

MY
WIFE'S DAUGHTER

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

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Author of "*The Vicar of Wakefield*," "*Separate Maintenance*,"
"*How to settle Accounts with your Laundress*," &c., &c.

HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

*First produced at the Royal Olympic Theatre, Monday,
October 14, 1850.*

Dramatis Personæ.

Mr. IVYLEAFE	Mr. W. FARREN.
Mr. ORMONDE	Mr. H. FARREN.
Mr. CHARLES APSLEY.....	Mr. W. FARREN, jun.
GILLYFLOWER	Mr. COMPTON.
TITTUMS (<i>a Page</i>).....	Miss SHARP.
Mrs. ORMONDE	Mrs. STIRLING.
CLARA	Miss HOWARD.
Mrs. IVYLEAFE	Mrs. LEIGH MURRAY.
ROSE	Miss ELLEN TURNER.

Time of Representation—1 hour 25 minutes.

Costume.

ORMONDE.—*1st Dress*—Velveteen shooting coat, white waistcoat, dark trowsers. *2nd*—Frock coat, figured velvet waistcoat.

APSLEY.—Fashionable morning dress.

IVYLEAFE.—*1st*—Light coloured paletot, nankeen waistcoat, breeches and gaiters. *2nd*—Brown coat. *3rd*—Flannel cricketing jacket, trowsers and russet shoes.

GILLYFLOWER.—Black coat and trowsers, white waistcoat, cravat and stockings, light pumps, wig and whiskers.

TITTUMS.—Dark blue page's dress.

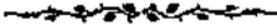
Mrs. ORMONDE.—White muslin robe. *2nd*—Elegant blue figured silk or satin dress.

Mrs. IVYLEAFE.—*1st*—Travelling costume. *2nd*—Fashionable walking dress, bonnet, &c.

CLARA.—White muslin frock, with coloured spots, neat straw bonnet.

ROSE.—Neat light print, apron and cap.

MY WIFE'S DAUGHTER.



ACT I.

SCENE—*The Villa of Arthur Ormonde in the Regent's Park. A handsomely furnished apartment, window in flat, R. looking on the Park. Door in flat, L. Doors 2 & 3 E. R. Door 4 E. L. A fireplace and chimney glass, L. GILLYFLOWER seated at table, c., on which breakfast is laid. TITTUMS, a Page, attending. Sofa, R. of table.*

GIL. (*L. of table, handing a coffee cup to TITTUMS.*) Tittums, another cup of coffee, a minimum sweeter than the last, and a—a—inform me what o'clock it is. (*yawns.*)

TIT. (*looking at timepiece, over fireplace.*) Nearly half-past nine, Mr. Gillyflower.

GIL. Half-past nine! (*yawns.*) I see clearly I shall have to resign if these habits are persevered in, my constitution can't stand getting up to breakfast at this barbarous hour.

TIT. Ah! it must be hard on a gentleman like you, Mr. Gillyflower, when master and mistress breakfast at ten.

GIL. It's outrageous, Tittums! I tolerated the objectionable practice while we were spending the honeymoon in Derbyshire. People are not accountable for their actions during that period of their lives—but now that they have been married six weeks, and have returned to town—we should live like fashionable human beings.

TIT, (*who has gone to door, 2 E, R.*) Mr. Gillyflower, here's Miss Rose, mistress's maid coming.

GIL. Aw! very well (*half aside*) Egad, I've taken a sort of tender propensity to that girl.

Enter. ROSE, R. 2 E.

Ah! my dear Miss Rose, how d'ye do? You look charmingly, 'pon my life, Pray sit down, we positively haven't had a *tete-a-tete* since we came from the country—three days ago.

ROSE. Thank you, Mr. Gillyflower (*sits on sofa.*)

GIL. You'll take a cup of coffee, Miss Rose? real Mocha, I assure you.

ROSE. You're very obliging.

GIL. (*sits.*) Coffee, Tittums. (TITTUMS *pours out coffee, and hands cup to ROSE.*) And now tell me how you like our town villa.

ROSE. Oh! I'm delighted with it—'tis so elegant—so out of the common.

GIL. Aw, yes! it's a neat sort of shed for a young fellow. A-a-ah! Miss Rose, what days—and what nights we've had here before we were married.

ROSE. Why you're never married, Mr. Gillyflower?

GIL. No, no, my dear! but my master *is*, that's all the same.

ROSE. I've heard he has been a very gay gentleman.

GIL. Ah! that he was. Six months ago he led the fashion in London. Mr. Ormonde's cab—Mr. Ormonde's horse—Mr. Ormonde's coat—and (*bows*) Mr. Ormonde's gentleman were admitted to be the most unique things in existence.

ROSE. There can't be a doubt of that, Mr. Gillyflower.

GIL. Then he had a yacht at Cowes, and a stall at the opera—he ran horses at Newmarket, and ran bills every where—and each season he brought an ugly coat, and a pretty dancer into fashion.

ROSE. What a surprise it must have been to his friends when he married.

GIL. Surprise! It was a perfect thunderbolt. I hear there wasn't a dry female eye in the opera that night, and I have it for a fact that the entire *corps de ballet* went into mourning for him.

ROSE. How exceedingly kind of them.

GIL. Very! There's not a more affectionate corps in the service than the *corps de ballet*. It was a terrible sacrifice of my master, who might have had his pick of scores of young beauties, to marry a widow whose age can't be less than—um—how much now do you say, on an average?

ROSE. Well it's rather a delicate point, Mr. Gillyflower, but as you're one of the family I don't mind telling you—she's forty.

GIL. Forty! You amaze me. I shouldn't take her for more than eight and twenty, or thirty at most—but some women are like poll parrots, there's no telling their age by their looks. Forty! and my master's only eight and twenty. Long odds! and on the wrong side too, Miss Rose.

ROSE. But she loves him to distraction.

GIL. That's the devil of it my dear, for she'll expect that he'll love her to desperation in return—all women of forty do, and widows especially.

ROSE. Well I must say for Mr. Ormonde, that he has proved himself a pattern for husbands ever since he has been married. His heart seems entirely devoted to his wife.

GIL. Ah, but don't you see that was in Derbyshire:—she had him all to herself there, but in London, my dear, a man

has so many claims on his heart, that a wife can only come in as a common creditor for a dividend.

ROSE. And I hear that's often so small, 'tis scarcely worth having. (*Bell rings, R. H.*) Ah! you must excuse me now, that's mistress's bell. (*going.*)

GIL. Well, *bong jour*, Miss Rose, a-doo!

Exit ROSE, D. 2 E. R.

Take away Tittums. (*TITTDMS removes tray from table and exits with it, D IN FLAT. GILLYFLOWER goes humming a tune to a mirror, L. over fireplace, and arranges his cravat.*)

Enter CHARLES APSLEY, D. IN FLAT.

APS. (R.) Hey, Gillyflower! Sorry to disturb your reflections.

GIL. (L., *turning.*) Mr. Apsley! I beg pardon, sir.

APS. Where's your master?

GIL. He's still in his dressing room, sir, but I'll let him know you're here. (*going to D. R. 3 E.*) He's coming, sir.

Enter ORMONDE, D. R. 3 E. GILLYFLOWER exits D. IN FLAT.

APS. (L.) Ormonde!

ORM. (R.) Ah! Apsley, my dear fellow.

APS. Welcome back to London, Arthur. I only heard of your return last night. So you're a married man now? Well, accept my sincere congratulations. (*shaking his hand.*)

ORM. Thank you, thank you. Ah, Charles, I never knew what true happiness was until I married, and became the husband of the most charming of her sex. We have been spending the summer in Derbyshire, away from all society, living for each other, and as the poet says—"The world forgetting, by the world forgot."

APS. And especially by your tailor, if I may judge by your costume. Ha! ha! ha! ha! Excuse me, my dear fellow, but really you have such an antediluvian air that I can't avoid laughing.

ORM. Ah! I suppose I shall find every thing changed in the world when I return to it.

APS. By no means. The world has gone round pretty much as usual since you left it. It is *we* who change, my friend, and not the world. Six months ago Arthur Ormonde left town a gay bachelor, and now he returns a sober married man; doubtless to sustain that useful, but not over brilliant, character with becoming propriety.

ORM. Pshaw!

APS. However you have still a consolation, for though your name has been erased from the *feuilletons* of fashion, you may still render yourself illustrious in the records of domestic felicity.

ORM. Ha! ha! My happiness is proof against your

raillery, Apsley. I have lost all taste for the follies that once delighted me—but I confess I should like to try if marriage has so completely transformed me as you say. A prudent man may take a sip of the world without plunging over ears into it you know.

Re-enter GILLYFLOWER, D. IN FLAT.

APS. Undoubtedly.

ORM. (*crosses to c.*) Gillyflower, go directly to my tailor, and desire him to call on me this morning; then go to Stubbs, my bootmaker, and Treville, the hairdresser, and tell them to come to me also. Aye, then to Splinterbar in Long Acre—(*to APS.*) I shall want a new phaeton, shant I?

APS. (R.) Indispensable, I should say.

ORM. Tell Splinterbar to come too, and step to Tattersall's on your way home—no, never mind, I'll go there myself—but go to the opera box office, and tell them to keep the stall for me that I had last season.

