard at the street door. Well, it certainly was an unreasonable time to expect anybody to be up—and I was preparing to go to a hotel, when it occurred to me that I could easily pass round to the coach house, and obtain admittance that way. I did so. As I went through the servants' hall, I saw a bright light through the

chinks of a door, and heard a thorough bass concert, proceeding from the interior. Not knowing what danger might be apprehended, I turned the handle cautiously, and looked in. Have you any idea, Stubbs, what I saw there?

Stubbs. Distinct! Go on—out with it all!

Capt. I saw the steady and correct Mr. Stubbs lying on his back, his head supported by an empty champagne basket, while, grouped in picturesque attitudes around the table, half a dozen unsexedly intoxicated individuals, gurgled, purred, and snored, in drunkenly discordant undulation, like a ditch full of exceedingly happy bull-frogs!

Stubbs. You saw all that, did you?

Capt. And more. Stubbs, if I have a predilection in the world, it is for green seal Madeira! Let me see—I think it is about two guineas a bottle. Ah, how I envied you, you happy dog! when I beheld at least a dozen deceased bottles, drained of their rich amber blood! You must have tolerably good pickings out of the lodgers, Stubbs, to be enabled to give such recherché entertainments.

Stubbs. [*Drops on his knees.*] Mercy, Mr. Brown! mercy!—that green seal—

Capt. Came from the landlady's cellar, eh?

Stubbs. It ain't no use to deny it to you—only our little perquisites!

Capt. Egad! Mrs. Brown must have rather a respectable stock of wines, to judge by the sample I saw! However, if you implicitly follow my directions, and do everything I desire you without comment, perhaps I may conceal your misconduct.

Stubbs. Such is the regard that has suddenly sprung up for you, Mr. Brown, I can refuse you nothing!

Capt. Now you speak sensibly! Go into my bedroom, and bring me my meerschaum pipes.

Stubbs. Good gracious! what for!

Capt. Why, for chimney-ornaments, to be sure!

Stubbs. But, sir—

Capt. Green seal!

Stubbs. All right!

[*Exit STUBBS.* c. d.]

Capt. So far, so good. Egad! it was lucky I saw the debris of that drunken symposium—it has secured me a faithful ally.

Enter STUBBS, with pipes, c. d.

That's right! dispose of them gracefully on the mantel. Now bring me the foils, boxing-gloves, and one or two overcoats.

Stubbs. [*Aside.*] It's no use kicking! [*Aloud.*] Certainly, Mr. Brown!

[*Exit, c.*]

Capt. Bravo! By Jove! I find that fear makes almost as firm and useful a friend as affection!

Re-enter STUBBS, with things, c.

That's right; place the foils on the table, and dispose of the others as you please. Stay! Why shouldn't I have the worth of my money in elegance as well as comfort! I hate those stingy-looking covers—take them off!

Stubbs. You don't mean——

Capt. Green seal!

Stubbs. All right! [*Takes off covers.*] I'm a doomed butler!

Capt. [*Throws himself on couch.*] You're a capital fellow, *Stubbs*, and when you open a chop-house out of your perquisites—as of course you will do in time—I'll patronize you. Now, you'll find a saucer of cigar ashes in the next room—bring it here. [*Exit STUBBS.*] If you see any stumps, bring them also. A wholesome lesson for my peculating friend, I hope. [*Enter STUBBS, c.*] Now, let's see what we can put these ashes in; I always preserve them for tooth-powder. Ah, here's a capital thing—Dresden china, too!

Stubbs. Good lord! articles that my lady values like the happle of her heyes. [*A loud knock.*] Mercy on us! here she is!

Capt. Give me a pipe—make haste; and now you can admit the landlady.

Stubbs. Hanged if I ain't goose-flesh all over!—transportation would be delicious to this! [*Exit, c.*]

Capt. Now, *Lady Fortune*, all the rest is in your hands. I could have approached her in the common way, but she has already made so many wear the willow—and, by this stratagem, I can, at least, discover if there's the slightest shadow of a hope for me. [*Settles himself on sofa, feet on chair, and pipe in his hand.*] Here she comes!—by Jove! my heart flutters like a schoolboy's before examination!

[*Pretends to sleep.*]

Enter STUBBS, c., announcing Mrs. ST. LEGER.

