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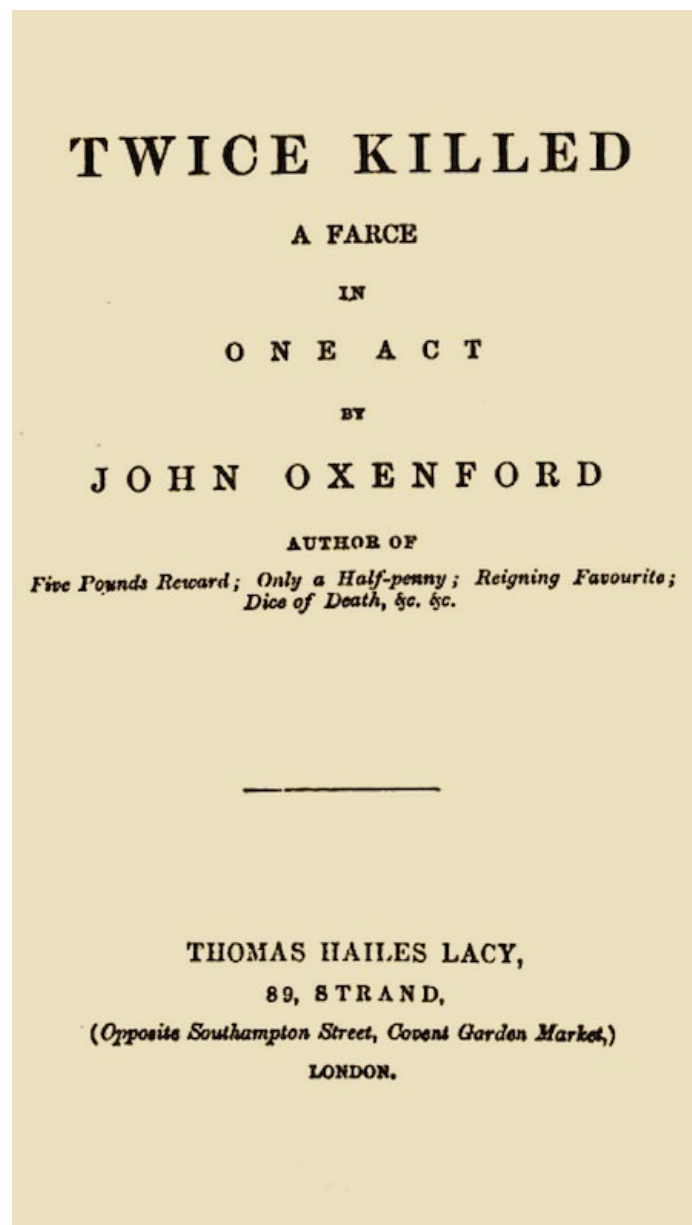
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TWICE KILLED: A FARCE IN ONE ACT ***





RECKLESS. My old friend Facile. I can't be mistaken. (*slaps on back.*) Facile, my boy!

FACILE. (*aside.*) That's the constable. No, sir, not here; it came from the window next door.

Act I, Scene ii

TWICE KILLED

A FARCE
IN
ONE ACT

BY
JOHN OXENFORD

AUTHOR OF
*Five Pounds Reward; Only a Half-penny; Reigning Favourite; Dice of
Death, &c. &c.*

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

TWICE KILLED.

First performed at the Royal Olympic Theatre, November 26th, 1835.

CHARACTERS.

Mr. Euclid Facile	Mr. KEELEY.
Mr. Ralph Reckless	Mr. J. VINING.
Tom, (<i>his servant</i>)	Mr. SALTER.
Mr. Holdfast	Mr. W. VINING.
Mr. Fergus Fable	Mr. COLLIER.
Robert	Mr. BRAYNE.
Mrs. Facile	Miss PAGET.
Miss Julia Flighty	Miss MALCOLM.
Fanny Pepper	Mrs. ORGER.

COSTUMES.

FACILE.—Brown dress coat, black pantaloons, white waistcoat.

RECKLESS.—Green Newmarket cut coat, light waistcoat, fashionable trousers.

FABLE.—Black suit.

MR. HOLDFAST.—Brown coat, dark trousers, and shoes.

TOM.—Grey livery coat, white knee breeches, top boots.

ROBERT.—Green livery coat, white knee breeches, ditto gaiters.

MRS. FACILE.—Black dress, ditto net apron, embroidered with flowers.

MISS FLIGHTY.—Plain white book muslin dress, white satin slip.

FANNY PEPPER.—Red dress, brown holland apron embroidered with green, cuffs to match, red ribbon in cap.

Time of representation, 45 minutes.

TWICE KILLED.

SCENE I.—*A view by a river side; on the opposite bank are seen the backs of houses—immersed in water, as at Blackwall, &c.*

Enter TOM, with a large hamper, L. H.

TOM. Come, this will do; though its utility exceeds its beauty; a confoundedly ugly basket, though destined to hold most rare contents: several sugar loaves, a canister of tea—black and green, almonds and raisins in abundance, coffee, rice, and spices, bars of soap, starch and powder, blue enough to stock a small shop. Dear Fanny! if her heart is not won by such a store of valuables, it is indeed hard.

Enter RECKLESS, L. H.

RECK. Ha, ha, ha, I've found her—What you here?

TOM. Yes, sir.

RECK. I have found her, I'll tell you; congratulate your fortunate master, most faithful Thomas.

TOM. Have you indeed found Miss Julia, and how?

RECK. Simply saw her at a house window.

TOM. But you cannot get into that house.

RECK. No; but I have got my mark, the means of hitting that mark are still in fortune's hands.