GIL. (L.) Yes, sir. (*going, and aside.*) Ha! ha! I thought he would soon break into his old pace.

Exit, D. IN FLAT.

APS. By the bye, Ormonde, when are you going to present me to your wife? I'm told she is most accomplished.

ORM. And beautiful, Charles! The only woman in the world who could have bound me in the fetters of love.

APS. Love! I understood your marriage was one of interest more than of love.

ORM. Well, in fact so it was. You know that at twenty years of age I became my own master, and the uncontrolled possessor of a large fortune. I loved pleasure, and—yielding to its temptations, I enjoyed the present as it came, and cared little for the future: but the pleasantest dreams must be broken, and one morning I awoke from mine—a beggar—on the high road to a jail.

APS. A rather unpicturesque terminus to your vista.

ORM. My friends shook their heads when they heard of my situation, and some of them kindly advised me not to continue the life I had been leading—a hint that seemed distantly suggestive of pistols or prussic acid.

APS. No originality at all in the idea.

ORM. Therefore I rejected it, and applied to my uncle who had been my guardian.

APS. And he, I suppose, recommended you to take a knapsack?

ORM. No: a burthen of a more agreeable nature—a wife; and he actually introduced me to a rich, handsome, and generous widow. (*APSLEY laughs.*) You may laugh—but that widow was like a life-buoy thrown to a drowning wretch. Figuratively—I clung to her—I grappled her—she couldn't shake me off—and so at length, yielding to my

ardent suit, she bestowed upon me her precious little hand and a noble fortune.

APS. A lucky chance for you; and you naturally feel grateful to the woman who has acted so generously towards you.

ORM. Gratitude is too cold a word to express my feelings. I confess, when I commenced my pursuit, I thought less of the woman than her fortune—but insensibly I became fascinated by the graces of her mind and person, until I finished by being irretrievably in love with her.

APS. I'm delighted to hear you say so; for I had heard that Mrs. Ormonde was a little—that is—not quite so young as—as—

ORM. Out with it. Not so young as me, eh? I know it; but I have learned to despise that very popular but very vulgar error, which insists that seniority should be on the side of the husband. I think the arrangement should be the other way. If a man marries a simple girl of sixteen, to ornament a drawing room or an opera box, he must live the life of a modern dragon, and watch night and day lest some of his kind friends should deem it a point of duty to steal his treasure. No, let him marry a woman of forty, who in the conscious strength of her many virtues and her years, knows how to repulse an enterprising invader, and saves her husband a world of trouble.

APS. Ha! ha! ha! Egad your system is quite a novel one—and if you can only bring it into fashion, you deserve to have a statue raised to your honour by all the ladies of forty in the kingdom.

[Turns up stage, so as not to be seen by Mrs. ORMONDE, Who enters, 2 E. R.]

Mrs. O. Arthur! (*playfully.*) Ah! deserter, have I found you at last? Why have you not presented yourself as usual at my toilette this morning, to do suit and service to your liege lady? Why have you neglected to offer me your arm to the breakfast parlour? And where—where, traitor—is my accustomed kiss?

ORM. "Pardon me, dear Marion, my homage is rendered as freely as ever. (*hisses her hand.*)

Mrs. O. Why upon my hand though? How long is it since you learned to stop half way with your homage? Ha!

ORM. (*in an under tone and embarrassed.*) A—a, my dear, you don't perceive we are not alone. (*indicating APSLEY, Who advances L. to be introduced.*) Mrs. Ormonde. This is my friend, Charles Apsley, (*she curtseys*) who admires you exceedingly.

Mrs. O. (*curtseys.*) A most extraordinary proof of the gentleman's good taste to admire me before he had seen me.

APS. (L.) Oh! madam, though I never had the pleasure

of meeting you till this moment, I had already been acquainted with you from your portrait.

Mrs. O. My portrait ?

APS. Yes, madam, your portrait, drawn by my friend Arthur, with so many attractive traits, that I was strongly tempted to envy him.

Mrs. O. (*tapping ORMONDE'S cheek.*) Ah, flatterer! Should I prove a spoiled pet, you will have yourself to thank.

ORM. (*apart to APS.*) Well, how do you like her ?

APS. (*apart to ORM.*) She is really charming.

Mrs. O. (*crosses to c.*) You see us, Mr. Apsley, a couple of rustics, fresh from the country. I love the country myself, and though it may seem incredible, I succeeded in making Arthur like it—he who could never endure the sight of a green field.

ORM. I beg your pardon, my dear, I always liked Hyde Park and Lord's cricket ground.

APS. Ah! madam, we ever love the life we lead with those we love.

Mrs. O. From morning to night we wandered, wherever chance led us, through woods and fields.

ORM. (*aside.*) Brambles and quagmires.

Mrs. O. Then 'twas so delightful when almost tired to death, to discover a peasant's cottage, where we could procure a bowl of new milk.

ORM. (*aside.*) Or a mug of bad cyder.

Mrs. O. And you remember, Arthur, the flowers we cultivated, and the birds that saluted as every morning with their joyous concert.

ORM. Delightful! (*aside.*) Only they would begin at four o'clock.

Mrs. O. And our favorite woodbine bower, where we used to sit together in the evening.

ORM. Delicious! Perfectly delicious! (*aside*) but for those infernal caterpillars and earwigs.

APS. I perceive, Mrs. Ormonde, we shall have a difficult task to reconcile Arthur again to London life, after the country. We cannot boast of mountains, and woods, and lakes, and cottages—but we have Regent street, the Trafalgar fountains, Primrose-hill, and the Club houses—and for birds and flowers we are compensated by the sparrows and bouquets of Covent Garden.

Mrs. O. Oh! we mean to live in London as quietly as we did in Derbyshire.

ORM. Yes; we shall be wonderfully domestic.

Enter GILLYFLOWER, L. D. IN FLAT.

I have abandoned once and for ever all those idle fopperies that formerly—

GIL. (L.) The tailor, sir, has come as you desired.

ORM. (*confused.*) Tell him to wait. (*to Mrs. O.*) You see, my dear, this coat is really so shabby.

GIL. Your hairdresser and bootmaker will attend you, sir, precisely at twelve.

ORM. (*more embarrassed.*) He—hem! Yes. Very well.

GIL. And Mr. Splinterbar says, sir, he has just turned out an elegant Albert phaeton, that he thinks will suit you exactly.

Exit GIL., D. L. IN FLAT.

Mrs. O. What! Tailor, hairdresser, and bootmaker; a new phaeton too. Arthur, you never mentioned this to me.

ORM. (*embarrassed.*) No, no, my dear, I thought—a—I fancied there was no necessity—

Mrs. O. To inform your wife of your projects. Oh! certainly not—I by no means desire to inquire into the cause of this sudden longing for elegance.

ORM. Elegance! Why, my dear, you would not have me show myself abroad in a coat like this, built by a Derbyshire tailor. (*crosses to c.*) Look at it, Apsley, and give your opinion of it.

APS. It has the true provincial cut:—obviously a grand agricultural design.

Mrs. O. You found no fault with it while you were in the country.

ORM. No; but in town, my dear, I must make some change in my appearance.

Mrs. O. Of course, and you will change your other country habits as readily as your coat: (*looking at APSLEY*) and some of your former friends will doubtless assist you in the agreeable task.

APS. Hem! hem! (*aside.*) Egad this angel seems to have got a tolerable spice of the devil in her. (*turns up, L.*)

Mrs. O. Perhaps though you are right. When a man has been for several months deprived of the pleasures, and abstracted from the companions he most values, it is but natural that he should return eagerly to their enjoyment.

ORM. Marion, this is new language from your lips, you are surely jesting.

Mrs. O. I am not jesting—I foresaw this moment, and I have no right to complain.

APS. (*aside.*) Affairs here are taking a family turn, so I'll withdraw. Oh! I had nearly forgotten an appointment I have with my lawyer this morning.

ORM. I thought you were come to breakfast with us, Charles?

APS. Impossible to-day. Must be gone, for though the law sometimes detains us, we must by no means detain the law. Mrs. Ormonde, good morning. (*bows.*) Adieu, Arthur.

(*going, returns.*) By the bye, I shall look for you in your old place at the opera to-night.

GILLYFLOWER, *entering hastily*, v. L. IN FLAT.

GIL. I beg pardon, sir, I forgot to tell you that your stall at the opera has been retained for you. There, sir, is the card. (*gives ORM. card.*)

ORM. (*aside.*) Stupid fool ! Go. (*APSLEY exits*, D. L. IN FLAT. *trying to suppress his laughter, followed by GILLYFLOWER.*)

Mrs. O. (R.) A stall at the opera too! Have I rightly heard him, Arthur?

ORM. (L.) Unquestionably, madam.

Mrs. O. I am astonished.

ORM. Nay, madam; it is I who should be astonished and indignant. You have rendered me ridiculous in the presence of my friend, and before to-morrow I shall be an object of commiseration to the whole town. You have commenced well, madam, this morning.

Mrs. O. (*sits L. of table*, c.) Go on, sir; pray go on,—I can patiently listen to your unjust reproaches.

ORM. (*taking chair and sitting*, L.) You shall hear no reproaches from me, Marion; but it is for your happiness as it is for my honour, that you should understand my position and the exigencies of society. You require that in the midst of the world I should live in seclusion, and dress like a gamekeeper—you would have me renounce along with the follies of a young man the tastes and feelings of a gentleman.