Stubbs. [*Aside.*] Now, *Mr. Brown*, I think you'll be slightly disappointed, confound you! [*Exit, c.*]

Mrs. ST. LEGER enters, on announcement.

Capt. [*Starting up.*] I beg ten thousand par—— [*Aside.*] This can't be she? [*Aloud.*] Pray be seated, madam. Allow me to apologize for receiving you in this unceremonious manner. To whom have I the honor of speaking?

Mrs. St. L. My name, sir, is *St. Leger*; and you, sir, I presume, are——

Capt. *Brown*, madame, at your service.

Mrs. St. L. You are doubtless then aware under what great obligations I am to your lady.

Capt. My—what, madame?

Mrs. St. L. To *Mrs. Brown*, sir.

Capt. Oh!—ah! Yes, I have heard something of your unfortunate history.

Mrs. St. L. No longer unfortunate, sir, thanks to your lady's bounty and yours.

Capt. Madame, I assure you that I have done nothing yet to merit your thanks!

Mrs. St. L. But your good kind wife has, sir, more than I can express, and, consequently, you are included in the obligation.

Capt. [*Aside.*] This is rather awkward!—if I undeceive her, I'm

lost ;—Here goes ! [*Aloud.*] My dear madame, Mrs. Brown is entirely mistress of her own actions, and though I cordially approve her conduct in the present instance, yet, upon my honor, I have had no part whatever in it. Indeed, in that respect, I beg to assure you, madame, that I am only a lodger.

Mrs. St. L. Oh ! I understand you, sir ; you generously shrink from the expression of a gratitude which it is nevertheless my duty to manifest.

Capt. I wish you wouldn't, madame !—You embarrass me ; really, now that I think of it, I did promise myself that Mrs. Brown should not have the luxury of doing some little good all to herself—may I beg your acceptance of this trifling check ?

Mrs. St. L. So much, sir !—I cannot—I dare not take it—it is profuse—more than I require.

Capt. But less than I can readily afford, and I shall take it very ill if you deny me a share in Mrs. Brown's gratification.

Mrs. St. L. Under such circumstances, it would be rudeness in me longer to refuse, and may the happiness with which you have clothed the widow's heart be returned upon your own tenfold. Mrs. Brown's note to me, led me to hope that I would have seen her ;—but may I presume so far, to expect that you will receive my fervent acknowledgments for both !

Capt. No, madame, I dare not—that is to say—I'd rather not receive more than my individual—[*Aside.*] I'm rapidly getting into the mire. [*Aloud.*] Mrs. Brown is expected home every moment—perhaps you will be good enough to see—I mean—as a woman of the world you must see what I mean.

Mrs. St. L. I confess, sir, I am slightly at a loss—however, I will call again directly, perhaps to day.

Capt. That's exactly what I mean, madame, and if you will oblige me so far as not to mention the trivial occurrence—that—ah—

Mrs. St. L. Oh, sir ! you do not suppose that I could be silent on a theme that has done me so great a service, and you so much honor.

[*Exit.*]
Capt. Does it ? Hem ! That's a matter of opinion. Upon my life, the situation was sufficiently perplexing—it was an impulse—I couldn't help it ; a piece of simply accidental benevolence, and yet it has proved to me how often I have neglected opportunities of experiencing a glow of real enjoyment ! But, confound it, I mustn't get sentimental now ! [*A knock.*] Here she comes in earnest ! ah ! my anxious heart tells me I can't be mistaken this time !

Enter STUBBS, announcing.

Stubbs. Mr. Percival.

Capt. Confound Mr. Percival ! Who the deuce is he ?

Stubbs. Don't you know him ! He's a lawyer ; so I wish you a pleasant confab together.

Capt. Get out, you scoundrel !

[*Exit STUBBS.*]

Enter MR. PERCIVAL.

Per. [*As he enters.*] Well, my lady, I think I have pretty good news for—a gentleman!

Capt. I hope so, sir, [*Aside.*] Egad! I mustn't prevaricate here!

Per. Excuse me, sir—[*Aside.*] Captain the Hon. Dudley Vere, as I live!—From the tenor of Lady Angela's note, I expected to see her alone—however, Captain, I can readily perceive that I need be under no ceremony with you. I presume her ladyship has acquainted you with the name of her old friend and confidential adviser, Percival?—I am he.

