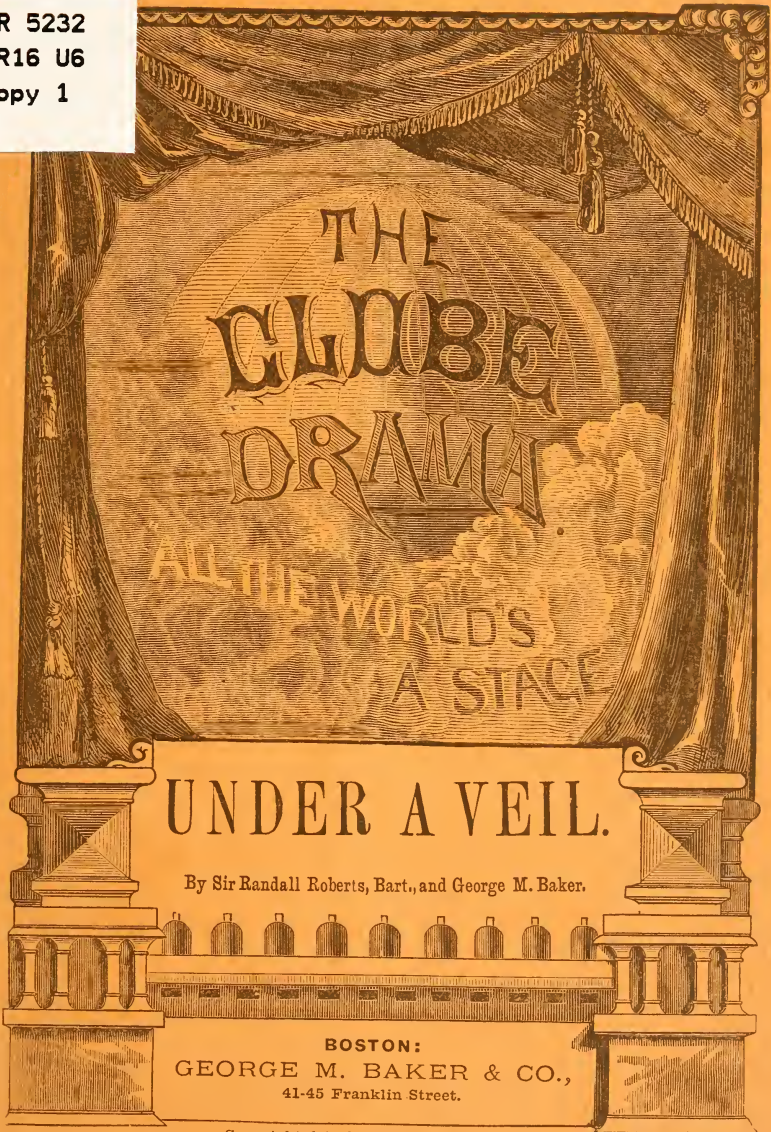


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A STAGE

UNDER A VEIL.


By Sir Randall Roberts, Bart., and George M. Baker.

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BOSTON:

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1877.

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UNDER A VEIL.

SCENE I. — *Two rooms right and left, stage divided in the centre; a door of communication between rooms, fastened by a bolt on either side; small tables, sofas, and arm-chairs. Practicable doors, 1 E. L., 2 E. L., and 2d E. R. Window at back of R. room. Door at back of L. room.*

Pri. (advancing towards table). Beg pardon, sir.

Cha. (lazily). All right.

Pri. Beg pardon, sir, exceedingly sorry to disturb you; (to WAITER) he's asleep.

Cha. (snores.)

Pri. (loudly). I'm really very sorry to wake you, sir.

Cha. (still lying on sofa). What! you don't mean to say it's twelve.

Pri. Twelve! ah, to be sure, the hour I was to wake him for the ball. No, sir, it's only ten o'clock; but (looking at him) he's asleep again — the devil! (Calling loudly.) I'm really pained to awake you, sir —

Cha. (half rising and yawning). What on earth's the matter? Oh, it's you, Mr. Red Lion, is it? [*Sinks back.*]

Pri. Beg pardon, sir, I am not Red Lion: it is my neighbor of the next hotel I suppose you allude to. Here, sir, you are in the first and best hotel in the town, — the White Horse.

Cha. (stretching himself on sofa). All right, with all my heart, then, Mr. White Horse. What is it?