Mrs. O. Arthur!

ORM. You believe me selfish and ungrateful; devoted to pleasure, eager only to enter the gay world again; and you cannot perceive that it is for your happiness more than my own that I am anxious to resume the semblance at least of my former self. No one will believe that a few months could have effected a complete change in all my habits and tastes. Then the malicious world, already disposed to ridicule our marriage, will shrug its shoulders, and pity the poor devil who sold himself into the bondage of a jealous wife.

Mrs. O. (*rising.*) A jealous wife!

ORM. The world will call you so.

Mrs. O. (*taking chair and sitting by his side.*) Arthur! dear Arthur! I have been wrong; but my fault springs from the depths of my love. My heart trembles and sickens when I think that, sooner or later, the world and its seductions may steal you from my side. This evening you are going to the opera, (*points to card,*) and for the first time since our marriage I shall feel what it is to be alone. I am too exacting perhaps, but the fault was yours, when you told me—and I believed you—that no pleasure on earth was comparable to that we enjoyed in each other's society. Tell

me, then, by what talisman I may still keep your heart at home. You like to see me elegantly attired—believe me I will study day by day to please your taste:—you love music, and have praised my voice;—if it still can charm you, I will sing to you those songs you used to love; or, if reading delights you, we will turn to your favorite Shakspeare from that noble volume of the heart draw lessons of truth, wisdom, and love unutterable.

ORM. Enough, dear Marion. I have no will, no wish that is not yours. There, (*tears opera card*.) I will remain at home this evening. (*both rise and come forward*.)

Mrs. O. (R., *coquettishly*.) Only this evening, Arthur?

ORM. (L.) This evening, and to-morrow, and for ever.

Mrs. O. Ah! *ever* is a long time in the society of a wife.

GILLYFLOWER *enters unperceived*, D. L. IN FLAT.

ORM. Not when she smiles and speaks as you do now.

(*kisses her*.)

GIL. (*comes forward and presents card to Mrs. O., R.*) Hem! The person waits, madam.

Mrs. O. (a, *aside*.) Oh! the milliner I have been recommended; she comes in good time. Arthur, you must excuse me now, I have got some little matters to arrange, but in half an hour I shall again monopolise you. (*places her arm in his*.)

ORM. Dispose of me as you will, dear Marion.

Exit Mrs. ORMONDE, 2 E. R., *and ORMONDE*, 3 E. R.

GIL. So. (*taking snuff*) 'Tis positively nauseous to see man and wife so dem'd affectionate after the honeymoon. However it's not likely to last long; and it shan't if I can help it. 'Tis the devil to live in a house where the master and mistress are intimate, for then they're always conspiring against the liberties of the servants' hall.

Enter ROSE hastily, R. D. 2 E.

ROSE. Oh! Mr. Gillyflower, there's such a queer-looking elderly gentleman with a young lady just stepped out from a carriage at the door. Do look at him!

GIL. (*going to window in flat*, R.) Ah! I know him. 'Tis old Ivyleafe and his young wife. (*coming down*, L.) Mr. Ormonde knew them in Paris last winter. The old fellow lived a bachelor till he was sixty, and then ferociously married a girl of three and twenty.

ROSE. (R.) Poor young woman.

GIL. But the most ridiculous thing is to see the painful efforts of the old fellow to appear young.

[*Knock outside, he places chairs back*.

ROSE. Hist, they are coming.

[*Exit* ROSE, R. 2 E., as TITTUMS *enters* L. D. IN FLAT, *showing in* Mr. and Mrs. IVYLEAFE. *He is dressed in a light dress, and wears a travelling cap. Mrs. IVYLEAFE wears a warm travelling dress. TITTUMS exit, L. D. IN FLAT.*

GIL. (R., *bowing*.) Mr. Ivyleafe, I hope I see you well, sir.

IVY. (c.) Ah! Gillyflower. Thank you, never was better in my life, hearty as a buck—hearty as a buck. Is your master at home?

GIL. Yes, sir. Shall I let him know you are here?

IVY. Do so—do so. (*Exit* GIL., R. D. 3 E.) You see, my dear, it will be necessary to use a little delicacy in this affair. Our friend Ormonde has married a charming woman—a very charming woman—but she's several years his senior. Now I have laid it down as a rule, that when a man marries, his wife ought not to be old enough to be his mother.

Mrs. I. (L.) Nor young enough to be his daughter, Mr. Ivyleafe.

IVY. I don't see the point of that.

Enter ORMOND R. D. 3 E.

Ah! here he is—here he is.

ORM. Welcome a thousand times, my dear friends. (*crosses to c.*) Mrs; Ivyleafe, I can now claim the privilege of a married man and an old friend. (*Kisses her cheek.*)

IVY. (R.) Very good, egad! Ha, ha, ha! just my way.

ORM. And you, my dear Ivyleafe, how do you do. (*shaking his hand, IVYLEAFE writhes and utters an exclamation of pain.*)

Mrs. I. Oh! 'tis his gouty hand.

IVY. Gouty, nonsense. I don't know what gout means. I sprained my thumb using the gloves the other morning, that's all. (*places himself in a pugilistic attitude.*) Ever spar, Ormonde? Fine vigorous exercise—expands the chest, and strengthens the muscles. (*strikes out as if sparring, but suddenly cringes as from pain in his shoulder.*) Oh!

Mrs. I. There, I knew you'd have the rheumatism in your shoulder, from walking on the pier last evening without a great coat.

IVY. Ridiculous! I never wore a great coat in my life, never.

ORM. I see you have been travelling?

IVY, Yes, yes. Only arrived this moment from Brighton. (*coughs.*)

Mrs. I. Here, here, my dear (*crosses to c.*), I've got your cough lozenges. (*takes a box of lozenges from her pocket,*

and puts a lozenge in his mouth.) Ah! you dear old soul; I don't know what you would do without me. (*IVY. coughs.*) There; I told you, when you would sit with the window open in the railway-carriage that it would bring on your asthma.

IVY. My asthma! ha! ha! ugh! ugh! ugh! ugh! Why my lungs are as clear as a trumpet—ugh! ugh! ugh! 'Tis this confounded London fog that sticks in my throat.

ORM. But I thought you had determined to winter in Paris.

Mrs. I. Why that *was* our intention, but we've altered our plans.

IVY. Yes, we've altered our plans; my wife likes change, and I like what my wife likes. Variety is the spur of life! Hang your slow people; we like to go the pace! Hey! Though I dare say the world calls us a pair of fools—ugh! ugh! (*coughs.*)

Mrs. I. Take another Locock, my love. (*puts a lozenge in his mouth.*) Our journey to town now, has however, been caused by an affair in which I shall require your assistance.

IVY. Yes, egad, my wife wants your assistance, Ormonde.

ORM. I shall be delighted to render it.

Mrs. I. The fact is, we have taken an extraordinary interest in a young couple who have formed an attachment for each other.

IVY. Mutual affection of the heart; none of us can help it.

Mrs. I. This match, Mr. Ormonde, would be perfectly eligible on both sides; a strange obstacle, however, opposes it. The girl, who is now seventeen, lost her father in her infancy, but her mother still lives, and has married a second time.

ORM. Well, surely the daughter may venture upon an experiment once which the mother has twice proved.

Mrs. I. True; but the woman whose looking-glass tells her that time has not yet impaired her charms, does not always like the idea of a married daughter. It seems like fixing the registry of her baptism on her forehead.

IVY. And there's the risk she runs of being made a premature grandmother.

ORM. It matters not; I should hate the woman who, to gratify her vanity, could oppose the happiness of her child.

Mrs. I. I am delighted to hear you speak so warmly on the subject, for now we are certain of your consent.

ORM. My consent! what have I to do with the matter?

Ivy. More than you imagine; our charming *protege* is your wife's daughter.

ORM. (*amazed.*) My wife's daughter! I'm thunderstruck?

Mrs. I. What! were you not aware there was a child?

ORM. Yes! I understood there was an interesting little

claimant upon my paternal sympathies, somewhere; at nurse, I imagined, but I had no idea that I had become the fond parent of a girl of seventeen.

IVY. Oh, you'll be delighted with her; she's nearly as tall as you.

ORM. (*half aside*). Pshaw! I don't know whether to laugh or be angry at my ridiculous position.

Mrs. I. You may wonder, Mr. Ormonde, how we came to interfere in this matter. A few words will explain it. Last autumn, on a visit down in Devonshire, I became acquainted with Mrs. Ormonde's daughter Clara, a parlour-boarder in a school where she had been placed by her mother. The candour and innocence of the poor girl interested me, and I felt the injustice of her being exiled from a home that she would have adorned by her beauty and accomplishments. We became warm friends, and she at length confided to me the secret of her attachment to a young gentleman.

IVY. Who happened to be one of our most intimate friends.

Mrs. I. I became the mutual confidant of the lovers, and knowing how deeply their happiness was concerned, I undertook the task of smoothing the way for Mr. Apsley's proposal for Clara's hand.

ORM. Apsley! my friend Apsley? the lover of my — I mean of my wife's daughter. Why he was here this morning, and never mentioned a syllable of the matter to me.