Capt. Happy to see you, Mr. Percival—I am—

Per. My dear sir, I am a man of the world:—I can see at a glance the tender character of the right by which you are so completely at home in this privileged retreat.

Capt. But, my dear sir! what the devil have I done—this is awful—allow me to explain—

Per. Not a word! I beg to congratulate you, upon my honor I do!—The property is in the most flourishing condition, the lady every way worthy of you!

Capt. I assure you, sir, you are mistaken! I have no right here—a mere intruder—in fact, only a lodger!

Per. I know;—man of the world, sir—old hand—can't deceive me—private marriage, I suppose—wants to keep it secret! [*Aside.*] Mum's the word—Steady, old campaigner!—But now to business, if you please.

Capt. I repeat to you, sir, most emphatically, that I dare not interfere in Lady Angela's business.

Per. Well!—not actually, perhaps, but by way of advice!—you merely take interest enough in her affairs to do her a service if you can?

Capt. Most certainly! Point out the way, and if it be within the compass of endeavor—

Per. Ah!—yes!—thought as much—real honeymoon halo about that speech!

Capt. Sir, I must insist—

Per. Pardon me—won't offend again—mustn't try to deceive me, though. Her ladyship has of course informed you of the vexatious litigation in which she has for so long a time been involved with the present representatives of the Mudford estate?

Capt. She has not, sir, and for an excellent reason.

Per. The best in the world—I know—entirely too early to let these realities interfere with love's young dream, as the poets say. Ha, ha! Excuse the remark, and don't be impatient!—The lands in question are far more valuable than her ladyship imagines, and by some singular fatality, our opponents, not aware of the strength of their case, have offered to relinquish upon payment of a small sum—but, alas! her ladyship's objection to a compromise, places me in an awkward position. Now what had we better do?

Capt. Pay it, by all means!

Per. Of course. I knew that would be your answer. You're right. I'll trouble you for a check.

Capt. Me!

Per. To be sure. Who else?

Capt. Well, whatever happens, it's the least I can do to atone for my presumption! [*Aside.*] There, sir!

Per. And after all this, you pretend that—well, never mind—no affair of mine! You can't prevent me wishing you and her ladyship every happiness! Good morning, sir! I hope to return very soon with the documents which will secure this excellent property to you both! [*Exit PERCIVAL, c.*]

Capt. It is very evident that I am getting myself into a very ridiculous kind of a dilemma here—and what's more than that, I have unwittingly involved her ladyship in a much more compromising predicament! As a man of honor, what should I do? Make a hasty and unqualified retreat? I think so! [*Going.*] What! Shamefully abandon her to the surmise and suspicion of an uncharitable world? I'll do nothing of the kind. Forbid it, gallantry! forbid it, manhood! No! I'll stay and share her embarrassment, and if needs be, end it by a courageous self-sacrifice. [*A knock.*] Another—visitor, I suppose, for my heart's as quiet as a stone!

Enter STUBBS, c.

Well, Stubbs, who is it now?

Stubbs. You needn't ask—look at my face! She's come!

Capt. Who, the landlady?

Stubbs. Exactly so!

Capt. [*Lying down.*] Bravo! You see I'm cool. Now, destiny, fate, fortune, or whatever you choose to call yourself, I'm in your hands.

Stubbs. Here she comes, and I feel as if the rope was round my neck, and I was just going to be swung off.

Enter LADY ANGELA, who carelessly throws her travelling cloak over the CAPTAIN, and sits.

Lady A. Well, Stubbs, I have arrived at last, a little fatigued with my journey, but heartily rejoiced to be in my own quiet home again.

Stubbs. [*Aside.*] Quiet! Yes, my lady. [*Aside.*] I'm beginning to kick!

Lady A. What's the matter, Stubbs? You don't seem glad to see me!

Stubbs. Glad? Why, no—I mean yes—all right, my lady.

Lady A. One would suppose from your manner that my return was somewhat malapropos. I gave you sufficient time for preparation. Of course the tenant, whose obstinacy you so much complained of, is gone?

Stubbs. I suppose, my lady, you mean Mr. Brown?

Lady A. Certainly. Mr. Brown, the fishmonger. I'm sorry you should have had so much trouble with him.

Stubbs. Bless you, it was all a mistake, my lady! I never met with a more praiseworthy gentleman!