Pri. Well, sir, the fact is, I'm in a dreadful fix — a most awkward predicament, out of which I cannot extricate myself without your assistance. You see, sir, if you will only pardon

it, but my daughter was only married to-day. Yes, sir, married; in fact, sir, she was married to make her happy — you know, sir, — you understand! And, sir, just as we are having a little dance in honor of this marriage, which takes up all our spare accommodation, a lady and her maid arrive, asking for rooms; and, as they require two beds in one room, I dared to hope that perhaps, sir, you would oblige me by changing this room for the next one. You see, sir, that the bedroom belonging to this sitting-room has two beds, whilst in here (*throwing open door in centre partition*) there is only one bed, though in all respects furnished in the same manner. If you, sir, would oblige me by just looking in (*on turning to CHARLES, finds him asleep*) — Confound it, he's asleep again! (*To audience.*) An idea occurs to me; (*turning to WAITER*) here, George, catch hold of one end of this sofa. (*They take sofa, and carry it into next room with CHARLES asleep on it.*) There, I don't believe he'll find it out; here, George, his luggage. (*Brings baggage, but leaves letter.*) There, now, that's all right, and now (*entering next door, and closing with bolt*) I can fetch the ladies up. [*Exit.*]

Re-enter PRICHARD ushering in LUCY and ELIZABETH. PRICHARD carrying candle. CHARLES asleep in R. H. room.

Pri. These are the rooms, madam. This door leads into the bedroom.

[*Shows door* I E. L., and ELIZABETH takes luggage in.

Luc. Many thanks. Don't forget the horses at six o'clock to-morrow morning.

Pri. To the moment, madam. (*Aside to ELIZABETH, who has re-entered.*) If you can find time, join us downstairs. Don't forget; I shall expect you.

Eliz. All right; as soon as missus has done with me.

[*Exit PRI.*]

Cha. (*R. H., waking up*). Hullo! there's somebody talking in the next room.

[*Listens, sitting up.*]

Luc. You seem to know the landlord, Elizabeth?

Eliz. Oh, yes, ma'am, I've known him for some time: his wife was a friend of mine, and his daughter that married to-day is my godchild.

Luc. Indeed! Then I suppose you'd like to join them downstairs. You can go, and I'll open my things myself.

Eliz. Oh, thank you, mum!

[*Exit L. 2 E.*]

LUCY *unpacking her boxes*, L. H.

Cha. (*sitting on side of sofa*, R. H.). By Jove! one hears every thing that is going on next door. Seems to be a lady and her maid — not very gentlemanly to listen, Master Charley, but it's interesting. Ah, well! when I was young this might have led to an adventure. I should never have rested until I had made the acquaintance of my fair neighbor, — for I suppose she is fair, — whilst now there's not the slightest danger. Confound it! I must see this woman, though. (*Rising, and going towards door.*) Hullo! I could have sworn the lock of the door was on the other side just now. That's deuced funny. (*Looking round the room.*) Why, where the mischief am I? and how on earth did I get here?

Luc. (*looking at her watch*). Half-past ten.

Cha. Ah! I understand. I thought I had a terrible nightmare. A frightful monster held me by the feet, and another by the head; it appears, however, that these monsters must have been the Red Lion or the White Horse, and my room has been given to this lady, whoever she may be, to suit their convenience. Well, I don't care very much about seeing her. All women are alike — just as cats are all alike. (*Stoops down to examine the door.*) Why, there's no lock! only a bolt. Well, I can't help that; let's see if we can't get another nap until it's time to go to the ball.

[*Returns to sofa.*]

Luc. (*book in hand, seated on sofa*). This "Voyage round the World" is always a charming book to read.

She puts her book upon the table, and leans her head upon her arm as if to read book; perceives letter.

Luc. Why, here's somebody's letter! (*Takes it up, coming down front.*) Not very ladylike to read it, I suppose; but all women are curious. Seems to be unfinished. Of course it's very wrong to read this letter (*reads*), —

"MY DEAR GEORGE, — As I quite anticipated on my return from home, the Government appointment I expected has been given to another. Pardon me, if on receiving this intelligence, I quitted London without bidding you adieu — and as it seems" —

This is really too bad of me, —

"that I am too lazy to do any thing, as you all of you always said" —

[*Pausing.*]

What on earth does that mean? I should much like to see the author (*reading again from letter*), —

“I intend as soon as I have realized what property I have, to go to Baden, and once more try my luck at the tables. If I win, I shall found a hospital; and if I lose — well, in that case, the only thing I can see for me to do is to join my mother.” [*Finishing reading letter.*]

That’s all; this gentleman has got no further, or else he has taken away the end of it.

