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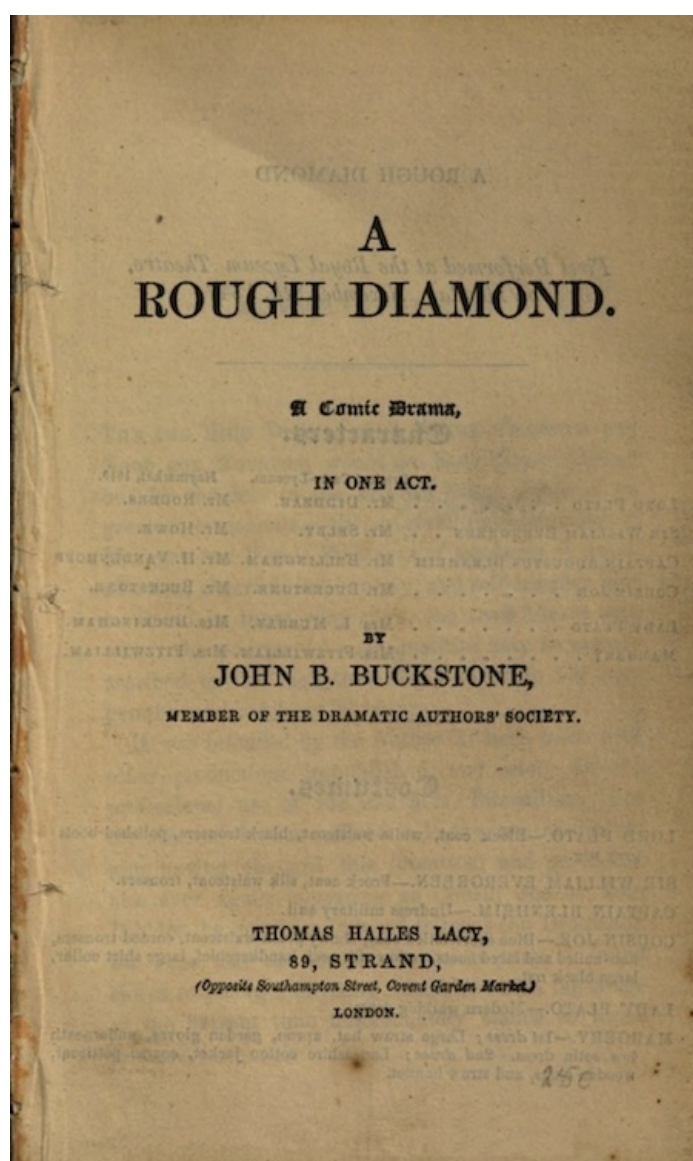
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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A ROUGH DIAMOND: A COMIC DRAMA IN ONE ACT \*\*\*



A  
ROUGH DIAMOND.

A Comic Drama,  
IN ONE ACT.

BY  
JOHN B. BUCKSTONE,  
MEMBER OF THE DRAMATIC AUTHORS' SOCIETY.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,  
89, STRAND,  
*(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market.)*  
LONDON.

## A ROUGH DIAMOND

*First Performed at the Royal Lyceum Theatre,  
on Monday, November 8th, 1847.*

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**Characters.**

	Original Cast— Lyceum.	Haymarket, 1849.
LORD PLATO	Mr. DIDDEAR.	Mr. ROGERS.
SIR WILLIAM EVERGREEN	Mr. SELBY.	Mr. HOWE.
CAPTAIN AUGUSTUS BLENHEIM	Mr. BELLINGHAM.	Mr. H. VANDENHOFF.
COUSIN JOE	Mr. BUCKSTONE.	Mr. BUCKSTONE.
LADY PLATO	Mrs. L. MURRAY.	Mrs. BUCKINGHAM.
MARGERY	Mrs. FITZWILLIAM.	Mrs. FITZWILLIAM.

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**Costumes.**

LORD PLATO.—Black coat, white waistcoat, black trousers, polished boots, grey wig.

SIR WILLIAM EVERGREEN.—Frock coat, silk waistcoat, trousers.

CAPTAIN BLENHEIM.—Undress military suit.

COUSIN JOE.—Blue short-tailed coat, showy plush waistcoat, corded trousers, hob-nailed and laced boots, yellow silk neck handkerchief, large shirt collar, large black hat.

LADY PLATO.—Modern walking dress.

MARGERY. *1st dress;* Large straw hat, apron, garden gloves, underneath low satin dress. *2nd dress;* Lancashire cotton jacket; coarse petticoat, wooden clogs, and straw bonnet.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE two little Dramas of A ROUGH DIAMOND and GOOD FOR NOTHING, would not have been published but for the loss to the English Stage of one of its greatest ornaments,—the original representative of Margery and Nan. Whatever of goodness of heart, affection, cheerfulness, honesty, and self-sacrifice may be found in those characters, the truthfulness with which she portrayed such qualities may be mainly ascribed to the fact, that they existed in her own genuine and most genial nature.

It was intended by the Author to keep these with other productions unpublished, and solely for the professional use of the late Mrs. Fitzwilliam; but the affliction he has suffered in losing one so dear to him having changed this intention, and prevented him ever again appearing as Cousin Joe or Tom Dibbles, he has been induced to print the Dramas in the hope that the female characters may be found suited to young and rising talent, of which the Stage at the present time unfortunately stands so much in need.

## A ROUGH DIAMOND.

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SCENE.—*A Country Residence—Door C., opening on a lawn with carriage way; on each side of the entrance are Statues—Door L.H.U.E.—An open door, R.H.U.E., leading to a Shrubbery—High flower stands on each side of the Stage, containing flowers—Plain chairs, &c. &c.*

SIR WILLIAM EVERGREEN, *heard without.*

SIR WILLIAM. Come in, come in—I'm delighted to see you. Harry, lead the horse to the stable.