TOM. And in worse hands they could not be; sir, do give up this scheme. You fall in love with a young lady at a boarding school, correspond with her under a feigned

name—

RECK. Yes, you know that arose from the fear of my cousin, old Guineamore, hearing of these matters. I dared not trust my own lady love. You are aware I have immense expectations from him, and that he hates anything like adventures.

TOM. Yes, and Reginald de Mowbray is a much prettier name than Ralph Reckless, but where was I? Oh, a feigned name. Well, the young lady's governess finds out the correspondence, and very properly sends her to her guardians, who takes her into the country, also very properly; give up this scheme, sir—

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RECK. Not I; when I have found the retreat of my charmer, the cavern where the treasure is hid, shall I be craven knight enough to fear the dragon that guards it? No, man, not I—so if you have not better advice to give, we'll change the subject. What the devil is that great basket for?

TOM. What? oh, that is an affair of the heart; you have confided all your tender secrets to me, therefore I will do the same to you, sir, if you will allow me.

RECK. Certainly, good Thomas, go on.

TOM. Why, a sort of a relation of mine—a grocer, died the other day, without a will, and his stock in trade got divided among six of us. I have borrowed this large crate from Delfs, the crockery-warehouseman, to stow my share in; and am thinking I could not do the genteel thing better, (as my sweetheart Fanny's in service, and has to find such articles out of her wages,) than to make her a delicate present of the groceries, to sweeten my progress in her affections—eh, sir?

RECK. Delicate indeed! that I should have so gallant a man in my service; and where does this happy maiden reside?

TOM. You see that white house, the other side of the water? one of those houses in the water.

RECK. What! the white one?

TOM. Yes, she is housemaid there.

RECK. Oh! ha, ha, ha! *Ri tol de rol. (dances.)*

TOM. Hey day. Did you tell me to order a straight waistcoat, sir?

RECK. No! *tol de rol*, I have a thought—

TOM. Why, you do look remarkable thoughtful.

RECK. You see these three bright gold sovereigns?

TOM. Yes, sir! perhaps you will allow me to *feel* them too?

RECK. So I will, Tom, on one condition! send *me* in that basket instead of the grocery, and carry me to the house where my Julia is secluded.

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TOM. Well, sir, but what will Fanny say?

RECK. Never mind her, there shall be a genteel note pinned outside the basket, explaining the contents. Then, I'll give her a couple of sovereigns, so pack up and be gone.

[*Exeunt L. H., TOM dragging the hamper.*

SCENE II.—*A parlour.—In centre of stage a sofa, capable of being made into a bed. At the back a globe, covered with a glazed cover. A dining table and chair. A cupboard to open at top and bottom, R.—A large window to open, L.*

(MRS. FACILE, with a pestle and mortar, and JULIA, R. H., discovered.)

MRS. F. Really, my dear, the best advice I can give you, is to employ yourself about something, it will divert your mind.

JULIA. Divert? I don't want to be diverted, I want to be miserable; it's very unkind of you to try to console me.

MRS. F. I can only say I mean well, and I believe your guardian means well.

JULIA. Yes, so is every horrid thing *meant* well. Our governess used to make us wash our hands in icy water in winter, and tell us it was all for our good. I hate what is for our good.

MRS. F. But consider the impropriety of your forming at school, a clandestine attachment with a young gentleman, of whose very residence you are ignorant.

JULIA. And what is propriety? A creature of imagination, framed by old maids under the inspiration of green tea.

MRS. F. Stop, stop—

JULIA. Oh, what times were those, when I used to look for a note from Mowbray, in

the key hole of the green gate, when I used to read it to six especial confidants, who were all dying with envy; 'till one quarrelled with me about a slice of my last cake, betrayed me to the French teacher, who told the head teacher, who told the governess—and then what an explosion! dragged off hither, without letting me even send my address to De Mowbray. It is a fine thing to be a victim of cruelty at seventeen. And now as you are so fond of giving advice, let me ask you why you are so very severe to that unfortunate little man, your husband?

MRS. F. What you call severity, arises from my strict sense of propriety, of which I am sorry to say, Mr. Facile has not so strict a sense.

JULIA. No! why for all I can see, the poor dear little man does nothing but sit with his mathematical books before him all day, looking just like our geography master. Then he is such a very easy man.

MRS. F. The very thing I dread; he not only lets me have my own way, but every one else too. He is the confidant of all the young ladies in the village; the very servants ask his advice on every single point, and he gives it—is never affronted.

JULIA. Dear, good-natured soul!

MRS. F. There's that Fanny Pepper has innumerable points to consult him upon—a forward slut, who apes me in everything. If I wear ringlets, she wears ringlets—makes her caps like mine. Now how do I know what she may ask him—and if he can refuse nothing—think of that!

Enter EUCLID, reading, R. H.

EUCLID. "X plus Y equal to—" Ah, my dear, what are you doing?

MRS. F. Can you address me in that calm manner, after what I said this morning about Fanny the housemaid?

EUCLID. True, my love, you did say something; but I don't remember what it was.

MRS. F. Only been married three weeks—come down to spend the honeymoon with your relation, Mr. Holdfast—and already the confidant of all the maid servants, and don't remember what I said!

EUCLID. No, dear, I only remember the agreeable things you say.

MRS. F. How provokingly good-tempered! I am cruelly used by your indifference.

EUCLID. Are you? upon my word I did not mean it. I am not indifferent, am always thinking of you—given, a, b.

Enter FANNY, L. H.

FANNY. Please ma'am, Miss—

EUCLID. Oh, I forgot! while I was out this morning, I bought this case of drawing instruments for you—there, dear.