Lady A. Indeed! How then was it that your letters were so filled with descriptions of his turbulence and—

Stubbs. Can it be possible that I so far forgot myself? I assure you, my lady, a more quiet and orderly a gentleman—

Lady A. [*Taking up boxing-glove.*] Why, what in the name of wonder is this!

Stubbs. [*Aside.*] It's coming! [*Aloud.*] That, my lady? I never saw such a thing before in all my life.

Lady A. What do I see? Pipes! Has anybody dared to enter this apartment?

Stubbs. No—certainly—I believe not!

Lady A. Don't attempt to tell me such a falsehood! Ah! look here! What is this? [*Ashes.*

Stubbs. That, my lady? That's—a—a—dentifrice, my lady!

Lady A. Stubbs! I have a terrible misgiving! I charge you to answer me truly. Is not this abomination cigar ashes?

Stubbs. The finest thing in the world for the teeth, my lady!

Lady A. Who has been here, Stubbs? No prevarication! Tell me the truth, and I will endeavor to overlook your faults.

Stubbs. Well, my lady, since you are so kind—I'll confess that it was—

Lady A. Whom?

Stubbs. Mr. Brown, the fishmonger, my lady!

Lady A. And you permitted the audacious person to bring these filthy things into my apartment?

Stubbs. I couldn't help it, my lady. I tried to prevent him—I mean— [*Aside.*]—oh! Lord! that confounded green seal waxes up my lips as tight as an oyster.

Lady A. I see you are ashamed of it. Let these implements be sent after Brown, as fast as you can.

Stubbs. After him, my lady?

Lady A. Certainly, at once! You don't suppose I can allow them to remain? Pah! my room feels like a tavern while they are here!

Stubbs. Yes, mum! [*CAPTAIN makes a sign.—Aside.*] Hang me if I can stand it any longer!—here goes to run for it! [*Exit hastily, L. H.*

Lady A. Stubbs!—what extraordinary conduct! I do believe the creature is intoxicated. This comes of entrusting a house to servants. Good gracious! what is this? A man's overcoat!—and, as I'm a living woman, slippers! This is intolerable! [*Throws herself on couch, and starts up with a scream.*] There is something alive there, I do believe!

Capt. [*As if awaking, slowly rises.*] What a singular thing it is that I can't get a few moments' rest in my own house! A lady!—I beg a million of pardons. [*LADY A. pulls bell.*] Thank you! you have just anticipated me. I was about to ask you to do me that favor.

Lady A. And pray, sir, who may you be?

Capt. Don't you know me? I'm Brown!

Lady A. Mr. Brown, the fishmonger?

Capt. At your service. I presume I have the pleasure of addressing my worthy landlady?

Enter STUBBS, c.

Stubbs. [*Aside.*] Now for the finishing stroke.

Lady A. Stubbs!—take away—

Capt. Excuse me!—Stubbs, put a little coal on the fire.

Lady A. Stay!

Capt. Go! [*Exit STUBBS.*] You're a little stingy in the article of coal, Mrs. Brown. Young housekeepers should be economical, I know, but lodgers have rights, and I made a special agreement that I should not be stinted in fuel.

Lady A. Well!—of all the impertinent fishmongers—

Capt. Mrs. Brown, sit down.

Lady A. Sir,—well I have brought it upon myself! See how even the most innocent deceit brings its punishment.

Capt. I'm glad you've come to town, Mrs. Brown, for there are a great many little things I wanted to see you about.

Lady A. There is no necessity to prolong this interview. Sir, I desire that you will leave my house immediately.

Capt. Oh! dear, no! Pray, don't imagine that I'm not exceedingly comfortable in my apartments. On the contrary, I take the earliest opportunity of assuring you that they suit me perfectly, and my petty grievances are of minor importance—or consideration.

Lady A. But, sir—

Capt. You'll remedy them, of course. To begin, then, with the article of breakfast: in the first place, your tea is debilitated; then your sugar is insufficient; and as for butter—By-the-by, how is Brown? Is there a Brown?—or, do I touch upon soft and sentimental regrets, and the lamented Brown is but a memory!

Lady A. This is unendurable. Allow me, sir, firmly but decisively to tell you that you intrude.