*Enter SIR WILLIAM and CAPTAIN BLENHEIM from the back, C.D.*

SIR W. I thought it was a face I knew. I'm very glad to see you—it's more than two years since we met! Where do you come from?—where are you going to?—and how d'ye do?

BLEN. My regiment is quartered about a mile off—we arrived there but yesterday—I knew you had a country house in the neighbourhood, and I had come in search of you.

SIR W. Excellent! now I have indeed a companion, for I shall expect you to pass all your leisure with me. I thought you were abroad, as I had not heard from you so long.

BLEN. I have been stationed in Ireland.

SIR W. You're looking in excellent health, and your spirits are as buoyant as ever, I'm sure.

BLEN. I have nothing to complain of as regards my health—my spirits I can't say much for.

SIR W. What, any old creditors troublesome, or—

BLEN. No, I've nothing to fear from them.

SIR W. Some love affair—some tender attachment.

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BLEN. Now you're right; I may as well be candid and tell you so.

SIR W. Jilted, or rejected, or—

BLEN. Shortly after you left me at college, I formed an attachment to a young girl that I idolized with all the enthusiasm of youth.

SIR W. Aye, aye; we generally begin that way.

BLEN. My passion was returned with equal fervor; when it became necessary that I should select my position in life. My friends suggested the army, and my inclination led me to adopt their views. Ireland soon became my destination—a constant correspondence with the object of my passion was my only solace in exile, and for months I almost daily opened a letter written by her dear hand.

SIR W. How delightful! I have often thought how charming it must be to receive an eloquent letter from a much-loved source—to have the colloquial grace of a Sévigné mingled with the fervor of a Heloise, or the moral delicacy of a Chapone. Oh, my dear fellow, I envy you!

BLEN. Have you never experienced that happiness?

SIR W. Never;—but proceed with your history, mine shall follow—you went to Ireland, and there received letters from the lady of your love.

BLEN. A long silence ensued.

SIR W. What anxious hours you must have passed.

BLEN. Till one morning my servant placed a letter on my table—the object of my passion had married during her silence.

SIR W. I guessed as much—always something ominous in a woman's silence.

BLEN. Her parents had met with misfortunes—a wealthy match presented itself—

a match with a title.

SIR W. A match with a title!—ignition at once, of course.

BLEN. The temptation, added to the prayers of her friends, were too much for her. She yielded, but assured me she had done so with a broken heart—implored me to forget her—that her lot in life was cast, that the stern duties of her future existence should be fulfilled if she died in the struggle, yet confessed that I still occupied one little corner in her heart, and concluded with a beautiful quotation from Milton.

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SIR W. A refined mind, an educated divinity, no doubt—one formed to adorn the rank she had gained.

BLEN. She was indeed accomplished.

SIR W. I thought so. Spoke Italian, no doubt?

BLEN. Fluently.

SIR W. And French?

BLEN. Better than a native.

SIR W. What a woman! Understood music?

BLEN. An enthusiast in the science.

SIR W. And mineralogy and archæology?

BLEN. Perfectly.

SIR W. And the steam engine?

BLEN. Yes.

SIR W. And the vestiges of creation?

BLEN. Yes, and chaos, and everything.

SIR W. What a woman! I should have adored her. And you lost this professor in petticoats?

BLEN. Irrevocably! She concealed the name and title of her husband, as she did not wish me to write in reply, as any reproach from me would but add to her wretchedness—and now you know the cause of my dejection.

SIR W. I pity you from my heart. If you have *lost* a treasure, you should see the one that I have *found*.

BLEN. *You* are married, I hear.

SIR W. Yes, I also formed an attachment to a young girl that I idolised. You have known me some years—that is to say, I was leaving college shortly after you entered, and you know how I have ever prized education—that it has been my watchword, my constant theme when I had a seat in Parliament. I don't sit now, but that's not *my* fault; but when I *did* sit, my constant agitation was education. "Educate," said I, "educate! that is the panacea for every social evil!"

BLEN. I've read your speeches.

SIR W. You should have heard them—will you hear one now?

BLEN. Don't trouble yourself.

SIR W. Well, after dinner. One day, Sir, in riding through the country, my horse stumbled, and I was thrown violently. My head encountered the edge of a stone wall; the wall being the hardest I was the only sufferer. Stunned and bleeding I was carried into a farm-house. My injuries were so severe that I was compelled to remain there for some weeks. The farmer's daughter constantly waited on me, paid me so much attention, so amused me, so anticipated my every wish—in short, made herself so necessary to my comforts, that—

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BLEN. You—

SIR W. Exactly! I used to watch her every action as I reclined on my sofa. She was rude and odd, but there was a heartiness in her nature and a comeliness in her person that pleased me, that really fascinated me, till at last I began rather to love her.

BLEN. You love an uneducated country wench?

SIR W. It was silly, wasn't it? but we are not our own masters in such matters. However, don't laugh at me yet. I anticipated the pleasure of rightly directing her mind, of the happiness in possessing a subject on which to practise my favorite theory—in short, I pictured a whole life of felicity in educating the object of my

affection.

BLEN. For which purpose you married her.

SIR W. I did, to the great disgust of my connexions; indeed, my uncle, Lord Plato, has never visited me since my union—has never written, or noticed me in any way.

BLEN. But you found happiness in combining the character of husband and tutor?

SIR W. I surrounded her with masters—an English master, a French master, a music master, a dancing master, a singing master, a philosophical lecturer, and a political economist.

BLEN. And what has been her progress?