[*Commences re-reading in a low tone.*]

Cha. (*rousing himself*). Oh! I can’t lay here any longer. Morpheus won’t come to my aid. What shall I do? Well, I might just as well finish my letter to George. Why! what the deuce have I done with it? (*Searches in his pockets.*) Why, it seems to me I left it on the table before I went to sleep. [*He looks upon the table.*]

Luc. (*again reading letter*). “In that case, the only thing I can see for me to do is to join my mother.”

Cha. (*striking his forehead*). Confound it! I’ve left it in the next room.

Luc. (*putting down letter, and taking up book*). After all, I’m not George, and I’ve no right to read that letter.

Cha. But then my letter must be in the power of this woman. It appears to me that I’ve a perfect right to —

[*Knocks gently at door.*]

Luc. Good gracious! there’s some one knocking. Who is there? What do you want?

Cha. A thousand pardons, madam. I am the person who inhabited a few minutes ago the room you now occupy; and by accident in leaving the room I left an unfinished letter.

Luc. (*aside*). Dear me! This is the young gentleman that’s too lazy for any thing.

Cha. Would you be kind enough to return me my letter?

Luc. (*embarrassed*). Sir, I’ll ring in order that your letter may be brought to you.

Cha. A thousand pardons, madam; but pray don’t trouble to ring. Can’t you slip it under the door?

Luc. Oh, certainly! There it is. [*Passes letter.*]

Cha. Thanks. (*Aside*.) A charming voice, — soft as a bird’s; and, if the plumage only corresponds — (*He goes to examine fastening.*) Confound this bolt! Infamous hotel! (*He returns to table, and prepares to write.*) By the way, I

should like to know if she's read this (*looking at letter*). Well, there's a very old method for ascertaining that: ask her. (*Goes to door, and knocks.*) Madam, pardon me —

Luc. What do you want, sir?

Cha. Madam, my letter was left open on the table; and in taking it up — without, of course, the slightest desire — your eye must naturally have fallen upon it, and —

Luc. (aside). I understand. (*Aloud.*) I don't understand you, sir; and, inasmuch as I've done what you desire, I must beg that we have no further conversation, as I shall refuse to answer.

Cha. Why, may I ask? I was asleep just now, and dreaming charmingly. If you like, I'll tell you the dream.

Luc. Certainly not, sir.

Cha. Very good: it'll keep for another time; but then, inasmuch as it was you that woke me up, permit me at least to converse with you as a compensation.

Luc. (aside). He is not stupid.

Cha. I beg pardon: did you speak?

Luc. (aside). What have I to dread? He seems a gentleman. (*Aloud.*) Well, sir, proceed, as you consider yourself aggrieved; only remember that I trust to your feelings as a gentleman, and your discretion.

Cha. Madam, you may depend upon it. (*Wheeling arm-chair to door, and speaking through keyhole.*) Are you married?

Luc. (affronted and aside). Upon my word! (*Aloud.*) Do you call that discretion, sir?

Cha. Most certainly; as a subject of conversation I see nothing against it. Society prescribes certain forms of conversation; and, to ascertain what forms to use, one must know whether one is speaking to a widow or a young girl, to an old maid or a married woman.

Luc. In — I — I am married.

Cha. (aside). So much the worse. I, madam, am a bachelor, and I'm going to Baden. Where may you be going?

Luc. A long way off, sir.

Cha. To —

Luc. To rejoin my husband, naturally.

Cha. By the way, madam, do you love your husband?

Luc. Excuse me, sir, but, if you don't mind, we'll change the conversation.

Cha. Whatever pleases you, madam, pleases me. (*Pause.*) A charming hotel, madam, is this Golden Lion. So well furnished, so well decorated! My goodness me! it gives me the inclination to set fire to the place.

Luc. If you've any such intentions, sir, pray remember that I'm in the hotel.

Cha. Very good; only just remember, that, in not setting fire to the hotel, I'm saving your life. (*A pause.*) By the way, madam, now I come to think of it, you do not love your husband.

Luc. Sir!

Cha. When one is compelled to separate one's self from a husband that one loves, one is not so light-hearted as you were just now, and —

Luc. Really, sir!

Cha. Madam, pardon me, but you do not evidently possess a husband who would make you cry out in the words of Sterne, "Oh, Love, king of gods and men!" Now, if it had been my fate to have crossed your path, I swear that —

Luc. And I swear to you, sir, that I would never marry a man who was too lazy to do any thing.

Cha. Madam, you have read my letter.

Luc. I, sir? oh, dear, no! I can assure you I only looked at it. By the way, would you mind informing me how it is that you came to inhabit this room?