Capt. By-the-by, Stubbs did tell me that you had quite a liking for this room, and I thought I would pay you the compliment of sharing your predilection. It certainly is a remarkably comfortable apartment.

Lady A. You cannot be so obtuse, sir, as not to see that your continued stay will be impertinent, if not insulting.

Capt. My dear madam, you are quite unreasonable. You can't have a more regular lodger than I, and if I did call your attention to a few small items of grocery, it was not so much for my own sake as that you should possess the character of being a liberal and reputable landlady.

Lady A. [*Aside.*] This man would provoke a saint. Such cool impudence sure never was paralleled. [*Aloud.*] One word for all, sir—do me the favor to leave my house.

Capt. For what reason?

Lady A. I wish to occupy it myself.

Capt. What!—all of it? Come, come, Mrs. Brown, that won't do. You must give some satisfactory reason before you can eject a tenant once in possession, so I'm sorry to say that I cannot comply with your desire.

Lady A. I only humble myself by stooping to argument with you. I must try other means. [Rings.]

Capt. Ah, the coal! He is a long time bringing it up. Thank you, Mrs. Brown. [*Aside*] She has an angelic temper, and what a villain I am to try it so unmercifully—but it's my only chance.

Enter STUBBS, with coal, which he puts on fire.

Lady A. Stubbs!

Stubbs. Yes, my lady.

Lady A. Oblige me by finding a policeman.

Stubbs. Oh, law! A what, ma'am!

Lady A. A policeman!

Capt. You know what for, Stubbs.

Stubbs. Find a policeman, ma'am! where!

Capt. Do as Mrs. Brown requests you, Stubbs—find a policeman! I have no doubt that our worthy landlady wishes to examine her pantries and her wine cellar. [STUBBS drops coal-scuttle.]

Stubbs. Oh, oh! I'm ruined! Oh! The sharp edge of the scuttle right on my foot.

Lady A. Are you hurt?

Stubbs. Toe off, ma'am, that's all! Oh! there ain't nobody in the house but myself, and you want a policeman!

Lady A. Much better find a doctor, Stubbs.

Stubbs. Oh, thank you, my lady! Which shall I get first?

Lady A. The doctor.

Stubbs. Oh, yes, ma'am; thank you, ma'am. [*Aside.*] Reprieved again! [Exit. limping, c.]

Lady A. You see, sir, the position that I am in, without a friend—a protector. I entreat you, therefore, not to prolong my embarrassment by remaining in the house.

Capt. Madame, you have conquered—and although my regrets at leaving your pleasant apartments are increased ten-fold since I had the pleasure of beholding you, yet, as I find it is impossible to eradicate the deep aversion you entertain for your tenant, I shall make the only recompense I can for my impertinent intrusion by at once and forever vacating the premises.

Lady A. I did not say that I entertained any aversion.

Capt. No! then, perhaps, we could negotiate for another month.

Lady A. Good gracious—no, sir! [*Aside*] The man's pertinacity makes me laugh in spite of myself.

Capt. Mrs. Brown, will you deign to listen to the passionate out-pouring of a lodger's heart, without sending for a policeman?

Lady A. What do you mean, sir? [*Aside.*] I do believe the fish-monger is going to make love to me.

Capt. Madame, a heavy responsibility rests at your door. Before I entered these premises, I was a gay, thoughtless, happy, independent man. Behold the lamentable reverse! I take my leave with crushed hopes and shattered aspirations,—revelling now in the golden sunlight of ideal ecstasy,—now plunged into the dark abyss of real woe.

Lady A. [*Aside.*] What on earth is the man talking about?

Capt. Over the mantle-piece of the apartment I have so long had the felicity to occupy, there hangs a portrait——

Lady A. Mine!

Capt. Its beauty riveted my gaze, thrilled through my frame, and compelled the adoration of my soul the moment I beheld it!——

Lady A. Oh, this is simply preposterous, sir.

Capt. Hear me out. I'm going as soon as I have done! Not a moment could I take my glance from that fascinating semblance—inly wondering if such loveliness had indeed a living prototype. Time after time have I looked upon those placid features, until I could see the dark eyes flash, and the red lips part with a smile. I'm not ashamed to confess that I loved that picture, at first passionately—and determined, if the earth contained the original, I would find her out. Then I began to reflect that she might possess more than the average share of disagreeables to counterbalance such an abundance of beauty—that perhaps her station—excuse me, Mrs. Brown, I do not mean anything personal——

Lady A. [*Looking round full for the first time.*] Sir!