SIR W. Her progress has been entirely stationary. I can do nothing with her—she seems to rejoice in her ignorance—and, though I sometimes think she has a capacity for learning, my hopes have been so often disappointed that I now give her up. She's a female Orson, Sir, though I confess I was once her Valentine.

MARGERY, *laughs without.*

—There she is.

BLEN. Very merry, at any rate.

SIR W. Oh, she's merry enough, and good-humoured enough; but, my dear Sir, with *my* prejudices, with *my* ideas of refinement, with *my* delicacy as regards conduct in society, conceive my agony in possessing a wife who is as wild as an unbroken colt, finds a nickname for everybody, and persists in being called by her Christian name of—of—

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BLEN. What?

SIR W. I'm ashamed to tell you—Margery.

BLEN. Margery?

SIR W. I have tried to persuade her to change it to Matilda, or Magaretta, or Marguerite, but all in vain—she says her mother's name was Margery, her grandmother's name was Margery, that her name is Margery, and Margery she'll be to the end of the chapter.

MARGERY. (*without*) Now, come along, Jack! and you, Tom, mind how you carry my kitten.

*Enter MARGERY from the back, in a fashionably-made dress, but which she wears awkwardly—She is followed by TWO SERVANTS.*

MAR. Now, Jack, mind what I say—how many pigs is there in the last litter? Oh, I know—eight! Well, you may send one to my cousin Joe—I'll tell you where he lives by and by—two to my old dad, and one to Betsy Buncle, my old playfellow in Lancashire—the three black ones I shall want to have in the parlor to play with.

SIR W. Pigs in the parlor to play with? Lady Evergreen, do you not perceive a visitor?

MAR. Wait a minute—I'll speak to him presently. Do as I bid you; and you, Tom, give my kitten her lunch, and turn all the young terriers loose on the grass plot, because I like to see 'em tumble over one another—and now go.

*Exit SERVANTS at back.*

—Well, Sir, and how d'ye do, Sir? and (*to BLENHEIM*) how are you, and who are you?

SIR W. My dear, my dear, *do* think of your station! This is an old friend of mine—we were at college together. Captain Blenheim—Lady Evergreen.

MAR. (*dropping a country curtsey*) Hope you're well, Sir—fine weather for the hay, and nothing can look better as yet than the taters.

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SIR W. Hush, hush! don't talk, my dear.

MAR. Then what did you bring him here for?

BLEN. I am delighted in being introduced to the wife of my old friend.

MAR. Well, I ain't sorry to see you, if it comes to that, if only for a bit of a change, for my Billy here seldom lets anybody come a-visiting, and when I ask him why he don't have a few friends now and then to kick up a bit of a bobbery—

SIR W. My dear!

MAR. I will talk! He says I'm too rough to mix up with his sort, and that he can't bring 'em here or take me amongst them till I'm polished up; but I'm afraid I shall take so much polishing that I shall be worn out before I'm as bright as he wants me to be.

BLEN. I trust not, Madam.

SIR W. My dear, will you go into your—

MAR. Not just yet—if I talk a little more to the gentleman he'll get used to me, and won't notice my grammar. And I'm not going to stand mumchance and try to talk that horrid gibberish you've been wanting to teach me, when I've got a good English tongue of my own. Leave me alone, Billy, or I'll set Growler at you. Please don't mind us, Sir (*to BLENHEIM*), man and wife, you know, when in company often have a few snaps at one another on the sly, and, as it's nobody's business but their own, why, of course you don't know what we're snapping about, do you?

BLEN. Certainly not, my lady.

MAR. Of course! I suppose *you've* been educated, haven't you, Sir?

BLEN. Your husband and I were at college together.

MAR. I know what you mean—you were schoolfellows. Well, I dare say you're very glad to see one another. I know I should be very glad to see my cousin Joe—we were schoolfellows, too—used to go to Old Mother Tickle's, at the first house in the village, close to the duck pond. Oh, many and many's the time I've pushed him into it—up to his knees! Oh lord! it was so *bong-bong*—that's a bit of French—do you understand it, Sir?

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SIR W. (*who has crossed behind to BLENHEIM*) Don't you, don't you pity me?

BLEN. I think her charming—it's natural gaiety of heart, nothing more.

SIR W. No, no, you're pleased to compliment.

MAR. (*comes between them*) Hallo! you're whispering! where's your manners, whispering before a lady? Is that your education, my dear?

SIR W. I stand corrected.

MAR. Corrected? why, I haven't touched you—though you deserve to catch toko, that you do.

SIR W. Well, my dear friend, I shall expect you to dine with us to-day.

MAR. Ah, do! come and take pot luck!

SIR W. Lady Evergreen, I implore you!

MAR. If he knows my meaning what does it matter? You'll come, won't you? Oh, do! and bring some of the sojers with you—I like sojers! What are you, a sharpshooter, or a—what d'ye call 'em?

BLEN. In the infantry, your ladyship.

MAR. Infant—infantry! Oh! what, young 'uns in arms?

SIR W. No, no, my dear!

MAR. I know, bless you! but I like what I used to see in the country—the—the yeo-ho— No, yeo-ho's sailors—the yeomanry, that's it! I like them best—such red jackets with yellow insides, and a thing on their heads like a tin pot with a large fox's brush pulled over it. Oh, didn't they look prime!

SIR W. Oh good gracious! oh good heavens! (*stamps about in agony*)

MAR. Oh! look at my Billy dancing! I never saw him so full of fun before.

BLEN. Well, Lady Evergreen, I shall certainly accept your kind invitation: I must return to my quarters for a short time, but will rejoin you in the course of half-an-hour. I am delighted at meeting you again, Sir William, and believe me equally delighted at my introduction to your excellent lady.

