

THE
MASTER PASSION.

A COMEDY.

IN TWO ACTS.

BY MRS. ALFRED PHILLIPS,

*Author of "An Organic Affection," "Caught in his own Trap,"
"A Bachelor's Vow," &c.&c.*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,
LONDON.

*First Performed at the Royal Olympic Theatre,
on Wednesday, September 1st, 1852.*

Characters.

Mr. Buscoyne	Mr. G. COOKE.
Randolph Buscoyne	{ m r . W . F a r r e n , J u n .
	{ Mr. Edgar.
Jacob Anstead	Mr. W. FARREN.
Caleb Thomas	Mr. HOSKINS.
Thomas Peg	Mr. CLIFTON.
Tobias Dove	Mr. SHALDERS.
Joseph	Mr. TANNER.
Mrs. Buscoyne	Mrs. B. BARTLETT.
Julia Buscoyne	Miss RAFTER.
Mildred Anstead	Mrs. WALTER LACY.
Polly Dodds	Mrs. A. PHILLIPS.

PERIOD—1780. SCENE—BRADFORD, YORKSHIRE.

Time in Representation, One Hour and Thirty Minutes.

MR. BUSCOYNE—Scarlet coat trimmed with gold, breeches, silk stockings, shoes.

RANDOLPH—*1st Dress* Green suit trimmed with silver, shoes and stockings.—*2nd Dress*. Large black cloak, large hat, boots.—*3rd Dress*. Same as *1st*.

JACOB—Light suit, breeches, stockings, shoes, white hair.

CALEB—Dark suit, breeches, stockings, shoes.

TObIAS—Black coat, drab breeches and gaiters, large hat.

PEG—Blue tail coat, breeches, stockings, shoes.

JOSEPH—Velveteen jacket, cap, &c.

WORKMEN—Same as Joseph.

MRS. BUSCOYNE—Blue satin dress, shoes, &c.

JULIA—Pink satin dress, white petticoat.

MILDRED—White muslin dress, trimmed with orange, ribbon.

POLLY—*1st Dress*. Lilac body, white petticoat, cap, &c.

2nd Dress. Puce-coloured body, petticoat, &c.

THE MASTER PASSION.

ACT 1.

SCENE I.—*A Merchant's Counting-house—Doors.R and L.—Large opening in flat, through which is seen Wareroom in the distance—Desk R. and L.—A writing table covered with papers—Table and chair R,—Bales and other packages lying about in different directions.*

PEG, JOSEPH, and WORKMEN *discovered.*

JOS. (*directing WORKMEN, and placing a bale on truck*) All right, Mr. Peg?

PEG. (*seated at desk L., marking off from invoice*) All right, and you may go.

JOS. If I might be so bold, Mr, Peg, the men have asked me to ask you to ask Mr. Anstead to beg a holiday to celebrate Miss Mildred's wedding.

PEG. I'll speak to her father about it

JOS. Thank you, Sir.

Exit, wheeling off bale of goods, L.C.

PEG. Now let me enter these goods. (*writes*)

Enter POLLY DODDS, R.D.

POL. (R.) Good morning, Mr. Peg. Have you seen Miss Mildred?

PEG. (*coming down L.*) Don't talk of Miss Mildred, but think of me, Polly. How well you look!

POL. D'ye think so, Mr. Peg?

PEG. I know so, and that's beyond thinking. This bit of machinery (*placing his hand upon his heart*) assures me of the fact.

POL. Ob, Mr. Peg, you mustn't talk like that. You know I am an affianced one.

PEG. Affianced be smothered ! As long as you're single, you're in the market, and I've as much right to bid for you as another. If you would but knock yourself down to me!

POL. I haven't put myself up yet; and depend upon it, when I do, I'll buy in, at any sacrifice, sooner than be knocked down to a mere Peg!

PEG. Miss Polly, you're an unmitigated flirt Before that Quaker chap came, I was your "dear Peg!"—your "kind Peg!"—your "only Peg!"

Enter TOBIAS DOVE, at back, c. from L.