MRS. F. And so, sir, you hope to atone for your conduct by a paltry present. (*runs to window and opens it.*) Thus you atone, and thus I treat the atonement. (*throws case out of window.*)

FANNY. (*aside.*) Lauk-a-dasy me; how fine that was. I wish my sweetheart would quarrel with me, and send me something—would not I shy it out of window!

MRS. F. There, sir, you see what I have done.

EUCLID. Yes, love, you threw the case out of the window.

MRS. F. And does it make no impression?

EUCLID. Why, it was your own; you had a right to do with it as you liked; it was nothing to me, you know.

MRS. F. Oh! obduracy, in the disguise of good nature.

FANNY. Please ma'am—

MRS. F. What, Fanny, you here! (*aside to JULIA.*) There, as I told you, her hair dressed the same—the ribbons in the cap too. Well, Fanny.

FANNY. Please, ma'am, Miss Weakley has sent to know if you are going to call there this afternoon?

MRS. F. Oh, yes, certainly—poor Miss Weakley. Yes, I shall call.

FANNY. (*whispers to EUCLID.*) I have something to shew you, sir, when your good lady goes out.

MRS. F. I shall call—what's the girl waiting for? do you think I can't call?

FANNY. Yes, you can, ma'am, pretty loud, too.

[*Exit, L. H.*]

MRS. F. And now, Mr. Facile, you ought to be ashamed to stand before me thus.

EUCLID. Ought I? Well, then, I'll take myself down stairs. (*reads.*) "On gravity—descending bodies."

[*Exit*, L. H.]

JULIA. How can you be so cross?

MRS. F. Discipline, I tell you. But reach me the decanter of wine from the shelf, that's a dear. (*pours contents of mortar into decanter.*) There—there's the sleeping draught for Miss Weakley; I made it from a receipt book belonging to my grandmama. Such a draught! it will make her sleep like Juliet's drug, worthy of the book from which it was extracted.

Enter TWO MEN *with basket*, L.

Well, my good people.

1st. MAN. We have brought this hamper for Miss Fanny Pepper, and the footman told us to bring it up stairs.

MRS. F. Miss, indeed! Yes, it's right *Miss Fanny Pepper* is Mr. Holdfast's housemaid—you may leave the basket.

[MEN *do so and exeunt*, L. H.]

JULIA. Well, while your are finishing your draughts, and the like, I will go and put on my bonnet to accompany you. With very different feelings from the time when I used to put it on to meet De Mowbray at the garden gate.

[*Exit* R. H., *with the bottle.*]

MRS. F. What's that? Oh! goodness, the basket moves—a man!

RECKLESS. (*jumps out.*) Madam, madam! do not cry out, I entreat you! I am a stranger, yet rely on your generosity.

MRS. F. But this strange intrusion?

RECK. It is useless to conceal anything. You have doubtless heard of De Mowbray—I am he.

MRS. F. The clandestine lover of Miss Julia, a person about whom no one knows anything. But as you have relied on my mercy, I will not betray you—I will assist you.

RECK. Dear, kind madam!

MRS. F. I will assist you to get out, I say. Return into that basket; two of the footman shall carry you out to any place you may name, no one shall know of your being here.

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RECK. (*aside.*) Oh, curse such kindness! Madam, consider—get into the basket again? I have a pattern of the wicker work impressed upon me from head to foot at present, independent of the lumps and bruises I have received.

MRS. F. I can offer no other alternative. I cannot encourage your addresses to Miss Julia; then I must consider my own character. Return into the basket, and I will go and order the footmen to come up immediately.

RECK. Well, madam, if there is no alternative, send me to this direction. (*gives card, and re-enters basket.*) Be sure to tell them to keep the right side upwards.

MRS. F. I will, sir; the contents of the basket shall be taken care of to the full value of the article.

[*Exit*, R. H.]

RECK. And I am to go back like a glass milk-pot, am I not? (*gets out.*) Snail! leave thy shell. In thy mistress's house, Ralph Reckless, and suffer thyself to be packed up like a fish, and sent off as mute? No, no; I've given the lady my tailor's card for a direction. Ha, ha, ha! (*looks in closet.*) what have we here?—a broken pestle and mortar, and a stone ball from the garden entrance. These shall go in the basket, (*puts them in.*) they will pass for me as well as I did for grocery.

[*Exit* L. H.]

Enter FANNY, L. H.]

FANNY. How cross Missus Facile is, and only a visitor too! I shall give her a bit of my mind if she goes on so, not but I like a woman of spirit. How beautiful she did throw the thingummy-gig out of the window—that was fine now; I can give the devil his due. (*goes to window.*) But, oh! there's a boat party—and, oh! there's my admirer, Thomas—and, oh! he's sitting by a female—and, oh! (*hides her face.*) how shocking, horrid, disgusting—he kissed her; it is so low-lived to kiss in the open air! He shall

see how I'll trim his jacket when I meet him again! I'll give—but what's this, a basket? M-i-ss, Miss—F-a-n, Fan-n-y-ny, Fanny—Miss Fanny P-e-p, Pep—Miss Fanny Pep-p-e-r, per—Miss Fanny Pepper. It's horrid writing, (*tears off note.*) a present, but I won't keep it; I'll—I'll do as Mrs. Facile did, I'll shy it out of window into the water. (*tries to lift it.*) Oh, gemini, how heavy it is. Hush! there's footsteps.

EUCLID. (*without.*) So is B to C.

FANNY. It is Mr. Facile; he has no pride, though he is a gentleman—I'll call him. Mr. Facile!

Enter EUCLID, L. H.

EUCLID. Well, Frances Pepper?