Capt. What do I see? Can it be possible?—you, the original! Oh, madame; oh, Mrs. Brown! if the slightest atom of humanity warms your heart, sell me that picture!

Lady A. You must be mad, sir!

Capt. You won't? Well, will you give me the original?

Lady A. Do you know to whom you are speaking, sir?

Capt. Certainly—to Mrs. Brown, the landlady. I'm very rich, and tolerably good-looking, and can afford to wink at disparity of station.

Lady A. Sir, I don't know whether your conduct proceeds from simple impudence, or a large admixture of lunacy! In either case, I would prefer to be alone!

Capt. Inexorable landlady! But remember, although you drive me from your presence, you cannot drive your image from my heart! Since you wish me gone, I'll go and pack up.

Lady A. Fishmonger, adieu!

Capt. Landlady—au revoir!

[*Exit CAPTAIN, C. D.*]

Lady A. Well, of all the impertinent, presuming incomprehensibilities I ever met with, this is assuredly the greatest! It certainly is the strangest adventure—and stranger still, all my anger has been quenched in the enormity of his impudence! The fellow is provokingly good-looking, too, and is evidently quite aware of his pretensions—but a fishmonger—pah!—but is he a fishmonger?—I am not a landlady!—What's this!—I declare that doubt has given me a slight approach to a sensation!—Pshaw! this is nonsense; there can be no harm in questioning Stubbs, however, just out of curiosity, [*Rings*] not that it's of the slightest interest to me. What a pleasant perfume there is in good cigars.

Enter STUBBS.

Stubbs, I'm very angry with you indeed, to allow my house to be so disorganized by this person. Who is he?

Stubbs. Brown, my lady! I don't know; all I can say is, the sooner you get rid of him the better. It's my opinion that he's nothing but an impostor.

CAPTAIN appears at c. d.

Lady A. Where does he come from ?

Stubbs. I shouldn't wonder if he came from—

Capt. [*Advances.*] Delighted to find that you take so much interest in your lodger as to inquire the place of his nativity : I come from Madeira, madame. Admirable climate for the production of wine—some of it as high as two guineas a bottle !—Stubbs, bring me my overcoat.

[*Exit, c.*

Stubbs. Yes, sir ; certainly, sir. [*Takes overcoat, and exit, c. d.*

Lady A. [*Aside.*] Deuce take the fellow ! One would suppose house and servants were his own.

Re-enter STUBBS, c.

Stubbs. He wants his pipes and things. He's going, my lady—thank fortune !

Capt. [*Within.*] Stubbs !

Stubbs. Coming, Mr. Brown ! [*Runs off, c. d.*

Lady A. I wish he were once fairly out of the house, or rather that he had never come into it.

Enter STUBBS, c.

Stubbs. Going for a hack, my lady ! All right, now, I hope !

[*Exit, l. h.—A knock.*

Lady A. I'm glad there's somebody coming to give me the protection of their society. [*A knock at c. d.*] What is it, sir ?

Capt. [*Within.*] I beg your pardon, Mrs. Brown, but I thought it right to inform you, that if you don't sell me that picture, or give it to me, it is my serious intention to steal it.

Enter STUBBS, l. h.

Stubbs. [*Announcing.*] Mrs. St. Leger !

Lady A. Show her in. [*Exit STUBBS.*] Go away, sir—I have visitors coming.

Enter MRS. ST. LEGER, l. h.

Lady A. My dear madame, I'm so glad you're come. Now I'm happy.

Mrs. St. L. I know you are, my kind benefactress—very. Your carriage drove up a short time ago. I felt it my duty to call, not only to thank you for all the kindness I have received at your hands, but to congratulate you upon the happiness you express.

Lady A. What do you mean ?

Mrs. St. L. Oh ! he's a fine, noble fellow !

Lady A. Of whom are you speaking ?

Mrs. St. L. I have seen him, but it was by accident, I assure you.

Mrs. A. Seen whom ? You are as mysterious as a Sphinx !

Mrs. St. L. Who should I mean but he, that by his profuse generosity enables me no longer to burthen you, although my gratitude is due to you, for it was for your sake only, of course, that he so largely befriended me.