POL. (*seizing PEG by the collar*) Calumniator! Did I ever say you were my Peg?

PEG. You looked it, if you didn't say it.

POL. Looked it? (*shakes him*) How dare you interpret my looks? How do I look now?

PEG. Let me go, and I'll tell you.

POL. (*releasing him*) There! Now, how do I look?

PEG. Like a fury, as you are! (*runs off L.D.*)

TOB. (*coming forward, R.*) Thou hast acted like a spirited damsel, and I do love thee, verily—hum!

POL. Did you hear what he said?

TOB. Yea, and it did gladden my heart when thou did'st call me thy affianced--hum!

POL. Pray, Mr. Tobias, how came you to suppose it was you I meant?

TOB. Because, maiden, I have pressed thy hand and kissed thy cheek, and it did seem to please thee.

POL. Toby, Toby, I believe you're a great hypocrite!

TOB. Put me to the proof, damsel, and thou'lt not find me wanting.

POL. Don't "damsel" and "maiden" me! I won't be called out of my name!

TOB. Verily—hum!

POL. What do you mean by "verily—hum?" My name is plain Polly Dodds!

TOB. I mean, plain Polly Dodds, that I have spoken of my intentions regarding thee to our master, and he consenting, verily, I will gird up my loins and marry thee.

POL. Marry me?

TOB. (R.) Yea, without delay I will make thee my rib!

POL. (L.) Your what?

TOB. My spare rib!

POL. (*crosses to R.*) Spare yourself the trouble, Mr. Tobias. Does master think I am made like his stockings, to be worn by any calf that can afford to pay for me? No, Sir; you shall find me a web that isn't to be unravelled by a—hum!

Exit R.D.

Enter JACOB ANSTEAD, L.D.

JAC. Tobias, what are you doing here?

TOB. Verily, I was cogitating.

JAC. Does your master pay you for cogitating in my office, when you should be writing in your own?

TOB. I came to hold converse with the handmaiden, plain Polly Dodds.

JAC. Ha, ha, ha! Plain Polly Dodds will be your ruin, Get to work, silly fellow, and drive her from your head.

TOB, Yes, verily—hum!

Exit C. and L.

JAC. (*sits R. of L. table*) Ha, ha, ha! Cupid has many freaks, and this is not the least of the rascal's tricks. My poor Mildred, too! She is—But I must be blind! Honour before all—yes, before all!

Enter MILDRED, R.D.,—Not seeing her father, she sits L. at R. table, covers her face with her hands, and seems absorbed in grief—JACOB watches her intently for a moment or two.

JAC. Milly!

MIL. (*confusedly*) Father!

JAC. Tears? What am I to think?

MIL. Not that I have been crying, father.

JAC. No, my child, no. Tears are proofs of anything but grief,—dewdrops, Milly, which fall but to refresh my beautiful rose. Is it not so.

MIL. Dear father, you will not be angry because I am out of spirits, fatigued, and—

JAC. (*pettishly, but fondly*) You are an idle, good-for-nothing little puss! There—there—get along,—you are growing silly, girl!

MIL. And you are growing cross—very cross, and harsh—to me, at least, (*approaches him*) Have I offended you?

JAC. No, my darling, no; but go, now, and mind your work, nor hinder me from mine.

MIL. But, dear father—(*bursts into tears*)

JAC. (*severely*) Tears again? What do they mean!

MIL. I do not know.

JAC. You do not love Caleb,—he is not good enough, handsome enough, for so fine a lady.

MIL. I think him very handsome, father, and quite good enough for me; but—

JAC. You do not know the value of an honest heart.

MIL. Indeed, indeed, I *esteem* Caleb *much*, but I fear I shall never know how to please or make him *happy*.

JAC. Nature is a rare teacher, Milly.

MIL. Then, I am so young.

JAC. Old enough to cause a deal of mischief. (*affectionately*) Come, come. (*kisses her*) Dry your tears, and work while I write. (*she is going towards R.D.*) What are you running away for? You are never with me now.

MIL. Indeed, father, I am too happy to remain with you; but while you are at those accounts, you cannot even look at me.