Cha. Well, the fact is, I went to sleep on the sofa: I've some faint recollection of the landlord coming in and asking me something about moving out; but he was so long about it that I fell asleep again, and during that time I fancy he had me quietly carried, sofa and all, into the next room. By the way, I have a charming idea.

Luc. May I venture to ask it? (*Aside.*) I should like to have a look at this man.

Cha. Madam, in the East, you are aware that a veil is a protecting wall between man and woman. If you would endeavor to put on such a veil, and would do me the honor of granting me an interview, — the landlord can supply us with refreshments, — we can converse more easily than through this partition; in fact, we shall be in the East; and, further, I pledge myself on my honor as a gentleman, that nothing shall in any way cause you to regret our interview.

Luc. (aside). His letter announces that he intends to risk his fortune. What if I could dissuade him? it would at least be the act of a Christian, and — and a woman.

Cha. What! not a word? must I then beseech you in song? —

(Sings.) Oh! let my voice persuasive
Penetrate to your inmost heart;
Oh! list to my prayer so plaintive,
Through the door that keeps us apart.

Luc. I consent, but upon one condition; and that is, that you explain to me how it is that a man can be too lazy to do any thing.

Cha. Very good; at least I will explain to you the meaning of this somewhat bad joke.

Luc. Sir, upon these conditions in a few moments I shall be prepared to meet you — in China.

Cha. Madam, in a few minutes I shall have the honor of presenting myself. *(Goes to window, calling.)* Mr. Red Lion, or Mr. White Horse!

Luc. (aside). I suppose I'd better alter my dress a little for the occasion. *Exit L. I E.*

Cha. (coming down stage). He has absolutely condescended to hear me, — this landlord. Upon my word, I'm rather pleased with this little adventure; if I'd gone to the ball, at any rate, I should never have heard so sweet a voice.

Enter PRICHARD, slightly intoxicated.

Pri. For nobody else but you, sir, would I have disturbed myself upon the auspicious occasion. To-day! yesterday! did I tell you that my daughter was married? Yes, sir, to make —

Cha. You couldn't do better, my dear White Horse, if you intended giving your daughter a husband. Just listen to me for a moment; you will oblige me by going up — yourself, mind — into that lady's room next door.

Pri. Marrying one's daughter, sir, when one is a father, is a grave responsibility; my emotions —

Cha. Of course you feel as a father; you will be good enough to take up plenty of candles, some flowers —

Pri. So long as she's happy, so long as — *(CHARLES, movement of impatience)* — candles, sir, yes, sir, and flowers; yes, sir.

Cha. Afterwards you will bring up some refreshments; tea, for instance.

Pri. Tea, sir?

Cha. Yes; tea, tea, tea.

Pri. Senna tea?

Cha. No, confound you, ordinary tea!

Pri. Ordin— ordmorary— onding (*Charles impatient*) — You're not ill, I hope, sir?

Cha. Not in the least, thanks. (*Going, Charles stops him*). Ah, by the way, landlord, that lady in the next room — what sort of a person is she?

Pri. Char—ming, sir; be-a-u-ti-ful. Oh! she's much handsomer than her father; but if hereafter he should betray her, if he should —

Cha. Who the devil are you talking about?

Pri. My shon-in-law.

Cha. Confound your son-in-law!

Pri. Yes, sir, certainly, sir: that's what I say, and —

Cha. Be off, and do what I told you.

Pri. Yes, sir, directly; but you'll understand that on such an auspicious —

Cha. There, there — be off; Red Lion — he's gone.

Pri. (*turning at door*). White Horse Hotel, sir, please.

[*Exit.*

Cha. (*alone*). I suppose he'll do what I've told him. I ought to change my coat too. Upon my honor (*dressing himself*), I'm delighted with my evening; and somehow or another, oddly enough, I feel quite curious to see this woman; in fact, I begin to be interested. It's so long since I've been in the least interested — yes, it's six months since any thing of the kind has happened. And my heart is, after all, but human: it detests a void. [*Goes on dressing.*

Enter PRICHARD and GEORGE, L. 2 E., carrying candelabra and vase of flowers.

Pri. (*still drunk*). George, your conduct is schandalush: your master's daughter is married to-day, and you take no more notish of the event than a cow, than a cow or calf; you've no heart, George, you've no shoul.

George. But, sir —

Pri. Hold your tongue; pray for her happiness, and go down and tell her I'm coming. [*Exit GEORGE.*

Enter LUCY I E. L., veil in hand, and long cloak on, hiding figure.

