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## **Niobe, All Smiles**



# NIOBE, All Smiles.

A FARCICAL COMEDY IN THREE ACTS.

BY

Harry and Edward Paulton.

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# NIOBE, ALL SMILES

A Farcical Comedy in Three Acts

BY  
HARRY AND EDWARD PAULTON

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SAMUEL FRENCH,  
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## NIOBE, ALL SMILES.

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### CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool, 1st Sept., 1890.</i>	<i>Strand Theatre, London, 16th April, 1892.</i>
PETER AMOS DUNN, in Life Assurance (President of the Universal Insurance Co.).	MR. HARRY PAULTON,	MR. HARRY PAULTON,
CORNELIUS GRIFFIN, in Love with Himself (Peter's Wife's Brother).	MR. E. T. STEYNE,	MR. FORBES DAWSON,
PHILIP INNINGS, in Corney's Hands (Corney's Friend).	MR. MERVYN HEREPATH,	MR. HERBERT ROSS,
HAMILTON TOMPKINS, in the Clouds (an Art Enthusiast, a Millionaire).	MR. HENRY S. DACRE,	MR. GEO. HAWTREY,
PARKER SILLOCKS, in Retirement (a Merchant).	MR. CHARLES RANDOLPH,	MR. A. C. MACKENZIE,
CAROLINE DUNN, in-dispensable (Peter's Wife).	MISS CONSTANCE NATHALIE,	MISS INA GOLDSMITH,
HELEN GRIFFIN, in Authority (Caroline's Eldest Sister).	MISS HELEN PALGRAVE,	MISS CARLOTTA ZERBINI,
HATTIE GRIFFIN, in Open Rebellion (Caroline's Youngest Sister).	MISS VIOLET LOFTING,	MISS GEORGIE ESMOND,
BEATRICE SILLOCKS, in Love with Corney (Parker's Daughter).	MISS MARIAN DENVIL,	MISS ELEANOR MAY,
MARY, in Service (Parlor Maid).	MISS DENT,	MISS VENIE BENNETT,
MADELEINE MIFTON, in the Way (New Jersey Governess).	MISS ALICE DRUMMOND,	MISS ISABEL ELLISSEN,
NIOBE, in the Flesh (Widow of the late Amphion, King of Thebes, a Statue).	MISS JENNY BEAUVILLE,	MISS BEATRICE LAMB,

ACT II.—Same. Looking to the South. In the Presence of the Family.

ACT III.—Same. Looking to West. Afternoon of the Same Day.

Time.—Present. Location.—London.

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## NIOBE, ALL SMILES

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### ACT I.

SCENE.—DUNN'S *drawing-room*. At the L. of front corner, a large bay window on to the street; L. C. an arched opening with portiere to stairs and entrance hall; R. door to dining-room. On the R. of entrance a four-fold screen like a box case, surrounding Statue of Niobe, in which is a Vampire opening at back. An opening also in Flat behind screen. One fold of screen opens to L. of stage towards centre opening. Two folds open to R. Small castors on the bottom of opening folds. Piano R. below door; couch in front of it; table L. C.; chairs R. and L. of it; piano stool, foot stool, chairs, etc.

At rise of curtain, HATTIE R. at piano; HELEN standing C., beating time to HATTIE'S playing "The Maiden's Prayer" for opening of act; CARRIE seated L. of table L. C.; BEATRICE seated R. of table, discovered examining album, sketches, etc.; after curtain is up, MARY enters from R. with three small cups and saucers on tray; HELEN up C., takes one, drinks, MARY offers other cups to CARRIE and BEATRICE; CARRIE offers one to BEATRICE.

BEA. (*with album*) Who in the name of goodness is that dreadful looking guy?

CAR. That is Mr. Dunn when he was a boy.

BEA. Your husband! oh!

MARY *after offering coffee to BEATRICE passes front of table to L., giving coffee to CARRIE.*

CAR. Are you quite sure you won't take coffee?

BEA. Quite sure!

*After this MARY going up L. to exit C.*

HEL. (*up C., sternly*) Mary, the fire!

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MARY *goes to fireplace L., puts tray on chair; MARY poking the fire—HELEN eyes MARY severely.*

HAT. (*at piano R., finishes playing*) Oh, Helen! That's *twice this evening* I've played the "Maiden's Prayer."

HEL. (*up C.; turning to HATTIE fiercely*) You will play the "Maiden's Prayer" twice morning and evening until you are perfect.

HELEN *turns from HATTIE and drinks coffee.*

HAT. (*impertinently*) Ugh! I'd like to catch you saying your maiden prayers twice morning and evening.

HATTIE *turns—resumes playing.*

MARY. (*advancing C. to HELEN, tray in hand*) What time shall I order the carriage round?

HEL. Seven fifty.

HELEN *returns cup to MARY—MARY exits C. and R. at back.*

We shall be at the Theatre *then* before the Curtain goes up.

HELEN *advances R. C., severely watches HATTIE play—with glasses on.*

HAT. Well, you oughtn't to do it. You'll lose caste if you get to your seats without disturbing the performance.

HATTIE *playing softly while she talks.*

HEL. (*advancing to BEATRICE, L. C.*) Beatrice, you are well posted on Theatrical matters; is the play we are going to see to-night strictly proper?

BEA. I know nothing to the contrary. (*closing album.*)

HATTIE *plays ff.*

HEL. (*very angrily*) Hattie! Take your foot off the loud pedal; we can't hear ourselves speaking.

HATTIE *shuts up piano petulantly; pouting as sits on couch, back to audience.*

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CAR. (*rising*) I was sorry Mr. Sillocks couldn't come to dinner.

CARRIE *goes to window down L., looks out.*

BEA. Papa regretted it very much, but he is sure to be here to escort us. (*crosses R. to couch and sits.*)

CAR. I'm glad of that, because Corney is never satisfactory as a Chaperon.

BEA. Oh, Carrie, I'm sure Corney is most attentive.

HEL. (L. C.) If you were his sister, you would not think so. He neglects us shamefully.

HAT. (R.) Quite right, too! It's a pity if a fellow can't stick to the girl he's spooning. (*sitting R. and laughingly hugging BEA.*)

HEL. Hattie! You are a very slangy child. Such terms are most improper.

HAT. Corney uses them, and I don't know any better way of saying it. (*crosses to C.*)

HEL. Could you not say adhere to the lady he's engaged to?

HATTIE *crosses back to sofa.*

BEA. We can hardly *consider* ourselves engaged, while Corney is, so to speak, on trial. If Papa approves of him, of course we shall be married.

*Bus.;* HATTIE and BEATRICE *quietly congratulate each other.*

HEL. I'm sorry I cannot live with you and manage the household, but Carrie could not get along without me. She has no talent for management and Peter is too engrossed with outside business.

HAT. (*laughingly*) If you'd watched him at dinner, you'd think he did not neglect his *inside* business.

CARRIE and BEATRICE *laugh.*

HEL. (*sternly*) I can see nothing humorous in that ribald remark.

CAR. (L.) A man of Peter's excitable temperament has enough worry abroad, he deserves to enjoy himself at home.

CARRIE *goes up L. to fireplace, puts cup on mantelpiece, as if looking for something.*

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HEL. But he brings his worries home with him. I'm sure we didn't want that troublesome *Statue* in the house, though Mr. Tompkins does think it the greatest treasure on earth. He calls it *Niobe Lachrymans*,—whatever *that* means.

BEA. Why did Mr. Dunn bring it home? (*knock and bell.*)

MARY *crosses at back from R. to L.*

HEL. For safety he says; it is insured in the Universal, of which Mr. Dunn is Manager, for quite a large sum, and as Mr. Dunn granted the policy on his own responsibility, he is anxious to guard the Statue from injury.

BEA. (*curiously*) I *should* like to look at it.

BEATRICE *rises, going up towards screen.*

HEL. (*interrupts her*) Not while *Hattie* is in the room.

HAT. (*on couch R.*) Oh! I've seen it, and why not! It's decent enough. She only shows a bit of her shoulder; it's nothing to the display at Society balls.

HEL. Hattie! The child is incorrigible. (*goes up R. C.*)

CAR. (*at fireplace up L.*) Where are the Opera glasses?

HAT. Better ask Corney. He was at the Alhambra last evening.

BEATRICE *at piano, looking at music.*

HEL. (*turns*) Oh, you dreadful girl! (*door slams off L. U. E.*)

MARY. (L. C.) They're in the drawing room, Sir!

SILLOCKS *enters L. C.;* MARY *crosses L. to R., always in front of stairs.*

SILL. (C.) Good evening! Here we are! 7:30 to the tick! How's Dunn?

CAR. (*at fireplace* L.) My husband is very well, thank you!

SILL. How are you? (*to HELEN, coming down* C.) Hello, Bea. (*to BEATRICE*) Ah! Hattie! (*HATTIE crosses to SILLOCKS, C., who takes off overcoat.*) and the babies, my little cherubs, Bertie and Maud. [Pg 7]

HEL. (*crossing at back to fireplace*) They are in the nursery; we don't allow them in the drawing-room.

CAR. (*down* L. *of* L. C. *table*) They ought to be in bed; it is past their hour.

BEATRICE *crosses at back to fireplace.*

SILL. Very early, isn't it? *even* for infants?

HEL. Judging from results, no! Look what a healthy child Hattie is. Few girls have so fresh a complexion.

HAT. Unless they get it at the Chemist's. (*SILLOCKS laughs.*)

BEATRICE *goes up* L. *to fireplace*; HATTIE *puts on* SILLOCKS' *hat, goes up* stage C. *at back*; *places coat and hat on rack in hallway*; SILLOCKS *sits* R. *of table.*

DUNN. (*without* R.) No! No! Everything is comparative; smoking is bad, but chewing is a precious sight worse; and have you reached the limit of comparative noxiousness then? No, sir; no! (*DUNN enters with CORNEY* R. D. CORNEY *crosses to* BEATRICE L.) Hallo, Sillocks! Did you notice how Nitrates were at closing?

SILL. (*coming down front in centre to* DUNN) 92½, a point and a quarter rise. You're not interested in that Electric Light Consolidation scheme, are you?

DUNN. (R. C.) No! There's no money in it.—Well! That's my opinion.

SILL. Aren't you coming with us to the Theatre?

DUNN. I? Oh no!

SILL. Why not?

DUNN. Not asked. Never intrude where I'm not wanted.

SILL. But your wife—

DUNN. Well, my wife—*They* did ask me to go once or twice; but owing to some business, I couldn't accept; *now*, I never get the chance of refusing.

SILLOCKS *goes and sits* R. *of table, opens album*; DUNN *up* C., *looking at his paper.*

HEL. (*back of table*) Peter, if you wish to see the children while we are away, go up to them in the nursery. Carrie does not approve of their coming into the drawing-room.

CORN. (*advancing slightly down* L.) Quite right! Children up to a certain age should be kept in a room as devoid of furniture as possible; the only way to keep them out of mischief, is to chain them up to a ring in the wall— [Pg 8]

BEA. What horrible notions you have Corney!

*Leaving* CORNEY, *she goes up and crosses at back to* R.

SILL. (*looking at album*) Hallo, legs! (*HELEN turns quickly, comes down to back of table*) You've got some choice specimens of the Ballet here, I see!

HAT. (*starting for table from* R. *corner*) Where? Let's have a look at them.

HEL. (*commandingly*) Stand back, Hattie! I must know before we proceed any further, how this indelicate picture happens to be placed by the side of *mine*, in the album?

HATTIE *goes to* BEATRICE *up* R., *laughing.*

CORN. (*down* L., *aside*) Hang it! I shall be ruined with Beatrice if Sillocks suspects me.

HEL. Corney!

CORN. (*alarmed*) Yes!

HEL. Do you know anything of this?

CORN. Why yes! Peter put 'em there!

DUNN. (*down* C.) What! I put them there?

CORN. (*crosses to* DUNN C.) Yes, of course, now—what's the good of denying it, old man? (*aside, digging* DUNN'S *ribs as he gets* R. *of him*) Say yes, or Sillocks won't approve of me.

CAR. (*advances slightly* L.) Is that true Peter? Did *you* put them there?

DUNN. (*perplexed*) Well—(CORNEY *looks at him*) Yes—I suppose I must have done.

CORN. (*over DUNN's shoulder*) Thanks—one extra lie can't press much on your conscience.

CORNEY *turns to* BEATRICE, *who is* R. C.

BEA. I'm so glad it wasn't *you*, Corney.

CORN. So am I. Don't make such a fuss about it, Helen, there's no great crime in having photos of pretty girls.

BEATRICE *and* CORNEY *go up towards dining-room* R. H.

HEL. (*at back of table, with a withering glance at DUNN*) Then we may fairly assume that those [Pg 9]  
yellow-backed French novels I found in the study, are yours also?

DUNN. (*turning C.*) Mine!! Look here, Helen—

CORN. (*turns quickly, coming back to C.*) Helen! You're too prying by half! Peter never imagined for a moment that you'd rake *them* out.

DUNN *looks at* CORNEY *inquiringly*.

HAT. (R.) Oh, Helen; they're not so very dreadful! At least, the one I read wasn't.

HEL. What! Oh, Carrie! What are we to do?

CORN. There's not so much harm in these French books after all. They're very much over-rated—I mean, exaggerated.

DUNN. I suppose Dobbin sent them up in a mistake for a bundle of circulars. (*aside to CORNEY, with paper, his back to audience*) What is it? What's the idea?

CORN. Old Sillocks! Must stand well with the father. It's all right, you can bear it. I cannot stand wrong—

BEA. Corney!

CORN. Oh, excuse me, Bea.

*Joins* BEATRICE *and exits with her in earnest conversation* R. U. E., *after pushing* HATTIE *out of the way*.

HEL. It is fortunate the servants are ignorant of French; it is a blessing they cannot realize the enormity of your offence.

DUNN *goes to couch, sitting*.

DUNN. (C.) I'm as bad as the servants—Neither can I.

CAR. (*crossing to DUNN, sits L. of him*) It is fortunate we detected them before the new Governess arrived.

DUNN. Yes; it wouldn't do to throw temptation in *her* way.

HAT. (R. *of couch*) When is she coming, Peter?

DUNN. I can't tell you that. She has started—I believe, but has found it agreeable to call on some friends at Leamington.

CAR. Then she may not be here for a day or two.

DUNN. It looks like it. She has sent her Leamington address, so she probably expects a message from us.

HEL. (*coming fiercely to DUNN*) *Why* have you kept this knowledge from us?

DUNN. You could have had it any time for the asking.

HEL. Where is her note?

DUNN. There's no occasion to put on that tragedy queen expression. Here it is—(*selects and gives letter*.)

HEL. (*crosses L. as she reads*) Madeline Mifton, care of Mrs. Miller, Barton street.

HAT. Did she seem a jolly sort of girl?

HEL. (*turning L. corner*) She's not engaged to be jolly!

HATTIE *with toss of her head, goes up* R.

DUNN. She appeared to me an agreeable kind of person, and the people at Chester, where she was living, spoke very well of her.

CAR. (*arm in DUNN'S*) I hope she will be good to the children.

DUNN. Well! She looked the kind of person who *would* be good to the children.

HEL. You have so little discrimination—I ought to have gone to Chester myself.

*Goes up L. near fireplace.*

DUNN. Well, nobody stopped you; and you have her references anyway. (*CARRIE soothes him and up to fireplace to HELEN.*)

SILL. I'm sorry you're not going with us, Dunn.

DUNN. (*crossing SILLOCKS and sitting L. of table*) It's just as well as it happens; I've had a letter from Tompkins, saying that he's going to be in town for a few hours; he is sure to run in to look at his treasures.

SILL. I saw in the Telegraph that he had bought the celebrated statue "Niobe" from the Bernoldi collection; is that so?

DUNN. Yes! I have it here in the house. We have insured it for £10,000.

SILL. A good sum—what was your idea of bringing it here?

*HELEN, HATTIE and CARRIE up at back near fireplace.*

DUNN. Oh! Mr. Tompkin's new mansion, at Henley, isn't ready yet; and I did not care to risk it in storage.

SILL. You don't go in for curiosities yourself?

DUNN. No! No money in 'em! I've a genuine Rembrandt in the dining-room,—said to be worth £12,000.

SILL. Yours?

DUNN. No! Tompkins's! Come and have a look at it—it may be your only chance. Just as well to be able to say you've seen these things. [Pg 11]

*Exit SILLOCKS and DUNN R. D., both talking; HATTIE follows to door, mimicking them; then turns to HELEN.*

HAT. We ought to get our wraps on now. It's a quarter to eight.

HEL. (*going C.*) How impatient you are!

HAT. No more so than *you*; only you think it clever to look as wooden as a Chinese idol.