JAC. Then you can look at *me*—you've nothing better to do.

MIL. Look at *you*?

JAC. (*writing*) If I am not ugly enough to frighten you.

MIL. You, father? That good, kind face—those dear white hairs! You? To me you are most beautiful!

JAC. Look at me attentively, and tell me your thoughts.

MIL. May I speak honestly?

JAC. (*putting down his pen*) Or not at all.

MIL. Then I think that you would die, as you have lived, for Mr. Buscoyne—that you would sacrifice, to *duty*, *your* happiness and *mine*.

JAC. (*after a pause, rises, and pushes her gently to R.D.*) Go along! If you have anything to do, I'll not detain you.

MIL. I will see if Julia——.

JAC. That young lady is our master's daughter!

MIL. (*catches JACOB'S eye*) If my mistress wants me.

JAC. That's right!

MIL. (*approaching him*) You will kiss me, father ?

JAC. Do you deserve it?—from the bottom of your heart, do you deserve it ?

MIL. I do.

JAC. There, then, (*kisses her*) Bless thee, my darling, bless thee! Now run away.

Exit MILDRED, R.D.

—(JACOB *watches her as she goes out, then reseats himself*) Young, weak, and restless!—honest as the day, and beautiful as (*with emotion*) her mother'.

Enter CALEB THOMAS, with papers, L.D.

CAL. Mr. Buscoyne sends these invoices, Sir.

JAC. (*hiding his tears*) Put them down.

CAL. (*looking round*) Where is Mildred? I thought she was here. (*crosses to R.*)

JAC. (*with forced gaiety*) Ha, ha ! You lovers are idle dogs!

CAL. (*sitting at desk L.*) Do you reproach me for loving your daughter, Mr. Anstead ?

JAC. Reproach you? No, my boy, no; providing the books do not suffer—that you don't neglect your duty.

CAL. Duty is as much my religion as your own.

JAC. I believed so, or I shouldn't have chosen you for my son. Caleb, you are an honest fellow—punctual in business, and I think, spite of your blunt temper, a reasonable man.

CAL. Sir!

JAC. Mildred is not rich, but she is good and virtuous.

CAL. A priceless dowry for the husband of her choice !

JAC. And she loves you.

CAL. Are you sure of that ?

JAC. I have already told you my means are not large. Mr. Buscoyne often wished to add to them, but I would never allow it.

CAL. Why not? I am ambitious—I would be rich.

JAC. You are rich in honesty and industry, and I am satisfied.

CAL. You are disinterested, Mr. Anstead.

JAC. Why should I be otherwise?

CAL. (*searchingly*) Have you no ambition even for your, child? You do not wish her to become rich ?

JAC. No. I follow my master's example. He prays only for his daughter's virtue—his son's honour.

CAL. Has he no prejudices of birth?

JAC. None. Born of a noble house, he sees no degradation in becoming a simple merchant.

CAL. (*coming down R.H.*) Humph! Does the son share the father's sentiments?

JAC. As yet, Master Randolph has no fixed principles,—he is young, generous, and I regard him as though he were my own.

Enter RANDOLPH BUSCOYNE, R.D.

RAN. Twenty pounds, if you please, Mr. Jacob—I've some purchases to make this morning.

JAC. I will fetch them, Master Randolph, I will fetch them, (*he hastens off L.C.*)

RAN. Well, Caleb, when is your marriage to come off?

CAL. (*coming down L.*) The day is fixed, Sir.

RAN. Bravo!—then I shall dance at the wedding.

CAL. (*coldly*) We shall be too much honoured, Sir.'

RAN. Not at all, I wish you joy with all my heart, for you are going to marry the sweetest creature in existence, Mildred, my sister, and myself were brought up together. Julia was tolerably good—I wasn't bad; but Milly—dear little Milly—was always better than either of us. You'll not object to a wedding-present from her brother?

CAL. Then, I presume, this—twenty pounds, Sir?—

RAN. Tush! never mind the sum, You give me permission?