FANNY. (*aside.*) I knew he'd come. I have a favour to ask—Are you strong, Mr. Facile?

EUCLID. (*aside.*) Now what the deuce should she ask that for?

FANNY. Strong in the arm, I mean?

EUCLID. Pretty well.

FANNY. You'll excuse the liberty—you are such a kind gentleman; but could you oblige me by throwing this basket out of the window?

EUCLID. Why?

FANNY. Oh, sir, pardon me, it's a delicate affair.

EUCLID. Delicate affair, indeed, to throw that great basket out of the window; a coal heaver would shine particularly in such a delicate affair! Oh, nonsense!

FANNY. Please do, sir, I've a motive—heigho!

EUCLID. Oh, well—what will they ask me to do next? Here, girl, ask me to do no more. It's confoundedly heavy! (*they lift the basket between them, rest it on the window ledge, and push it off.*) Oh, my shoulder!

FANNY. What a splash! Thank'ye, sir, thank'ye; it's gone to the bottom of the river.

EUCLID. Yes, and nearly took my arm with it—oh! oh! oh! Let me impress one thing on your memory. Frances Pepper, next time you want a delicate affair managed, hire a ticket porter.

FANNY. Thank'ye, sir, thank'ye, sir, for throwing my basket out of window. That faithless monster's present; I wish he had been here, I'd have asked Mr. Facile to throw him after it; I'm sure he'd have done it, he is so good-natured.

[*Exit*, L. H.]

EUCLID. Ha! ha! a whimsical request enough. See what it is to be of an easy disposition. What the servants will ask next it is impossible to say. I have already written six letters for the footman, and read as many valentines for the women; and the other day the old nurse asked me to tell her fortune, because she said my books looked like conjuring books; but this basket-throwing—

Enter MRS. FACILE, L. H.

is the strangest adventure I ever knew.

MRS. F. Oh, my dear, have you seen a basket—a large basket?

EUCLID. Yes.

MRS. F. Like a hamper, big enough to put you in.

EUCLID. Yes, yes, well—(*aside.*) I had better not say I helped Fanny, or she'll blow up.

MRS. F. Well, you'll promise not to say anything, give me your word.

EUCLID. My love, not I; upon my word.

MRS. F. What do you suppose is in that basket?

EUCLID. Oh, I don't know—pickled salmon. He! he! (*aside.*) I shall learn something.

MRS. F. It is a man.

EUCLID. Hey—what?

MRS. F. A man!

EUCLID. (*aside.*) The devil it was. My sweetest, you must be mistaken.

MRS. F. I heard him talk; he is De Mowbray, Julia's unknown lover. He wanted to get out of the basket, but I told him I would have him carried out of the house. You see I want to break off the connexion.

EUCLID. Egad! the connexion is broke off with a vengeance.

MRS. F. But how serious you look—quite uneasy.

EUCLID. Uneasy, I? Ha! ha! quite a mistake! man in a basket—devilish droll! Ha! ha! ha! Oh! oh! oh!

Enter ROBERT, R.

ROBERT. Please, ma'am, we can't find any basket; we have looked everywhere.

MRS. F. No!

EUCLID. Not found it? How extraordinary! You could not have looked.

MRS. F. Ah! Fanny must have seen it and taken it. You may go. [*Exit* ROBERT, R.] I'm uneasy.

EUCLID. So am I. Uneasy, my dear—how absurd!

MRS. F. Why suppose that wild fellow has got out of the basket, Mr. Holdfast may meet him.

EUCLID. My love, you need not give yourself the slightest uneasiness on that score. I dare say he has escaped with the basket, out of the window perhaps—oh! oh! oh!

MRS. F. Why you know that window looks upon the river.

EUCLID. (*aside.*) I should rather think I did know it. La, so it does, ha! ha! He could not get out of the window without tumbling into the wa—ter. Ha! ha! Oh-h-h!

MRS. F. But I'll go and see after Julia; for if the mad headed couple should meet, I dread the consequences. Be sure you do not tell Mr. Holdfast, if he comes home, there was a man in the basket.

[*Exit*, R. H.]

EUCLID. No, I shall not betray the secret. Here's a pretty kettle of fish! here's a nice business! I turned *Noyade*;—Oh, but it's over—yes, over! I won't think about it. What business had a man in that basket? I'll be comfortable; it was not my fault. I'll read—divert my mind with study. "Hydrostatics—to find the specific gravity of bodies, immerse the body in water." Curse Hydrostatics!

Enter FANNY, L.

Oh, you are here, are you? You are a pretty article.

FANNY. Well, so all the men say.

EUCLID. How can you look at me with that confounded smirk, you abandoned woman?

FANNY. Sir! do you mean to say I'm—

EUCLID. No—you are a damned deal worse; you are an accessory before the fact.

FANNY. What fact?

EUCLID. An enormous fact—murder!

FANNY. Oh, Mr. Facile! Ha! ha! you are joking.

EUCLID. Joking, eh! It's all very fine for you to pretend you didn't know a man was in that basket.

FANNY. Oh, a very fine trick. Ah, no, you are in fun; there was a note tied; I have it in my pocket. (*pulls it out.*) There, sir; pardon me blushing if it says anything soft.

EUCLID. (*reading.*) "Dear Fan—

FANNY. Deceitful wretch!

EUCLID. "Inclosed herewith you have my master."

FANNY. (*screams.*) Oh!

EUCLID. Don't scream—don't scream! We shall be hanged if you scream.

FANNY. Oh, dear! oh, dear, oh, dear! Let me look; m-a-s, mas—t-e-r, ter—master. It's right—oh, dear! oh, dear! (*sobs.*) we're in a pickle!