HEL. Hattie! We'll leave you behind if you're not good.

*HELEN exits C. and R. up stairs.*

HAT. (*calling after her*) You'd send me to bed without my supper too, if you could, only I have had it.

CAR. (*with pretended severity*) Don't be so forward, Hattie!

*CARRIE exits C. and R. up stairs; CORNEY and BEATRICE enter from R. D., spooning.*

CORN. Oh yes, Bea, if I asked you very sweetly, wouldn't you? (*HATTIE gets in front of them.*)

BEA. Here is Hattie?

HAT. (*laughing with hands behind her*) Disturbed again, eh? Poor dears. Can't you get left to yourselves anywhere?

CORN. Yes, *here*—if you leave us. Get out.

*CORNEY goes for HATTIE C.; BEATRICE drops down R. to couch and sits.*

HAT. Now behave Corney, or I'll tell Helen who put the photos in the album.

CORN. Be off, Miss Impudence—(*runs her off upstairs R. C.*) That girl's a terror. (*returns to BEA, speaking as he comes down*) You can't think Beatrice—(*sits on couch*) You can't think.

HAT. (*returning*) You can think; we haven't much time, Bea; you'll be late.

CORN. Will you get out—(*CORNEY chases her round table and up stairs C. and R.; he returns*) She gets worse and worse! (*looking back after HATTIE.*)

BEA. I didn't see anything so dreadful in the photos, Corney; if you own up to them, I don't mind.

CORN. Oh, well! If you don't mind, I will!

BEA. I thought they couldn't be poor Mr. Dunn's; he looked so innocent.



CORN. (*seated on couch R., laughing*) Yes, Peter's appearance does rather discount him.

BEA. It was too bad to infer they were *his*.

CORN. Oh, he doesn't mind. We put everything on to Peter; and I'm so much afraid of your father's displeasure; you don't know the treasure you are Bea; and the fume a fellow gets in for fear of losing you. (*with arm round BEA.*)

BEA. Why should you be so anxious? If your past was only blameless.

CORN. (*absent minded*) Yes! If it *only was!*

BEA. Do you *tell* me it is not?

CORN. (*quickly*) No! Of course I don't, you don't think I'm such a jay—gay—gay deceiver? (*turns slightly away*) If we were only married. Then I shouldn't have to be so careful.

BEA. Have you to be careful?

CORN. Of myself, yes! But *then*, you can take care of me; and I can be careful of *you*; and I shan't have to invent stories about Art photographs, or French Novels.

BEA. Novels, Corney?

CORN. Though they're not really mine; Innings brought them here.

BEA. We've not seen Mr. Innings lately.

CORN. Not for two or three days; he's away on business.

BEA. I thought he had no business to be away upon.

CORN. No! he has no business to be away, when I want him here—that is—he isn't away on his business. It's business of mine.

BEA. (*curiously*) Business of yours?

CORN. Yes! well! *pleasure* more than business—when I say pleasure I mean business—I wanted a change—but I couldn't spare the time—and Phil could—he took the change—it was really my change; for he paid the time before; you know how one fellow will take another fellow's change. He's a most obliging fellow.

*Knock; HATTIE runs down stairs.*

HAT. Here's Mr. Innings, Corney!

*HATTIE rushes off L.*

CORN. Thank goodness—I was getting a bit mixed. (*goes L. as INNINGS enters C. from L., HATTIE following.*) How are you, Phil? [Pg 13]

BEA. Good evening, Mr. Innings!

INN. Good evening, Miss Sillocks!

*INNINGS down R.*

BEA. Come Hattie!

*BEATRICE going up C.*

HAT. (*C., gushing at INNINGS*) Oh, there's heaps of time; it's so rude to leave Mr. Innings.

CORN. (*going up to HATTIE*) You haven't a minute; the carriage is at the door now; I'll do the polite to Innings.

*CORNEY sees girls off C. R. up stairs and returns to INNINGS.*

What kept you so long? I expected you yesterday!

INN. (*taking off gloves as he sits on couch*) I had more to do than I thought. *You said*—

CORN. (*C. anxiously*) Never mind what *I* said; what have *you to say?* Your news?

INN. Well! I went to Cambridge you know—

CORN. And you have come *back, I know*, but what *did you do* there? What have you discovered?

INN. I found Ethel—

CORN. Good!

INN. Was no longer there—

CORN. Then you didn't find her?

INN. (*sitting on couch*) No; nor the slightest trace of where she had gone.

CORN. (*goes L. and up round table*) Then she'll turn up when least expected; what a confounded fool I was! If the affair reaches old Sillocks's ears, good bye to Beatrice; hang it! I'd have discovered something if I'd gone. (*sits R. of table.*)

INN. (*rises and coming C.*) It wasn't much, but I discovered something—I learnt that Ethel had a sister, a governess. Did you know Ethel had a sister, a governess?

CORN. Yes, but I never saw her!

INN. Knew you'd think I hadn't tried, if I didn't find out something; so obtained the address of Sister, at a situation in Chester—went to Chester; sister had left—referred to a friend. Miss Topping; found Topping; worked round stealthily to subject, but the moment I mentioned *Ethel's name*, Miss T. shut up like an Oyster; no news there, except that Ethel's sister, Madeline Mifton

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CORN. Yes!

INN. Had gone to a situation as governess, in London. Resigned a good situation, for "some ridiculous notion"—that's what Miss T. called it—of coming to London—to look up—or hunt down—a young man to whom her sister *was* or *had* been engaged.

CORN. (*delighted*) Ridiculous notion! Good for Topping! She might as well search for a needle in a haystack—I'm safe enough.

*Knock; MARY crosses from R. to L. at back.*

INN. I wonder she didn't pursue you herself, instead of putting the sister on your track.

CORN. Well, Ethel is something like myself—*she cannot stand worry.*

*Door slam; enter MARY C. from L.; INNINGS goes to R. of table.*

MARY. Mr. Tompkins!

CORN. Show him in, and I'll send Mr. Dunn to him. (*MARY exits to L.; CORNEY goes over to door R.*) Peter! Here's Mr. Tompkins—I'm going to the Theatre Phil, so I can't stop and entertain you. I'm immensely tickled with the idea of the Sister coming to London to hunt me down. I shall think of nothing else all the evening.

DUNN. (*speaking as he enters from room R.*) How de do, Tompkins, (*INNINGS going towards DUNN*) why, it's Innings! (*DUNN down to couch*) I thought you said Mr. Tompkins was here.

CORN. He is here.

DUNN. Where?

CORN. There! (*indicating hall off C.*) How *you do* worry, Peter!

*CORNEY and INNINGS exit into dining-room R., as TOMPKINS enters L. C.; DUNN rises and meets him C.*

TOMP. Let me thank you, Mr. Dunn, for taking such particular care of my treasure. It was most considerate of you to bring it into your own house.

*TOMPKINS posing L. C.*

DUNN. (R. C.) Not at all! I was anxious to have it unpacked, just to make sure it hadn't suffered in shipment.

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TOMP. (*enthusiastically—taking off gloves*) Ah! you thought of the centuries that beautiful form had retained its completeness, without damage or disfigurement, and were impressed with a tender, almost loving, care.

DUNN. Not a bit! I thought of the loss to our Company if it got chipped. There was no sentiment or friendship in the business. Sentiment's all very well, but there's no money in it.

*DUNN crosses to window, L. C.; SILLOCKS enters from dining-room R.; lights begin to go slowly down.*

SILL. (R. C.) How do you do, Mr. Tompkins. I congratulate you Sir, on the possession of such a gem.

TOMP. (L. C.) Beautiful, is it not?

SILL. (R. C.) Grand! A painting like that—

TOMP. Painting! I am speaking of my Statue, Niobe.

SILL. Oh, I haven't seen it.

TOMP. (C.) Ah, when you do! Where among your moderns is a work like it? Where among your Sculptors, the peer of Phidias, Praxiteles, Scopas or Polydorus of Rhodes?

DUNN. (L. *of table*) And which of the whole lot would compare with Edison?

TOMP. Ah, Dunn! You are not familiar with the *Elgin Marbles*.

DUNN. Haven't played a game since I was a boy! (*sits L. of table*)

TOMP. (*despondently*) Sculpture is dead now Sillocks.

SILL. Don't despond Tompkins, it may *revive*!

DUNN. Sculpture's right enough in its way—but it isn't in it with the Telephone, or the Telegraph, or the Tape, or the Typewriter.

TOMP. Ugh! All such inventions tend to warp the noblest traits of human nature.

DUNN. Statues are all right for decorating Parks, but there's no money in them.

SILL. I'm in favor of the modern myself.

TOMP. And I sigh for the Antique—(*sits R. of table L. C.*) I should like to have lived in the days of Homer!

DUNN. Not for me. I can't fancy existence without cheap postage, fast steamers, and penny-in-the-slot machines. I countenance every improvement. Move with the times I say, and *get ahead of 'em if you can.* (*rise*) I'm getting the Electric light put in now; we make our connection from the street here, just as you do with your gas. [Pg 16]

TOMP. *I hate gas.* I would go back to the pine torch or the days of *candles*!

DUNN. (L.) Yes! You're crazed on the subject of *Early Greece*.

SILLOCKS *laughs*.

TOMP. (L. C.) I am, and I glory in it.

SILL. (R.) Well for modern tastes, there isn't always too much clothing on our remnants of that early period.

DUNN. (*crosses to SILLOCKS*) You're right. That's one reason the women objected to the Niobe; and *it's* decent enough for *anything*. The dress is apparently split up a bit on one side, and shows part of the knee.

TOMP. (*enthusiastically*) A classic knee, Sir, which nothing in nature—Modern nature—could equal.

DUNN. (C. ) I did manage to have my own way for once, and there it is, behind that four-fold screen, which boxes it in completely. It's nicely out of the way there too.

TOMP. (*rising*) You'd like to see it, Sillocks?

SILL. Yes!

TOMP. A glorious figure, Sir!

*Goes L. and around table.*

DUNN. (*up C.*) I suppose as Statues go, it is very well turned out.

*Swings back fold of screen, showing Statue of Niobe; DUNN is now R., holding back two folds of screen; red glow from fire.*

TOMP. (L. C. *behind table*) Lovely! What exquisite moulding—That knee especially!

SILL. (*curiously*) What's she supposed to be doing?

TOMP. (*back of table*) Weeping! You know the story of Niobe. The gods wearied of her incessant tears: turned her into stone.

DUNN. She'd make an elegant ornament for a family vault.

TOMP. Sillocks! I would not take ten thousand pounds for that Statue.

DUNN. Sillocks won't tempt you!

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TOMP. (*with enthusiasm*) This beautiful image was dug up in the ruins of Thebes in 1785; it passed into the hands of a Florentine gentleman; but in 1825 Count Bernoldi purchased it and it remained in his collection, till I tempted his grandson, a spendthrift youth, with an offer he could not resist. Oh, how perfectly that nose is chiselled, and that shoulder—

DUNN. That cold shoulder—

TOMP. (*approaching Statue*) What are those wires around the feet?

MARY. (*who is seen busy in hall C.—quickly*) Excuse me, Sir, don't touch them; the Electric man said as you were to be *very careful* with the wires.

DUNN. The connection with the street is made then? (DUNN *closes the screen and lights go up again*)

MARY. (C. *in doorway*) Yes, Sir! But he hadn't time to bury the wires under the floor to-day; so he wrapped 'em round the feet of the Statue, where they wouldn't be likely to hurt no one.

DUNN. Who the devil gave him permission to touch the figure? Don't you know you are expressly forbidden to touch the figures?

*Ladies come down stairs to hallway; CORNEY and INNINGS from R. in hallway join them.*

MARY. Miss Griffin, Sir!

DUNN. Oh Miss— That'll do!

MARY *exits at back R.*

N. B.—*After DUNN closes screen NIOBE removes white wig, makes up, etc., for re-appearance in the flesh.*

TOMP. Confound your modern appliances! They managed to get along without them in Attica! Bah! We might all have been killed!

TOMPKINS *crosses L. corner; lights going up.*

DUNN. (C.) Not this time. The pressure isn't on.

SILL. How do you know that?

DUNN. (*following TOMPKINS, crosses to window L.*) Because the lights in the street are not going yet.

HELEN, BEATRICE, CORNEY, HATTIE *and* INNINGS, *and* CARRIE *advance from hallway C.*

CORN. (*putting on gloves*) Sorry Phil, that you can't come along with us. (CORNEY *down L. C.*)

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INN. I'm not dressed to go to the Theatre.

CAR. What a pity there isn't another seat?

CARRIE *comes down R.; SILLOCKS gets up back of ladies to centre.*

HAT. Oh, you *must* come, Mr. Innings.

HEL. (*coming C.*) If you will give up *your* seat to Mr. Innings.

INN. (*protestingly*) No, no!

DUNN. If you are all settled in your seats, let me introduce Mr. Tompkins, Mr. Hamilton Tompkins, my wife—(*ladies get into line with CORNEY top; DUNN waving his hand comprehensively*) My wife's family.

CORN. (*waving his hand*) How are you, Tompkins?

HEL. We are delighted to meet you.

*All ladies in row curtsy rather marked; CARRIE is R. corner, HELEN next, HATTIE next, BEA next to CORNEY.*

SILL. (C. *at back*) Come along, Mrs. Dunn; we shall be late!

CARRIE *exits C. and L. with SILLOCKS.*

CORN. Come on Phil, give your arm to Hattie, and pilot her to the carriage.

BEA. Some of us will have to walk; the brougham will only hold four.

*Exit CORNEY and BEATRICE, others following C. and L.*

HAT. Mr. Innings can sit on my lap. (*exits taking INNINGS'S arm.*)

HEL. Hattie! I can do nothing with her.

*Exit HELEN C. and L.; slam of door; lights slowly going down.*

TOMP. (*front of table*) All your wife's family?

DUNN. (C., *coming down*) Nearly!

TOMP. Some of your own?

DUNN. Oh no! I married out of my own family circle into my wife's—I got rid of one Griffin by changing it to a Dunn, and three other Griffins sprang up in its place. Takes it out of the Phenix, don't it? (*rings bell on table*)

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MARY *enters* R. C.; DUNN *signs to her; she exits* R. D.

TOMP. (*crosses* R.) Griffin! Griffin! Was that your wife's maiden name?

DUNN. Yes! The Griffins of Brentford.

TOMP. (*as if thinking, sitting on couch* R.) Indeed! Unless I'm much mistaken, there was quite a scandal years ago about a Miss Griffin of Brentford, but that *could* not be your wife?

DUNN. No, but it might be Helen! And oh, if it were! Tompkins, if you could only find out for certain, and place me in possession of the facts—

TOMP. (*on couch*) I certainly can and will with pleasure. I think (*bus.*) she eloped with the coachman.

*Enter* MARY *with trays, drinks, 3 glasses, Decanter, glass jug, with a little water in it, and exit* R. C.

DUNN. Helen eloped! Eureka! I see the dawn of emancipation—Tompkins, do I look like a slave? (C.)

TOMP. (*eyeing* DUNN) No, I don't see that you do!

DUNN. (C.) But I am—we all are—this is Uncle Tom's Cabin; I'm Uncle Tom, and Helen Griffin is my Legree. (*crosses* L. *of table*) But provided with such a weapon, I could rear the standard of revolt and free our beloved home.

DUNN L. *of table with decanter; TOMPKINS follows* DUNN *to* R. *of table*.

TOMP. The intelligence shall be yours, (*sits* R. *of table*)

DUNN. The few of my own people that are left, I never see, never hear of. My own dear little sister Mabel has never been asked to visit us. The Griffin has never fixed her Basilisk eye on *her*, and apparently doesn't want to.

TOMP. The attendant ills of married life! Ah! The women will never victimize me.

*They drink.*

DUNN. (*sitting* L. *of table*) Ah Tompkins! Don't be too sure of that. You never know what it is that gives you *indigestion*, but you get it *just the same*.

TOMP. I shall never marry, if you mean that; I *would not* marry a modern, and I'm not likely to meet with an Antique. [Pg 20]

DUNN. I've a Maiden Aunt; the one my Sister's with, who is antique enough for anything.

TOMP. (*interested*) How far back does she go?

DUNN. Well, past the middle ages; she's over sixty; but it's the rarity of her that would attract you, Tompkins!

TOMP. (*indignantly rising, going* R.) Sir, I'm not forming a museum of curiosities, but a gallery of Art treasures.

DUNN. (*rising*) Yes! Of course! Are you going already?

MARY *enters from* C. *and* L. *with trunk; TOMPKINS putting gloves on* C.

MARY. (C.) Here's a trunk, Sir, has been delivered for a Miss Mifton.