CAL. (*Haughtily*) Sir, if my wife—

RAN. Ha, ha, ha! You call her wife even before you are married. Your wife! Ha, ha, ha!

CAL. The jest is pointless, Mr. Randolph.

RAN. My dear fellow, I did not wish to hurt your feelings. Come, have I your permission?

CAL. Mildred is not yet my wife, and I cannot control her. She may accept or reject your gift, as best pleases her.

RAN. Oh! she will not refuse *me*; if she does, it will be the first time in her life,—there is no pride in her. But you are not well?

CAL. Perfectly.

RAN. Well, then, you are out of humour—and that is so unlike Milly. I left her just now singing like a blackbird.

CAL. (*inquiringly*) You have seen her?—this morning?

RAN. Of course I have. I couldn't eat my breakfast until I had been greeted by her merry laugh. She's a little angel, Caleb, and you are a lucky fellow in gaining; such a creature.

CAL. (*with suppressed anger*) I want to marry a woman not an angel.

RAN. My sentiment exactly. There is *some* sympathy between us..

CAL. Sympathy? (*aside*) I could strangle him!

Enter JACOB ANSTEAD, L.C.

JAC. (R.C.) Here, Master Randolph—here is what you asked for. (*giving the money*)

RAN. (L.C.) You'll enter this, if you please.

8 THE MASTER PASSION.

JAC. I enter everything. See, here is your account, (*running his finger down several pages of a book he has in his hand*) There, sir, there!

RAN. Ha, ha, ha! My good friend, you frighten me!

JAC. That is your account, Sir—I enter everything, even to a farthing.

RAN. I don't doubt it. Has my father seen this?

JAC. No; but he saw last month's, and it was pretty much the same.

RAN. Did he complain?

JAC. He complain? He never complains. He lives but to promote his children's happiness.

RAN. If he thinks me a little too fast, he will tell me.

JAC. He! Ah, Master Randolph, you little know him!

RAN. Well, then, *you* will. If my father spoils me, you must not.

Enter Polly C. and L.

POL. If you please, Mr. Jacob, mistress is coming to pay you a visit here in your office.

Enter Tobias C. and L.

JAC. Your mistress here! This is an honour.

TOB. Friend Jacob!

JAC. Toby, too? After that girl again? Ha, ha, ha!

TOB. (C.) Yea, friend, she did outrun me. I am not used to skip like a lamb, for my wind is anything but strong—hum!

POL. (R.) Don't begin humming again—I'm sick of it!

TOB. Teach me what I shall do to please thee, and I'll about it straight, plain Polly Dodds.

POL. Don't "plain" me, booby!

TOB. Verily, there are about thee some rough edges that will bear it—hum!

RAN. There you are mistaken, friend Tobias. Polly is round and smooth as a snowball.

TOB. And much more melting—verily!

POL. It's not when I'm near you, then; for you are enough to freeze-up everything.

TOB. Talk not, maiden, of what thou knowest not. Man is a mystery—hum! Friend Jacob, I have come to tell thee our honoured master wishes a word with thee.

JAC. Why didn't you tell me so before? Oh! this love, this love! I verily believe it softens man's heads as well as their hearts!

Exit C. and L.

TOB. Friend Randolph, thy father craves a word with thee.

RAN. (*pushing TOBIAS aside, crosses to C.*) Does he? Then stand out of the way, and I'll quickly stop his craving.

Exit C. and L.

POL. I am going to fetch Miss Julia. Don't you attempt to follow me!

Exit R.D.

TOB. Further than the door I will not, (r.d. is shut in his face) because, alas! I cannot—hum!

Exit C. and L.

Enter MILDRED R.H.D.

MIL. (a.) Father, (*looking round*) Not here? Ha, Caleb! What is the matter? You look sad.

CAL. (*coming down L.*) I am sad, because—became you are gay.

MIL. Can you wish that I should be sorrowful, Caleb?

CAL. You are never otherwise with me,—you reserve your gaiety for others. Mildred, there is a mystery about you which must be cleared up. I will be satisfied.

MIL. You frighten me, Caleb!