Luc. (*perceiving flowers*). Oh, what a charming change! I congratulate you, sir,

Pri. I'll tell her, madam, she will be delighted; such a day, you understand, madam. If she's only happy! May heaven —

Cha. He's having a reel in the next room now.

Luc. Who are you talking about?

Pri. Eh, my daughter, madam; at this moment she's so happy — may she be so all her life! and as to your maid, madam, she dances as if my daughter's happiness depended on her legs, you understand. Madam, of course I mean —

Luc. Perfectly; be good enough to open that door, and show the gentleman in, who is in there.

[*Sits down, and puts on veil.*]

Pri. But, madam —

Luc. Do what I tell you.

Pri. (*hesitating, yet opens door of communication, and enters CHARLES'S room.*) Sir!

Cha. All right, I've heard; you can announce me.

Pri. You wrote your name in my book; but you see, sir, my daughter's —

Cha. You've forgotten it; say Mr. Charleston King.

Pri. (*re-entering L. H.*) Mr. Charles, son of a king!

Luc. Son of a king!

Cha. (*entering.*) Charleston King, at your service, madam.

Pri. (*aside, going.*) A veiled woman in my house on such a day! [*Exit.*]

Cha. (*taking a chair near LUCY.*) It is really too good of you, madam, to receive a man in your rooms who you never saw; and I scarcely know how to thank you.

Luc. You will thank me, sir, by explaining how it is that one can be —

Cha. Too lazy for any thing.

Luc. Precisely. If you will take the chair near you, you can be seated.

Cha. Well, you see, in this world men have all sorts of faces. (*PRICHARD enters with tea-tray.*) Confound this fellow! Just as I was getting on so nicely!

Pri. (*putting down tea.*) Madam —

Cha. Talking of faces, let me draw your attention, madam, to this one (*pointing to PRI.'S face.*) There is a face that has committed faults — crimes.

Pri. Crimes! Faults! Me, madam! me, sir! Here is the best tea, which upon this auspicious day —

Cha. That'll do.

Pri. Crimes! Faults! Yes, madam, your maid has charmed us to such an extent with her dancing on this auspicious —

Luc. (*taking no notice of PRI.*). Go on talking, sir, whilst I pour out the tea.

Cha. Well, madam, in consequence of my misfortune my lifetime has indeed been a miserable one, — sorrow upon sorrow, faults accumulating upon faults.

Pri. (*leaving*). Crimes! Faults, indeed! [*Exit.*

Cha. My friends always insisted on declaring that I was too lazy to do any thing; and the unlucky star that I was born under, gossiping tongues, and certain circumstances all combined, seemed to favor such a prediction.

Luc. But, sir, was this merited? (*Making tea.*) Will you have a cup of tea, Mr. — Mr. —

Cha. (*absorbed*). Apollo.

Luc. Mr. Apollo.

Cha. Madam! Ah, a thousand pardons. I was absorbed in thinking of my miserable self.

Luc. (*getting interested*). Have you no relations?

Cha. I had an uncle, a well-known merchant, but he died two years ago.

Luc. And didn't he leave any thing?

Cha. Oh, dear, yes; he left a very nice fortune. In fact, he adopted this young lady on purpose to do that.

Luc. Oh, that wasn't right.

Cha. I don't know that it's wrong; but it is not on account of this that I owe him a grudge. I heard that the only way in which he could discharge an obligation to a friend of his was by adopting this friend's daughter, who was left an orphan, a very charming person, I heard; at least, so I was told, for I refused to put my foot inside his house.

Luc. Curious determination!

Cha. Pardon me: not at all. The fact is, he insulted me, — he made me a present.

Luc. A present! what could it be?

Cha. "A very handsome dressing-case" (*a waltz is heard playing outside*), with my name engraved upon it, and below my name the following compliment: "Too lazy to do any thing." I was furious, but I wanted a dressing-case: so, as I wanted a dressing-case, I kept it. I'll trouble you for

another cup of tea, at least if you don't find me too lazy for that?

[*Handing cup.*

Luc. With pleasure.

[*Hands cup.*

Cha. Thanks ; don't let's talk of my unfortunate self any more ; a little more sugar, please.

Luc. This country band really plays that waltz charmingly.

Cha. (*listening and pondering.*) Yes, oh, yes ; how often have I heard that air, and how happy have I been !

Luc. That waltz ?

Cha. My mother used to play it to me when *I was a little child !*

Luc. Have you any control over yourself ?

Cha. Most certainly, a good deal even ; ask me to prove it.

Luc. You would not grant what I ask.

Cha. I wouldn't. Ah, madam ! you want to send me away.