DUNN. Miss Mifton! Oh, the Governess's trunk. She said it would be sent on. Leave it there, Mary. We'll get it carried up bye and bye. I remember she said in her letter it would be sent on.

MARY *places trunk near* R. *of* C. *doorway and goes to turn up lamp on stand below fireplace.*

DUNN. Never mind the lamp, Mary; I'll turn it up myself when I want it; (MARY *exits* C. *and* R.) I like to sit in the gloaming! What's your hurry Tompkins? Sit down and take another drink.

TOMP. I am due at the Antiquarian Society. A discussion on what History owes to *numismatics*!

DUNN. Well, go and fix the amount and get History to settle up—Good evening! Mary! Oh! Good evening, Tompkins! (*lights down low*)

MARY *appears* C. *and* R., *ushers* TOMPKINS *out* L. C., *then crosses to* R. *at back.*

DUNN. (*goes to Statue again, softly humming a tune*) A pretty thing for our Company if that idiot had damaged his Statue with those infernal wires. Just like my beautiful sister-in-law, to give permission to wrap them round the figure, just to show that *my* wishes were of no account. I'll get a staple and padlock to-morrow; and fasten that screen up like a packing case. (*sits on sofa*) I suppose the Electricity can't affect the marble; ha! it's such a mysterious agent, one never knows *what* it may do. P'raps I'd better light up. I wonder what's the matter with the Electric lamps in the street? (*crosses at front of table* L. C. *and looks out of window*) They're generally making the [Pg 21]

gas look sickly before this—must be something wrong this evening. Ah! There it goes! (*flash on electric light outside window, flooding stage, DUNN sits L. of table L. C.*) Well! That's light enough to think by. (*low moan; weird music begins*) What's that? (*moan*) Some Psychological phenomenon! An omen of some kind! (*rising, towards window; NIOBE extending her arms, pushes open screen and is seen moving, as if awakening to life; DUNN slowly turns*) Great Heavens! The Statue's alive!

*Falls on knees at chair L. of table.*

NIO. My feet! Oh, Amphion! Amphion!

DUNN. (*looking at Statue*) Is this nightmare? Am I dreaming?

NIO. My feet! This thrill! A liquid fire seems coursing through my veins. Ah!

*As if bursting the spell steps down from pedestal, remains, making picture.*

DUNN. No! No! It can't be that—I don't *drink* to that extent.

*NIOBE comes slowly down C., examining room in wonderment; goes round up R. and then deliberately to C.; DUNN, who has crouched behind or beside table, disarranges himself, tie, hair, etc.; then crawls round table up C., as NIOBE turns and confronts him, he shrinks back on to knees, hands on chair. Music ceases. NIOBE comes near DUNN regarding him with amazement; picture.*

NIO. Hail to thee! What man art thou? How came you in this strange guise? Are you a slave?

DUNN. Yes—No—Certainly not! (*aside*) There's no use in letting every stranger know I'm a cipher in my own house.

NIO. A Lord?

DUNN. (*timidly rising*) Lord and Master! (*aside*) I can truthfully say it while Helen is not on the premises.

*NIOBE approaches DUNN before speaking; he backs away from her.*

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NIO. How strange! (*goes lower and regarding him, back to audience*) How strange!

DUNN. (*with wonderment*) Strange! She thinks me strange! If she could only change places and regard herself, and doubt the existence of her faculties, as I do—(*NIOBE now moves, going up R.*) When I see her move and hear her speak. No! *I've got to believe it.* It's the Electricity. She's *there alive*, Niobe herself; not a Statue. And I'm not dreaming, or *drunk or demented.* (*staggers front of table*)

*NIOBE has looked round apartment.*

NIO. (*advancing C.*) Who has made these changes? Where's Amphion? Is he not yet back from Olympia?

DUNN. (*getting L. of table, half frightened*) I'm sure I don't know—he'll be some time yet; if he is staying for the Ballet.

NIO. Who has won the Kotinos of poetry? My *Amphion* was the Alutarches.

DUNN. Very likely! But he isn't now! I'm afraid you don't quite realize what has happened to you. That you have just been—revived—I suppose—as it were: That you're not in your Palace *here*, but *mine*! That we are now in Anno Domini 1896, and that the trifling events you're thinking and speaking of, occurred about one thousand years B. C.; before you changed your mortal flesh into Parian marble.

*During this speech, NIOBE, her hand to her head, appears to be trying to recall the past.*

NIO. (*as if recollecting—coming down stage*) Ah! No! The gods! Knowledge returns; alas! Phœbus and Artemis punished me—Changed! Ah fate! Oh, my unhappy fate. (*kneeling, sobs bitterly*)

DUNN. (L. C.) That's a settler—I never can; I never *could* bear to see a woman cry—Never! There, don't grieve, dear; you were turned into stone, but you've turned out all right; don't cry! Please don't cry.

NIO. Ah me! That I so easily am *moved*.

DUNN. Well, it took eight men to carry you in here.

NIO. (*crosses L.*) I'll dry these tears, the cause of my hard lot.

DUNN. The hardest lot ever put up; when you consider you've gone all these years without so much as having your nose chipped off! Why, you've been buried for centuries. (*NIOBE looks at him in wonder*) And if they hadn't started exploring the ruins of some of those old Temples, you'd be there still. I'm aware it's a delicate subject with a lady, but I should estimate you must be close on *three thousand years old*.

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NIO. (*looking at him indignantly*) How?

DUNN. (*backing away from NIOBE*) Oh, you don't look it!

NIO. (L.) Three thousand years! Oh, Zeus, and now the ban, the curse of mighty Phœbus is removed.

DUNN. (C.) Yes! And Phœbus is gone, too.

NIOBE *goes up L. behind and round table to C.*

NIO. And all is new! Is this the Hesitaterion? The Throni are strange, the Katoptron colossal.

DUNN. Yes, you've got to do things big now-a-days.

NIO. (*approaching DUNN C.*) You truly say, the ages have rolled by; my husband, children, dead! In all the world, I have no one but you. (*taking his hand*)

DUNN. (*snatching hand away—crosses to L. of her*) No one but me! You've no claim on me;—that is—I have no claim on you!

NIO. (*quickly*) Ah yes! I am no ingrate; take *all* my love; you gave new life to me, and I am yours.

*Falls upon his neck, embracing him.*

DUNN. White Elephants, what am I going to do with her? (NIOBE *turns him round to R. of her*)

NIO. (*holding him at arm's length*) You are not much to look at; (DUNN *turns away*) but your heart —

DUNN. (R. C.) Now don't count upon *that*. And don't indulge in expectations that can never be realized.

NIO. Your mien is soft—(*hand on his head*) Have you a noble name?

DUNN. Peter Amos—

NIO. (*gushingly*) Petramos! Petramos! And I will love Petramos, as I have loved Amphion; and there will be no happier twain in Greece!

*She has taken his hands, and now swings them about childishly.*

DUNN. Yes—you're mapping it all out, but it can't *be*; for a variety of reasons: In the first place, we're *not* in Greece. (*crosses L.*)

NIO. (*in wonderment, getting C.*) Not in Greece?

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DUNN. (*returning to her*) No! We're in London, the Capital of a little Island called Great Britain, hundreds of miles from Thebes.

NIO. You speak our tongue. And are you not a Greek?

DUNN. (L. C.) Not much! And we're not speaking Greek, but English—though how you picked it up is a mystery to me.

NIO. We understand each other, that's enough. What else there is to know, I'll learn from *you*, now that I'm *settled here*.

*Nestling up to and resting against him.*

DUNN. (*alarmed*) But *you're not settled here!* And it's out of the question! (*he speaks very angrily and NIOBE starts to sob*) No, no! You're a very charming lady and personally I shouldn't object to your stopping for a week or so, but I have a wife!

NIO. But you are Lord and could put her *away*.

DUNN. Oh could I! And she has an elder sister. Perhaps you could tell me what I'm going to do with *her?*

NIO. It is not hard! Why, sell her for a slave! (*pose*)

DUNN. (*goes L.*) I should like to, but I don't think anybody would buy Helen unless a great big life insurance policy went along with her; besides Slavery is abolished, and if you weren't so ignorant you'd know that; and know how wrong it is to fill one with delusive hopes like these.

DUNN *goes towards window.*

NIO. Ah, be not angered with me, Petramos. If you reject me, life restored is wrecked, and I shall die.

NIOBE *kneels and sobs.*

DUNN (*returns again L. C.*) Well, after three thousand years, you can't complain if you *have* to. You've had a pretty good innings. She's at it again. I can't stand hearing a woman cry like this,

and she is pretty, considering what a back number she is. Don't cry, stop it, don't cry, please—there's a dear. (*patting her head*)

NIO. (*clinging to him—rises*) And you *do* love me, Petramos?

DUNN. Oh, well in a way! (NIOBE *suddenly crying*) Don't! don't cry! Yes! Yes!

NIOBE *instantly cheerful, standing erect.*

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NIO. And we will sacrifice to Dusky Dis; and pray him to take your wife to Hades. (*pose*)

DUNN. But I don't want my wife to go to—who's Dusky Dis? Some Nigger Minstrel?

NIO. The stern proud God of Tartarus!

DUNN. (*disgusted*) Oh, he's played out long ago; there's no such party—you mustn't suppose the world has been standing still while you've been in a state of Petrification; we've been going ahead, and the gods have had to knock under.

DUNN *sits R. of table.*

NIO. (C.) No Gods? No Zeus? No Aphrodite?

DUNN. Not one! Except in Heathen mythology—why you're a heathen.

NIO. I am!

DUNN. A Pagan idolater, and you'll have to be converted.

NIO. I *was* converted.

DUNN. Eh?

NIO. Into stone!

DUNN. Not that! You'll have to go to school, and learn the Piano, and the Alphabet.

NIO. Alphabet—Ah! (*action with hands*) Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta.

DUNN. (*rises*) Very likely! But that doesn't get over the difficulty of what is going to be done with you; and look at it as we will you *cannot* remain here.

NIO. (R. C.; *after slight pause*) I have no friends! No home! *Where* can I go?

DUNN. Your case has not been altogether unprovided for; as there is a home for lost dogs, so also is there an asylum for ladies in distress.

NIO. Can I go out into a vicious world in direst ignorance of all its ways?

DUNN. Oh, I don't suppose it's any worse than it was in your time. (NIOBE *sobs*) You're quite right, you can't, and it would be brutal to send you out, at this time of night too.

NIOBE *sits on front of pedestal.*

NIO. The gods, alas, are angered with me still. (*sobbing*)

DUNN. She's at it again! No wonder the gods got tired. Don't! please don't cry; and we'll hit upon some plan; if I only knew what to say to my family. (*stands dejectedly C.*)

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NIO. Say whence I came—and how—tell them the truth!

DUNN. Tell them *what? What* d'ye take me for? Some outrageous, ridiculous lie *might* pass muster, but the truth, *a truth like this!* you couldn't ask them to believe it. George Washington would have found this too strong for his veracity.

NIO. (R. C.) Who is Washington?

DUNN. Oh, he was an American fighting man; you wouldn't know him. You were before his time. (*looks at watch, at window*) Is that the time? (*goes round table to window; NIOBE meanwhile lies full length on stage, head to R. on stool*) They'll be home from the Theatre presently; what *am* I to do? (*turning up from window, comes down centre*)

*Sees NIOBE and covers her feet with drapery from piano and goes again anxiously to window; MARY enters L. C., going to fire; DUNN rushes her off R. C.*

DUNN. I'll ring if I require coals. I'll ring, Mary, ring—(*coming down C.*) Madame! Niobe! You can't be seen like that, you must do something with *yourself*—(NIOBE *half rises*) You'd better go upstairs and put some of my wife's clothes on!

NIO. (*kneeling*) I tore my Peplos in excess of grief!

DUNN. Yes! Yes! I see you did; go upstairs, and dress while I think out some plan.

DUNN R. *as if in great worry, as NIOBE rises, moving up C.*



NIO. (*turning back*) I fear I don't know *how* to dress *myself*.

DUNN. Oh, well, *I can't!* You must try, try! up the stairs there—on the right—first door when you reach the top.

NIO. Petramos! All my will I'll yield to thine,  
Do thou but clear thy brow of fretfulness.  
Thy anger, linked with fury of the gods  
I could not bear! I could not bear!

NIOBE *exits weeping up stairs C. R., the footlights up through this scene, to assist the comedy, now low again.*

DUNN. (*staggered—sits end of couch—a pause*) What an uncompleted idiot I am. My wife will recognize her clothes—(*running to stairs, sees trunk which he secures and brings down stage*) The Governess's trunk! If my keys will only fit it, no, no! They never do—Yes—that's lucky! (*raising lid of trunk and closing it again*) How clever you thought yourself, Peter Amos Dunn, when you suggested to yourself bringing that d—d Statue into the house. It isn't there! (*closes screen—looks round—straightens room—picks up drapery, etc.; crosses to mirror, re-arranges himself, tie, smooths hair, goes down L. of table and pours himself a drink, hand shakes. He cannot get it to his mouth; sops his handkerchief and putting it to his brow, crosses and sits on trunk. Loud knock at door; DUNN jumping up; shoulders trunk and rushes upstairs*)

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*Knocking; MARY crosses R. to L.; INNINGS then enters, MARY following L. C.*

INN. Not back yet, eh?

MARY. No Sir! (*going down L. to lamp*)

INN. (*looking at watch*) Oh, well, they won't be long, it's close upon eleven. (*sits on sofa R.*)

MARY. I will turn up the lamp, Sir, I thought the Master was here.

MARY *turns up lamp; lights full on.*

INN. They'd have stretched a point and taken me with them, but for that confounded Helen. Perhaps they're walking, it's a beautiful night.

DUNN *enters C. and R. down stairs.*

DUNN. (*worried and anxious—down C.*) Ah! that's right, Mary, let's have a light on the subject—(*starts at seeing INNINGS*) Back before them, eh Innings? But they can't be long—it's so hot, so late—what's that—is not that a carriage?

MARY. No, Sir!

DUNN. (L. C.) I said not—I said not—don't argue, Mary; don't argue—(*has got near table, takes up empty water jug and empty glass*) Why have you no water here? How can I be expected to wash—drink—if you have no water (*loud knock—MARY frightened of him rushes round front of table to R.*)

DUNN *backs to centre; he keeps water jug and glass until end of act.*

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INN. (R.) There they are!

DUNN. I knew they'd return—(*knock*) They'll have to come in, won't they? (*knock—to MARY*) Go! Go! And open the door; don't stand there like an idiot.

MARY *exits C. and L.*

INN. You're very fidgetty, Dunn, what's wrong?

DUNN. Wrong! Do I look as if I was, why—why should there be anything wrong?

*Savagely to INNINGS; INNINGS afraid, crosses to L. corner.*

INN. I never saw you like this before.

DUNN. I never *was* like this before.

*Falls into chair R. of table L. C.*

HAT. (*entering C., comes down to back of DUNN*) Peter! (*DUNN starts up*) It was too delightful for anything. I'm so sorry you didn't come.

DUNN *drops again in chair as HATTIE goes R. taking off gloves, etc., etc.; CORNEY enters L. C.*

DUNN. So am I—I'd have given a hundred pounds to have been with you.

CORN. (C., *taking off gloves*) Hundred pounds! Oh, come! What for?

DUNN. Wh—er—It's a favourite play of mine.

CORN. (*crossing to L.*) Pygmalion and Galatea?

DUNN. Was that it?

CORN. Yes! Lovely girl, Galatea. Never saw anything like her as the *Statue*.

DUNN. (*starting up*) Statue! What's the matter with the Statue? (*rushing to screen, meets CARRIE, who enters L. C., coming front screen*) Eh! Ha! Ha! And did you enjoy it, Carrie?

CAR. (R. C.) Very much, Peter! (*HELEN enters L. C., remains up C.*)

DUNN. (*wild and exhausted with worry*) Ah! How interesting those old legends are; how beautiful the revive—animating—of the Statue! And if you were told of such a wonder now-a-days, you—you wouldn't believe it perhaps.

*Music till end of act. Comic Agitato.*

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HEL. (*coming down C.*) Now-a-days, nor any other time. No woman of ordinary intelligence could be deceived by such a story.

DUNN *back to audience R. C., looking anxiously from one to the other.*

CORN. (L. *of table near INNINGS*) And what's your idea of Galatea?

HEL. (*going towards chair R. of table*) That she was some infamous creature whom Pygmalion had brought into his household; and that the Statue tale was made up to hoodwink his confiding wife. (*sits*)

CAR. Ah!! Quite possible.

CARRIE *back of sofa.*

DUNN. (*falling on stool front of couch*) No use! I knew the truth was no use.