CAL. I never used to frighten you.

MIL. No! when I was a child.

CAL. Why should I frighten you now?

MIL. Caleb, this language is new to me. I did not expect rudeness from you—from one who used to be so gentle, so kind.

CAL. It is not in my nature to woo with soft speeches; but, stern and rugged as that nature is, you could do much to soften it. Teach me, then—teach me, dear Mildred, how to win you!

MIL. Be my friend.

CAL. (*reproachfully*) Friend, Mildred?

MIL. (*firmly*) Be just to yourself, and do not doubt me.

CAL. (*taking her hand, which she strives to release*) Oh! if you knew how dearly I prize the possession of this little hand, you would not take it from me. Mildred, I am not a man of many words—not easily moved. I do not know how to speak as daintily as others. Few words come to me on any occasion. I could call you "Angel!" "Light!" "Life!"—but these are commonplace, unmeaning terms, and poorly express what I would say.

MIL. Dear Caleb, I am not worthy of you!

CAL. Not worthy, Mildred?

MIL. I fear---

CAL. Fear?

MIL. That I may not love you as you deserve. My nature is not ardent as your own, but—I will do my best, Caleb—I will do my best!

Enter JACOB C. from L.

—Father, I am glad you have come—Caleb doubts my affection for him.

JAC. (C.) Ah! he's so much in love himself, it makes him unreasonable. Marriage is a serious matter, Caleb; but provided both are determined to do their duty, all will go well. (*he embraces MILDRED*)

Enter POLLY and TOBIAS, C. from L.

POL. (r.) Toby, Toby, this is too bad! Don't come so close—you've trodden on my heel!

TOB. (R.) I would fain walk in thy footsteps, for the proximity is pleasant to my feelings.

Enter MR. BUSCOYNE, MRS. BUSCOYNE, JULIA, and PEG, c. from L., followed by SERVANTS carrying boxes.

MRS. B. (R.C., *taking box from SERVANT*) Mildred, we have come to offer our gifts of affection, and to wish you and your future husband all kinds of happiness and prosperity.

MIL. (L.C.) Madam, this kindness——

BUS. (L.C.) I am not skilled in draperies, Milly, but this little pocket-book will prove more useful, (*presents a pocket-book, which MILDRED hands to her father, who examines the contents*)

TOB. (*aside to POLLY*) Truly, I am anxious to present my mite.

POL. Be quiet, Toby!

JAC. (L., *taking a draft from pocket-book*) A thousand pounds!

CAL. (L.) (*aside*) Money! 'Twas this I dreaded!

BUS. I always told you, Jacob, It was my intention to give your daughter a wedding portion.

JAC, But this is too much, Sir.

MIL. My father is right. I do not merit such generosity,—it makes me feel that you no longer wish *me* near you.

MRS. B. On the contrary, my *dear* Milly, it is our wish that you continue under the protection of this roof.

CAL. (*aside*) Not when she is my wife !

MIL. I cannot express my gratitude—my feelings overpower me.

TOB. (*advancing*) I am like unto thee, maiden, for my feelings do often rise in judgment against me.

POL, I wish you'd keep yourself and your feelings in the background ! (*she forces him back*)

JUL. (R.C., *taking box from SERVANT*) Now, Mildred, here is my present, (*giving box*)

MIL. (*taking a wreath from box*) How beautiful!

POL. (*crossing to her*) Yes, Miss, you may live in a bower and wear white kid gloves all the rest of your days. I have only a silver thimble, but it will remind you of Polly Dodds. (*presents it*)

PEG. (*advancing to c.*) A trifle from Thomas Peg, I hope, will prove acceptable.

POL. (*taking a cushion from PEG*) Why, it is stuck full of pins! —and poetry! (*reads*)

"The gift is small,
But love is all!"

TOB. (*crosses to MILDRED*) Friend Mildred, from thy father's faithful "Tobias thou' it not refuse this ancient receptacle for—pap !—nutritious food for infants—hum ! (*presents a silver pap-boat*)

MIL. Thanks, thanks—my kind, good friends!