MAR. That's hearty! give me your hand—*you're* the kind o' man I like, after all.

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SIR W. Don't be longer than half-an-hour.

BLEN. Not a moment. Adieu, my lady, for the present.

MAR. Good bye! Come again soon, now.

BLENHEIM *goes off at the back*—MARGERY *calls after him*.

—Captain! *bon jour!* There! that's French, there's a bit of education for him!



SIR W. Now, my dear, that we are alone, I must tell you that your behaviour has been abominable.

MAR. Oh! has it? Now if I didn't think I was quite the lady!

SIR W. What with your directions respecting your animals, and your reference to your cousin Joe and the old woman your schoolmistress, and your ridiculous eulogium on the uniform of the yeomanry, I thought I should have taken to my heels and have run out of the house.

MAR. I wish you had—I know I should have got on much better without *you* at my elbow. And as for my cousin Joe, he may be a stupid fellow and all that, but he's a very good fellow, and if he don't know how to make a proper bow, or a long speech like you do—such as when I've heard you practising to yourself about railroads, and borrowing money, and taxes, and the state of the nation, and situation of the population, and that horrible Education—*he* can talk so as I can understand him, and that's more than I always can when you talk—and anybody else, for the matter o' that. And if I did like the sojers I used to see so often, what harm was there in that? I'm sure the Captain was a fine man, a very fine man, whiskers and all—and I've often looked at him till I've felt as if I could eat him.

SIR W. I know that you mean no harm—I know that your heart is pure; but you must learn to be conscious of your present station in society. The diamond, though of value in its rough and original state, must be polished and set before it can be worn. Now to-day, when I rang for the cook and wished you to commence giving your own orders for dinner, and had previously practised you in the pronunciation of asking for *cabillaud au gratin poulet roti—pomme de terre bute—*

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MAR. Well, I couldn't recollect it, and so I thought it best to ask for what I liked better than anything.

SIR W. And are you aware what you did ask for?

MAR. I only asked for a toad in a hole.

SIR W. And didn't you perceive the vain endeavour of the servant to conceal his laughter? didn't you perceive my face suffused with blushes?

MAR. Well, I speak according to my knowledge, and I know I always speak the truth and what I want to say, without any beating about the bush; and that's much better than being deceitful and making believe to be glad to see people when you really wish 'em at Jericho, and go grinning and smiling up to 'em, and shaking hands, when in your heart you'd like to shake 'em inside out—and make use of fine words and say beautiful things when you don't mean it. You may call it polish if you like, but I call it telling lies.

SIR W. But the usages of society—the—

MAR. I don't care! I shall follow my own usages, and I begin this morning by packing off my French master and my music master; and as for the dancing master, if he dares come here again and make my feet ache as he did yesterday, I'll break his little fiddle over his head for him!

*Enter a SERVANT at the back.*

SERV. Lord and Lady Plato.

SIR W. Good heavens! my uncle and his wife, his first visit since his marriage! Now, my dearest Margaret, if you have any regard for me—and I know you *have*, after your own fashion—

MAR. I like you very much when you don't snub me.

SIR W. I never will again, if you will only be a little on your guard now. Speak as few words as possible, and take off that apron and those gardening gloves, and try to recollect the way of receiving visitors that I have so often taught you.

MAR. I'll try.

SIR W. There's a dear! and I'll give you a kiss when they're gone.

MAR. No, give it me now.

SIR W. (*kissing her*) There! (*to SERVANT*) I'll attend his lordship immediately.

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*Exit SERVANT and SIR WILLIAM.*

MAR. Bless me! then I must titivate a little. (*rings a bell*) I'm to take off these gloves and this apron.

—Come here, Lucy—take these things, will you? (*giving her the gloves and apron*) Now my hair and my dress—do I look nice and proper to see gentlefolks? Oh! my shoes do pinch me so! There, that will do—now go.

MARGERY *stands very prim*, L.H.—SIR WILLIAM *ushers in* LORD and LADY PLATO.

SIR W. My dear uncle, this is kind! I was afraid you would never honor me with a visit again. Lady Plato, I am delighted to know you. You can form no idea how gratified I am by the unexpected pleasure of seeing you.

PLATO. Just returned from a trip to the Highlands.

SIR W. I was fearful I had offended you, but this kindness assures me we are still friends.

PLATO. We shall have the pleasure of meeting Lady Evergreen, I hope.

SIR W. Certainly—her ladyship is present. You have heard of my choice, and will, I trust, overlook any *gaucherie*—any—

PLATO. Certainly! I've considered the matter, and as there is now no help for it, why, what can't be cured—I need say no more.

SIR W. Lady Evergreen, permit me to introduce you to my excellent uncle, Lord Plato, and to Lady Plato.

MARGERY *is introduced with some ceremony—On curtseying to* LADY PLATO *she suddenly stops and stares at her.*

MAR. Lord, it's Polly! Oh, Polly dear, is it you? Oh! how glad I am to see you. Well now, only to think!

LADY P. My dear old friend!

MAR. It is she! Oh, I'm so glad! Oh! that I should see you again—oh my gemini! (*to* SIR WILLIAM) My dear, she's my old, my dear, my dearest friend—she was at school at the big house where I used to take fruit from the farm to all the girls, and she took a fancy to me—didn't you, Polly? and I took a fancy to her, and we used to play together, and sing together, and then she came to my father's and stopped a whole month when she had the measles. Oh dear! oh! I'm going to cry now—I'm so happy.

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SIR W. (*to* LADY PLATO) Old acquaintance I perceive, my lady.