NIOBE *enters R. C. in an eccentric but stylish tea robe.*

NIO. (*speaking as she advances C.*) I have obeyed you, Petramos, and I am here—(*all turn to her*)

DUNN *rises frightened, getting R. of NIOBE.*

HEL. Who is this?

DUNN. (R. C.—*introducing*) The new Governess, *Miss Mifton!*

CORN. Miss Mifton—

INN. There! I told you so!

*Looks at INNINGS and falls into chair L. of table, the others grouped, scrutinizing NIOBE.*

NIO. (*with her accustomed action*) Hail to you!

PICTURE.      CURTAIN.

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## ACT II.

### THE NEXT MORNING.

SCENE.—DUNN'S *drawing-room, the opposite end to Act I. Conservatory with steps at back C. Bay window R. Plain window or blank piece above. Blank piece or Alcove L. Door above to Library.* [Pg 30]  
*Table R. C. with chairs. Couch L. Footstool L. C. Screen is not on; is supposed to be at audience side of room. Piano against flat. Paper on table.*

HELEN *up C. and CARRIE at window R. dressed for walking; discovered interviewing MARY, up L. C.*

HEL. Can you not tell us Mary, at what hour she came?

MARY. I don't know, ma'am—I didn't hear her come and I didn't let her in.

HEL. You hear Carrie, *he let her in himself.*

CAR. (R. C.) I don't see why we should attach any importance to that!

MARY. No Ma'am, for she might have got in by herself; she is the strangest person I ever met, Ma'am.

HEL. In what way?

HATTIE *enters L., goes to couch, playing with mechanical toy.*

MARY. Why, the name she gives things. She asked me at breakfast to hand her the Mazas, and when I didn't understand her, she called me *Helot*, and pointed to the muffins.

HAT. If you're talking about Miss Mifton, she *is* a treat. She's got a new name for sausages.

CAR. If she will only be good to the children.

HAT. You needn't worry about that. If you'd seen the way she wept over them, and kissed and fondled them. And called them *Hippicus* and *Alophagos*.

HEL. (*sternly*) Who are they?

HAT. Oh, I didn't like to ask—some connections of her own, perhaps.

HEL. No doubt! They are sufficiently outlandish; the idea of a Governess, wandering about the house in an extravagant tea gown; impertinence I call it.

MARY. I suppose we're to take our orders from *you* as usual, Mum?

HEL. Yes! Certainly!

MARY. Thank ye! I don't want to have *that* person lording it *over me*.

MARY *exits* L. D. *with an indignant toss of her head.*

CAR. (R.) She's no doubt one of those highly emotional creatures, who grow hysterical at almost anything. [Pg 31]

HEL. (*coming slightly forward*) Carrie, you're *so confiding*; such affectation wouldn't suit *me*.

CAR. But you always were superior to *ordinary* woman's weakness.

HAT. Weakness! Oh, there's no flipperty flop about Helen.

HEL. (*advances towards HATTIE*) Hattie! When you are more like me, you will have more cause for self-respect.

HAT. Oh! I've nothing against myself as I am.

CAR. When we return you must examine her Helen, and find out if she is competent to teach the children.

HEL. I will, but take my word for it, the Woman is a fraud. She knows nothing *that is desirable*. In knowledge and learning she is little better than an idiot; I could see that in her face last night.

HAT. Helen's a judge of idiots.

HEL. Hattie! You're growing more impudent every day.

HAT. Well, if I keep on, I'll grow out of it.

CAR. I wonder when Peter saw her at Chester that he wasn't impressed with her appearance.

HEL. (*with malicious meaning*) Perhaps he was!

CAR. She might be the advanced guard of a gang of thieves, and Peter has some such thought, perhaps, as he has not gone to the office.

HEL. Your confiding nature does you credit, Carrie, but you are too ingenuous. He may be actuated by motives *far less praiseworthy*.

CAR. What do you mean, Helen?

HEL. I would not say Carrie, for I make it a rule never to stir up ill feeling between man and wife. (*going up C.*)

*Enter* INNINGS.

INN. (*on steps*) Good morning, Ladies! Corney gone out yet?

CAR. He is still engaged with his breakfast. He is always late after a Theatre night.

CARRIE *exits* C. *and* R.

HEL. (*severely and pointedly*) His indolence is a source of great inconvenience to us all.

HELEN *exits* C. *and* R. INNINGS *looking at HATTIE on sofa—crosses to window, putting hat on chair R. of table in recess of window, produces box of chocolates which he places ready for* [Pg 32] *business later; then, half frightened, gets extreme R. at window.*

INN. (R.) They're gone!

HAT. (*on sofa*) Yes! I see they are! You didn't intend that for information did you? It was only—only just a something to say—to—fill up a page kind of remark, wasn't it?

INN. (*at window*) That's all—simply to call your attention to the fact that we are alone.

HAT. Oh, you needn't have called; my attention was rivetted;—but I don't feel in the least embarrassed; do you?

INN. No!

HAT. Well—why aren't you embarrassed? (*rises, coming to C.*)

INN. Don't see what there is about *you* to frighten a fellow.

HAT. I don't believe you're so bold as you pretend; judging from the respectful distance you keep.

INN. Don't you *want* me to be respectful?

HAT. Why of course, but you needn't be distant.

INN. (*crosses slowly to her*) If I thought by coming nearer, I should be getting dearer—

HAT. Wouldn't you be getting costly? You're pretty near now!

INN. (R. C.—*getting closer to HATTIE*; HAT. *bus.*) So are you, Hattie. You're pretty near and pretty far, but the nearer I am the sweeter you are. Ha! Ha!

HAT. Oh! You don't flatter yourself much to think that your proximity makes *me* sweeter.

*Sarcastically; turning from him.*

INN. To me! I mean in my opinion! Oh, Hattie!

HAT. (*quickly*) What is it, Philip? (*whisking round*)

INN. (*turning away*) I wonder how long Corney *usually* takes over his breakfast.

HAT. Oh, I can go and ask him, if *that's all* you want to know.

HATTIE *going up L.*

INN. (*pulling her back by her dress; she in mischief runs for chair, trying to sit upon his hat, which he saves*) Oh, Hattie! oh my! oh I—I don't want to know particularly.

CORNEY *enters quietly from Library up L., sees them and goes out again.*

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It's good enough to stay here and go on wondering—*with you*. Of course—I don't want to wonder by myself. Oh, Hattie!

HAT. Oh, Mr. Innings. (*gushingly*)

INNINGS, *kneeling beside HATTIE, embraces her; CORNEY sings outside; HATTIE and INNINGS hurriedly get away from each other; HATTIE goes and sits on couch L.; INNINGS goes extreme R. to window recess.*

CORN. (*entering L. and down C.; sings*)

“When the heart in palpitating is impressed with fear,  
You're pleased to find a being where there's no one near  
And whisper foolish nothings no one else may hear,  
That is love! That is love!”

Do you know, Phil, I've been haunted by that song ever since you started me at it; Hattie's crazed on it too.

HAT. Oh, Corney! Why I'm only learning it.

CORN. Yes, but you've nearly mastered it I can see. (*looks at INNINGS*) I interrupted your practice, didn't I?

HAT. (*impertinently up in his face*) I don't understand.

CORN. (*pushing her up C.*) Oh, yes you do! See if you can find my cigar case in the Conservatory; I rather fancy I left it there last night.

CORNEY *turns down stage L.; INNINGS gives HATTIE box of chocolates quickly; as CORNEY turns on exclamation they separate.*

HAT. Oh chocks! (*to INNINGS*) We can resume our conversation some other time, Mr. Innings.

INN. I was going to ask you if we couldn't, and will you please make a note of where we left off?

HAT. (*sings*) “And whisper foolish nothings no one else may hear. That is love! That is——” Ugh! (*at CORNEY*)

INNINGS *stands up C. looking after HATTIE, throwing kisses to her—echoes “That is love—That is ——”*

CORN. (*after watching INNINGS, swings down stage near couch*) Come here Phil! Never mind Hattie, she'll keep. Anything fresh? Have you learnt anything new?

INN. There's nothing new to learn that I can see. Madeline Mifton's here, and you've got to prepare for the worst. (*lies on couch putting his legs up*) [Pg 34]

CORN. (C.) It is the most striking coincidence I ever heard of; that the sister of the girl I jilted should take the place of Governess, and come here, by the merest accident.

INN. Do you *suppose it was accident?*

CORN. Oh, come Phil—you don't think it was design?

INN. I do! Didn't I tell you last evening that she was coming to London to hunt you down!

CORN. Yes! But who could realize such persistency outside a Gaboriau Novel.

INN. Have you seen her yet?

CORN. Not this morning—she's in the nursery with the children. *She's very like her sister.* There's something weird about her, but the exact type of features. (*crosses R. C.*)

INN. What do you intend to do? Have you made up your mind?

CORN. Yes! (*crossing back to him*) I've decided to get *you* to talk to her, Phil—

INN. (*sits up*) Me?

CORN. You can give it her straight—show her clearly that I was cajoled into proposing to her sister, that it was really Ethel's fault, and that she's entirely to blame for the whole business, and there you are!

INN. I couldn't do it; it doesn't seem nice to throw all the blame on to the girl.

CORN. It belongs to her, Phil—besides, my boy, you know that the least thing upsets me. I cannot stand worry; now you can; (*INNINGS rises*) you have one of those oxydised-zinc constitutions.

INN. No, I haven't! I'm just as susceptible to worry as you.

CORN. You mean to say you won't do it?

INN. No! I can't!

CORN. You can't?

INN. (*emphatically*) No! Damn! there! I don't see why I should. (*crosses R. and round table*)

CORN. Oh, well, then, Peter will have to do it. I'll get Peter to talk to her. (*goes L.*)

INN. (*up R.*) That's the best way. He won't mind.

*Enter DUNN from Library L. D. with scent bottle, pale and careworn, crosses and sits on chair L. of table.*

CORN. I'd rather you did it; because I shall have to disclose the whole escapade to Peter. And he hasn't a particularly good opinion of me as it is. [Pg 35]

INN. I doubt if he could have a worse, so it can't make much difference.

CORN. (*seeing DUNN*) Good morning, Peter—(*DUNN scowls at him*) Seen you before though, haven't I? (*to INNINGS*) Peter looks jolly, doesn't he? Innings, you'll find Hattie in the Conservatory looking for my cigar case, which I have in my pocket.

INN. All right! I'll see if we can't resume that conversation where you broke in on it; (*sings*) "And whisper foolish nothings, no one else may hear, That is love! That is——" (*voice cracks*)

*INNINGS exits C. and R.*

CORN. (*after slight pause—looks at DUNN*) Peter, old man! You don't look well.

DUNN. I don't feel well; I've been walking my room the whole of the night. I haven't slept a wink.

CORN. Neither have I; but sleeplessness doesn't break me up nearly so quickly as worry. *I cannot stand worry*; and that is why I want to speak with you about this new Governess.

DUNN. (*startled*) What! Why should there be any worry about the new Governess? (*aside*) Can he suspect—

CORN. It's no use trying to disguise it, Peter, she is not what she seems.

DUNN. (*amazed and frightened*) Not what she—

CORN. She hasn't come here to teach the children at all.

DUNN. (*rising*) Great goodness, how did he learn this! (*aside*)

CORN. It was hard to believe, but a good look at her face settled it; she's the very *image*—

DUNN. Image! (*aside*) He knows all. (*crosses L.*)

CORN. I'm pretty shrewd Peter, and I suspect I've summed up the whole business.

DUNN. (*aside*) Oh! He's not sure, then I won't betray myself. I'll brazen it out. (*sits on couch*)

CORN. (*aside, down R. C.*) If I could only induce him to get rid of her, without disclosing anything.

DUNN. (*on sofa*) I've told you before Corney, how wrong it is to jump to these conclusions; you may misjudge this woman and her purpose and object entirely, and, right or wrong, Corney, I'm blameless.

CORN. (*aside*) Ah! Peter knows she's unpopular with the women and that the blame of engaging her will fall upon him. (*fetching chair from table*) That's all very well with me, Peter! (*puts chair near couch and sits astride it, facing audience.*)

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DUNN. (*aside*) With *him*! That means, at the worst I can buy him off!

CORN. But Helen and Carrie are prejudiced, and naturally perhaps. You can't deny there is something *uncanny* about the woman.

DUNN. There *is* perhaps—a *stony* look about the eyes; but that will wear off.

CORN. It's hard to believe that she is of the same *clay* as ourselves.

DUNN. Clay! She was never clay.

CORN. She might have been *cast in a different mould*.

DUNN. She's not a casting at all—so—

CORN. Of course there's no denying she's beautiful. But I've a prejudice against *these classic expressionless women; these cold blocks of marble*.

DUNN. (*as if paralyzed*) Marble—you do know then—

CORN. (*looks at DUNN quickly*) I know what *you* ought to have known the moment you saw her, that she was not the sort of thing, that—that—it wouldn't do to have her about the house.

DUNN. I did know it, Corney, and I have tried. I *have* tried to get her away, but I can't.

CORN. Obdurate and unforgiving, eh? As I suspected; she has a *heart of stone*.

DUNN. Well, she *had*; of course that was changed with the other alterations.

CORN. (*rises and puts chair back by table*) What? She relents? She wavers in her purpose? Then let her go. The matter's simple enough: pack her off!

DUNN. (*rises*) But I can't! It's all so brutal.

CORN. (*with foot on stool*) Oh, she's told you the whole story, eh? but remember my version will put an entirely different light on it. And yet out of cold-blooded vindictiveness she comes here to ruin me with Bea and Sillocks.

DUNN. (*putting foot on stool; looks puzzled at CORNEY—pause*) Have you met her before? Have you got that former existence theory?

CORN. If you call a year ago a former existence! (*CORNEY turns going R.*)

DUNN. A year ago! (*stumbles over stool*)

CORN. Yes! When I *broke off* with her.

DUNN. Broke off! (*aside*) I didn't notice she had anything missing.

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CORN. Broke off my engagement with her sister.

DUNN. (*perplexed*) Whose sister?

CORN. Mifton's sister, whom I met at Cambridge. (*goes R.*)

DUNN. (*aside*) He's on the wrong tack; Heavens! What a pitfall I nearly fell into! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

DUNN *goes up C., laughing heartily.*

CORN. (*meeting DUNN up C.*) Don't laugh! Don't laugh! I tell you—

DUNN. It's too bad Corney, to let you indulge in all this unnecessary worry, but your fears are quite groundless. The new Governess, Madeline Mifton, never heard of you till last evening.

CORN. I know better, Peter! She came here in her sister's interest, to hunt me down.

DUNN. Nothing of the kind.

CORN. I tell you I learnt, on the best of authority, that Madeline Mifton would certainly come here for the purpose of going for me. (*crosses L.*)

DUNN. (*dropping into chair R. E.*) Great goodness! I'm forgetting she *will* be here. The new Governess, and what will happen then? What will happen then?

MARY. (*enters from Library L. U. E.*) The Locksmith is in the Library Sir, to know what is to be done.

DUNN. (*looking at audience as if for screen*) Oh, the lock and staple for the screen; I'll explain it to him, myself. Tell the Governess I wish to speak to her.

MARY *exits C. and R. up steps.*

CORN. (*going up C.*) No! Never mind, Peter—I'll tackle her myself.

DUNN. (*stopping him C.*) What for? when I tell you there's no occasion.

CORN. Well, I'm not so sure of that; and I'll satisfy myself. There's some mystery connected with her. And I'll find out *why* and *how* she came; and all about her. (*crosses R.*)

DUNN. No! No! Don't you meddle or you'll ruin everything! (*aside*) He must not see Niobe till I have warned her. I'll run and see that locksmith and hurry back. You remain quiet and I'll find out if you have any cause for fear. Don't interfere, or you'll spoil everything. Leave her to me. She's a peculiar woman, but I think I understand her. *She's a woman of the world undoubtedly, but a little after date.* Leave her to me. Leave her to me!

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*Exit DUNN to Library L. D.*

CORN. He seems so particularly anxious I should leave it to him, I don't think it good enough; I would always rather that somebody else should manage any little unpleasantness for me, but I like to feel sure that they're not working some little purpose of their own.

*Enter NIOBE C. and L. as if looking for some one; comes R.*

Ah! Here she is—good morning, Miss Mifton!

NIO. (*on steps, waving her hands*) Hail to you! (*comes down*) Where is he whom they call master? The lord of this house?

CORN. (*aside*) Umph! A poetic blank verse kind of character—(*aloud*) Oh, Peter!

NIO. (*fondly*) Ah! Petramos!

*Goes down L. in front of couch.*

CORN. Yes, if you put it that way; he'll be here in a moment, Miss Mifton. Make yourself at home; take a chair, be seated.