Luc. Not at all : only I wished to explain to you, that, never having worn a thick veil in a room, I'm simply stifling.

Cha. I can quite believe you. Nothing, nothing is so dangerous as a thick veil : you must take it off at once, — you must.

Luc. If you can sufficiently control yourself to sit in a chair here without turning your head, I will sit behind you, and we can finish our conversation without my being stifled.

Cha. (*reproachfully.*) What, madam !

Luc. Well, you must choose ; for, as I don't want to die of suffocation, I shall be forced to give you your *congé*.

Cha. (*taking chair down front of scene, and sitting.*) Madam, this is the second time it is my good fortune to save your life to-night, in return for which —

Luc. (*advancing with a cup of tea in one hand, whilst with the other she keeps him down in the chair.*) Then, sir, I am to understand that, notwithstanding all the misfortunes connected with your nickname, you have still hope.

Cha. Yes, — hope, that poor little creature that nothing can kill.

Luc. It is, then, this hope that takes you to Baden ?

Cha. Baden is, as far as I'm concerned at this moment, my last hope in this world ; then, if my luck is once more against me, if fortune fails to help me, if that poor little creature, hope, succumbs to bad luck, why, then —

Luc. You'll go and join your mother.

Cha. Yes, madam, I shall go.

[*Endeavoring to turn round.*]

Luc. If you do that, I shall have to tie you with my handkerchief. Don't you think now, joking apart, that it would be wiser, without tempting fortune at Baden, to go to your "mother at once"? (*Waltz music again.*) She'd play to you again. (*Listening.*) Come, do you hear that waltz? and when you hear it once more by her side, — that dear mother, — you'll be happy, and —

Cha. Ah! then, in reading my letter, you evidently did not understand, did not comprehend.

Luc. Comprehend what?

Cha. The country that my mother is gone to.

Luc. No.

Cha. It is the Country of Peace, of Repose, — the only land from which the mother cannot return to console her child.

Luc. (*making a movement as if to show herself.*) Then, sir, am I to understand that if you lost — you would — (*stops, and reseats herself*) — he has no mother!

Cha. It would not interest you, madam, to learn all these details; but please to remember that you are not my friend George, and that I've not absolutely gone on my knees to you to read my letter.

Luc. (*aside, looking at CHARLES.*) Just imagine if it were him! (*Rising with animation.*) Well, sir, I don't repent of having read your letter: in fact, I congratulate myself on having done so; and I am also glad to see you here, for now I can implore you, beseech you, to renounce such fatal plans; to beg of you with clasped hands to do so, in the name of your mother.

Cha. Madam!

Luc. Listen, sir. I cannot explain to you my object in being so curious; but what is your name?

Cha. Charleston King.

Luc. Sir!

Cha. That is my veil. If you want to take it off, remove your own.

Luc. No, sir: that is impossible; but —

Cha. In that case, madam, I am Charleston King, too lazy to do any thing, but quite at your service.

Luc. (aside). What shall I do? (*Looking round, sees flowers.*) Ah! (*Takes a sprig of May, and comes towards CHA.*) Sir, we are about to part, probably never to meet again; would it be repugnant to your feelings to accept a souvenir?

Cha. Pardon, madam, but you don't propose giving me a dressing-case?

Luc. Don't be alarmed. The souvenir I give you, do you promise to keep it?

Cha. For ever, madam, I swear it. (*Aside.*) What can it be?

Luc. (kissing sprig, and leaning against back of CHA.'S chair). Take it.

Cha. (looking at it, but not taking it.) A sprig of May!

Luc. Upon which I have just left a kiss. (*CHA. moves.*) You have sworn never to part with it. Good! Should you persist in your fatal project, at the moment when you are about to commit this frightful act, perhaps my poor little sprig may catch your eye; perhaps it will remind you of the days of your childhood, those happy days that have fled away; those Sundays when your mother's smile was upon you as you filled your little arms with flowers, and brought your childish offering to her knees.

Cha. Keep still, my heart!

Luc. If you should have such thoughts, your courage will be tried; for, in speaking to you of me, my little sprig will also remind you of your mother; and if you should still desire —

Cha. (seizing sprig). No, no! I have no longer any such desire (*seizing her hand, and kissing it, slides upon his knees*). I swear it to you on my knees. But I must see the angel who — (*Lifts his head, when LUCY turns away*). Ah, cruel! This hand at least I hold. [*Covers it with kisses.*]

Luc. Give me my hand, sir, or else —

Cha. Or else —

Luc. Tell me your name.

Cha. Shall I see your face?