LADY P. Indeed we are! I cannot express the pleasure, the delight I experience at once more meeting the playmate of my infancy.

MAR. Don't you remember blind man's buff, and puss in the corner? Oh, I do, so well! And only to think that you should be married to my husband's uncle! Lord, you're my aunt! Oh what fun! (*takes* LADY PLATO *up the Stage*)

SIR W. You see, my lord, the choice I have made; but you are aware of my feelings, my motives—I have been disappointed hitherto, but still I hope to succeed.

PLATO. Don't allude to the matter, I beg. In the refined society of Lady P., your wife will receive more instruction from the force of example than could be accomplished by any system. We'll leave them together, as I wish to have a little conversation with you on the state of the nation.

SIR W. I'll attend your lordship with pleasure.

PLATO. (*to* LADY PLATO) Adieu, my dearest, for a few moments—you will, I know, prefer a little freedom with your old acquaintance. Lady Evergreen will, I'm sure, excuse us.

MAR. Oh yes! and thank you for going.

PLATO. Frank, at any rate! You'll be delighted with Lady Plato. (*to* SIR WILLIAM) Such refinement! such intellect! Gigantic, Sir, gigantic!—and such angelic sweetness!

SIR W. Ah! all education—all education!

*Exeunt* LORD PLATO and SIR WILLIAM *at the back*, L.H.

MAR. Oh, Polly dear! I never thought to see you any more! Let me look at you all over! Yes, it is the same—the same eyes, the same mouth, the same nose—all the same! But you don't laugh as you used—not look so merry. What's the matter, dear?

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—don't you do as you like? ar'n't you happy in your mind?

LADY P. A sadness oppresses me that I find very difficult to conquer.

MAR. Your husband worries you, I dare say—mine does sometimes, though he's very good to me, one way and another. But I don't like his wanting me to learn so much about nouns, and pronouns, and history—and then he gives me such dull books to read, all about astrology, and chronology, and physiology, and conchology, and etymology, and how many miles the moon's off—just as if one wanted to know, as long as it shines. I can't bear it! Give me Robinson Crusoe and the Seven Champions—that's what I like! But with all his learning I can do what *he* can't.

LADY P. What's that, my dear?

MAR. Get up on a cold morning. Ah! you should only see *him* try!

LADY P. Your gaiety of heart, my dear Margaret—

MAR. Margery, call me Margery—it sounds more comfortable.

LADY P. My dear Margery—

MAR. That's it!

LADY P. And animal spirits, are proof against all temperatures.

MAR. Lord! how fine you do talk! you'll be just the thing for my husband—I wonder whether I shall like yours. He seems a funny old fellow, and so grand too, and so upright, and his hair all so nicely floured over. What did you love him for?

LADY P. To gratify the wishes of my parents; the position that my union insured flattered and pleased me, while it removed the troubles of my family. I am grateful, very grateful, for his lordship's preference, I confess—but—there's—

MAR. Somebody else you like better. Well, never mind, dear, you'll love the old one very well by and by.

CAPTAIN BLENHEIM *appears at the back—comes down*, L.H.

BLEN. I am pretty punctual you see, Lady Evergreen. Is it possible? Mary!

LADY P. Augustus!

MAR. What, do *you* know one another too? Why, he's my husband's old schoolfellow, and we've asked him to come and pick a bit with us to-day. Now this is what I like—old friends all meeting together again. Oh! won't we have a merry evening!

BLEN. I never thought to see you more.

LADY P. This meeting will be most embarrassing! I am here, with my husband, and—

BLEN. You would wish me to retire.

MAR. I can understand—that is the one you like better, is it? Well, never mind, dear, don't be afraid of your husband meeting him—they won't fight, will they? and if they do, what o' that? People that fight are often the best friends in the world when it's all over.

BLEN. If you *request* me to leave the house, I can only obey.

MAR. No, no, you mustn't go—take him to your husband and say right out, "My dear, this is my old sweetheart, and you must not be jealous, and though I did like him once, what o' that? I'm your wife now, and he can only be a friend, and there's no harm in a friend coming to see me." Be upright and downright, my dear—it's the best way—for where there's nothing concealed nothing can pop out.

LADY P. There are positions that exact great discretion from us—that absolutely render concealment a necessity, if only to avoid those explanations and confessions that *must* lead to mortification, if not to unhappiness.

BLEN. May I not exchange one word with you?

LADY P. If you will then immediately leave me, defer your visit here till another day, and not expose me to an embarrassment that will be most painful. Where's my lord?

MAR. I don't know, aunt—he's somewhere about.

LADY P. In the house?

MAR. I think so—talking over the state of the nation with my husband.

LADY P. I must seek him instantly. (*to* BLENHEIM) Pray do not follow me. (*to*

MARGERY) Say nothing of this meeting, I beg.

BLÉN. Listen to me but for one moment, and I will do all that you desire.

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LADY PLATO *goes up the Stage as if uncertain which way to go, till she hurries off by the R.H. door, followed by BLÉNHEIM.*

MAR. Well, I say nothing, but if aunt really wants to find her husband she's gone quite the wrong way, and I'm to say nothing about it. Well, I'm no tell-tale, but I don't like it. (*goes to the flower-stand, L.H., and trims the flowers*) Lord bless us! what a deal o' trouble people get themselves into when once they begin having secrets from one another.

COUSIN JOE *appears at the back.*

JOE. This must be the house—I found the gate open, and the Nag's Head told me this was Sir William's, and he's the gentleman that married my cousin, and—What, Margery! lord bless us!

MAR. What, Joe, is it you? how d'ye do, Joe? Well, I am glad to see you! (*shakes hands heartily with JOE*) More old friends meeting, but this is the best of all. Well, and how are you, cousin Joe?