*He goes to L. of table; his back to her as if to offer chair.*

NIO. Nay, I am easier thus.

*Flops on floor with head supported on footstool; CORNEY turns and sees her on floor; staggered! he puts up eye glass.*

CORN. (*aside*) She's a decidedly eccentric creature—I hardly know how to begin with her; (*aloud—stooping down*) I hope you find no trouble with the children.

NIO. To *love* is not a trouble, and they are *so like* Petramos.

CORN. (*slight pause, he turns away slightly*) She seems partial enough to Peter—(*aloud—stooping down to her*) Ahem! How—how did you come to hear of this place? Was it by accident—quite by chance you came here?

NIO. (*looks round*) By chance? Ah, yes!

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CORN. Ah yes! You had no—(*bends down—hurts back—gets chair from table, sits R., and stoops*) You had no purpose beyond the *ostensible*—one—of *occupying*—the *situation*—you had *—accepted.* (*speech disjointed and jerky*)

NIO. Your speech is meaningless; to me but the empty rattle of a falling can.

*Posing face in hands, elbows on stool.*

CORN. (*after regarding her suspiciously, turns to R.*) She's frank to a degree—(*aloud—stooping*) Ahem! You did not expect—you had no thought of finding *me* here?

*Spoken in a conciliatory tone, trying to be agreeable.*

NIO. (*after regarding CORNEY disdainfully—perplexed*) I'd rather Petramos should tell me what to say.

CORN. (*rises and goes step to R.; aside*) Can she have confided the affair to Peter, and is this just simplicity, or only cunning?

NIO. If you like best conversing with yourself, I shall not miss your chatter.

CORN. (*quickly recovering himself*) I beg your pardon! She isn't such a fool; (*sits again, crosses*

*legs*) Excuse me. You find a great change, I suppose?

NIO. Ah yes! All things are changed, even men are not as they were. Why do you hide your legs in those loose sleeves?

CORN. (*looks at his trousers, tries to hide his legs—aside*) She must have lived among the savages, she's a Highlander perhaps! I thought you belonged to Cambridge.

NIO. I was born in Athens, but I left it when I married.

CORN. (R. C.) You are married then?

NIO. (*beginning to cry*) I was! Oh—Amphion! (*cries on footstool*)

CORN. Oh! I beg your pardon—your husband is dead? (*stooping to speak to her*)

NIO. More years than I can count. (*sobbing*)

CORN. Ah! You don't look your age. She's trying the idiotic dodge again. (*stooping*) Ahem! When did you—(*gets twinge again with bending, puts away chair and fetches low occasional chair from back of stage, sits close to her and stoops*) When did you see your sister last?

NIO. (*sits up*) At the Feast of Demeter, on the Temple steps.

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CORN. Temple steps! Taking the Battersea boat perhaps! How did you leave her?

NIO. In sorrow. She had been early plighted to a young *hoplite* of Ithaca, named Aulakes.

CORN. *Hoplite!* A dancing master I suppose. It's the first I've heard of this; she may betray more of Ethel's secrets! (*aloud*) And what—(*trying to get lower, and sees stool, NIOBE sitting up, has left room for him, he steps over stool and sits*) What became of the young fellow?

NIO. He fought throughout the war and fell in the last battle.

CORN. (*aside—surprised*) Ethel can't be the Spring chicken I believed her. (*aloud*) You were younger than your sister?

NIO. Ah yes!

CORN. Ah yes—I can see a resemblance, but a difference; she might be called handsome—you're pretty.

NIO. Why not? Mother was as fair as *Helen*.

CORN. *Our Helen!* Oh! I don't think much of her as a beauty.

*Enter DUNN hurriedly—he sees them, when he reaches C., falls into low chair.*

NIO. (*rises on one knee as she sees PETER*) Ah! Here is Petramos! And I no longer wish to talk with you.

*NIOBE rises and goes L.; PETER affects indifference.*

CORN. (*rises*) That's straight, anyway, but what she can see in Peter beats me.

DUNN. (*to CORNEY*) You didn't say anything to her?

CORN. No, no! I've left it to you! (*goes up, putting back chair*)

NIO. (*coming towards DUNN C.*) He has perplexed and frightened me with questions.

DUNN. (*C., turning to CORNEY R.*) Now I thought—

CORN. (*replacing other chair*) No, no! Merely ordinary courtesies.

NIO. (*very affectionately*) I have no fear of him now you are here.

*Putting her arms round DUNN'S neck as he turns; CORNEY, coming forward, sees them and affects to be greatly shocked, hiding face with newspaper.*

DUNN. (*perplexed and affecting light indifference, trying to get away from her*) Of course not, there is nothing to be afraid of. (*to CORNEY*) She's so timid, you see Corney, she—she—seems to think everyone is against her.

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*NIOBE looks up, their faces close together.*

CORN. (*down C.*) She doesn't seem to mind you, Peter!

DUNN. No, she's quite taken to me, and if there *is* anything, Corney, I'll find out for you. She'll tell me!

*As DUNN turns from NIOBE going towards CORNEY, she keeps him back with her arms still round his neck. He breaks away and she goes L.—DUNN R.*

CORN. Well, I'll leave her to you—(*goes up L. C.*) I confess I don't know what to make of her; she



doesn't seem the kind of person to undertake such a mission; a resuscitated mummy couldn't appear more ignorant of the world's ways. (*aloud*) Peter! Peter! Hail to you!

CORNEY *exits centre to R.*

NIO. (*following him up, looks off L., then turns to DUNN*) Have you resolved truth shall be told, and all disclosed, Petramos?

DUNN. Truth! no! I took a feeler at that; it isn't to be thought of.

NIO. (*going R. C. towards DUNN*) As my lord says—it would be well, then, to hire some slave to murder him that's gone! (*mysteriously pointing off L.*)

DUNN. Murder Corney! What for?

NIO. He will betray.

DUNN. He can't—he doesn't know!

NIO. But he suspects!

DUNN. Suspects the truth! Ridiculous! There may be, well there are—suspicions—but they'll never take that form; and the only difficulty is to keep up something that's possible of belief till we can provide for you, or hear from your friends. (*R. of table*)

NIO. (*on steps C.*) Alas! have I in all the world a friend?

DUNN. (*L. H.*) I suppose not! We might go round electrifying all the Art museums; on the off chance; there may be friends of yours in Greece, if you could only go back to Greece, and burrow for them. (*sits R.*)

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NIO. (*coming back of table*) Zeus! How desolate I am—(*to DUNN*) Your only thought is to be rid of me. (*weeps on table*)

DUNN. (*R. of table*) She's at it again! No, I don't wish to be rid of you; if I could only see some way to manage it—I should be *glad* for you to remain.

NIO. (*raising her head*) Could I not stay then, as your wife?

DUNN. Umph! If I wasn't already suited. I've told you I have a wife?

NIO. But one! The law of Thebes allows *two* wives.

DUNN. But the law of England doesn't; and I should consider it a dangerous experiment if *it did*; besides there are other interests in the concern. My wife would be sure to object; and her sister would howl with indignation. (*crosses L., up stage in fear of interruption.*)

NIO. The sour face! (*R. C.*) We could invoke the gods to strike *her dumb*.

DUNN. The gods don't amount to a row of pins, or I should have put 'em on to Helen long ago! (*DUNN sits on footstool C.*) You're the Governess, that's what they've been told and that's what we have to keep up; till we can make other arrangements.

NIO. Say clearly then, what is a Governess?

DUNN. Oh! a Governess; a Governess, is one who governs, according to the orders of those who govern her; you must try to keep up an appearance of meekness and servility.

NIO. For what?

DUNN. Because you won't be allowed to govern unless you do.

NIO. (*with dignity*) I am a Queen.

DUNN. Yes, but you got lost in the shuffle!

NIO. And my duties?

DUNN. To trot out the children, and pretend to teach, but above all cringe to Helen—say "yes Ma'am"—always—"Yes Ma'am."

NIO. (*proudly*) "Yes Ma'am," only that, "yes Ma'am?"

DUNN. (*rising*) Yes—but not in that way, mind the tone, humbly; "Yes Ma'am." (*in a nasal tone and with a bob curtsey*)

NIO. (*after wonderingly regarding DUNN, imitates DUNN's manner*) "Yes Ma'am!"

DUNN. That's better, and don't call *me* Petramos, but, *Master*, "the Master," and above all, don't forget to be obsequious to Helen. Agree with the old cat in all things, that's very important. (*DUNN goes up L., watching*)

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NIO. I shall remember—(*goes to window R., looks out and appears delighted*) Ah see! See! The crowd! The populace are out! Why do they hurry so? There is no dignity in all this haste.

DUNN. (*sitting on couch L.*) They're not out for dignity, there's no money in it; we haven't time for

dignity now-a-days.

NIO. (*goes back to window*) Look! See! What are those strange chariots?

DUNN. Chariots? (*crossing to look out*) Oh! cabs! Growlers! Growlers! They are called *Growlers!*

NIO. (*following DUNN to C.*) Growlers! Growlers!! Oh, could they not be changed?

DUNN. I'll see what can be done in the matter—(NIOBE *goes back to window*) Go up to the nursery now, the children will be getting anxious about you.

NIO. (*at window R.*) Look! Look Ixion; the man upon the wheel.

DUNN. Where! Oh, a boy on a bicycle! Do go!

*Postman's knock is heard thrice.*

NIO. (*coming out again*) Why does he do that, is the man a Herald?

DUNN. No, a letter carrier—the postman! Postman!

NIO. Postman! (*pleased*) Ah! The Postman! (*amused at the sound, repeats "Postman" as she goes to window*)

DUNN. If she's so struck on the postman, what will it be when she sees a policeman!

NIO. Oh, how they sway! Could not someone teach them how to walk? The Maidens waddle, like web-footed cranes.

*Imitating a modern walk to L. corner.*

DUNN. Yes! You've got it, that's it (NIOBE *hurrying back to window, DUNN stops her*) Look at 'em another time—go to the nursery now, and if the ladies, my wife or her sister, send for you, do be careful. (*putting her up L. C.*)

NIO. (*returns*) I will bring the children and show how much they love me.

DUNN. (R. C.) No, no! They're not allowed in here.

NIO. (L. C.) Why, are they not yours?

DUNN. Yes, but I never attempt to prejudice them in my favour, I'll explain to you another time, when I'm not so busy; I have to telegraph the real governess, to stop away, or we are ruined. [Pg 44]

NIO. I don't know Telegraph—what is it, Petramos?

DUNN. Why—oh—it's a machine—er—on which you tick, tick, tick, tick at one end, and the same tick ticks are heard at the other end, and the tick ticks tell whatever you are thinking, to the party you're tick, tick, ticking to.

NIO. Oh Petramos! you treat me like a child. Am I so foolish that you mock my ignorance?

*Weeps and falls on DUNN'S shoulder, embracing him; CARRIE and HELEN enter at back C.*

DUNN. She's at it again. Don't cry—there's no money in it. I wasn't fooling you. Cheer up! there's a darling. (*stroking her hair*) Poor little woman! (CARRIE *down R.*; DUNN *sees her, pretends not to see her*) My dear young lady, you shall be treated with every kindness, my wife is gentleness itself. I'm sure if my wife were here—oh, you *are* there, Caroline.

CAR. (R., *indignantly*) Yes, I am here!

DUNN. Come to this poor girl, she's homesick.

HEL. (*coming down L.*) And needs consolation, I observe.

*At the sound of HELEN'S voice NIOBE recoils, back centre.*

Miss Mifton, will you leave us?

NIO. Not at *your* bidding! If he, the *Master*, bids me go, I go—not else. I wait his orders.

HEL. (*crossing R. C. to CARRIE*) You'll find *mine* are the orders that are observed in this household, and you must obey them if you wish to stay with us.

NIO. You can't suppose I wish to stay with *you*. (DUNN *has gone up and is now L.—to DUNN*) You Pet—the *Master*—is the ruler here.

CAR. (*in great tribulation; to HELEN*) She called him pet.

DUNN. (*crossing back of NIOBE R. C.*) Yes! yes! but I never interfere in domestic matters. Mrs. Dunn's sister manages everything. (*aside as he goes back L.*) Don't forget what I told you; be obsequious.

NIO. Ah, that's well remembered. (*to HELEN*) I had forgotten; I am to be obsequious to you; Yes Ma'am—and cringe to you—"Yes Ma'am!" It was the master's wish—agree with the old cat in all

things, yes Ma'am!

NIOBE *backing up stage with speech, turns and exits C. and R.*

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CAR. (*goes up C., looks after NIOBE—then down C.—to DUNN, who in desperation is strumming on the piano*) So Peter! you are prompting her to deceit.

DUNN. (L.) Deceit, my dear! *What!* Where's the deceit? (CARRIE *indignant, crosses R.*)

HEL. (*coming C.*) It's true there was little show of confusion, in spite of the indelicacy of the situation.

DUNN. *What* indelicacy? The poor girl required soothing, and no wonder; you'd make a china dog homesick.

HEL. It did not take you long to *acquire an interest* in this person.

DUNN. What d'ye mean by *acquiring* an interest? She's not a joint stock company!

CAR. (R.) Oh, Peter, and we thought it was illness kept you at home.

DUNN. (*crossing to CARRIE*) Carrie! My dear!

HEL. But it's obvious now why you stayed away from the office.

CAR. And she is no prettier than I.

HEL. Some men are captivated by impudence.

DUNN. (*between them*) It's a *wonder you've* remained single, so long.

HEL. I have too constant a reminder before me of the mistake of married life, ever to venture.

DUNN. Oh! The *venture* would be—on the *other* side: you run no risk!

CAR. You must admit, Peter, that this woman, the new governess—

DUNN *impatient, with an exclamation, crosses R. to window.*

HEL. Carrie, don't make foolish remarks you may be sorry for; to say too much is to put him on his guard. Come—(*puts CARRIE over*) to your room—not a word—you're excited. *I'll keep an eye on this Miss Mifton.*

*Exits, following CARRIE L. D.*

DUNN. (*taking stage R. to L.; kicking stool away*) Where will it end? What am I to do? (*sitting on couch*) Send off that infernal Telegram to the real governess. She must be detained where she is for the present, and bought off; I shall have to go to Leamington, see her, and bribe her to take some other engagement, and I don't know how I am to do it!

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*Enter INNINGS C. R.*

INN. (*coming down*) If I can find Corney—

DUNN. (*aside*) Ah! Innings! Here's the very man! (DUNN *shakes INNINGS's hand bringing him down on his R.*) Innings, how are you—glad to see you! I don't know that I ever met a man that I took to more readily than I did to you.

INN. (R. C.) Ha! Ha! Well! What favour do you want me to do for you?

DUNN. Favour! Oh! I wanted you to travel.

INN. Travel?

DUNN. Yes! It isn't far! You have lots of time on your hands.

INN. (R. C.) I don't travel on my hands! I couldn't go to-day. To-morrow early, if you like?

DUNN. (L. C.) It would be better to-day, but to-morrow will do.

INN. Have I nothing to do but travel? Isn't there an object?

DUNN. Oh yes! I can trust you I know. I want you to go to Leamington for me, to see a Miss Mifton, who is coming here as governess.

INN. Coming! I thought she *was* here!

DUNN. Eh! Oh no! This is another one, she's not the same—that is a different one to the other. There are *lots of them* at this time of year; the woods are full of 'em.

INN. Of what?

DUNN. Miftons! (*going across R.*) I'm getting so muddled, I have to send a telegram—I'll explain as we go. Give me your arm. (*going up C. arm in arm*) I'm bilious—I mean I'm weak this morning. I—oh this deception—there's no money in it.

Enter BEATRICE C. from R., as DUNN and INNINGS are going up.

INN. Good morning, Miss Sillocks!

DUNN. Good morning, Bea. Have you stepped in to see Hattie? (*calls*) Hattie! Hattie! (*turning round with INNINGS on his arm*) You'll find her in the Telegraph office—back in a jiffey! Where are you Innings? (*turning*) Oh, there you are. Come along!

DUNN *exits with* INNINGS C. and R.

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BEA. (*down R.*) Something has excited him.

HATTIE *enters* L. D.

HAT. Good morning, Bea!

BEA. (*kissing her*) Good morning, dear. How are the babies?

HAT. Flourishing! You look quite serious this morning! What's the matter, Bea?

BEA. (R. C.) I have had a shock.

HAT. (C.) Galvanic?

BEA. No, no! Well, an unpleasantness—a letter.

HAT. It wasn't from Corney then?

BEA. No! From a Miss Mifton!

HAT. Madeline Mifton? Why it's our new governess!

BEA. (*goes C.*) But she writes from Chester. See! there's the postmark.