Luc. No, no! I cannot possibly —

Cha. Madam, I implore you! I beseech you!

Eliz. (outside). It's me, mam. There's no key.

Luc. Elizabeth! — Get up at once, and return to your room, I implore you!

Cha. Madam, I obey you; but —

Luc. (*going towards door*). Thanks, sir, and don't forget my lecture.

Cha. (*entering his room*). In thinking of you, madam, I shall always remember it. [*Exit. LUCY opens door.*]

Eliz. (*entering 2 E. L.*). Why, the key's fallen out. (*Aside.*) She's been up to something, I know. [*Replaces it.*]

Luc. (*still upset*). You must be tired, Elizabeth. Go to bed, my good girl, go. [*Reseats herself, and takes up book.*]

Eliz. (*takes off tea things*). I tired! Oh, no, mum! (*Returns.*) Surely thirty waltzes or quadrilles wouldn't tire me much; and there's only two hours to sleep. It's not worth while going to bed: so, if you please, mum, I'll sit up with you. [*Sits on sofa.*]

Luc. It must, then, be that nephew, the son of his sister, of whom Mr. Mortimer always avoided speaking to me.

Cha. (*in next room, uneasy*). What on earth made her so anxious to know my name?

Luc. At any rate, I have his promise: that's some consolation. By the way, Elizabeth, did you know Mr. Mortimer's nephew?

Eliz. Well, yes, — little Charley Devereux. Oh, yes! I recollect; and I — I — (*falling asleep and dreaming*) thank you, sir: I don't dance any more.

Cha. And to think she'll leave without my seeing her face! It's abominable! [*Rises.*]

Luc. (*Looking at ELIZABETH*). She's asleep, poor thing! She'll catch cold. [*Covers her with her cloak.*]

Cha. Ah, this window! Perhaps there's a veranda.

[*Goes to window.*]

Luc. How can I ascertain for certain that he is Mr. Mortimer's nephew? I must know it somehow.

Cha. No road here; perhaps by the other staircase. I shall just go in without knocking, as if I had forgotten; that's it: here goes. [*Exit, slamming door.*]

Luc. That noise was in his room. I think he's gone out. If I was certain that dressing-case he spoke of would tell me! (*At door.*) Sir, Mr. King! No answer. What have I to fear? [*Enters room, closing door.*]

Cha. (*gently opening 2 E. L. door*). Yes, this is the room. (*Looking round.*) She sleeps; my handkerchief too. Now, my charming girl, let me see your face. (*Takes candle,*

starts back.) Confound it! Well, there's the end of my dream.

[*Heaves a sigh, and goes out.*]

Eliz. (starting up.) There's somebody in the room. (*Goes to door at back, and looks in.*) I knew she was up to something: I'll find it out, see if I don't. [*Exit I. L. E.*]

Luc. (Searching.) Ah, here it is at last, — Charles Devereux. It's he, it's he! (*She returns hastily, and bolts door.*) Ah, how my heart beats! what shall I do now? (*Thinking.*) The fact is, he's very nice, notwithstanding his nickname.

Cha. (entering, and falling into arm-chair.) Another dream, that takes itself off to the land of dreams. (*Striking table.*) No, it's always the same. If you were to go to a masked ball where there was only one woman — oh, love! oh, frenzy! the mask falls, ugh! no more love, no more frenzy. The woman's ninety, and ugly as — heaven knows what.

Luc. He's come in. (*Calling at door.*) Mr. King!

Cha. And such a voice!

Luc. Sir.

Cha. Woke her up, I suppose. Madam —

Luc. Sir, I should like to have a few words of explanation with you.

Cha. (running to fasten door.) Oh, by jingo!

Luc. He's locked himself in. (*Aloud.*) Pardon me, sir, for troubling you; but — but — if I mistake not, you are Mr. Charles Devereux, the nephew of Mr. Mortimer.

Cha. I suppose you mean, madam, that that gentleman was my uncle. I don't dispute the fact. (*Aside.*) How the mischief did she find that out? Ah! it's that confounded landlord told her.

Luc. Well, sir, I've a most important communication to make to you from his adopted child.

Cha. But I don't want to hear what she's got to say, madam. You know her?

Luc. Yes, sir, I know her; and I also know that she has been seeking you for a long time, in order to give you up a fortune which by right belongs to you.

Cha. What you propose, madam, is ridiculous. I could never accept a farthing.

Luc. But suppose in seeing her you happen to like her, and that —

Cha. I shall never like her.

Luc. Perhaps you might. If she were like me, for instance ?

Cha. Never, madam. I'm sworn celibacy, — a knight of Malta, in fact.