JOE. Oh, I'm very well, thank ye!

MAR. What's brought you here? come to see me?

JOE. Yes.

MAR. That's right.

JOE. I'm going up to a place in London. You see, mother knows somebody there, and as I didn't care much about farming, and always had a kind o' sort o' notion of being a bit of a gentleman, why, they said I was cut out for sarvice, and the end of it is, I'm going to London to be page to a fine lady.

MAR. Lord, Joe!

JOE. The very thing for a genteel youth like me, they say. I ain't to wear these clothes then. No, I'm to be all over buttons, and have a hat with gold lace, and my hair is to be curled every morning, and I'm to carry letters in to missus on a silver plate, and walk arter her with the lap-dog in the street, and take care nobody's sarcy to her.

MAR. Can't you stop here a day or two before you go to your place? we would have such fun—for though my husband has often said that none of my family must come here, as he wanted me to forget all their ways, yet as you *are* here, I think I could coax him to let you stop. Sit down, Joe—here's a chair. Well, and so—and how's your mother?

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JOE. Hearty.

MAR. And what's the news?—tell me all you can think of. Has Tom Dixon married Lizzey Turvey yet?

JOE. No; they were going to be married only a week ago, and when they got to the church Tom took fright and ran all the way home again, and left Lizzey Turvey crying her eyes out at the porch door.

MAR. You don't say so! Well, I always said Tom was a fool. Come close, Joe, don't be shy—and, oh Joe! how comfortable this is, to have somebody to talk to in one's own fashion! I do feel so free and easy again! Well, and tell me, Joe, is Dame Willows living?

JOE. No—died six months ago.

MAR. Did she leave all her money to her nephew, Jem Porter?

JOE. No, bless your life! Oh, there's such work!

MAR. Come quite close—quite close, and tell me.

JOE. You see, Jem made sure of the money, and lived in such style—bought a horse and shay, and went to races, and played nine-pins—when, lo and behold! the old lady died and he found it was all left to a smooth-faced fellow that nobody never heard on, that got somehow or other into the old lady's good books and she had it writ down. It was all because Jem one day kicked her favorite dog, that used to fly at everybody's legs—now the dog's gone to live with a baker, and Jem's in prison for debt.

MAR. And Harry Bacon, what's become of him?

JOE. Gone to sea, because Mary Brown took up with a tailor what opened a shop from London. And you recollect Tom Hammer the blacksmith?

MAR. Yes.

JOE. Well, if he ain't gone and bought all Merryweather's pigs I'm a Dutchman! And Merryweather's gone to America, and the eldest daughter's married Sam Holloway the cutler, and folks say it ain't a good match, because he was a widow with three children all ready and she might have had Master Pollard the schoolmaster, and he's gone and turned serious and won't let the boys play at no games, and so they're all going away to a new man that'll let 'em do just what they like; and Will Twigg has been found out stealing chickens, and he's in prison; and Johnny Trotter the postman has opened a grocer's shop; and they've pulled down the old parsonage and are building a new 'un; and the doctor's got a large lamp over his door with big blue and red bull's eyes; and there's a new beadle, and all the parish children have got the hooping-cough, and Mrs. Jenkins' cow's dead, and—that's all!

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MAR. Oh, Joe! I can shut my eyes and see everything and everybody you've been talking about, oh so plain! and to see you again does seem so like old times.

JOE. And didn't we have games? when you used to climb up the cherry-tree, and call out to me, "Joe, come and help me, or I shall tumble down and break something!"

MAR. Yes! and Joe, when my father used to take you and I to market, and we used to sit at the bottom of the cart and eat apples!

JOE. And when sometimes I used to try to give you a kiss, what knocks on my nose you used to give me!

MAR. Ah! didn't I?

JOE. And when I got savage how I used to kick you wi' my hob-nail shoes! Oh! how friendly we was—wasn't we?

MAR. And how we did sing!

JOE. And dance!

MAR. And were so happy!

JOE. Oh, Margery!

MAR. Oh, Joe!

*JOE catches her in his arms and kisses her—At the same moment, SIR WILLIAM and LORD PLATO appear at the back, and stand in astonishment.*

SIR W. Heavens!

PLATO. Sir William!

MAR. (*to JOE*) Don't go away—it's only my husband.

SIR W. Who is this fellow, and what is he doing here?

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*JOE, still seated, stares at SIR WILLIAM and makes him a bow—SIR WILLIAM repeats the question.*

MAR. It's my cousin Joe. He was only giving me a kiss just now—and I was so glad to see him, and he was so glad to see me, that we—we couldn't help it.

JOE. No, we couldn't help it.

PLATO. Exceedingly ingenious!

SIR W. (*to MARGERY*) Oblige me by retiring to your room—and you, fellow, leave this place immediately.

MAR. Don't send him away yet—we haven't had half a talk together.

JOE. No, we haven't had half a talk together.

MAR. Don't you go, Joe.

JOE. I don't mean to!

SIR W. Your conduct, Madam, is most unbecoming! you forget your station—you forget that you are my wife!

MAR. I'm sure I don't, and I'm sure you take good care that I sha'n't.

JOE. You take good care that she sha'n't.

MAR. Hold your tongue, Sir! how dare you speak? I won't be tethered so tight any longer, I can tell you—and I *will* be myself again! I've tried to be somebody else, and I can't, and I'll go and put on my old country clothes again—for I've no comfort in these—and then I can do as I like—kiss Joe, and you, and even that old gentleman—though I shouldn't much like it.

JOE. (*after staring at* LORD PLATO) I shouldn't like to kiss him.