HAT. (*looking*) Why, it's three weeks old; been all over the country, misdirected! What's in it?

BEA. She has seen something of my intended marriage with Corney in some of the Society papers, and asks for his address.

HAT. That is suspicious, isn't it? But I dare say Corney can explain. (*aside*) He's good at explaining—(*aloud*) I wouldn't let it worry me.

BEA. I will not, if Corney assures me I've no reason to mistrust.

HAT. Oh, *he'll do that!* Did you find out if it's true that Peter had a sister?

BEA. Oh yes! Papa says Mr. Dunn's sister is a most charming person.

HAT. Fancy that! and I never even heard of her; that's Helen's doings—(*HELEN speaks off*) Mum! She's here.

HATTIE and BEATRICE *go* L. to couch, as HELEN and CARRIE *enter* L. D.

HEL. (C.) Good morning, Miss Sillocks! How is your Papa?

HAT. Do tell, Bea. Helen has great interest in your papa, he's a widower;—and Helen is "*nuts*" on widowers.

HEL. Hattie! Tell the new Governess we wish to see her.

HAT. (L.) Don't get excited Bea. She *is* pretty, but I don't believe she's Corney's kind.

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HATTIE *exits up steps* C. and R.

CAR. (*crossing R.*) We have engaged a Miss Mifton to superintend the children's education; but Helen has doubts as to her competency.

HEL. It will not take five minutes to *satisfy ourselves*; I'll put a few questions to her, and if she cannot answer them satisfactorily a fortnight's wages, in lieu of notice, will have to satisfy *her*. (*sitting R. C., front of table; CARRIE sits R. of HELEN*)

Enter HATTIE C. from R., NIOBE *following*; HATTIE *goes down* L. to BEA.; NIOBE C., *top of steps*.

BEA. What a lovely woman! Oh, Hattie! I believe Corney *has* been in love with her.

HAT. Oh, nonsense!

NIO. (*on steps*) Hail to you!

HATTIE and BEA. *on couch; all surprised; NIOBE advances*.

CAR. Sit down, Miss Mifton!

NIO. Thank you! I am not tired, and stand to take mine ease.

HEL. I wish to ask you a few questions, Miss Mifton, to see if you are capable of the training and

instruction of the young. You *write* and *cypher*, of course? I need not ask?

NIO. (*standing* C.) I would not then. Why speak of what is needless!

HEL. (*after business of looking at* NIOBE) What is your definition of Geography?

NIO. It matters not since I am authorized—to bow my will to yours; *what* you would have it—say—and that it is.

HELEN *turns and looks at* CARRIE.

HAT. (*laughing*) Just the thing for *you* Helen; you can have it all your own way, (an educational Phonograph). You breathe in what is to be learned, and she'll breathe it out again.

HEL. (R. C.—*to* CARRIE) This sounds like prevarication. (*to* NIOBE) You would not have *me* describe the divisions of the land and sea; tell *you* the names of the Continents.

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NIO. Oh, yes, I would; that is, *if* you know them.

HEL. Know them—

HELEN *rising*—CARRIE *calms and soothes* HELEN, *who again sits*.

HAT. Ha! Ha! She doesn't! She doesn't!

CAR. Hattie! Do not interrupt the examination.

HEL. (*re-seated*) It's not a question of what *I* know, Miss Mifton, I'll undertake to say, *you* don't know what a Continent *is*? (*pause*) You don't!

NIO. (C.) I don't! I was to agree with you in all things.

HEL. If I asked you to name the Capital of Norway or the location of the Red Sea, what would you say?

NIO. (*at a loss—pauses—then in imitation of* DUNN'S *voice, curtseying*) Yes Ma'am!

HEL. Do you call *that* an answer? (*rises angrily*—CARRIE *soothes her*)

NIO. Yes Ma'am! (*HELEN sits again*)

BEA. She looks intelligent; this must be all pretence.

CAR. She has better knowledge, perhaps, of home affairs.

HEL. (*seated*) What was the cause of the last War?

NIO. (C., *confidently*) A quarrel which broke out, upon the rights of which I would not speak, for it was ended nearly when I was born.

HEL. (*turns slightly from* NIOBE) We don't want to know your age.

HAT. How many years did it last?

NIO. Ten!

HAT. Oh, she is a treat!

HEL. Be quiet, Hattie! Can you play the Piano?

NIO. I cannot tell you *that*, for I have never tried.

HEL. *That's meant* for impudence, I suppose.

NIO. (*confused—curtseying*) Yes Ma'am!

HEL. (*rising*) You must be an idiot, or it is possible, you believe *me* one?

NIO. (*curtseying*) Yes Ma'am!

HATTIE *laughing*; HELEN *frowns, falls into seat*; CARRIE *rises*; enter DUNN C., *endeavours to get off* L., *meets* CORNEY *from* L. D.; DUNN *comes down* L. *of* NIOBE; CORNEY *down* L. *to* BEA. and HATTIE; BEATRICE *afterwards shows* CORNEY *letter, CORNEY protesting in pantomime*.

CAR. Peter! Peter! this girl appears to be ignorant on every subject!

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DUNN. (L. C.) Why, of course, if you've been asking her things she doesn't know!

HEL. (*seated*) She won't do, Peter. Her mind is a complete blank.

DUNN. (*crossing to* HELEN) Yes! On trivial *modern* accomplishments, perhaps, but—have you asked her anything about Ancient history?

HEL. No!

DUNN. Have you spoken Greek to her?

HEL. No!

DUNN. I thought not! Even you don't know everything. (*as DUNN turns to NIOBE, she tries to embrace him; he avoids her, and crosses quickly to CORNEY*) Corney, ask her something about Ancient history; the more Ancient the better.

CORN. (L.) I've forgotten all I ever knew.

DUNN. That doesn't matter, she'll answer you all right!

CORN. Where was Homer born?

NIO. In Scios!

DUNN. There you see! First go!

CORN. (L. H.) What were the—er—names of the nine Muses?

NIO. (C.) Clio, Calliope, Euterpe, Erato, Melpomene, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, Thalia, Urania.

DUNN. (*crossing to HELEN*) Cyclopædias! What *more* do you want?

HEL. (*facing audience*) What good will it do the children to know the names of the Muses?

DUNN. (R. C.) Oh, I beg your pardon! We don't pay enough attention to Ancient history now-a-days. (*DUNN crosses again to CORNEY, L.*) Corney, speak Greek to her.

HATTIE *and* BEATRICE *have gone up C.*

CORN. Can't! "Hoi polloi" is the only expression I remember.

DUNN. Well, go on, give her that!

CORN. Hoi polloi!

DUNN. Hoi polly! Give her time—now—give her time—

HEL. She is no use whatever! She can't even play the Piano.

HAT. (L. C.) How do you know! She has never tried.

HATTIE *exits laughing, with BEATRICE C. and R.*

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DUNN. (*comes down L. C.*) Well, if she can't, the Piano is not so very desirable for young children; and she may be great on the Triangle or the Jew's harp.

CORN. And no doubt Miss Mifton will soon learn if you insist on it. (*aside*) I must keep the right side of her.

HEL. (*rises*) Absurd! She has not the intelligence of an insect.

NIO. (C.) It is not a necessity, for I am beautiful. It is such as you who need intelligence.

CORN. Phew! That's a facer!

HEL. (*rises fiercely*) Minx! How dare you!

NIO. (*clinging to DUNN as she recoils from HELEN, to L. of DUNN*) Petramos! I ask protection from this Medusa!

DUNN. Of course! Yes! Helen, you're *too* severe.

NIO. (L. C., *rising*) Helen! Ah! Like her of Troy, at whom the finger of scandal pointed. (*pose, as if denouncing HELEN*)

HEL. It is false! The story is untrue!

CAR. Be calm, Helen!

DUNN *turns up C., back to audience, shaking with laughter.*

HEL. (R. C.) How dare you hint at scandal against me; but such innuendos will not deter me. Peter! This woman leaves this house, or I do!

NIO. (L. C.) Then there is little doubt which of us two will go. He'd sooner *fifty* fold, that I should stay.

DUNN. (*turning round C.*) I must endorse that truism, if it ruins me. *I would!* Damme! there! (*turns again up stage*)

HEL. Caroline, you hear!

CAR. (R. C.) Peter, after this you must see that it is absolutely necessary for this person to depart.

CARRIE *sobs in HELEN'S arms.*

CORN. Confound Helen! Mifton will be on to *me* next.

*Enter INNINGS from L. D., drops down L.*

HEL. (R. C.) Carrie, you have been patient and long suffering, but there is a limit.

DUNN. (C.) Yes! There is a limit. And you've gone it. It's *my* say now, and I am reckless, and may raise the devil! [Pg 52]

NIO. (*kneeling and clinging to him*) Petramos, restrain! Be merciful! Invoke not now the curses of the gods!

DUNN. Oh, hang the gods! Be quiet, you only make things worse!

NIO. (*bursting into tears, rising and falling on DUNN's neck*) Oh, Petramos!

*CARRIE sees the situation, and sobs loudly.*

DUNN. (C.) She's at it again!

CORN. It's a shame—poor girl—why—

INN. (*aside to CORNEY*) Don't waste your superfluous sympathies, that is not Miss Mifton at all.

CORN. What! Can it be the women are right in their suspicions? What a blackguard Peter is!

HEL. (*embracing CARRIE*) When you have finished comforting that shameless creature, you may observe your wife needs consolation.

DUNN. Certainly! Corney! comfort my wife, can't you?

CORN. (L. of NIOBE) Don't try to make me a party to your vile intrigues! (*goes to L. corner*)

DUNN. What's come to you? (DUNN *tries to get at CORNEY, but turns back to CARRIE*) Listen to me, Carrie! I admit circumstances are—

CAR. Go away! I never wish to speak to you again!

*They go up C.; DUNN going L.; CARRIE R.*

HEL. (R., to NIOBE) Begone, Hussy! Leave the House!

NIO. (C.) Not at your *bidding*. Petramos is lord, and Petramos decrees that I abide with him! (*as if going to DUNN*)

OMNES. (*strong*) Oh, Peter!!! (NIOBE *gets over R., up stage*)

DUNN. (*wildly excited, coming down R. C.*) In a sense, Miss Mifton is right. She came here with an irreproachable character and the highest references, and as the Master of the house, knowing nothing to her discredit, I am responsible for her. Miss Mifton is here and for the present must remain. (*goes to R. of CORNEY*)

HAT. (*who has entered C. and has tried to get a word with DUNN, taking up DUNN's tone*) That's what I tell her, but she insists it can't be.

HEL. Of whom are you speaking? [Pg 53]

HAT. The lady here, who is asking for Mr. Dunn.

DUNN. (L. C.; *facing audience*) What lady? What's her business? Who is she?

*Turns and confronts MISS MIFTON, who has entered C. and just reached L. C.*

MIFT. The new Governess, Miss Mifton!

*NIOBE advances R. C. close to MISS MIFTON, who turns and recognises her dress.*

DUNN. (L. C.) The other Mifton!

CORN. (L.) Another Mifton!

LADIES. Two Miftons! What infamy! (*together*)

*NIOBE and MISS MIFTON stand looking at each other; NIOBE doing her usual action of "Hail to you!" Picture of consternation and surprise, by other characters as curtain falls.*

QUICK CURTAIN.

N. B.—*No Second Picture. Company Call.*

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## ACT III.

TIME.—*The same day as Act II. A few hours later.*

SCENE.—*Another side of the same room. The fireplace centre, the bay window cornerwise L. of fireplace; the hallway R. U.; screen below it; when open, covers a door down R.; couch and piano off; table is L. C.; chairs, etc.; low chair at a small table against scene down L.; fire in fireplace.*

HELEN *discovered seated R. of fireplace; CARRIE seated L.; CORNEY, back to fireplace, standing smoking.*

HEL. (R. C., *seated*) There is nothing left us but departure. Mr. Dunn's falsehoods, and the woman's shamelessness, render any further stay impossible. We are decided to leave his roof.

CORN. Certainly! Leave him the entire house; you've raised it about his ears, you can't do more.

CAR. *How* he has deceived us!

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HEL. What *lies* he has told us.

CORN. Hasn't he? Beauties! What a political future for a man who could lie like Peter!

CAR. I'm appalled to find he is so wicked.

CORN. And mad to think you never suspected him. You feel so mean at having been fooled, don't you? Why, I positively looked up *to him*. Ah! It's the same old story, scores of presumably, blameless, spotless men, only waiting to be found out.

CAR. (*rises*) We cannot longer remain under the same roof with him.

*Down to table, packing trinkets in small bag on table. HELEN rises and goes to cabinet up R.*

CORN. Of course not, and the only question is, *who's* to quit! We can, but why shouldn't *he*? There's four of us, and only one of him.

HEL. And her, the woman. (*crossing to table with small vase*)

CORN. Yes! Well, it would be far less trouble to arrange for us to remain, and let him go, and take *her along with him*.

HEL. AND CAR. (CARRIE *turning quickly from window*) Corney!!

HEL. How can you suggest such a breach of propriety? (*back to cabinet for another small treasure*)

CORN. I can't see that it's worse than leaving them here. Beside it would save the inconvenience of packing, and as far as I'm concerned, I don't relish getting out of my comfortable quarters for a trifle. (*sits in chair R. of fireplace, stretching himself*)

HELEN *crossing to table L. C. with vase—CARRIE packing with tissue paper, and placing in bag on table.*

HEL. A trifle?

CORN. Well, say a serious little thing!

CAR. She is not a serious little thing! (CARRIE *rings bell on table L.*)

CORN. It's foolish to hurry our departure in any case. Give them time, and we may find they have *eloped*, and left us in possession. (CORNEY *gets L. of fireplace on MARY'S entrance*)

CAR. How can you hint at anything so shocking? (*at table L., getting photo*) If Peter can clear himself, I will give him one more opportunity.

HEL. (*taking photo out of CARRIE'S hand*) And one more chance for new and greater falsehoods. (*crosses back to cabinet R. and puts down photo. MARY enters from hallway R., front of them*) [Pg 55]

CAR. Where is Mr. Dunn?

MARY. (R. C.) He's *gone*, Ma'am!

CORN. (*rises quickly*) *There!* What did I say?

HEL. (*advancing R.*) Gone! Gone where?

MARY. Gone out, Ma'am!

CAR. And Miss Mifton—is—she in the house?

MARY. Yes Ma'am, both of them. The one, the *first one*, was on the point of going out, but Miss Mifton, the second, stopped her and says: "No you don't, not in them clothes; take my frock off," she said, and the high words they've been having you might have heard down here.

HATTIE *enters R. C.*

HAT. (R. C.) A downright quarrel over the nursery table.

CORN. Well, if I'm a judge of character, number two could hold her own.



HAT. Oh, the other's no duffer.

HEL. Hattie! Such language. (MARY *exits R. to hallway*)

HAT. She has such dignity, she's withering. She curled the new one up, I can tell you.

HEL. And where are they now?

HAT. Number one is on the roof.

INNINGS *enters R.*

INN. (*entering*) I say, it's awful, you know, there's a crowd collecting in front of the house; I think they imagine it's a sleep-walking seance—

*Shouts of mob off L.; all run to window except INNINGS and HATTIE.*

HEL. (*returning*) What do they want?

CORN. What's the matter? What is it?

INN. One of the Miftons, the Governess, is on the tiles.

*Shouts; same business as before.*

HEL. What a disgrace!

CAR. What is she doing on the roof?

HAT. I don't know, the step ladder was there, and she ran up through the skylight, she's calling out Phoebus! Phoebus! and waving her arms about like this. (HATTIE *down R., and comes over again*) [Pg 56]

HEL. Tell her to come down.

CORN. She must belong to some new sect that has taken up the old Pagan idolatry.

INN. Yes! That's it! She's calling on the gods.

*Shouts; all to window again.*

CAR. But why up there—why upon the roof?

HAT. Thinks she's getting *nearer* to 'em, up there.

CORN. Tell her to try the upper story of a residential flat.

HAT. Or the top of the Eiffel Tower.

HATTIE *exits to hall R. U. E.*

INN. (*following*) If she would like to go up in a balloon, I shall be delighted—

INNINGS *exits R.*

HEL. When will our humiliation cease? (*crosses R.*)

MISS MIFTON *enters R. U. E.*

MIFT. (R. C.; *speaking as she enters*) I will not put up with it—you will pardon me troubling you; but if I cannot get my rights any other way, I must send for the policeman.

CORN. I fancy the Cook's got a mortgage on him! (*comes down L.*)

CAR. (L. C.) What is it you want, Miss Mifton?

MIFT. (*indignantly, C.*) My wearing apparel, Mrs. Dunn! That imposter is in possession of my trunk, and is still wearing some of my dresses.