Luc. (aside). What an extraordinary change! (*Aloud.*) Mr. King, I'm in the greatest danger, and you alone can save me.

Cha. Madam, I've saved you twice to-night, and I distinctly refuse to do it any more.

Luc. (aside). He's absolutely getting impertinent. — Sir, I have something to return to you that belongs to you, — a pocket-handkerchief.

Cha. Thanks : I've got it, — one with a monogram. I really believe I must barricade my door.

[*Puts furniture against door.*]

Luc. He's got it! Why, he must have come in here, then ; and — and — of course he saw Elizabeth with my cloak round her. I see. Ha, ha, ha!

Cha. Confound her, she's laughing! She laughs too as if she was only twenty.

Luc. So, sir, you refuse to open the door ?

Cha. Quite impossible, madam. I'm gone, I'm a long way off, I'm on my road to Baden.

Luc. Pleasant journey, sir. (*Aside.*) It can't be helped, I must have recourse to more violent means. [*Exit L. D.*]

Cha. I verily believe she's going to burst the door in : I'd better bolt. The devil! this is becoming serious. It almost reminds me of my adventure amongst the savages in Africa, where the daughter of a king, with rings in her nose, took a violent fancy to me. The king favored the marriage, and told me quietly that I had the choice, if I didn't marry his daughter he'd eat me. I at once answered, "Your Majesty, I prefer to enter your family to your mouth ; I'll marry your daughter to-morrow." And during the night I escaped to the coast. Let us do the same, and escape to the coast.

[*Makes for door.*]

Pri. (appearing at door drunk). Miss Lucy Mortimer wishes to have the honor of seeing you, sir.

Cha. Miss who, did you say ?

Pri. Well, sir, beg pardon, it's your cousin's uncle or your uncle's cousin.

Cha. Ask the lady to walk in, wretched man.

Pri. (announcing LUCY, who is in ELIZABETH'S cloak with a thick veil on). Miss Lucy Mortimer.

Cha. (advancing, confused). Madam, I thought I —

Luc. (speaking to him in a disguised voice, and throwing back veil). Well, sir, what do you think of me?

Cha. Ah, madam! Even the most confused man in the world could but confess that you are charming. (*Aside.*) If my neighbor were only half as pretty! Charming is not the word; but, excuse me, you come here at five in the morning, and ask me what I think of you. Well, that's all right, I suppose; but pardon me if I go further, and venture to ask in the most humble manner in the world a little question.

Luc. (same voice). I'm listening.

Cha. I scarcely know how to put it, but by what curious coincidence do you come to know my name?

Luc. (in ordinary voice). Because, sir, I found out. (*Points to dressing-case.*) Because it's the name of a kind, frank, brave young fellow, whom I really don't find too lazy for any thing, and whom I've also learned to know as too honorable to misinterpret.

Cha. That voice! impossible. (*Points to L. H.*) It can't be you. Who could I have seen there just now?

Luc. My maid, who was asleep whilst I was here, reading your name.

Cha. Why, it's like a dream. But your husband, madam —

Luc. He too has gone to that land of rest.

Cha. You are then —

Luc. Miss Lucy Mortimer, your cousin, who can no longer retain the fortune that so justly belongs to you.

Cha. (confused). But I absolutely refuse to —

Luc. Ah, if you refuse me, I shall ask you to give me back my sprig of May.

Cha. (kneeling). Never. I will keep it to the last moment of my life, and with it the hand I now hold.

[*Sinks on his knee. Door opens.*]

Luc. Get up: here's some one coming.

Enter PRICHARD, R. 2 E.

Pri. Madam, sir, the postilions are harnessed: I mean the horses.

Cha. Confound that landlord! — Come here, landlord. (*Takes PRI. up C.*) Did you ever hear that this hotel of

yours was infected with a malady of the most infectious character?

Pri. Sir, I beg most distinctly to state that —

Cha. Landlord, you're very drunk.

[*Pushes him through door into next room, where he falls on sofa.*]

Luc. Oh, Charles, dear! I hope we sha'n't catch it.

Cha. Don't be afraid, dear: the malady which I allude to is one from which we are both of us suffering, and it is one that has but one remedy for its cure. (*To audience.*) Dear friends, the malady is love: the remedy is marriage. If any of you are suffering from some of the premonitory symptoms of this insidious disease, you will, I feel sure, accord us your utmost sympathy. But if there should be any here who have not yet been attacked, and who wish to avoid contagion, let me strongly recommend them to avoid, upon any pretence whatever, a conversation with a lady which is to be carried on

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