EUCLID. Yes, and so is our unfortunate victim. Then you did not know it?

FANNY. No; you know I cannot read without help. I determined to throw that wretch's presents out of the window. I was only thinking of the present.

EUCLID. Ay, but I'm thinking of the future; I did you wrong. I see you are innocent. We are both a couple of innocent—guilty, miserable wretches. Why didn't you throw it in yourself? We'll finish this letter though.

(*they stand close together, reading a letter.*)

RECK. (*aside.*) I can't find Julia anywhere; and I dread every minute lest I should meet some cursed person or other who might be more curious than pleasant. Who's that? Bless my lucky stars! my old friend Facile. I can't be mistaken. (*slaps on back.*) Facile, my boy!

EUCLID. (*aside.*) That's the constable. No, sir, not here; it came from the window next door. What, Reckless! Ah, how do you do? (*aside.*) Where the deuce did he come from?

RECK. I won't say a word about the basket; I'll feign I called to see him. How do you do, my boy? We have not seen one another these—

EUCLID. These four years. So you remember me, and came to call?

RECK. Yes, ahem!

EUCLID. Very kind. But how did you know I lived here?

RECK. Oh, I saw you at the window.

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EUCLID. Come, come, we don't occupy the front, and the back of the house is in the water.

RECK. Ahem! Oh, ah! I was rowing past a quarter of an hour ago.

EUCLID. Ah—h—h! And you saw me at the window, did you? You did not see me do anything particular, did you?

RECK. No. (*aside.*) Good reason, I never saw you at all. No.

EUCLID. Ha! ha! no, of course not. What was there particular for me to do, eh?

RECK. (*aside.*) What a strange manner he has!

FANNY. And I was not standing by him, was I?

RECK. No.

EUCLID. No, to be sure not.

RECK. What the devil does this mean? They seem uneasy about something. I suppose he has been kissing the girl at the window. Ha! ha! I understand you.

EUCLID. Eh? do you though?

FANNY. Oh, gemini, oh!

RECK. You are a sly fellow, Euclid. (*whispers.*) Eh?

EUCLID. (*aside.*) It's all right—no, no, wrong, I assure you. But you always had such odd ideas—still in the same spirits.

RECK. Yes, I can always smile; like that water which wears a smooth countenance, whatever is beneath its surface.

EUCLID. (*aside.*) Curse his similes!

FANNY. (*aside.*) I hates figurative language.

RECK. Gad! what a lumping I had in that basket—I feel quite knocked up! (*aside.*) A little refreshment—Euclid, my old friend, you know I don't mind taking liberties with you—could you give me a glass of wine?

FANNY. Yes, sir, I saw a bottle in the room where the bas—

EUCLID. Ah—h—hem! the store-room you mean. Fetch it.

[Exit FANNY, R.]

RECK. It will be rather acceptable, I assure you. I have just come off a very unpleasant journey.

EUCLID. What? by the coach?

RECK. (*aside.*) No, by the basket. You mentioned your wife. You are married—and these are your lodgings?

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EUCLID. For the present; I don't think I shall stay here.

RECK. Where shall you go then?

EUCLID. (*aside.*) To Newgate, most likely. That, sir, depends entirely upon circumstances.

Enter FANNY with bottle and glass, R.

RECK. (*drinking.*) Ha, ha! another—(*drinks.*) very good—no, I don't know that it is so very good. There's a queer twang in this wine—have you ever noticed it?

EUCLID. No—you know I never touch wine.

RECK. Oh, I remember you patronise water. How queer I feel!

EUCLID. Patronise water! what do you mean by patronising water? Oh—ha, ha! you mean I drink it.

RECK. Of course I do. Egad, I wish I had drank water instead of this infernal stuff. I feel quite uncomfortable.

EUCLID. (*aside.*) So do I.

FANNY. (*aside.*) So do I.

RECK. Really, there was something wrong—

EUCLID. Nonsense—fancy—

RECK. (*puts his hand to his eyes.*) There's a swimming—

(EUCLID and FANNY run to window.)

EUCLID. What is afloat?

RECK. Oh—h—h—I'm going! There was something wrong about that wine—oh—wrong—very wrong—poison—wine—bad wine—poison! (*falls senseless on the sofa.* EUCLID and FANNY stare.)

FANNY. (*rubs her eyes.*) What does this mean?

EUCLID. It means there's another victim. Oh, Fanny!

FANNY. Oh, sir!

EUCLID. (*smells.*) There is something wrong in this wine.

FANNY. (*sobs.*) Oh—h—h! Now I shall be hanged!

EUCLID. In all human probability. You have got two strings to your bow. So shall I. What makes you pitch upon me for an accomplice?

FANNY. It was a mistake—oh—h!

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EUCLID. But yours are such confounded mistakes. There's Mr. Basket in the river—Reckless is here poisoned—you and I shall be hanged—that makes four. We shall have seriously diminished the population.

FANNY. He had no business to want wine.

EUCLID. Dissipated wretch, to drink wine, except after dinner! How intrusive to call on me—I did not ask him.

FANNY. What shall we do with him? Throw him out of the window after Mr. Basket? Oh—

EUCLID. There are half a dozen boats passing. (*a double knock.*) Oh, there's a knock—they'll come up stairs!

FANNY. Oh, I shall faint!

EUCLID. At this crisis, stupid, thick headed girl! you must not faint at this crisis—I want all your assistance. Lock the door. (*she locks R. door.*) We'll let him fall into the well of the sofa. (*they do so, by pulling the mattress from under him.* VOICES heard outside.)

HOLDFAST. (*without—knocking, R.*) Euclid! Euclid!