HEL. What insufferable impudence!

CAR. Have you asked her to give them up?

MIFT. I did more than ask; I insisted; I commanded her to take my property off her back; and she replied, by imploring Artemis, to strike me dumb. (*puts her hands up a-la-NIOBE*)

HEL. Artemis, who?

CORN. Artemis Ward, of course. She meant it in some humorous way, probably.

CAR. (L. C.) What a vindictive wretch she must be.

MIFT. (R. C.) The most annoying part of it is she won't lose her temper; she simply waves me off, and says, "The audience hour is noon." [Pg 57]

CORN. (L.) A new way of implying "At home, Thursdays, 12 to 2."

CAR. Miss Mifton, will you please be patient, and silent, too; endeavour to spare us the pain of a great scandal.

MIFT. You may rely on my discretion, Mrs. Dunn.

HEL. Be prepared to leave with us, and have the children ready.

MIFT. I'll do my best, but she has set the dear pets against me. They won't leave her side.

CAR. (*crosses R. to HELEN*) Oh, Helen, this is the bitterest blow of all.

HEL. (*following CARRIE down R.*) Don't despair Carrie. Miss Mifton is, as yet, new to them; you at least will be able to lure the darlings from the pernicious influence.

*Crosses to table and gets hand-bag.*

CORN. (*aside*) If I can get a chance, I'll have my little business out with Miss Mifton at once.

HEL. (*crossing back with hand-bag*) We will see to the children ourselves, Miss Mifton. (*crosses R. of CARRIE*) Come Carrie, we must first send to a Hotel and secure rooms! The very air here seems loathsome.

HELEN *exits with CARRIE R. I. E.*

CORN. Yes, there's an escape of gas somewhere.

MIFT. (*looks after CARRIE and HELEN—then speaks down R.—aside*) He's here! Now is my opportunity to endeavour to obtain my sister's letters.

CORN. (*L.—aside*) The annoyance she's meeting with will make her more spiteful to *me*. I must pacify her the first thing. (*aloud*) We deeply regret the vile treatment you have received. I myself am pained beyond measure at the ignominy you have suffered. (*DUNN enters R. U. E., as if from street, with paper parcel, puts down hat on cabinet, up R.*) And if it were not for the ties of relationship, Mr. Dunn should answer to me for his dastardly conduct.

DUNN. (*coming down C.*) Should he? If you will only show your authority for questioning, Mr. Dunn is prepared with unlimited replies.

CORN. I have merely the authority of equity and common justice.

DUNN. Justice for whom?

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*During following scene CORNEY bullies DUNN very considerably.*

CORN. (*L. C.*) Justice for all.

DUNN. (*C.*) That's rather a large order, isn't it? and you might find your portion of it, a little more than you bargained for; as for the little inconvenience Miss Mifton has experienced—

MIFT. (*R. C.*) It is no small matter, Mr. Dunn, to have your trunk seized and your dresses appropriated.

CORN. Even her very name has been stolen.

DUNN. How do you know? I suppose there may be other Miftons? (*to MIFTON*) You don't quite claim a monopoly for the name, do you Mifton?

MIFT. It's a remarkable coincidence, that I should find a person of *my name*, occupying my situation.

DUNN. You were so long coming to *fill it*. You threw away your chances.

MIFT. I merely delayed to call upon some friends.

CORN. (*going to DUNN C.*) The fact of Miss Mifton being delayed is no excuse for the pretence.

DUNN. But it accounts for the *mistake*. We had engaged a Miss Mifton, and a Miss Mifton came; it was a case of first come—first serve.

MIFT. But she appears here in my tea gown—she's wearing my clothes.

DUNN. That's your fault again for *sending them on*. If you had *come in them*, it couldn't have happened. And there's no desire to keep your clothes. The lady will get some made with all possible dispatch. I have here samples of materials that I have obtained for her to select from. (*showing parcel*)

*N. B.—This parcel contains a number of small sample cuttings of dress goods, a printed measure form to fill up, tape measure and pencil.*

CORN. You take a remarkable interest in this woman.

DUNN. The interest one naturally feels for the unprotected. She is an Orphan; of *long standing*; she is misjudged and suffering an injustice.

MIFT. (R. C.) You are strangely blind to *my* grievances, Mr. Dunn. You engaged me as Governess, and I came here to teach your children.

DUNN. (C.) No! No! Let us be correct. You came here to hunt down the gay deceiver—(*indicating CORNEY, who comes quickly down to him* C.) who trifled with the young affections of a confiding Mifton. [Pg 59]

CORN. (*aside to DUNN*) Don't be a fool Peter; she'll put up the damages, a couple of thousand, on a remark like that. (*aloud*) What reason have you to suppose—who could have told you such was the object of the lady's visit?

DUNN. (C.) You told me yourself, and asked me to speak to Miss Mifton.

CORN. (L. C.) Not *that one*!

DUNN. But you *meant* that one. Why, the other hasn't had a sister for *years and years*. And it's the sister you had broken off with. (*goes up and unties parcel at cabinet* R.)

CORN. (R.) I never said she was broken off.

MIFT. (*comes down* R. C.) I admit I took the engagement for the purpose, if it proved the same, of speaking with Mr. Griffin of my sister; and if he still loved her, to prepare him for the worst.

CORN. (*with mock grief*) What! Is she dead? My bonny Ethel, a thing of the past! Oh!

*Falls into chair* R. *of table*.

MIFT. (*crosses to CORNEY*) No! No! Not that, Mr. Griffin; my sister still lives.

CORN. (*rises*) Oh, I see; you mean the worst if I refuse to compromise. Of course, it is to be regretted that mercenary motives should creep in, where once love reigned. And your case is not a strong one, Mr. Dunn will tell you——

DUNN. (*at table, arranging his patterns under newspaper*) No, Mr. Dunn won't. Don't drag me into your vile deceptions. I've enough to worry with my own.

CORN. Why can't Ethel let by-gones be by-gones; she must know I was an impressionable young jackass; that we never could be happy together, at least I couldn't, and she is very wrong, very wrong, to insist on marrying me.

MIFT. (C.) She does not. How could she when she is already married?

CORN. (*bus.*) Married! Oh, Miss Mifton—oh—(*aside*) oh, this is lovely! (*going to* L. *corner*)

DUNN. Oh, what luck some people have!

MIFT. (C.) I came to plead to your generosity; her husband believes she was never engaged before! She dreads you might disclose her deception, and expose her letters. [Pg 60]

CORN. Ah! How she has misjudged me; I forgive her freely; she shall have her letters——

MIFT. Thank you!

CORN. In exchange for mine, of course. It must be a sound reciprocal arrangement.

MIFT. Yes! Yes! I have them in my trunk.

CORN. Good! When you are packing, I will take them.

DUNN. (*coming down*) And as you have now thoroughly accomplished the object of your coming, Miss Mifton, there is nothing further to detain you. I wish you good day. (*taking her hand*) I'm sorry you had so much trouble, but compensation will of course——

MIFT. (*withdrawing her hand, indignantly, and going* R.) You are mistaken, Mr. Dunn. I could never consent to leave the ladies in their distress.

CORN. (*crosses to MISS MIFTON*) That sentiment does you credit, Miss Mifton! Don't be intimidated, I will stand by you.

MIFT. (*excitedly*) I will not! (*crosses* C., *DUNN running* L.) I will send for an officer. I will demand my clothes—I cannot pack my dress while it is on the back of that person.

*Going hurriedly* R. *and exits* R. U. E.

CORN. (*following her up*) No! have it off! have it off! Send for the police.

DUNN. (L. C.) Do you know you're spreading insubordination, Cornelius Griffin, and breeding contempt for me; the constituted authority of this house?

CORN. (*returning* C.) I can't help that, Peter, I must stand up for the innocent and oppressed.

DUNN. (C.) Must you! How long has this wave of virtuous indignation been raging along *your* seaboard?

CORN. (R. C.) *For several minutes!* Aroused by the vile treatment of poor little Mifton; it was contemptible to seize her trunk and pick the lock. (*goes R.*)

DUNN. (*following CORNEY closely*) I did not. I only picked the key; and it was only by the merest chance that it fitted.

CORN. (*backing DUNN to C.*) But you have the nerve to utilize the contents of the said trunk to *deck out* your precious beauty!

*Crosses to L. H.*

DUNN. (*follows CORNEY*) What d'ye mean by *deck out*? She's not a shop window, and don't call her *my* beauty, I have never made any special claim to comeliness. [Pg 61]

CORN. Oh, come Dunn! (*gets L. of table*)

DUNN. (R. *of table*) Don't, Oh come Dunn me!

CORN. (*turns on DUNN across table*) I had a *high* opinion of you once.

DUNN. (*same business*) I never had a high opinion of *you* at any time.

CORN. I was mistaken.

DUNN. I wasn't! You're no good—you're not solid; you've about as much vertebral support to you as a rubber pipe; you haven't the pluck to stand by your own tom-fooleries, but shift the blame on to others.

CORN. (*across table*) You never will understand how necessary it is for me not to worry. The doctor says I *cannot* both worry and *live*.

DUNN. (*across table*) Then worry and *die*! I've had enough of this scapegoat business. You can allot me shares in a newer enterprise. (*sits R. of table*)

CORN. (*crossing behind table to C.*) And this is your gratitude to me for letting you down easy?

DUNN. (*turning fiercely*) Letting *me* down easy!

CORN. (C.) Why certainly! Being, so to say, sullied with my smaller vices has served to break your fall, hasn't it? If you had possessed a spotless reputation, the effect of your colossal villainy *now* would be paralyzing.

DUNN. (*aghast*) *My colossal villainy!*

CORN. It's bad enough as it is. Carrie has washed her hands of you; they are preparing to depart.

DUNN. Preparing to depart! What for?

CORN. (R. C.) What for? You must see that I cannot allow my sisters to remain longer under your roof. (*turns from DUNN*)

DUNN. Then take 'em away; you can take Helen away, and Hattie too, I can even spare Hattie, but Carrie ceased to be your sister when she became my wife; she is going to remain. (*goes to low chair L., is about to sit*)

CORN. (C.) There! I said you'd be agreeable to that. My argument was, that if *somebody* must go, it would be better for you to get out.

DUNN. Better—for me to get out!

CORN. Yes! You have only one trunk to pack! The girls have two each, and I have another, that's seven.

DUNN. Yes, it's seven to one against me; but I *decline* to be the *outsider*. (*sits L.*)

CORN. Well, don't be too hasty in deciding—think it over. I shall not pack my traps till I hear from you, and I rely on your good sense to show you the value of my suggestions; Peter, you nearly worried me that time. [Pg 62]

CORNEY *exits* R. I. D.

DUNN. Why! Why didn't I tell the truth at first, as Niobe suggested. It might *not* have been believed; it wouldn't have been, but I could have stuck to it instead of floundering about, and getting up to my neck in a quicksand of equivocation. (*rises, going C.*) If I can only get a dress made for her to go out in, I'll send her to my sister, Mabel—who would believe whatever I might tell her. (*turns to table back to audience*)

*Enter* NIOBE R. U. E.—*comes down* R. C.

NIO. (*not seeing DUNN when first entering*) Ah me! I would I were a stone again! Anything were better than to suffer such indignities as now I meet. Petramos! you will remove my cares as Eos lifts the sable pall of night.

DUNN. I don't know anything of Knight's pall. Don't talk undertaking business. What is it?

NIO. That daughter of Athena claims these robes, the which you gave me yester e'en.

DUNN. Oh well, for the sake of peace give them to her. Avoid war if you can. There's no money in it. (*goes L.*)

NIO. (*following him slightly C.*) Why yield to her when we might ostracise her?

DUNN. Because she'll call in the police—if she hasn't already done so.

NIO. Perlice? Is that some portion of the things we wear?

DUNN. No, no! Police—the Police—the gentlemen who guide and direct us—of whom we enquire the time—the officers of justice. They keep the peace—where nobody can find it.

NIO. Ah, the custodians of law and order? (DUNN *nods affirmatively*) Why, we have but to fill their hands with *bribes*.

DUNN. What! They were the same in the old time! We've trouble enough in the house without getting the police in. Of course, you couldn't foresee the mischief you were doing, but you've ruined me. (NIOBE *starts*) Yes, ruined me. My wife will leave me, and my family be scattered to the fore and hind quarters of the globe.

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*Crosses R. and rests head against side of screen.*

NIO. (*sees and takes paper knife from table*) If I have wrecked your pleasure, let me die. You gave new life to me; 'tis yours, take it away.

*Kneeling, offering paper knife with outstretched hands.*

DUNN. With a paper knife! You can't remove existence in that off-handed way. You're flesh and blood now and it would be murder. If you were only electrified back to stone now, if you were only *stone dead*.

NIO. (*rises—throws knife up stage*) I'll rouse again the wrath of High Olympus. (*crosses R.*)

DUNN. (*annoyed*) I've told you the firm went to smash long ago. Do be rational. You must go and give that woman her frock. Put on your own dress—your stone dress, till we can get you one made to go out in. (*gets back of table a-la-shopman*) I have here samples of materials and a choice variety of colours for you to select from. (*takes newspaper off patterns*)

NIO. Ah, Petramos! How good you are! (*takes up patterns and places them on stage, kneeling, interested, and sorting them*)

DUNN. (*coming down L.*) I was afraid to bring the dressmaker into the house, but I have full instructions here for measuring you. (*coming down L. with printed form, taking out pencil and tape measures, which he hangs about his neck*)

NIO. (*on stage C., spreading out samples*) It will be hard to choose from such a store of prettiness.

DUNN. (*placing form on table*) Yes, if you'd had about two, you might have come to a decision. Don't scatter them about, you haven't time to play patience now. I suppose it doesn't matter much where I begin on her, so that I fill up the form! (*he measures length of back, 18, crosses to table and writes it down*) 18.

NIO. This pink and grey would be the sweetest match. If this dress is the fashion it becomes me well.

DUNN. (*returning to R. of NIOBE*) Stand up, please—(*placing her arm to measure sleeve, NIOBE puts arm full up, DUNN goes up to door R., returns to NIOBE and places arm in position; measures, 6. 13. 24., crosses to table*) 6. 13. 24.

NIO. (C.) May I, too, have a full accordion skirt?

DUNN. (*coming back to R. of NIOBE*) Oh yes, with concertina sleeves; and harmonican puffs if you like.

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NIO. As you decide. Whom have I in the world but you! (*going to embrace DUNN, as he places arm to measure bust; NIOBE attempts to embrace him as he puts his hand around to measure her; DUNN gets the measurement and bobbing under arm, goes to table*)

DUNN. Thirty-nine. (*writes thirty-nine*)

NIO. Why I am forty times as old as you. I think that grey would suit me.

DUNN. (*returns to C. L. of NIOBE, bringing card form with him; he goes to measure her waist—she embraces him ad lib. He falls on his knees and takes measurement*) Waist 36. (CARRIE *enters R.; NIOBE gets over on his L.; he measures skirt and sees CARRIE'S foot, she having entered during business; DUNN falls flat on stage, muttering measurement and gathering up loose patterns, pushing them into his vest.*)

CAR. (R. C., *indignantly to NIOBE*) I had some business with my husband, but I can wait.

NIO. (L. C.) Oh no! We would not have you wait. He's here and you may speak.

CAR. (R.) You're too gracious. I came, Peter, unknown to Helen, to see if you could not remove my doubts; and I find you, as usual, in open unblushing companionship with this woman.

DUNN. Open! Yes open! There is no deception. None. (*rising*)

CAR. You loved me once, Peter.

NIO. (*crosses to CARRIE*) He loves you still. His heart is yours; you cannot grudge me a little corner in it.

DUNN. (*at table, putting down patterns*) She wants a corner on it.

CAR. How can I bear this infamous creature's insolence.

DUNN. Carrie, you don't understand; she's *not* infamous.

CAR. You defend her!

DUNN. I'd defend anyone who's unjustly accused.

CAR. (*crying R.*) If you are bewitched, confess it; say you are under the spell of this fair Siren.

NIO. (*crying C.*) The Sirens lured Odysseus with melody and song. I have not played or sung here to Petramos.

DUNN. Now they're both at it. Here's a chance for the gods! Carrie, there's no spell in the business.

CAR. (R.) Ah! Why do I protest. I *might* have expected it.

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DUNN. (*crossing to CARRIE*) I *did* expect it. The moment I saw her, I knew you would object to her being here.

CAR. What self-respecting wife would not? (*cries at screen*)

DUNN. (*going to seat L. corner*) Now we're all at it. (*sits*) I knew it was useless to say who she was, or how she came.

NIO. (C.) He feared the truth, tho' I advised it. Truth might have worked more mischief.