PLATO. Really! (*going up*)

SIR W. Margaret, I— (*turns sharply to* JOE, *who wears his hat*) Take off your hat, Sir!

JOE. Eh?

SIR W. (*pointing to his hat*) Take off your hat, Sir!

MAR. I don't want to quarrel, and I won't quarrel, if you'll only be kind to me; but I will be myself again, for since I've been married I feel as if my head, and my arms, and my legs were all put on the wrong way; and when I am myself again, if you don't like me I had better go back to my father, he'll be fond of me if you won't—so come along, Joe!

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*She runs off, followed by* JOE, L.H.

SIR W. I give it up! I can no longer pursue my darling theory—it's all labour in vain!

PLATO. I told you so, my dear Sir William, I told you so when you described the humble person you were about to honor with your hand—that the union could not be a happy one.

SIR W. I admired her simplicity, her frankness—and I fondly imagined that if I could unite such qualities with education, with refinement, that I should create, as it were, a woman of perfection.

PLATO. You now perceive the error of your speculation—the inutility of striving to elevate humanity from its natural position. There *must* exist separate grades of society—the patrician, the commoner, and the plebeian—seek not to amalgamate,—the process may be very well in a railroad, but with human nature it must ever create incongruities. Where's Lady P.? Ah, there! could you have found another woman like that, how different would have been your fate! Well, as we have discussed the state of the nation, I must seek her—she's in the house, no doubt fatigued with her journey. Don't look so downcast, Sir William, there's no help for it now—make the best of a bad bargain, for it's an excellent observation, that there's no making a silk purse—I need say no more.

*Exit at back.*

SIR W. I am sorry, very sorry, to see this sad result of all my labour, and fear that much unhappiness is in store for both of us. How can I introduce my wife to society? how can I pass my leisure in the company of one so utterly uninformed, so incapable of conversation? Ah! my uncle is indeed happy! Blessed with a woman of intellect, whose natural graces harmonise so sweetly with her accomplishments, whose refinement is so exquisite, *his* life will pass like a dream of bliss—like a—Eh? (*looking off* R.H.U.E.) my friend Augustus with a lady? with my—no; yes, with my aunt! They are in earnest conversation—she seems embarrassed, is weeping—what does it mean? He clasps her hand, and she does not withdraw it—they come this way. I—I feel in a very awkward situation! I would not for the world let them be aware that I had seen them together—I had better retire, and not notice them. I will; I feel as if I had not the moral courage to face them. (*he is about to go off at the back—he stops*) They will see me if I go that way. I quite tremble! they're here! I'll conceal myself, and slip away as quickly as possible.

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*He passes behind the stand of flowers, L.H., and remains there unperceived by* BLENHEIM *and* LADY PLATO, *who enter* R.H.D. *at the same moment.*

BLEN. Permit me at least to *write* occasionally to you.

LADY P. If you will bring every philosophical argument, every delicate sophistry, to prove that one may have a confiding friend to whom one may unfold the heart's dearest secrets, every emotion of the soul, every joy, and every sorrow, not only with safety, but propriety, you may, if you are discreet, periodically correspond with me.

BLEN. Then I am happy! and, though my blighted hopes must ever be my theme,

yet—

SIR WILLIAM *steals from his place of concealment towards a statue near the door.*

LADY P. Heavens! what's that? I heard a footstep!

BLEN. 'Tis no one!—why are you so alarmed, so agitated?

LADY P. Leave me now! you have not been seen; go out again by the gate we saw near the shrubbery—it opens into the road. You returned here on foot?

BLEN. I did.

LADY P. Go then, I implore you! and, when you again arrive, no one need know that we have had this interview.

BLEN. Adieu! for the last time I press your hand to my lips!

*Enter MARGERY, L.H.D., in the dress of a country girl.*

MAR. (*entering*) Now I am comfortable—now I do feel myself again! (*seeing BLENHEIM and LADY PLATO*) Oh!

BLENHEIM *disappears*, R.H.D.—LADY PLATO *seems confused*.

—Oh! don't mind me! I'm so glad I've caught you, though, for if such a well-behaved gentleman as that is, can kiss my aunt's hand, there can be no harm in my cousin kissing me.

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LADY P. Listen, my dear friend. I do not wish it to transpire that I have had an interview with the gentleman you saw just now—it would but cause explanations that must lead to disagreeables, and they had better be avoided. I shall therefore rely on your discretion.

MAR. On my what?

LADY P. Your keeping my secret.

MAR. Oh, I won't tell, if you mean that.

LADY P. Where's his lordship?

MAR. (*pointing L.H.*) With my husband.

LADY P. Remember!

MAR. But stop, Polly—wouldn't it be better not to mind anybody knowing anything? because it don't seem loving and cosy to be sly, and to be frightened every minute in case somebody should say something about somebody that would make somebody else angry, and get everybody into trouble, and set everybody quarrelling with everybody. I don't like it, Polly dear! where there's secrets there's no happiness, and no love—ah! and no goodness, if you come to that.

LADY P. Dear Margery, I feel your reproof, sincerely feel it—oblige me but for this once, and never, never will I again place myself in a position that shall cause me to conceal one thought or action—I will not, indeed!

MAR. Then you're a good girl, and I'll do my best this time, because I know you'll keep your word with me. Good bye for the present. (*shakes hands with her*)

*Exit LADY PLATO at back.*

—I just now felt so comfortable when I found myself once more in my old clothes, and was going to be so happy and so free, and now I'm in trouble again! I don't like there being any secrets, and I know I'm the worst in the world to keep one—and as to my not telling about the Captain and my aunt having seen one another, I may try not to say a word, but it's sure to slip out after dinner. What's Polly afraid of? why does she want to make believe not to know her old sweetheart? and I'm to help her in the make believe! I don't like it! and I feel now as if I had stolen something, and had got it in my pocket, and that somebody was coming to search me.