Mrs. I. No; his lips were sealed. We had bound him to silence until we had seen you, and engaged you as our ally. We have now only Mrs. Ormonde's consent to obtain, and as matters have been put in train we will leave you to break the business to her.

IVY. Yes; you shall manage this affair yourself. Meanwhile we'll go and make some change in our travelling dress. (*crosses to c.*)

Mrs. I. And then return to congratulate you on your success. Come, my dear, (*puts a lozenge in IVY.'s mouth, and takes his arm.*) *Exeunt, C. D. L.*

ORM. My success! I'm not quite certain of that, for I begin to perceive that my wife has the most amiable way in the world of maintaining her own will. She evidently wishes to conceal her daughter's age, because it perhaps reminds her that time, which expands the bud, fades the flower. And here have I been commissioned to bring this disagreeable fact to her remembrance. A pleasant office I've undertaken:—how to introduce the subject I don't know. (*sits on sofa, R.*)

Enter CLARA, in a travelling dress, D. L. IN FLAT.

CLARA. (*advancing timidly.*) No person to be seen. (*sees*

ORM. I beg pardon, the hall door being open I ventured— but perhaps I may be mistaken. Does Mrs. Ormonde reside here ?

ORM. (R.) She does, madam.

CLARA. (L., *halfaside*.) Heaven be praised! I wish, sir, to see her particularly.

ORM. I'll send for her instantly. Let me offer you a seat. What name may I mention ?

CLARA. Clara.

ORM. Cla—! you said Clara ?

CLARA. Her daughter Clara!

ORM. (*aside*.) Her daughter ?

CLARA. Yes, and may I ask to whom I am speaking ?

ORM. Certainly! I have the happiness to be your papa. No, no, I mean your mother's husband.

CLARA. You? Mr. Ormonde. Oh! I'm delighted to find I've got such a nice-looking papa!

ORM. Papa! (*aside*.) What a strange paternal shock that word gives my nerves. I feel flattered by your approval.

CLARA. Do you know that before I saw you I had an idea that a step-father was like an ogre in the fairy tales; a great tall man, with grizzled hair, goggle eyes, and long teeth—ha! ha! ha! But you don't at all resemble the picture.

ORM. Well, I hope not. (*apart*.) I'm afraid the parental authority is in danger of falling into contempt here. But, my dear Clara, this visit of your's is quite a surprise to me. Does your mother expect you ?

CLARA. Oh, no; I've run away from school.

ORM. Run away ?

CLARA. Yes, all the young ladies had gone home for the holidays—all but me—and I was was left to spend the vacation with the old French governess and the black cat, till I got so weary and melancholy that I should have died if I hadn't run away.

ORM. But were you aware of the imprudence of this step ? a young girl, like you, to venture to travel from Devonshire without money.

CLARA. Oh ! I had three sovereigns and five shillings in my purse, I assure you.

ORM. To be thrown into a vast city, a stranger, not knowing where to turn.

CLARA. I had my mother's address written on a card, and I inquired my way at every turn.

ORM. And then without a protector.

CLARA. Ah ! but I have found a kind one now.

(*takes his hand*.)

ORM. He, hem! yes. (*aside*.) The most innocent of them know where our weak point lies. I'm rather awkward yet in the parental character. Hem ! Still, my dear,

you have acted very imprudently, and I fear your mother will be seriously displeased with you.

CLARA. Not if you intercede for me, my dear papa.

ORM. (*aside.*) 'Tis harder to argue with one of these artless creatures than a dozen lawyers. Now, what course shall I take? If my wife meets Clara now she will be irritated beyond measure. She will be here presently.

CLARA. (*touching his arm.*) You are serious, papa?

ORM. No, no, my dear; I was thinking of a little scheme for your future happiness.

CLARA. Dear papa, how kind of you. (*she places her arm within his, they walk slowly to and fro, R. & L.*)

ORM. I think I should see your mother, and break the ice before she knows you are here.

ROSE *enters unperceived, R. D. 2 E., and starts on seeing them.*

ROSE. (*apart.*) My master and a female! What are they saying? (*she glides behind arm chair up stage R., and conceals herself.*)

ORM. (*walking.*) I dread the consequences if she should meet you.

ROSE. (*aside.*) O-oh! Here's a pretty affair going on.

ORM. We must therefore proceed with caution.

ROSE. (*aside.*) Of course you must.

CLARA. I am wholly at your disposal.

ROSE. (*aside.*) I dare say you are.

ORM. (*taking CLARA up stage, L.*) I must lock you into the library.

ROSE. (*aside.*) The library!—my dream's out.

ORM. (*at door, 3 E. L.*) Where you can remain undisturbed, while I attack her alone.

CLARA. Pray don't be long away!

ORM. Not a moment that I can avoid. There now keep quiet and fear nothing, my dear child. (*Kisses her cheek, she goes in. ORM. locks the library door.*) There—she's secure now under lock and key. Nobody has seen her enter the house, and all is safe for the present.

(*crosses and exits, R. D. 3 E.*)

ROSE. (*coming forward, L.*) Don't be too sure of that, Mr. Ormonde. But who is he going to attack? Her! My mistress. No doubt his poor unprotected—unfortunate wife. He'll attack her when she's alone too. The inhuman Blue-beard!

Enter GILLYFLOWER, D. L. IN FLAT.

Oh! Mr. Gillyflower, I'm so glad you're come. I've discovered such a horrid affair. You wouldn't believe—Mr. Ormonde—oh!

GIL. (R.) Hah! What has he been doing?

ROSE. (L.) I blush to tell you that he has been visited by a female here this morning. Don't it shock you, Mr. Gillyflower?

GIL. Not severely—it takes a great deal to shock me, Miss Rose.

ROSE. But she's here at this moment, locked into the library there—a pretty library it is if these be the kind of books he studies in it. I'll never set my foot inside its horrid doors while I live.

GIL. The young person is locked in the library ?

ROSE. I saw him turn the key and put it in his pocket.

GIL. Humph!

ROSE. But that's not the worst, for I heard him planning to attack his wife alone. Shall I go and tell my mistress—or inform the police? Whatever *is* to be done, Mr. Gillyflower?

GIL. Hold your tongue, my dear, and leave the matter to me. (*putting her across to R.*) There go, go. I'll take care of your mistress, and you too.

ROSE. Well, you know best; so I'll leave our helpless innocence in your hands. But watch the library—watch the library, Mr. Gillyflower. *Exit, D. 2 E. R.*

GIL. Humph! So the governor thinks he can manage these delicate little affairs without my assistance. Very good! I'm at liberty now to play my own game. I must find out who this mysterious female is. The library is locked, but I've not been so neglectful of my duty as not to have a second key for every lock in the house. (*produces a bunch of keys.*) Hah! here he comes—I must take another opportunity. *Exit GILLYFLOWER, D. L. IN FLAT.*

Enter ORMONDE, 3 E. R.

ORM. Marion! (*crosses to L.*) I thought I was past my time, but she's not here yet. (*crosses to R. at back.*)

Enter Mrs. ORMONDE, R. D. 2 E, in an elegant costume.

Mrs. O. (*crosses to mirror, L., turns and sees ORM. R.*) Pardon, dear Arthur, for detaining you; but when a woman dresses to please her husband, he should forgive her if she devotes a few minutes extra to her toilette. (*gaily.*) Well have you no compliments to make me on my appearance? Am I quite a dowdy? Ha, ha, ha!

ORM. (R.) Upon my life I never saw you dressed with such exquisite taste. Never saw you look more irresistible than at this moment.

Mrs. O. (*laughing.*) Come, that is not so ungallant a speech from a husband who has outlived the honeymoon. (*places her arm in his.*) Now, my dear Arthur, I must tell you that I intend to chain you to my side for this entire

day. I have the programme of our amusements arranged in my head. First we will drive to Howell and James's, where your taste shall guide me in a few purchases. Then we shall be in time for the flower show—afterwards we may exhibit ourselves in Hyde Park—then return to dinner quietly—and spend the evening together happily.

ORM. Yes, yes. (*aside.*) But what the devil am I to do with Clara?

Mrs. O. My project don't appear to please you?

ORM. Yes, it does, I'm enraptured with it; but I've just remembered there's an unfortunate—not exactly an unfortunate—but an urgent affair—a very urgent affair—that may engage me.

Mrs. O. May I enquire the nature of this very urgent affair?

ORM. Oh ! certainly. It's a club business. We're going to ballot for a couple of new members in the United Service—and I've promised my vote and interest to Charles Apsley.

Mrs. O. Apsley! I hate that man. Why does he come here to rob me of your society? This morning it was the opera—now it is your club, or some other temptation. Arthur, I hate that man. (*crosses to R.*)

ORM. (*smiling.*) Indeed, my love, you are unjust to the poor fellow. He has been my earliest and best friend—the dear companion with whom I have run the joyous race of youth—and to let you into a secret you are a great favorite of his.

Mrs. O. (*flattered.*) Indeed?

ORM. Indeed, but you are. We were talking of marriage, and he envied me the happiness of being united to the most charming woman in existence.

Mrs. O. (*laughing.*) Well, I don't deny Mr. Apsley his merits—he's evidently a young man of very good taste, and rather gentlemanly exterior.