DUNN. No! truth couldn't! But what's the use of a truth which seemed like throwing down the gauntlet to Annanias.

CAR. (*crosses to PETER*) Oh Peter! Confess you were beguiled and I'll forgive you. (*taking his face in her hands, turns his head towards her*)

DUNN. I cannot criminate myself by owning up to what doesn't belong to me. If you had been here when she arrived—if you had seen *how* she came, it would have been all right; you would understand that—(*rises*) that she is no more to me—than a sister I have not seen for years.

*Goes up C. to fireplace.*

NIO. (R. C.) He was near when I first drew my breath! But him in the wide world I have no one, he is my guardian, my *protector*.

CAR. (*crosses C.*) Ah, how blind I've been. (*goes to DUNN and brings him down L. of her*) Forgive me, Peter, for having doubted. Why did you not say she was your sister?

DUNN. Why! I never thought of it.

CAR. (*to NIOBE*) You, too, must forgive me, and let me call you Sister. (DUNN *smiling*)

NIO. Oh yes, that will be sweet. I have wanted so *much* to love you, but you would not let me.

CAR. (*arms around NIOBE*) I might have known you would wish to be near Peter. Though he never said so; and what a resemblance! Come, Peter dear, kiss your sister. And—Helen thought different.

DUNN. Helen would. (*back at table, putting away, hiding patterns*)

CAR. I was to blame for neglecting Peter's kindred. I knew of your existence, that is all. What is your name, dear?

DUNN. (*at back, trying to stop her*) Mab—

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NIO. (*not heeding DUNN*) My name is Niobe!

DUNN. (*goes down L.*) She conceals nothing. She's altogether too guileless for this nineteenth century.

*Enter HELEN and HATTIE from dining-room R. I. E.*

CAR. Sister Niobe! (*embracing her and putting her over C.*) Helen! (*crosses to HELEN*) We have wronged Peter; *we* are to blame. She is his sister.

HEL. (*severely*) Sister!

HAT. Peter's Sister!

(*together*)

CAR. And if we had not kept her a stranger to our circle, her coming would not have caused all this anxiety.

HEL. (*nastily spoken*) I always said, if she came there would be trouble.

HAT. (*crosses to NIOBE, R. C.*) Peter's sister. Well, you're not a bit like him. You're altogether too scrumptious for anything.

NIO. (C.) Though I am ignorant of what "scrumptious" means, your manner tells me it is something good.

HAT. (L. C.) You bet your boots it is.

HEL. (R.) Hattie!

HAT. (*sharply*) Don't you interfere. We're going to run our new sister on our own lines, aren't we Carrie?

NIO. You have my sympathy—(*pointing to HELEN*)—that *she* claims kinship with you.

HELEN *turns indignantly from NIOBE.*

HAT. Oh, you are a funny old thing. And say, Ni', won't you tell me how you dress your hair like that? (*round to L. of NIOBE*)

NIO. I cannot tell you that; my tiring women dressed it. It is as it was left three thousand years ago.

*General surprise.*

OMNES. Three thousand years!

DUNN. (*crossing in front to C.*) Ha!—Er—that's a quotation; you know the quotation "Rode the three thousand." (*goes up C.*)

*Enter MARY, R., from hallway, R. C.*

MARY. (*to NIOBE*) Miss Mifton wants to know if she's ever goin' to get her clothes?

DUNN. Yes, yes! Of course! (*to NIOBE*) Go! Go! and give her dress back by all means. (*goes up*)

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MARY *exits R.*

HAT. Bother her shabby old clothes! You can have some of my dresses.

CAR. Or mine. You are about my figure.

NIO. I am pleased you are so shapely. Cleophas thought that I was well nigh faultless.

CAR. Who's Cleophas?

HAT. (*quickly, R. C.*) Is he your mash?

DUNN. (*going down, pushes HATTIE away*) Never mind him. He's a fellow we met at the races. (*to NIOBE—aside*) Be quiet and do as I tell you or you'll spoil all. (*goes over to window*)

NIO. (*gradually working up*) Ah no! Fear not! (*coming down C.*) I cannot take the robes you'd kindly loan me, but I am touched no less with all your love and moved to the relief of melting tears.

NIOBE *exits crying, off R. C. up stairs; CARRIE up C., looks after NIOBE; HATTIE goes up R. C., and exits after NIOBE.*

DUNN. (*coming down L.*) At it again. Kindness or cruelty, care or neglect, all melt her alike.

*Door bell.*

CAR. Poor, tender hearted darling.

HEL. (*down R.*) Irrigating Crocodile! She's a huge sham—mark my words, we shall live to regret her coming.

DUNN. (*goes a little towards HELEN*) There's no occasion for you to *live here* to regret it. If you feel you could *bear* it better somewhere else, don't let us keep you. (*goes L.*)

*Enter BEATRICE R., from hallway, advances with HATTIE.*

HAT. (R. C.) Bea! What do you think? Such a surprise; Miss Mifton, the first Miss Mifton is—

DUNN. (L.) Hattie, my dear, be quiet. Miss Sillocks is not interested in our family surprises.

BEA. (R. C.) Oh yes I am! Especially as I have one of my own.

CAR. For whom?

BEA. For all of you! Papa has always imagined, as Mr. Dunn's sister never visited him, that there was some kind of estrangement. [Pg 68]

HAT. Yes! And her papa was determined to get Peter's sister over on a visit, and give them the chance to kiss and be friends.

BEA. That's it! And he has just received a telegram to say she will come.

HEL. AND CAR. (R. *and* R. C.) Who will come?

BEA. (C.) Mr. Dunn's sister, Mabel!

HEL. Mabel?

CAR. Niobe!

DUNN. Niobe—Niobe Mabel Dunn—she has several names. Those are the two front ones—Miobe, Nabel, Dunn.

BEA. Mabel; tho' papa says they always called her Gypsy, she was so dark.

CAR. Dark!!

HEL. (*rises*) Dark? She is fair!

BEA. *and* HATTIE *go up C. in front of fireplace; CARRIE up to opening C.*

DUNN. (C.) Yes, she is *fair now*. I *tried* to keep her dark, but I couldn't. (*going—drops in chair extreme L.*)

*Enter CORNEY from dining-room.*

HEL. (*advances C.*) I knew it—another fraud unveiled.

CORN. (R.) What is it? What's the new discovery?

HEL. (C.) He, this *monster* of marital iniquity, has been blinding us with new and more daring falsehoods. He declared that this woman was his sister.

DUNN. Never! Never! I never declared it.

HEL. (*crosses L. C. to table*) See how he cowers, for he stands confessed. Fate, in the person of Beatrice Sillocks, has hunted him down.

CORN. Bea, in a new role. The guardian angel of innocence. (*crosses L. to DUNN*)

HAT. (*down C.*) Perhaps he has two sisters! (DUNN *with a gleam of hope rises*) Why not, there are two Miss Miftons! (CORNEY *meets DUNN's gaze*)

CORN. No!

DUNN. No?

CORN. No, no!

DUNN. No, no! (*drops in chair again*)

CORN. No! no! That's played out. Even Peter, with all his impudence, wouldn't set up that defence. [Pg 69] (*goes up to fire to BEATRICE*)

CAR. (*advances to R. C.*) She is *not* your sister?

DUNN. No! No!

HAT. (L. C.) Oh, Peter!

HEL. Hattie! Leave the room; these disclosures are unfit for your ears.

HATTIE *crosses front to R.*

CORN. (*bringing BEATRICE down R. C.*) And take Beatrice from the moral poison of his presence.

HAT. We'll hear all about it afterwards, so it doesn't make any difference. (HATTIE *exits with BEATRICE R. I. E.*)

CORN. (*goes towards PETER in front of table L. C.*) Now Peter Amos Dunn! As my sister's brother, I am bound to bring it to your notice, that one of us, either your party or our party, must leave this house. And, I think your best course is to leave us in possession of the home you are no longer fit to occupy.

DUNN. (*rises*) It's *my* home, and I suit it to myself. (*desperately, CORNEY backs a little C.*)

HEL. Leave him to me, *Corney!* (*going to DUNN*)



DUNN. Yes, do! Her sex gives her a protection you haven't got.

CAR. (R. C.) Peter, why, oh why did you say she was your sister?

DUNN. (*crossing to CARRIE*) I didn't! It never occurred to me or I might. You yourself said she was my sister, and I know you hate to be contradicted.

CAR. (R. C.) But she gave her consent to the fraud. She let me call her sister.

DUNN. (R. C.) Oh, what of that! I've called many a girl sister before I married you.

CAR. This woman admitted that you were her guardian and protector.

DUNN. Well, in a sense I am. I'm responsible for her. She's purely a matter of business. She was turned over to me to take care of, and when he's ready for her he'll take her away.

HEL. What disgusting levity!

CAR. Who will take her away?

DUNN. Why Tompkins! She's his property, not mine.

CORN. (*advancing C.*) Tompkins! Isn't this a branch of business which ought not to be intruded on the home circle?

DUNN. (C.) Don't I know that? But Tompkins set such store by her, I had to oblige him and bring her here. (*crosses to low seat L.*) [Pg 70]

HEL. (*rises*) Then weak as you are to shield another person's infamy at the cost of insulting your family, you are a spotless infant compared to Tompkins.

CAR. Mr. Tompkins must never set foot in this house again.

CORN. (C.) Say the word and I'll kick Tompkins out every time he comes.

*Enter MARY from hallway R. from L.*

MARY. Mr. Tompkins! (*MARY exits*)

*CORNEY goes quickly to R. corner; enter TOMPKINS R. U. E.*

DUNN. How d'ye do, Tompkins? If you'll come to my room—

HEL. (*putting DUNN back, he falls into chair*) Let Mr. Tompkins first hear the opinion of the ladies, whose sense of delicacy he has outraged.

TOMP. (C.) What's the matter, Dunn?

DUNN. Nothing! Nothing! Don't take any notice.

HEL. He must take notice, and apologize to ladies of irreproachable character—though it is scarcely to be expected from one so utterly depraved.

TOMP. I haven't an idea what I'm supposed to have done, but few of us have past *lives, wholly* free from blame. Even you, Miss Griffin, may have something to regret.

HEL. What dare *you* insinuate? It is not true! Who could have told you? I—I—

DUNN. It's right! It's right! Tompkins has found it all out—Helen's down—and I can't triumph—I haven't a crow left in me. (*goes up L. to fire C.*)

HEL. Even for your sake Carrie, I cannot remain here to be insulted.

CAR. Is not Corney here to protect you? (*comes down R. C.*)

CORN. To be sure, tricks of this kind won't help you, Tompkins, and we must ask you to take her away, if you have not the decency to apologise for her presence.

TOMP. (C.) Whose presence? Who's *she*?

CORN. (R.) The woman you brought here.

TOMP. I brought!

CORN. The Governess!

HEL. (L.) Dunn's sister!

CAR. (R. C.) Miss Mifton!

TOMP. (R. C.) There are three of them?

DUNN. They're all one!

CAR. (*advancing to TOMPKINS*) Mr. Dunn says she was brought here to oblige you.

TOMP. Dunn says that—(*goes up to DUNN*)

DUNN. (*crouching on stool by fire*) Yes, I did, but it's a lie—a whacking lie! I'm trying to break a record—I started in without thinking and Heaven only knows where I shall end.

TOMP. Is this meant for a joke, Mr. Dunn?

DUNN. That's it! I never thought of it before, but it's a joke. Ha! Ha!

TOMP. I fail to appreciate it, Sir; but fortunately my business with you will soon be over and our acquaintance can end with it. I have come to take away my Statue. (*comes down c.*)

CARRIE *crosses to L.*

DUNN. His Statue! The last straw!

TOMP. I find my place is ready, and the men are here to move it.

DUNN. Move it! You can't move it!

CORN. (R.) Why not? It's only a question of having enough men.

TOMP. I have a score, and they will exercise every care in getting it out.

DUNN. Care's of no use, and a hundred men couldn't get the Statue out! It isn't here.

TOMP. Not here!

OMNES. Not here!

TOMP. What do you mean?

HEL. The figure has not been moved.

CORN. (R.) It's here in the screen right enough, it couldn't fly out of the window. (*opening screen*)  
Gone!

OMNES. Gone!!!

TOMP. Nothing but the Pedestal!

DUNN. (*advancing R. C.*) Didn't I tell you so? Do you think I am incapable of *ever* speaking the truth?

TOMP. But where is it? Where! What is your explanation?

DUNN. I haven't got one! (*falling into chair R.*)

CORN. Absurd! Make a break at something. (*crossing up stage and down and sits on table*)

TOMP. (C.) Stupendous misfortune! You can have no conception of the awfulness of your avowal— [Pg 72]  
you cannot realize my loss.

DUNN. I can realize the loss it is to our Company!

TOMP. What is filthy lucre? No money on earth can compensate me for its destruction.

CAR. (L. C.) Be calm, Mr. Tompkins!

HEL. (R. *of table L. C.*) It will be found no doubt.

TOMP. Calm! With such a treasure gone! Ah! You know nothing of the halo of romance that surrounds that figure. It was no ordinary piece of statuary. There is a legend that no mortal hand carved or chiselled it. It is believed to be the actual petrification of the *identical once living Niobe*, wife of Amphion, King of Thebes.

DUNN. (*jumping up*) What! Niobe herself! And you believe the story? You do!

TOMP. Why should I doubt the possibility of human petrification?

DUNN. (*rushing at TOMPKINS, taking his hand*) Bless you, Tompkins! Bless you! Now *I* can be believed! (*crosses to others L. C.*) The truth seemed so preposterous before, I dared not tell it. But now—oh—Tompkins! Tompkins! (*embracing TOMPKINS*)

TOMP. (*pushing him away*) Why this excitement?

DUNN. (*going back R.*) Because she, Niobe herself, from the time immediately after the Trojan war, who was there in the stone, has come to life!

OMNES. Come to life!!!

DUNN. (*on pedestal*) The uncovered electric wires imparted some vital current to the system, which roused the dormant principle of respiration and circulation, unpetrified her limbs and she is alive; alive, oh! (*goes L.*)

*Music.*

TOMP. (R. C.) Mirabile Dictu! (*goes to R. corner*)

DUNN. Call it what you like, Tompkins, you can't alter it. Ah! She is here!

NIOBE *enters R. C. as Statue, coming down C.; white lime on NIOBE.*

NIO. (C.) Petramos, I have obeyed you.

TOMP. (R.) The same sweet face!

CAR. (*up C.*) The same features!

HEL. (L.) The same Costume!

NIO. (C.) You stare most strangely! What does your wonder mean?

DUNN. (R. C.) It means, they have heard the truth and believe it.

[Pg 73]

TOMP. Niobe! (*hands out*)

NIO. (*seeing TOMPKINS*) What man is this?

DUNN. Your owner. The man who paid great treasure to purchase you to adorn his home.

NIO. Am I then his slave?

TOMP. Say rather I am yours.

NIOBE *advances C.; TOMPKINS to her as DUNN goes up to CARRIE—reconciliation business.*

TOMP. Oh filtatase gewnaikos omma kai dommas,  
ekk s'aelptose, oupot opsesthai, dokone.

NIO. Ekkeis fthonosdy mee genoito tone theone.

*They turn back to audience, TOMPKINS half embracing her; enter SILLOCKS, BEATRICE, HATTIE and INNINGS R., from hallway.*

SILL. (*up R. C.*) Hallo! What's this? A fancy dress ball?

CORN. (L.) Oh no! A new metamorphosis for a modern Ovid. This lady is the real article, warranted three thousand years in bottle.

SILLOCKS *and* BEATRICE *cross to L., and NIOBE and TOMPKINS go up C.*

HAT. (L.) Oh, Corney, what a stretch!

INN. (*down L.*) Why, she's the exact counterpart of the Statue.

TOMPKINS *and NIOBE go up C. and face audience.*

CAR. (R. C.) She is the Statue!

SILL. (*up L. C.*) What does it mean?

DUNN. (L. *of CARRIE*) It means that Tompkins has no longer an Antique excuse for living single.

TOMP. (L. *of NIOBE*) It means, he does *not* want one.

DUNN. (R. C.) She'll make you an excellent wife, Tompkins, combining all the charm of youth with a long worldly experience.

NIO. (C.) Farewell, Petramos!

DUNN. Good bye!

NIO. Good bye to all.

NIOBE TO AUDIENCE:

I know you may expect me, from the strain  
Of such like plays, to turn to stone again,  
But life is sweet, and faults if you'll forgive  
Sans tears, all smiling Niobe will live.

[Pg 74]

MUSIC.

CURTAIN.

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\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NIOBE, ALL SMILES: A FARCICAL COMEDY  
IN THREE ACTS \*\*\*

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