MRS. FACILE. (*without, R.*) Euclid! Euclid, my love!

FANNY. Oh dear, how heavy!

EUCLID. And there they are outside. There, put the mattress—that's right—oh! Now I'll let them in.

FANNY. But Mrs. Facile must not find me locked up with you. You know of what a queer turn of mind she is.

EUCLID. Well, here—(*takes cover off globe, and puts it on her head. Takes up book.*)

HOLD. }
MRS. F. } Euclid! Euclid!

EUCLID. (*opens R. door.*) Well, come in.

Enter MR. HOLDFAST and MRS. FACILE, R.

MRS. F. Well sir, you hear us at last.

EUCLID. At last!—what did you call more than once, dear?

MRS. F. Once, indeed! we thought you had lost your hearing.

HOLD. Yes, and the door locked. The lady began to grow jealous. She thought some one else might be locked in. Never mind, says I, there's no murder going on.

MRS. F. But what were you doing, eh, dear?

EUCLID. Studying, to be sure—a new subject—how to make bodies occupy the smallest space. Don't you see my book?

MRS. F. Yes, I see a book—upside down.

EUCLID. Eh? ahem! Ah, my dear, when you are so used to reading as I am, you won't care which way a book stands.

MRS. F. And what's the matter?—you look as pale as a ghost.

EUCLID. Ghost!

HOLD. Ha! ha! ha! talking about ghosts, I expect my friend Fable. You will be delighted with Fable—a strange fellow, who thinks a legend is attached to every house—a firm believer in ghosts, goblins, and all sorts of curiosities—and no wonder, for he himself is a greater curiosity than all he believes in. But I hope we have not interrupted your studies? We want your decision on a geographical discussion. I maintain that Petersburg is sixty degrees, north latitude—

MRS. F. Sixty-one and a half, my dear sir.

EUCLID. Sixty—

MRS. F. One and a half. Obstinate creature.

HOLD. Well, do not quarrel. Mr. Fergus Fable, my old friend's son, will be here in a minute, and expects to find us a quiet family.

Enter JULIA, R.

Here, Julia, you were at school last—what is the latitude of Petersburg?

JULIA. I forget, I am sure—and the terrestrial globe is gone to be repaired. (*pointing to cover, which conceals FANNY.*) It seems to have come home.

HOLD. Take off the cover, Euclid.

EUCLID. (*aside.*) Another incident! No, no—this globe is dreadfully inaccurate—full of mistakes.

MRS. F. Nonsense, dear, it will do.

EUCLID. No, no, no.

JULIA. How very warm he is.

MRS. F. What is come to you? I may look at it, and will!

EUCLID. No, no; don't touch it!

MRS. F. But, Mr. Euclid, I insist—

HOLD. True, true—the globe was made to be looked at. Let us settle our dispute.

EUCLID. The dispute will never be settled. (*MRS. FACILE advances again to globe, EUCLID keeping her back; globe moves off, L.*)

HOLD. Ha, ha, ha! the globe moves in an eccentric orbit—ha! ha!

MRS. F. I see it all; it is some evil creature concealed under the globe cover! I'll follow it.

JULIA. So will I.

EUCLID. (*holding her back.*) No, no, no!

HOLD. Ha! ha! ha!

Enter FABLE, L. as they approach door.

Ah, Fable, my friend—how are you? You have come in time to meet—

EUCLID. A quiet family.

MRS. F. Sir, you are the murderer of—

EUCLID. Murderer—of what?

MRS. F. Of my happiness, sir.

EUCLID. Oh, that's all, is it? Ha! ha! that's nothing.

HOLD. Nay, Mr. Facile, you are going too far.

JULIA. He is getting a most horrid husband.

MRS. F. He'll break my heart! (*crying.*)

FABLE. Crying, too! A charming family—and I seem to have called at a crisis.

EUCLID. (*aside.*) I have a thought! My dear, you know the gentleman whom I threw

—ahem!

MRS. F. Sir!

EUCLID. You know—the gentleman in the basket I mean.

MRS. F. Well?

EUCLID. (*aside.*) He came in here—you lost him, you know—and hearing Mr. Holdfast, I popped the cover on him—it was he. (*aside.*) I wish it had been!

MRS. F. Oh, is that all?—what a clever man you are, Euclid. That was nothing, Mr. Holdfast—nothing at all.

HOLD. How very satisfactory!

MRS. F. Only a frolic of my husband's, funny little man. He meant to astonish you.

HOLD. Egad, he succeeded, too! I never was so struck in my life!

FABLE. Nor I. I thought there was a legend attached to the house!

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EUCLID. And yet, you see, you had doubts of my fidelity, when I was only guilty of—(*aside.*)—murder.

MRS. F. Do not be angry; you know appearances were against you.

HOLD. Well, what say you to a stroll on the banks of the river, while supper is getting ready?

JULIA. Oh, delightful! this is the most romantic time, twilight.

FABLE. Yes, the very moment for a ghost story!

MRS. F. Come, Euclid—

FABLE. Well, then, come along, and I will tell you a most pleasant story about the ghost of a man who was drowned near this spot.

[*Exeunt all but EUCLID, R.*

EUCLID. Here I am alone at last. What an awful day I have had. Two murders and a row! I wonder where my unfortunate accomplice is?

Enter FANNY, L.

Ah, Fanny, heigho! How do you do, Fanny?

FANNY. Very ill, indeed, Mr. Facile; think of my nerves being in such a weak state, from you know what.

EUCLID. Yes.

FANNY. And then my having to cut capers with that nasty thing over my head; I should not wonder if I took to my bed and died.

EUCLID. Then you may think yourself very fortunate, I assure you. I expect no such luck as to die in my bed.