ORM. (*aside.*) Has the wind shifted already? Yes;—a little wild perhaps.

Mrs. O. 'Tis the fault of youth.

ORM. And devoted to pleasure.

Mrs. O. He'll get tired of it by and bye. If he were but married I think I should like him exceedingly. Why don't he marry?

ORM. He is most anxious to do so—but where is a wife to be found?

Mrs. O. Oh! I'll find him fifty amongst my friends. (*goes up and sits on sofa, R.*)

ORM. No, not quite so many, my dear—a blessing may be too abundant. (*sits beside her on sofa.*)

Mrs. O. Now, there's Maria Somerville.

ORM. A dowdy!

Mrs. O. Helena Villiers !

ORM. A flirt.

Mrs. O. Julia Fitzallen—an heiress with an unencumbered estate.

ORM. And an equally unencumbered head.

Mrs. O. Well, there's Horatia Neville; she, at all events has wit enough.

ORM. TO make her husband look like a fool.

Mrs. O. You are most fastidious; but you cannot object to the pretty widow Douglas.

ORM. She buried her husband—a Scotchman, too—in six months. We'll not meddle with *her*.

Mrs. O. Hold; there's my charming friend Arabella Middleton.

ORM. Why she's forty, if she's a day old. (*apause.*)

Mrs. O. (*offended.*) Well, Mr. Ormonde, and if she even be forty?

ORM. (*embarrassed.*) I don't mean to say it ought to form the slightest objection—ha! ha! ha! In my mind a little difference of age prevents uniformity in the married state, especially when the seniority is on the female side. But Apsley's opinions may differ—I only say it is possible he may think—not that I know what he thinks—but there are prejudices a—a—

Mrs. O. Pray go on, sir. (*both rise.*)

ORM. (*aside.*) There, I've ruined poor Apsley's case; she'll never consent now.

Enter TITTUMS, D. L. IN FLAT.

TIT. Mr. and Mrs. Ivyleafe !

Exit TITTUMS.

Enter Mr. and Mrs. IVYLEAFE, D. L. IN FLAT.

ORM. Thank heaven, they're come. (*runs to them.*) Ah, my dear friends. (*apart to Mrs. IVY., L.*) She knows nothing yet.

IVY. (*c, who has crossed to Mrs. O.*) Mrs. Ormonde, give me leave to renew our old acquaintance:—it is ten years since we met at Spa.

Mrs. O. (*R.*) Yes, and I declare you look younger now than you did then.

IVY. Do I? ha! ha! ha! I believe matrimony has made me a new man. Allow me to introduce to you Mrs. Ivyleafe—a—Mrs. Ormonde, my dear. (*the ladies curtsey.*) There,—I hope we shall be excellent friends. By the bye, Mrs. Ormonde, my little wife is prodigiously fond of your husband.

Mrs. O. Indeed! I was not aware that there had been any acquaintance.

IVY. Arthur has not told you then? Ha! ha! ha! That's so like him, close dog—close dog. Why, Mrs. Or-

monde, he was the constant *attaché* of my wife last summer in Paris.

ORM. (L. C.) Oh, nonsense!

IVY. Egad, but you were though! You used to bring her bouquets every morning, and ride out with her every afternoon.

Mrs. I. (L.) Yes, we have had some delightful canters in the Bois de Boulogne.

Mrs. O. (R.) Oh, I have no doubt of it; but Mr. Ivy-leaf used to accompany you?

IVY (R. C.) No, not I. I'm not partial to equestrian exercise, so I stopped at home and ate guava jelly.

Mr. O. (*aside, and looking at ORM. (L. C.), who appears uneasy.*) 'Tis too plain; I see it in his confusion; he has been fascinated by this woman, and now she comes to entangle him again in her meshes. (Mrs. IVY. (L.) *draws ORM. a little way from the others, and speaks to him apart.*)

IVY. (*laughing.*) There, there—that's the way they're always going into private committee. Egad, if you don't take care, Mrs. Ormonde, she'll monopolise your husband! Egad, she will.

Mrs. I. Oh! we are old friends. Mrs. Ormonde you must not be jealous.

Mrs. O. Jealous! ridiculous!

Mrs. I. But if you wish to have your revenge, there's Mr. Ivyleafe; you may flirt with him as long as you like, but I warn you to take care of him, for he's a terrible fellow amongst our sex.

IVY. Egad, now, isn't that capital! I don't think I could make my wife jealous if I tried. But she's a good-natured creature; she'll take all the trouble of entertaining your husband off your hands.

Mrs. O. (*ironically.*) Oh! I am too sensible of the interest that Mrs. Ivyleafe takes in my family, not to feel most grateful.

IVY. Oh! then Ormonde has been telling you about that little love affair, and you give your consent.

Mrs. O. Consent! to what?

Ivy. To the marriage of your daughter.

Mrs. O. (*starts.*) The marriage of my daughter.

ORM. (*aside to Mrs. I.*) There, the blow is struck.

Mrs. I. (*aside to ORM.*) We must follow it up then. (*to Mrs. O.*) A most eligible match I assure you, Mrs. Ormonde.

ORM. Which I was about mentioning to you when our friends came in.

Mr. I. The gentleman is all that you could desire as a husband for your child.

IVY. They'll make a charming couple.

Mrs. O. Couple! Clara is still a mere child.

ORM. Why she looks seventeen!

Mrs. O. (*quickly.*) How know you how she looks?

ORM. (*embarrassed.*) I—I—know it—by a—

Mrs. I. By my description, I suppose.

ORM. Yes, by Mrs. Ivyleafe's description. (*aside.*) That was well escaped. (*turns up L., crosses to R., at back.*)

Mrs. O. (*crosses to c.*) Oh, madam, I cannot sufficiently express my obligations for the interest you seem to take in my affairs. I shall, however, when the fitting time arrives, exercise my own judgment in the selection of Clara's future partner.

Mrs. I. If you knew the object of her attachment—

Mrs. O. Her attachment! (*aside.*) Insolent!

IVY. A young fellow of good birth—

Mrs. I. Polished manners—

OHM. Fine fortune—

IVY. And, egad! here he comes to speak for himself.

Enter APSLEY, L. D. IS FLAT.

Mrs. O. (R. C.) Mr. Apsley! (*aside.*) This is a premeditated insult.

APS. (L. C.) May I venture to hope, Mrs. Ormonde, that I shall obtain your consent to offer my hand and fortune to your daughter?

Mrs. O. No, sir, never! The officious friends who have devised this scene to humble me, and render you ridiculous, shall find that I can penetrate their designs, despise their stratagems, and be still mistress of my own actions.

ORM. (R.) This language to my friends, madam!

Mrs. I. (*crosses to c.*) Oh, pray do not interrupt the lady. I have inadvertently been the means of making a disagreeable discovery. It was a giddy act I confess, but hereafter, madam (*curtseys to Mrs. O.*) my conduct shall be regulated by the respect due to the mother of a family.

APS. (*aside.*) So that *coup* has destroyed all our plans. Adieu, Ormonde. [*bows and exits, L. D. IN FLAT.*]

Mrs. I. Allow me to say good morning, madam.

[*curtseys.*]

IVY. (L.) Egad, I don't understand it. What does it all mean? Officious friends—that evidently alludes to you and me—eh—we're the officious friends, my dear.

Mrs. I. Come, Mr. Ivyleafe. (*taking his arm and going, returns, curtseys, and Mr. IVY. bows.*) Good morning, madam.

[*Exit Mr. & Mrs. IVY., D. L. IN FLAT.*]

ORM. (R.) Well, madam, you have achieved your purpose, and driven my friends from my house, and now I trust you are satisfied. (Mrs. ORM. *sits in chair, L., ORM. throws himself on sofa, R., with his back to Mrs. ORM., as Act Drop descends.*)

ACT II.

SCENE.—*A Library in the Villa of Arthur Ormonde, suitably furnished. Door of entrance from house, 2 E. L. Door of another apartment, 2 E. L. Door communicating with the garden, in flat, R. Window looking on garden, flat, L. Bound library table, c. A folding-screen, at back, c. Arm chair R. of table.*

CLARA *discovered alone, reading, R. of table, c.*

CLARA, (*throwing aside the book.*) I'm tired of reading. I might better have remained at school in Devonshire than have come to London, if I'm to be shut up in this way. I wish Mr. Ormonde would come and give me my liberty. 'Tis now four hours since he left me, with a charge that I was not to quit this room till he returned! I'm afraid, though, I should have been tempted to break my prison if he had not taken security for my safe keeping, by locking the door. Dear me, I almost wish I had the old French governess to talk to, for I am getting horribly fatigued. (*listens.*) Hark! I hear somebody coming.

Enter ORMONDE, through R. D. IN FLAT.

CLARA. (L.) Ah! my dear papa! you are come at length. Do you know I was nearly out of patience in this solitude.

ORM. (R.) And out of temper with your jailor? Well, I expected no less; so, to make my peace, I have brought a friend to visit you.

Returns to door, and hands in Mrs. IVYLEAFE.

CLARA. A friend! (*sees Mrs. IVY.*) Mrs. Ivyleafe?

Mrs. I. (*c, advancing.*) Yes, my dear Clara. The moment I heard from Mr. Ormonde that you had arrived in town I hastened to you.