Lady A. For gracious' sake, tell me to whom you allude.

Mrs. St. L. Why, to the gentleman I saw here to-day—your kind-hearted husband, Mr. Brown!

Lady A. Mr. Brown?

Capt. [At c. D.] The fishmonger, and no relation whatever, my good madame, to his namesake, the worthy landlady of this establishment.

Lady A. Was ever anybody placed in such a singular and annoying position?

Mrs. St. L. Pray, madame, pardon me; but from the similarity of names, and finding the gentleman at home here, I was led into the very natural error.

Lady A. It's not your fault, Mrs. St. Leger. I am rejoiced for your sake, that Mr. Brown has so befriended you. Whatever dilemma I may be in, I have only myself to blame.

Mrs. St. L. I see you are embarrassed, madame, and regret, more than I can express, that I seem to be the cause of it. [A knock.] As you have other visitors calling, permit me, most thankfully, to take my leave.

Lady A. I will explain this to you some future day. Good morning.
[Exit MRS. ST. LEGER.]

Enter STUBBS.

Stubbs. [Announcing.] Mr. Percival.

Enter PERCIVAL.

Per. My dear Lady Angela, you're welcome to town. Permit me to congratulate you.

Lady A. On what, Mr. Percival?

Per. Well, not exactly—on—hem!—you know. But we have conquered—the estate is yours—here are the papers which confirm your title.

Lady A. Is it possible, Mr. Percival?—that tedious lawsuit ended?

Per. Why, didn't he tell you?

Lady A. Who?

Per. Sly rogue! To me, too, such an old and tried friend! to tell the truth, but for him the matter would have turned out far differently, for it was only after all the papers were signed that our opponents found out that they had made a mistake. There! [Hands paper.]

Lady A. I thank you most heartily, my good friend!

Per. Pshaw! Thank him, and love him, for he deserves it.

Lady A. Love whom? You are as mysterious as the rest!

Per. You mustn't try and humbug me. It's all safe, if you wish it kept private—I don't know why you should! The fact is, I saw him this morning.

Lady A. Saw him?

Per. Yes, and settled all this with him.

Lady A. With whom?

Per. [Taking up smoking-cap] With the owner of this!

Lady A. Brown?

Enter CAPTAIN, C. D., with carpet-bag.

Capt. The fishmonger—about to seek a new lodging!

Enter STUBBS.

Stubbs. The carriage has come. What shall I pass in first?

Capt. A dozen of green—

Stubbs. Dozen of shirts? Yes, sir! I'll wait below!—I won't be safe till he's off! [Exit.

Per. Hey dey! What's the meaning of this? A tiff already? You don't look a bit like husband and wife!

Both. Sir!

Lady A. Don't be ridiculous, Mr. Percival! Why should we look like anything of the kind?

Capt. You don't suppose, sir, that I am the husband of Mrs. Brown, the landlady?

Per. Ha! ha! That's good! The Lady Angela Villiers, Mrs. Brown, the landlady!

Capt. What's that I hear?

Lady A. Did you imagine, sir, that I was the wife of Mr. Brown, the fishmonger?

Per. Capital! Fine masquerading, my friends! Captain the Honorable Dudley Vere, brother and heir apparent to old Lord Wimbledon—Mr. Brown, the fishmonger! Ha, ha! I'm an old campaigner! You can't deceive me! I'm glad to find, however, that the misunderstanding is not a serious one. There, go along, you young fools! Take an old fox's advice—never encourage small clouds of temper, or in time their accumulation will overshadow the very brightest lot. I see you're ashamed of yourselves, so I'll make my escape, while you kiss and be friends. [Exit.

Capt. [After a pause.] Mrs. Brown!

Lady A. Mr. Brown!

Capt. Lady Angela, it is now, I trust, necessary for me to say that I was aware of your identity through all. Impelled by a true and uncontrollable love, I dared to risk this coup-de-main, rather than trust to the chances of a regular siege. With the accidental circumstances which aided me, I had nothing to do. I would blush for myself did I resort to such unworthy means! Can you forgive me?

Lady A. What am I to do? You have left me no alternative. I am wholly compromised in the eyes of my friends, and of course the world. Come what may, they will always associate us together.

Capt. I know a way to put a stop to that.

Lady A. Indeed! What is it?