FANNY. I tried to amuse myself; I took up an old volume of the Newgate Calender.

EUCLID. Horrid book! It will be increased some pages soon, I dare say.

FANNY. It was about a man who murdered another man.

EUCLID. Only killed one man! A mere babe of innocence compared with you and me; but I shall sit up all night, and you must do the same, and we'll convey, you know what, out of here, and pitch it in the river.

Enter ROBERT, R., with cloth, knives, &c.; lays cloth.

Seem as if nothing had happened.

FANNY. Yes; but don't talk, Robert is looking.

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ROBERT. Here, Fanny, help me to move this sofa. How remarkably heavy it is; it feels heavier than usual.

FANNY. Heavy! I think it feels lighter than usual. Oh dear! there that will do.

Enter HOLDFAST, MRS. FACILE, JULIA, and FABLE, R. Exit ROBERT, L.

FABLE. A delightful family; the young lady evidently voted me a bore every time I opened my mouth, and the old man calls ancient traditions a humbug. (*aside.*) Goths!

HOLD. You must be hungry, sir—have an appetite for your supper.

FABLE. Why, to tell you the truth, I am rather so; have not tasted a morsel since one o'clock.

HOLD. Fortunate! we have a game supper to-night—grouse and ptarmigan, which I

think you'll enjoy.

FABLE. (*aside.*) That's the first pleasant thing I've heard since I came here.

EUCLID. (*aside.*) But I have no appetite.

Enter ROBERT, L.

ROBERT. (*entering.*) Please, Mr. Fable, your man says there's not a lodging to be had in the village.

HOLD. How unfortunate, and every bed here is occupied. (FANNY, *who is going in and out with supper things, during this dialogue enters R. with a tray.*) Stop! I have it; that sofa will make up into a bed; you shall have that. (FANNY *screams and drops the tray.*)

FABLE. Capital family! servants drop the supper.

MRS. F. Careless slut, what did you drop the tray for?

FANNY. I tell you what, ma'am, I don't get no wages of you—you're only a visitor, and I won't stand being talked to by you. So if you attempts to blow me up, I'll give you a bit of my mind, more mayhap than you like.

FABLE. There's another row! more quietness. Servants so civil—oh, beautiful!

HOLD. Ha, ha, ha! a pretty business; it's too late to get anything. Well, ladies and gents, I am very sorry—very sorry to send you supperless to bed; but you see all the circumstances—the supper is dropped, so I've no other course than to drop the subject.

FABLE. Splendid entertainment!

HOLD. We have nothing to do but to retire for the night, and leave you, Fable, to repose on the sofa bed.

FANNY. Sir! Oh, oh!—sir, the sofa can't be made up—we have no bed.

EUCLID. (*aside.*) Some good spirit inspired that thought—a reprieve.

FABLE. Oh, very well then, I'll lay down on the sofa as it is. (*aside.*) Charming accomodation!

HOLD. Why, my dear sir, I see no other course. I am very sorry you came—

EUCLID. (*aside.*) So am I.

HOLD. Under such awkward circumstances; always happy to see you, you know.

MRS. F. Well, I think we may as well retire; don't you, Mr. Facile?

EUCLID. Ahem! My dear, I must—that is—yes, I must sit up rather late, to finish a job I have in hand—an article for the Philosophical Repository.

MRS. F. Ah, if your gallantry were equal to your philosophy, what a different husband you would be.

[*Exeunt* MRS. FACILE *and* JULIA, *with candle*, R.

HOLD. Good night; you will not find your night's rest spoiled by a hot supper, Ferguson, ha, ha, ha!

[*Exit*, R.

EUCLID. (*whispers.*) Fanny, as soon as he is asleep, you must come here with me, bring your scissors, and we'll cut a certain gentleman out of the side of the sofa; for we shall not be able to fish him up while this fellow is asleep over him.

FANNY. Suppose we wake him.

EUCLID. Then we must kill him too.

[*Exit*, R.

FABLE. Rather a pretty girl that! I'll talk to her. You need not hurry yourself, my dear.

FANNY. I don't wish to keep you from sleeping, sir.

FABLE. I ain't at all sleepy.

FANNY. Horrid man! how inconvenient! (*aside.*) You must be sleepy; you ought to be sleepy; and the best thing you can do is, to go to sleep as fast as you can, and continue sleeping as soundly as possible.

[*Exit* FANNY, R.

FABLE. I'll go to-morrow. Hang me if ever I met with such a family in my life! (*lies down on sofa.*) Such capering, quarrelling, blowing up and fasting. Ugh! let me go to sleep and forget their existence. (EUCLID *and* FANNY *are seen at the door* R. *with*

scissors and dark lanthorn.) Charming family—supper dropped—(*dosing.*)

EUCLID. He's going off.

FANNY. Yes, so shall I to-morrow. To *Merrikey* most likely.

EUCLID. But now to business.

FANNY. Heigho! this is not making a business of a pleasure.

EUCLID. Look at his ugly face—he is asleep.

(holds lanthorn in Fable's face.

FABLE. *(starting up and knocking lanthorn out of Euclid's hand with his head.)* What the devil is that? Oh, my head! There was a flash—and a rap on the skull—and a jingle! What the devil can it mean? *(stage dark.)*

EUCLID. Now what shall we do? We are extinguished.

FANNY. Oh, my poor nerves! How thick-headed of the man to wake! We shall never get the poor gentleman out.

FABLE. There is a kind of whispering noise. Egad! there must be a legend attached to this house. I'm uncomfortable.

FANNY. } So am I.
EUCLID. }

EUCLID. We'll find the way out. Where's the door?