CLARA, (L.) Like the benevolent fairy that came to visit the Enchanted Princess in the Brazen Tower. Well, 'twas very kind of you. (*to ORM.*) But I do not see my mother; have you spoken to her? have you broken the ice?

ORM. Why, no; she's not yet prepared to meet you. (*Mrs. IVY. turns up c., and places her bouquet which she carries and her handkerchief on table c., and then comes down R.*

CLARA. (L.) Surely a mother's heart needs no preparation to meet her child. She may be angry with me, but she will forgive me I know:—take me to her, let me hear her dear voice, and be folded to that bosom from which I have so long been estranged. Then let her send me back to Devonshire if she likes, I will go without a murmur. Will you not plead for me, Mr. Ormonde?

ORM. Oh, certainly! (*aside to Mrs. IVY.*) The poor girl don't know that I have pleaded a cause for her already this morning, and been nonsuited.

Mrs. I. (*aside to ORM.*) The cause, however, is not lost yet. I have set my heart on that match, and I will not give it up without another struggle.

CLARA. Well! may I not be admitted to your council?

Mrs. I. (*crosses to CLARA.*) Certainly, my dear since you were the subject of our deliberations. I want to take you under my protection for a day or two, before your mother knows of your arrival.

CLARA. But why this secrecy? Why may I not be permitted to see her? Why should I quit the safe-guard of her roof?

ORM. If you ask me—I should say—(*aside.*) Hang me if I know what I should say. All shall be explained, hereafter. At present you must trust to our sincere wish to promote your happiness.

CLARA. I do, I do, implicitly.

Mrs. I. Then be prepared to accompany me this evening, when I come for you with Mr. Ormonde.

ORM. To avoid observation we will come by this private door, opening into the garden, of which I only have the key.

CLARA. And I suppose I shall be left till then without any company but these dusty old authors, who don't seem disposed to cultivate my acquaintance, for see how rudely they have turned their backs upon me.

ORM. Yet, I assure you, many of them are distinguished in polite literature. They are all gentlemen of rank, too, for they bear their titles on their backs, and—what is more rare—their titles, are derived from their own merits.

Mrs. I. Well! good bye, my love! When the benevolent fairy next visits you she will release you from your prison. Till then trust in her, and hope for the best.

[*Exeunt ORM. and Mrs. I., by door R. IN FLAT.*]

CLARA. Hope for the best! What can she mean? Why am I surrounded by mystery, shut up like a state prisoner, and forbidden to see my mother. Heigho! I wonder why I have thought so often of Charles Apsley to-day. Poor fellow! I've tried to read him out of my head, but I can't. I must find some other way. (*looking round the room.*) What's here? A door. (*opens door 2 E. R.*) Ah! a charming little study, with a window looking over the park. I'll sit there, and look at the people as they pass by. Ah! how happy they must all be in their liberty.

[*Exit into room R. 2 E. When she is gone GILLI-FLOWER enters at door L. 2 E., carrying a tray, with cakes, fruit, wine, and glasses.*]

GIL. Ha! Hem! I beg pardon, miss—I—a—a—I—thought—hem—beg pardon—I say—(*looking round*)—hey! (*puts down the tray on the table*)—eh! Where can she be? (*listens, and looks through the partly open door of study.*) Oh! she's there, safe enough. I'm glad of it, as 'twill give me time to arrange my thoughts and my cravat before we meet. I haven't an idea who the young woman is, or what she does here; but human nature leads me to suspect the worst. If there wasn't something mysterious about her Mr. Ormonde would never have taken such pains to conceal her. She can't be a new acquaintance neither, for he hasn't been out of his wife's sight since he came to town. Some former favourite, perhaps, that he'd give any money to get rid of. I've known many remarkable cases of the sort in the course of my practice. Hey I humph! Gillyflower, my boy, here's a chance for you:—if the girl be good looking, and Mr. Ormonde comes down with a handsome *potion* I shouldn't mind doing him a service, and myself a pleasure, by swallowing the girl and the *potion*. Some people might object to a cast-off mistress, but I'm not particular myself in these matters.

Enter CLARA, from study, R. 2 E.

(*Aside.*) 'Gad she's very pretty!

CLARA. I fancied I heard—(*starts on seeing GIL.*) Ah!

GIL. (*bowing.*) Don't be alarmed, miss! 'Tis only me.

CLARA. And who may you be, sir?

GIL. Eh! oh! I'm Gillyflower.

CLARA. A friend of Mr. Ormonde's, I presume?

GIL. Quite so! We're hand and glove—hand and boot, as I may say; so intimate indeed that I don't think he could live comfortably without me.

CLARA. You live here?

GIL. Yes, I've hung up my hat here for five years. In fact Mr. Ormonde and me have agreed never to part—never—without a month's warning on either side.

CLARA. A month's warning! Then you are Mr. Ormonde's servant?

GIL. Excuse me;—his gentleman. I do him the honour to brush his clothes and take his wages—but I bar the livery indignantly.

CLARA. What is your business then? You bring a message from Mr. Ormonde?

GIL. No, my visit is private and personal—a sort of confidential call. I knew you were alone, and I thought you might be gratified by a glass of Maderia and my company.

CLARA. You will have the goodness to withdraw directly.

GIL. Oh! I couldn't think of it. I'm come to spend the afternoon with you, and you may as well be sociable. Allow

me to fill you a glass of wine. (*pours out two glasses of wine.*) I can recommend that Madeira from long experience. Here's my love to you! (*drinks.*) Masters ain't often allowed such wine as that: and here's some peccoliar fine hot-house grapes was sent a present to mistress, (*eating grapes*) but Hamburgs is good enough for her.

CLARA. (*aside.*) Must I endure this fellow's insolence?

GIL. Come, miss, never look so bashful. We are here quite private and select. Ah! you ought to be very grateful to heaven! Sweethearts don't tumble out of the clouds every day—I mean such sweethearts as me. May this refreshment be my pison, if I am not outrageously in love with you.

CLARA. Quit the room instantly, fellow, or I ring the bell.

GIL. Oh! Don't put yourself to the trouble, I'll ring:—(*cross to bell rope, R.*) the servants will come up, and then you will be able to explain why you're concealed here.

CLARA. Stop, stop!

GIL. Certainly; I only offered to oblige you.

CLARA. There, don't come near me.

GIL. Oh! nonsense, what's the use in distance when my views is honourable.

CLARA. *Your* views!

GIL. Yes! I say when a man looks at a girl through a wedding-ring his views is decidedly honourable.

CLARA. Insolent!

GIL. Ah! (*aside.*) This is the moment for a grand demonstration! (*drops on his knees, and seizes her hand.*) Too scornful beauty, turn your eyes upon the moving panorama before you—hear me, on my bended knees:—I've, thirty pounds a year wages, with cribbings and windfalls' they shall be all your own;—a hundred pounds in the Savings Bank, with a bursting heart, and a sweet feather bed—think of that. Oh, Cupid! Cupid! Cupid! Cu—um—um—um. (*kissing CLARA'S hand, who struggles to disengage herself.*)

CLARA. Begone, wretch! Loose my hand—help! somebody! Help!

Enter APSLEY, hastily, L. 2 E.

APS. Clara!

CLARA. Ah, Charles! Charles! (*rushing to him,*) protect me from this audacious wretch.

GIL. (*aside.*) I wish I was safe in the remotest recesses of the pantry. (*rising.*) Mr. Apsley, I beg to apologise—hope the young lady ain't offended—human weakness, sir,—I was suddenly carried away by my feelings.

APS. (*shaking him.*) Then, let your feelings carry you away as suddenly now, scoundrel!

GIL. Oh! oh! I'm gone, sir. (*APSLEY returns to CLARA, who has sat down. GILLYFLOWER stops at the door.*) [*aside.*]

Never mind! I shan't sit easy till I've had my revenge. I'll go this moment to Rose, and she shall give Mrs. Ormonde a few hints about this mysterious female. Mr. Apsley, you may have the young woman—I resign my pretensions.

APS. Your pretensions, rascal? (APSLEY *rushes after GILLYFLOWER who exits hastily*, L. 2 E. *A noise as of a person tumbling is heard outside. Then APSLEY re-enters.*) I was obliged to kick the fellow down stairs for his insolence. But you have been alarmed Clara,—you tremble.

CLARA. No, no! all is forgotten! in the happiness of this unlooked for meeting. How did you learn that I was in London?

APS. I had not the most distant idea of it. My visit here to Alfred Ormonde was entirely accidental.

CLARA. You know Mr. Ormonde then?

APS. Know him! Why we were college chums, and ever since have been the best friends living. But how is it I find you exposed in your mother's house to the insults of a menial?

CLARA. Hush!—my mother does not know of my being here. I came up from Devonshire unexpectedly this morning without her knowledge, and Mr. Ormonde has placed me here until he can make my peace with her.

APS. But to meet you thus, distracted by doubts—

CLARA. Doubts of what? of my love?

APS. No, Clara. Your voice—your looks—assure me that you are still mine.

CLARA. What doubts then, do you speak of?

APS. (*aside.*) She has not heard of her mother having refused her consent. None, none that one look of those bright hopeful eyes could not dispel. (*kisses her hand.*) I will hasten this moment to Ormonde—seek your mother—explain all—and return to claim you as my wife. (*rushes Off*, D. L. 2 E.)