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JOE. (*without*) I don't care! I'm as good as you are, any day!

*Enter JOE.*

MAR. Why, Joe, what's the matter now?

JOE. What's the matter? why, when you put me in that room full o' pictur's, and left me staring at 'em while you went to take off your grand clothes, your fine

husband came in. "Hallo!" says he, "don't stand in the chairs." "How can I see the pictures if I don't?" says I. "Sit down," says he. Well, I did sit down—then he was at me again, and told me to go out of the room, and I said I shouldn't—that my cousin had took me in, and neither he nor six of his servants should take me out.

MAR. That was wrong, Joe.

JOE. Then one word brought up another till I said something and then he said something, and then I said something, and then he took me by the collar of my coat and kicked me down stairs.

MAR. And served you just right.

JOE. Eh?

MAR. You had no business to be impudent to my husband, if you *are* my cousin. What did you say?

JOE. I didn't say much, only he bothered me so that I up and called him——

MAR. What?

JOE. A d—d fool!

MAR. You did?

JOE. Yes; and why didn't he come down and fight it out on the grass like a man? I'd ha' soon ha' 'molished him.

MAR. You would? and did you dare to call my husband names, and such a name? There, there, there, and there!

*She seizes him by the collar with her left hand, and thrashes him with her right, and finishes by knocking his hat over his eyes, as SIR WILLIAM and LORD and LADY PLATO appear at the back.*

—(running to SIR WILLIAM) I'm so glad you've come, my dear—he won't behave bad any more, I can promise—I've given him such a thrashing!

JOE. I won't come *here* again, I know! I came to see my cousin that was once so fond o' me, only to bid her good bye, and I haven't been in the house more nor half-an-hour, and I've been kicked and thumped about by everybody. I shall go to my new place with, a black eye, I know.

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SIR W. My dear Margery, there was no necessity for being so severe with your cousin, I had sufficiently corrected him, though I must confess that I have not witnessed this proof of the openness of your heart, and the striking simplicity of your nature, without a feeling of gratification.

*Enter BLENHEIM, at the back.*

BLEN. Ah, Sir William! I am afraid I am a little over my time. I beg your pardon—I was not aware you had strangers.

SIR W. (*confused*) My uncle, and—and his wife. I thought you might be already acquainted.

PLATO. And so we *are*, now I look again—'tis Captain Blenheim, the son of an old friend. Allow me to introduce you to Lady Plato, my dear—you will be charmed to make the lady's acquaintance.

LADY P. (*curtseying with gravity*) I shall at all times be delighted at an introduction to any friend of my husband.

SIR W. (*aside*) I'm perfectly astonished!

MAR. (*aside*) I couldn't make believe like that.

PLATO. (*to SIR WILLIAM*) You see, my dear nephew! you perceive what sweetness, what refined obedience. Ah! a thousand pities you did not make such a selection; but, as we say in the classics—"a fronte præcipitium a tergo lupus,"—I need say no more.

SIR W. (*aside*) Indeed you needn't! I am perfectly satisfied with my unfortunate choice. What dissimulation! (*aloud*) Margaret, my dear, will you kiss me?

MAR. Oh, won't I? There!

SIR W. And there! (*embracing her*) You don't want to kiss cousin Joe now, I hope?

JOE. I wouldn't let her if she did.

MAR. Bless his heart! I think no more of kissing him than I should my

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grandmother—but he must not forget himself.

SIR W. I forgive him; and, if agreeable, he may remain and dine with us.

MAR. There, Joe, you may stay and dine with us if you will.

JOE. Well, then, I will; and I'll be revenged on his wittels, if I can't on him—ha, ha!

SIR W. (*to MARGERY*) And you are happier in your homely attire?

MAR. Oh, much happier! if only because 'twas what I wore when you first loved me.

SIR W. And you will be much happier still if I leave you to follow the dictates of your own heart and feelings, without the direction of masters or of books?

MAR. Oh, that I shall! yet I *will* try my hardest to be as you would wish me, if you but let me try in my own way; and I am sure, in time, you will not be ashamed of me. Don't give me masters, don't give me books, but when you want me to learn, teach me *yourself*—a loving word and gentle patience, and all from *you*, will make us both happy, and me I hope sincere. (*to Audience*) And, what will be better still, let but the Rough Diamond be firmly set in *your* golden opinion, and she will be sufficiently polished to shine as long as you will permit her.

CURTAIN.

### ***Transcriber's Note***

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The following changes were made to the text:

- p. 3: Mr. H. VANDENHOFF—Inserted a period after “VANDENHOFF” for consistency.
- p. 3: Mrs L. MURRAY.—Inserted a period after “Mrs” for consistency.
- p. 3: Black coat, white waistcoat, black trousers, polished boots grey wig.—Inserted a comma after “boots”.
- p. 3: yellow silk neck handkerchief, large shirt collar, large black nat.—Changed “nat” to “hat”.
- p. 13: my uncle and his wife his first visit since his marriage!—Inserted a comma after “wife”.
- p. 16: I am pretty punctual you see, Lady Evergreen, Is it possible?—Changed comma after “Evergreen” to a period.
- p. 23: Eh? (*looking off* R.H.U.E) my friend Augustus with a lady?—Inserted a period between “E” and the closing parenthesis.

Variant spellings such as “pourtrayed” and “ar’n’t” and spellings to suggest pronunciation in Joe’s and Margery’s lines have been retained.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A ROUGH DIAMOND: A COMIC DRAMA IN ONE ACT \*\*\*

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