(groping about—sneezes.

FABLE. The cat's in the room, sure. *(the mattress rises up and down.)* What on earth is this? there's something moves—there must be a legend! Oh! keep quiet there!

FANNY. I can't find the door. Some one must have taken it off its hinges.

EUCLID. Yes, and that cursed fellow is going to hallo.

(RECKLESS darts up, throws the mattress, with FABLE on it, to a considerable distance.

FABLE. Murder! the devil! thieves! fire! Mr. Holdfast!

Enter HOLDFAST, with candle, R. EUCLID and FANNY throw their arms round Reckless's neck.

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HOLD. What an infernal noise! What is the meaning of all this? Three hugging one another, and a fourth bawling out murder! Who the deuce is this?

EUCLID. Oh, I forgot—you are not introduced. Mr. Holdfast, Mr. Reckless—Mr. Reckless, Mr. Holdfast!

HOLD. Very proud—very happy. How the devil did he get here?

FANNY. You dear man, for keeping alive. Oh, you dear.

EUCLID. A particular friend of mine.

HOLD. A particular friend of Fanny's too, it seems? And what was the matter with you, Fergus?

FABLE. Matter! Everything. Your sofa chucks people on the floor, Mr. Holdfast.

(bell rings.

HOLD. More visitors?

Enter ROBERT, L.

ROBERT. A man wants to see Fanny Pepper. He has found a basket in the river directed to—

FANNY. Send him away. I don't want it. Oh, I forgot that in my joy—I forgot there was two of them. I will not have the basket.

EUCLID. No. Robert, kick the man down stairs and the basket after him.

HOLD. Nonsense! You don't know what's in the basket.

FANNY. Oh, but I do.

EUCLID. No, you don't.

FANNY. No, no—no more I do. But I hate baskets; they frightened me, when a child, with a wicker-work rattle.

HOLD. It may be something valuable.

EUCLID. Well, what's that to us, if the girl don't want it? We have no right to cram things down her throat.

TOM. (*without.*) Mr. Reckless is here—I know he is.

RECK. That's my rascal's voice. I'm here.

Enter TOM, *drunk*, L.

FANNY. That faithless Tom!

TOM. (*hiccup.*) I've brought a letter, sir. (*gives letter.*) I knew you was here, 'cos you know I ha—ha— And I know what the letter is about, the bearer thereof told me thereof—old Guineamore is no more.

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RECK. I am De Mowbray; my real name is Reckless. This letter will convince you I have a handsome fortune at my disposal, if I may be allowed to lay it at the feet of Miss Flighty.

EUCLID. Mowbray! Mowbray! here! You did not come in a basket, and see my wife?

RECK. Yes, but I did though.

EUCLID. Then there's nobody killed, tol-de-rol! Fanny, there's nobody killed.

Enter MRS. FACILE *and* JULIA, R.

JULIA. De Mowbray!

RECK. Reckless, dear Julia, if you please.

HOLD. Yes, my dear, he is a gentleman of whom I approve, and you may take him as soon as you please.

TOM. And, Fanny, we cannot do better than follow so good an example. (*takes her hand.*)

FABLE. A monstrous pleasant joke. Catch me here again in a hurry.

HOLD. What's all this about a basket?

EUCLID. Why this gentleman has been twice killed. I'll tell you all at breakfast; now let us retire to rest after the troubles of this eventful night, and contrive not to dream.

FANNY. At any rate not of bottles and baskets.

EUCLID. And now, ladies and gentlemen, that you've seen my friend, Reckless "Twice Killed," let us hope that you will, at length, allow him to live uninterruptedly—uninterruptedly, did I say? No; for if my innocent delinquencies did serve to amuse you, I shall feel the greatest pleasure in killing him twice more to-morrow.

TOM., FAN., MRS. F., EUC., JULIA, RECK., HOLD., FAB.

R.

L.

CURTAIN.

Transcriber's Note

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Because a few page scans had text cut off next to the margin, this transcription has been compared with the text posted by the Victorian Plays Project at:

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In general, this transcription attempts to retain the punctuation and spelling of the source text. Variant spellings have been retained, including "calender," "terrestrial," "accomodation," and "dosing" (for "dozing"), as have inconsistent spellings such as "lattitude" and "latitude." Obvious errors have been corrected. The use of "its" and "it's" has been made consistent.

The following changes were noted:

- Frontispiece: The punctuation of the caption text has been made consistent with the script text.
- p. 3: though it's utility exceeds it's beauty—Changed "it's" to "its" in both cases.
- p. 5: its very unkind of you—Changed "its" to "it's".
- p. 6: "X plus Y. equal to—"—Deleted the period after "Y".
- p. 8: [MEN *do so and exeunt.*, L. H.—Deleted the period after "*exeunt*".
- p. 13: FANNY. (*screams*.) Oh!—Changed the comma after "*screams*" to a period.
- p. 14: I was rowing past a quarter of ah hour ago.—Changed "ah" to "an".

- p. 17: Mr. Feargus Fable, my old friend's son, will be here in a minute—Changed "Feargus" to "Fergus" for consistency.
- p. 17: what is the lattitude of Petersburg.—Changed the period after "Petersburgh" to a question mark.
- p. 20: Careless slut, what did you drop the tray for:—Changed the colon after "for" to a question mark.
- p. 21: always happy to see you, you know—Inserted a period after "you know".
- p. 21: I must sit up rather rate, to finish a job—Changed "rate" to "late".
- p. 24: TOM., FAN., MRS. F., EUC., JULIA., RECK., HOLD., FAB.—Deleted the period after "JULIA".

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK TWICE KILLED: A FARCE IN ONE ACT ***

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