CLARA. I could almost wish now that he had not gone; 'tis so lonely here, and who knows but that rude fellow may return again. I shall be frightened to death if he does. Perhaps Charles may still be within hearing, I'll call him back. (*calls in a suppressed voice at the door*, L. 2 E.) Charles! Charles! (*looks out at door,*) No; he's gone. Heigho, and well a day! I begin to fear this love is like ballooning; we go into the clouds pleasantly enough, but heaven knows how we may come down; and, oh dear I how many of us defy broken necks—and hearts—for the novelty of the sensation. Well, I'll return to my seat in the window, and watch the setting sun; it will take me back to Devonshire, where we were obliged to go to bed by bis light.

Exit into study, D. R. 2 E. *The door is heard to be locked inside. Then enter D. L. 2 E., Mrs. ORMONDE followed by ROSE. She looks round rapidly.*

Mrs. O. There is no one here. Are you certain you may not have been deceived, Rose ?

ROSE. There's some things I can't be deceived in, mum.

Mrs. O. You saw her in close conversation with Mr. Ormonde.

ROSE. Yes, mum! Quite familiar and easy.

Mrs. O. (*suppressing her emotions.*) Well, Rose, there is nothing remarkable in that; I know he has relatives in town; she may have been a relation, Rose, who called to see him.

ROSE. D'ye know I thought she might, mum, when I see him embrace her so affectionately.

Mrs. O. Embrace her, Rose! Impossible! But even if he did, there would be no impropriety in bestowing a kiss of friendship upon an old lady of sixty—or fifty—or fifty-five, Rose.

ROSE. Oh! bless you mum, you don't suppose master would ever go to kiss an old woman of fifty-five. Times isn't come so bad as that, I hope. No, mum, the young person I mean couldn't be above eighteen.

Mrs. O. Eighteen! (*with increasing emotion.*) But she was ugly; tell me Rose, was she not hideous ?

ROSE. I'm sorry to say, mum, she was abominably good looking, a lovely figure, about the middle height, beautiful blue eyes, and brown curling hair, cheeks like roses, and lips, mum—oh!

Mrs. O. Cease this nonsense! You saw this—this—visitor—shut up in this apartment by Mr. Ormonde.

ROSE. I'll never trust my two eyes if I didn't, mum.

Mrs. O. (*aside.*) Heartless, cruel, man ! Is this the reward for my devoted love. But who is she ? who is this woman who has wronged me ? (*sees the bouquet on the table.*) Hah! these flowers! I know this bouquet: I have seen it somewhere;—yes, this morning, in the hands of—and this handkerchief. (*snatches handkerchief from the table.*) There is a name here—ah!—"Julia Ivyleafe." 'Tis she ! 'tis she ! My heart informed me truly. I saw it in their stolen glances and secret whispers, whose meaning her imbecile husband could not perceive. Where is she ? where is this daring woman ? has she escaped and baffled me ? Hah! In this room she may be concealed. (*tries to open the door R. 2 E.*) Fastened inside! She *is* here! and here I remain. Leave me Rose! (*ROSE exits D. L. 2 E.*) At length all is known (*sits L. of c. table*), and I am most wretched. Six weeks—six little weeks—could love survive no longer? Let me not think of it, lest I go mad. Yet I foresaw this bitter hour, but thought not it would come so soon. I loved him! I was proud of him! He was my joy, my hope, my very world. For him I have abandoned all, even to my child, whom I have exiled from my heart, that worshipped

this man only for its idol. Deeply have I been punished for my fault. But my resolution's fixed. We part:—though with that parting ends my dream of happiness; a dream so bright that angels might have envied it; but, oh, so brief, it leaves the dreamer only tears and vain regrets for waking. No matter! away from him I shall escape this horrible torture 'Tis the penalty of my pride, and pride must now sustain me. (*knock, L.*) Who's there?

IVYLEAFE *puts in his head at door, L.*

IVY. I beg pardon, Mrs. Ormonde. I heard you were here.

Mrs. O. Come in, Mr. Ivyleafe. (*aside.*) He comes opportunely.

Enter IVYLEAFE, dressed in a cricketer's dress, and carrying a cricket-bat, D.L.

IVY. I should apologise, madam, after the occurrence of this morning. I am, perhaps, intruding?

Mrs. O. Pray let it be forgotten. Towards you, Mr. Ivyleafe, I meant no offence, and if an apology—

IVY. Stop—stop—the very mention of an apology from a lady makes me blush. I shan't hear another word on the subject. Hah! I see you are looking at my dress; I've just been playing a game of cricket—noble game—the true bulwark of our country. Britain, madam, can never be bowled out while she has her English gentlemen to keep the wicket. You should have seen my bowling. There I was (*uses the action of delivering the ball, but cringes as with sudden pain*) a—a—ah! you mustn't imagine that's lumbago though; not a bit of it—I'm as strong in the back as an elephant, and as nimble as a greyhound. You should have seen me after a wide ball, Mrs. Ormonde.

Mrs. O. Doubtless it was very fine! But where is Mrs. Ivyleafe? I do not see her with you.

IVY. No, I came here to look for her.

Mrs. O. (R.) Here! did you expect to meet her here?

IVY. (L.) Why, you see, I returned to our lodgings after the first innings, and there I heard she had left some time before, with your husband, so I jumped into a cab, without changing my dress, to seek her.

Mrs. O. And you suspect nothing?

Ivy. Suspect! no—I never suspected anything in my life.

Mrs. O. I mean your wife's honour.

IVY. Stop, madam, my wife's honour is mine, and I will suffer no aspersions upon it.

Mrs. O. She is undeserving the confidence you have reposed in her.

Ivy. That confidence, madam, has never been shaken.

Mrs. O. I tell you she has betrayed *you* (*turns away*), and made me miserable.

IVY. (*Aside*.) Oh! jealous! poor lady! I really pity her.

Mrs. O. This intelligence don't seem to discompose you, Mr. Ivyleafe.

IVY. Not at all—not at all. I have no doubt of my wife.

Mrs. O. I can prove her infidelity.

IVY. Prove it! how?

Mrs. O. I have evidence that she visited Mr. Ormonde privately, and that she has been concealed by him here to day.

IVY. (*startled*.) She! Julia! no—no—no! I will not believe it

Mrs. O. My servant Rose witnessed it.

IVY. Household viper! she lies—she lies!

Mrs. O. You know this bouquet and this handkerchief?

IVY. (*snatching them*.) My wife's!

Mrs. O. I found them as you entered, on the table here in my husband's private library, and she to whom they belong is at this moment locked in that room. (*pointing to studydoor*.)

IVY. She there! (*crosses to R.*) I'll break open the door; I've the strength of a thousand lions. (Mrs. O. *holds him*.) Don't restrain me, I'll drag her from her hiding place. I'll—I'll—I'll do—something terrible—ah! (*sinks into a chair*.)

Mrs. O. My wrongs are great as your's, yet I restrain my indignation until I confront our unfaithful partners, and prove their infidelity before they can frame some excuse to deceive us.

IVY. Hah! she shall never deceive me again. Ormonde, too, the man I trusted, to betray me; it makes one hate the world. But he shall fight me. (*rises*.) If you'll allow me, madam, I'll shoot him. I can hold a pistol—a pistol—as steady as a rock, (*uses the action of holding a pistol, his hand shakes violently*), and snuff a candle at twelve paces.

Mrs. O. Hist! I hear my husband coming, you must hide behind this screen and be an unseen witness of our interview.

IVY. Very well! 'Tis better I should not meet him suddenly or I might do him an injury. I'm sure I should, you have no idea the blow I strike when I'm excited. I'll go behind the screen.

[*Conceals himself behind the screen*, Mrs. ORMONDE sits at table, ORMONDE enters door in R. FLAT, does not perceive her.

ORM. (R.) Now for my poor little prisoner. (*sees Mrs. O., aside*.) My wife here. Can I have forgotten the key in the other door?

Mrs. O. (*rising and curtseying*.) You are, perhaps,

astonished, sir, to find me in an apartment reserved for your private studies.

ORM. I confess, madam, I am a little surprised. (*aside.*) What can she want here? But it is yourself you have to thank if the surprise be not an agreeable one.

Mrs. O. We will drop that subject if you please. (*looking around.*) What a delightful retreat you have here for a weary husband who, in his seclusion, loves to scatter the roses of pleasure upon the pages of learning.

ORM. Roses! ah! the sweetest of them have their thorns.

Mrs. O. Yes, and with all our caution we may sometimes prick our fingers gathering them—

ORM. Or even after they have been gathered, madam. I have had a painful experience of the fact. (*looks at D. R.*)

Mrs. O. (*aside.*) His eyes are fixed on the door. She is there. By the bye, I came to apprise you that I have invited here this evening a few friends whom I expect immediately.

ORM. Well, madam, you are free to receive your friends; my presence will not be necessary.

Mrs. O. Pardon me, 'twill be indispensable. There are certain details of domestic happiness that should not be concealed from our friends or our enemies.

ORM. How! would you have witnesses of the domestic discord that has unhappily arisen between us? Would you expose to the world your weakness, your folly?

Mrs. O. I have no reason to desire concealment, though it is possible others may.