Capt. Let us get married, and then they'll separate us just as quickly.

Lady A. Perhaps it would be the easiest way to get rid of you.

Capt. A thousand thanks for that word. Let me on this sweet hand—

Lady A. Stop, sir! Have you the presumption to suppose that I will surrender at discretion after so ridiculously short a siege?

Capt. Certainly! I saw irresolution in your eye, and you know the woman who hesitates is lost!

Lady A. I did not hesitate.

Capt. Well, then, you're found, and that's a great deal more agree-

able. It is no use for you to buffet against the waves of destiny—they irresistibly bear you toward my encircling arms, therefore take my advice—float quietly into them, and let them lovingly harbor you forever!

[*Business.*]

Lady A. I won't—it's too sudden—I haven't reflected—

Capt. Plenty of time for reflection by-and-by; it will come at its legitimate hour, never fear! Now don't imagine for a single instant that I shall meanly take advantage of circumstances to force an inclination which should be spontaneous. Dismiss me but with a look, and to other climes my small carpet-bag I'll bear, and live alone on the recollection of the past.

Lady A. Very romantic and considerate, I must say, sir, but I do not see how your insufficient diet can remedy the wound you have inflicted upon my position and character.

Capt. Alas! there is but one remedy for that.

Lady A. Which is—

Capt. To change the character of your position. Such wounds are only to be healed by the adhesive plaster of matrimony.

Lady A. How absurd you are, sir! Why, I have not known you an hour yet.

Capt. My dear madam, did it never occur to you what an immensity of time a whole hour is in our ephemeral existence? In the slow old antediluvian eras, a young fellow of two hundred and fifty might be pardoned, if he took half a century or so to deliberate; but in this rapid age, happiness must be reached by railroad. Pause but a moment, and you lose the train.

Lady A. You surely have not the folly to imagine that I listen to your impertinences with the slightest degree of interest.

Capt. Far be it from me to indulge in any such presumptuous thought. I only know that you *do* listen—most convincing proof that I have at least conquered your indifference.

Lady A. It is simple courtesy alone detains me here. I but wait for you to take your departure.

Capt. Upon the instant. [*Getting carpet-bag.*] Your lodger leaves at once, if you declare truly and from your heart that you desire no further association with him than that of landlady and tenant—remember I have paid my rent and got a receipt.

Lady A. Such association was merely temporary, sir—and I request that it may be forgotten.

Capt. [*Flinging away carpet-bag.*] Forgotten! forever! Memory perishes upon the flaming altar of hope—the lodger is merged in the lover, and temporary associations are abandoned for those of a more permanent nature.

Lady A. Good gracious, sir! I said nothing to warrant such an outburst of enthusiastic nonsense.

Capt. Not a word, I grant you—but the inference was obvious to the meanest capacity. What a pity it is that you dare not follow the prompting of your own honest impulse now, and putting your hand in mine say that you accept me as your suitor—I won't say husband just yet, for fear you might think me rather precipitate.

Lady A. You are absolutely unendurable! Suppose I were to make a public exposure of this unwarrantable persecution, what do you imagine would be the result?

Capt. [*Laughing.*] Excuse me, but I am exceedingly anxious to know what kind of a case you would make out. Now just fancy for a few moments, that, instead of being in your own quiet boudoir, you were face to face with a brilliant delegation from the beauty and intelligence of the community, how would you proceed?

Lady A. I should go forward, and say, ladies and gentlemen.

Capt. Exactly, and they would probably encourage you in their own peculiar way.

Lady A. Don't interrupt me.

Capt. You wouldn't say that, surely? Pardon me—go on.

Lady A. Ladies and gentlemen—I, that is to say, you, I mean—

Capt. You see, you haven't a single straw of chance for drowning confidence to grasp at, consequently I should be obliged to rush mercifully to your rescue, thus: Most excellent, discriminating, and judicious public, both plaintiff and defendant, fearing the law's delay, and perfectly willing to abide by the decision of the majority, leave the termination of the affair entirely in your hands. Therefore, as many of you as are of opinion that I have done nothing but what was entirely according to the rules of the Supreme Court of *Cupid*, will signify the same by saying ay—on the contrary—it is a vote—

Lady A. I shall appeal.

Capt. You can't—it's a DECIDED CASE.

CURTAIN.

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