ORM. Few of us, madam, have not some hidden corner of our heart into which we would not wish the world to pry too narrowly.

Mrs. O. Is this taunt meant for me, sir? 'Tis worthy of you to add insult to infidelity.

ORM. Infidelity! What is it you say?

Mrs. O. I say that your infamous conduct has broken every tie between us. (*raising her voice.*) That from this moment we are disunited for ever.

ORM. (*looking anxiously at the study door R.*) Silence! for Heaven's sake.

Mrs. O. Why should I be silent! the world shall hear my wrongs and judge between us.

ORM. What madness possesses you? (*half aside.*) Ah! her cheek changes, and her frame trembles. Let me support you, Marion.

Mrs. O. No, sir, I am no longer the duped wife whom you designed as a convenient screen for your pleasures. No! Though you have deceived me, you shall never degrade me.

ORM. This passes the bounds of patience. Of what do you accuse me? It is my duty now to demand of you an explanation of those vague calumnies you have cast upon me.

Mrs. O, Oh! you feign admirably sir, but I will not, have to seek far for a proof of your guilt. When a libertine husband profanes, without remorse, the home that should be sacred to domestic affection;—when he betrays the wife who loves him—

IVY. (*coming forward.*) and the friend who trusts him.

ORM. (R.) An ambushade!—

Mrs. O. (c.) When he secretly introduces the companion of his shame into his house.

IVY. (L.) And when that companion is my wife, what does he deserve?

ORM. Your wife?

IVY. Yes, you have concealed the miserable woman in that room. Produce her instantly, or tremble for the consequences.

ORM. Mr. Ivyleafe. (*Mrs. O. is approaching the study door R.*) Marion, what would you do? (*interposing.*)

Mrs. O Stamp the brand of infamy upon the brow of guilt.

ORM. For your own sake desist.

Mrs. O. No! though death stood on the threshold, it should not deter me. (*breaks from him, and strikes the door R. 2 E.*) Come forth? Come forth, madam, I command you.

The study-door opens R. 2. E., and CLARA. enters timidly.

CLARA. (R.) My mother!

Mrs. O. (R. C, *starting back.*) Clara! my daughter!

IVY. (L., *aside.*) Egad! I'm afraid we've made an awkward mistake here. (*turns up L., and comes down R.*)

CLARA. (*approaching timidly.*) Dearest mother, forgive me.

Mrs. O. (*aside.*) Poor girl! I blush to look upon her.

CLARA. I know 'twas rash and imprudent of me to run away from school, but I thought you had forgotten me, and with the thought came the resolve to seek you, and reclaim the place in your affections I had never knowingly forfeited. Mr. Ormonde received me on my arrival this morning, promised to intercede for me, and—

Mrs. O. Enough, enough, my child! Come to my heart, and let a mother's love atone for a mother's fault. (*embraces.*)

CLARA. Oh! to be pressed once more within these arms.

Mrs. O. This, this, is too much. Leave me, dear Clara. The surprise, the joy, the confusion, overpower me.

IVY. (R.) Just like me; I'm perfectly bewildered, completely stunned.

Mrs. O. Leave me awhile, dear Clara. (*Mrs. O. indicates to IVY. to take CLARA away.*)

IVY. (*aside.*) I understand. Come, my dear. (*taking CLARA up the stage, R.*) We'll take a turn in the garden for a few minutes. (*they both exeunt R. D IN FLAT.*)

[Mr. ORM. L., *stands with his back towards Mrs. O.,*

who makes a few steps towards him, hesitatingly, then stops, and with a hopeless gesture totters to a chair by the table, L., and hides her face in her hands.

Mrs. O. No, no! He can never forgive me. *(weeps.)*

ORM. *(turns and aside.)* She weeps. Poor Marion! I cannot for my life but pity her. *(crosses and approaches her gently.)* Marion.

Mrs. O. Ah! there's kindness in that tone. Can it be possible you do not hate me? No, I dare not look upon your face, lest I should read there the heavy sentence of my fault.

ORM. Your heaviest punishment, Marion, must be in 'the secret reproaches of your own heart. My tongue shall utter none.

Mrs. O. Dear Arthur; yet hear me! I have wronged you, wronged your noble nature, and mistrusted your actions when I had most cause to be grateful and confiding. How shall I confess the weakness of my love that trembled for the treasure it possessed. I dreaded even that you should see my daughter grown to womanhood—lest she might remind you that the spring time of her mother's youth was past. Often has my heart accused me for the unworthy concealment; and I have resolved to tell you all; but my woman's vanity still sealed my lips and left the unmade confession for another day. For this I have been justly punished—for this behold me humble and penitent—*(about to kneel.)*

ORM. Not there; dear Marion! But here in my bosom, *(raises and embraces her.)* The storm raised by your jealous fears is past, the heavens smile again upon us.

Mrs. O. Oh! joy, joy! Dear Arthur am I forgiven—my errors and your wrongs—forgiven?

ORM. Aye, all forgiven, and forgotten, in this kiss. *(kisses her.)*

Re-enter IVYLEAFE and CLARA, R. D., IN FLAT.

IVY. (R. C.) Bravo! bravo! Just like me! I see you have been making up—

Mrs. O. (L. C., *apart to IVY.*) Hush! Clara is ignorant of this affair, do not expose my weakness to her.

IVY. (to Mrs. O.) Mum! I understand *(crosses to ORM.)* Don't say a word, but give me your hand—you're a noble fellow. *(wrings ORMONDE'S hand.)* My wife has told me all; I met her coming across the garden with our friend Apsley. Here they are.

Enter APSLEY, and Mrs. IVYLEAFE, R. D., IN FLAT.

Mrs. O. *(crosses to meet Mrs. IVY.)* You are come in a happy moment to witness my felicity; to complete it—let

me be assured that I have your pardon for the unjust suspicions I—

Mrs. I. (R. C.) Hush, my dear! It was given before you asked it. I have been myself to blame for the pain I have given you, and require your forgiveness in return.

APS. (R., *apart to CLARA.*) Is there any hope, Clara?

CLARA. (R., *apart to APS.*) I know not.

Mrs. O. I have, however, one duty to perform. (*crosses to R.*) Mr. Apsley, when you asked me for Clara's hand this morning I refused it, because, (*pause,*) no matter; the cause is past. If there be faith in human looks, she loves you. (*places CLARA'S hand in APSLEY'S.*) Take her, and fondly guard the treasure I bestow upon you.

APS. With my life.

IVY. (L. C.) Bravo! bravo! I knew my wife would manage this affair at last. She's a wonderful creature, and egad I don't mind saying it to her face, we're the happiest couple that—

Mrs. I. (*running to him.*) There, there! I must stop your mouth with another lozenge, (*puts a lozenge into his mouth.*)

Enter GILLYFLOWER and ROSE, L. D. 2 E.

ORM. Well, Gillyflower?

GIL. (L.) I beg pardon, sir, for coming up without being rung for, but circumstances of an unpleasant nature have occurred in this house. I mention no names, but if a boot could blush, there's one in the present company ought to turn like a lobster from black to red for the indignity it has placed upon my person.

APS. (R.) Oh! I can explain this matter.

GIL. Pray don't, sir. Oblige me by leaving the painful recollection to my own—bosom. Mr. Ormonde, sir, I don't think, feeling as I do, I could be comfortable in this house any longer—so I'm about to leave.

ORM. AS you please—are you provided with another place?

GIL. Yes, sir. I'm going into the service of Hymen. I've made up my mind to undertake the duties of the *high-mienial* state. Rose here has opened her heart and her Savings' Bank book to me. They are both to be transferred next week to the name of Gillyflower.

Mrs. O. Is this true, Rose?

ROSE. (*curtseys.*) Yes please, mum. Mr. Gillyflower says heaven has matched us like a cup and saucer in a set of china.

ORM. Well, I wish you happiness; but what do you mean to do?

GIL. Why, sir, I've a snug public-house in my eye, near Hyde Park Corner. Rose has a pleasing bust for behind a

bar, and I may say, with becoming modesty, that I have an agreeable figure for the convivial parlour.

IVY. That's right; I like to hear of a wedding, it makes me feel as merry as a cricket Apsley, I give you joy of your charging bride.

CLARA. And shall I be, indeed, a real bride,
With favours, cake, and gloves, and all beside ?
Shall I no more again to school return,
And have no tasks—

APS. Save those which love may learn?
Our life one long bright holiday shall be.

IVY. That's capital; that just the way with me.
And when you're married—

Mrs. I. Pray, adopt our plan,
And wear your chains as lightly as you can;

ORM. Not loosely, nor too strictly, but between ;
True happiness lies in the golden mean.

GIL. Nothing that's golden can be mean, I say.
Disgustibus non disputandum—hey?
Give *me* a neat bar-parlour—

ROSE. And a shay! 

Mrs. O. (*to the audience.*)
They say I'm forty ! what a fib ! I pray
You won't believe much more than *half* they say.
I feel—to learn, I'm not one day too old,
To change too stubborn—or to love too cold;
Nor yet too proud to plead my woman's cause.
Too happy, though—to merit your applause.

Disposition of Characters.

R. CLARA, APSLEY, Mrs. I., IVY., Mrs. O., ORM., ROSE GIL. L.

Curtain.