MRS. B. We will leave you now, Mildred, to contemplate your little finery. At the breakfast-table you will join your father and intended husband, and then we'll talk over the arrangements for the happy day.

BUS. (*who has been talking apart to JACOB, as if in reference to CALEB, advances, and speaks aside to MRS. BUSCOYNE*) Go, my dear, and await our friends. I have some trifling matters to settle

with Jacob, but will join you in a few minutes, (*he leads MRS. B. to the door*) Jacob, follow me.

Exeunt BUSCOYNE. and JACOB C. and L.

CAL. (*following*) (*aside*) A dowry!—and I to suffer it!

Exit C. and L.

MRS. B. (*crosses to a.*) Come, Julia, let us leave Milly now. Polly, see that the things are in order.

POL Yes, Ma'am.

Exit MRS. BUSCOYNE, R.D.

—Now, Toby, don't you attempt to follow me again!

Ton. I would fain go before.

POL. Go, then, (*points off c.*)

TOB. (*going towards C.*) Wilt thou follow ?

POL. Certainly not!

Exit R.D.

Ton. (*turning back*) Then I'll content me with the rear.

Exit R.D.

JUL. Milly dear, I shall not leave you long—only just time to pack up your treasures. Oh, we shall all be so happy!

EXIT R

MIL. (*gazing at the different presents which lie scattered on the table*) A bridal dress! flowers! lace! and money! (*she takes up the pocket-book*) My initials! and oh, so much money! I shall be so rich—so happy! (*despondingly*) so very happy! Caleb loves me! (*in tears*) And my father—so pleased at this marriage! All are so fond of me! I *must* be happy! (*faltering*) I *am* happy—so happy! I choke with happiness! (*bursts into tears*)

Enter RANDOLPH BUSCOYNE, C, from L.

RAN. (R.) Mildred, you are crying.

MIL. (L.) No--no! Do not say so to my father—he is angry when I cry.

RAN. Are you often thus?

MIL. Very often, (*checks herself*) That is, sometimes. It is nothing!

RAN. What is it that troubles you, Mildred?

MIL. Nothing!

RAN. Do you weep without a cause?

MIL. Sometimes.

RAN. Caleb

MIL. (*starts at the name—endeavouring to conceal her confusion*) Well—Caleb?

RAN. Loves you?

MIL. (*quickly*) Oh yes—very much!

RAN. And you love him; Milly?

MIL. (*casting her eyes to the ground*) Yes!

RAN. Then it is not your marriage that makes you unhappy?

MIL. (*sighing deeply*) No!

RAN. (*assuming his previous gaiety of manner*) Come, then, MILLY,—my little sister must not spoil her pretty eyes with weeping. If she does, I shall take my gift away again.

MIL. (*suddenly looks up, and brushes away her tears*) I am not sad now.

RAN. (*draws a case from his pocket*)

MIL. What is your gift? Something, I hope, that I can always wear.

RAN. (*gives her the case, which she opens*)

MIL. Your watch!—your dear watch, that passed the whole night with me—that dreadful night preceding the duel! (*kisses it*)

RAN. I am glad it pleases you.

MIL. But what will your sister say, thus to give away her birthday present?

RAN. I have ordered one exactly like it—she will not know the difference.

MIL. Ah! but you must not deceive her.

RAN. Then give it me again, and you shall have the new one.

MIL. (*sadly*) I should like the old one much better—it will remind me of that fearful night when you said, "Take this watch, Milly, and return it only to me,—you understand—to me!" (*with great feeling*) You were going to fight, and you would have left this as a memento of—— 'Thank God! I was able to return it!

RAN. Come, no more sighs--I cannot bear to see you unhappy.

MIL. I am not unhappy now.

Enter CALEB and JACOB, C. from L.

JAC. (R.C.) Of course you are not!--and going to be married!

MIL. (L.C.) It is not that makes me happy, father—it is because Mr. Randolph has given me his watch for a bridal present.

CAL. (*aside*) His watch!

MIL. I will wear it all the days of my life.

JAC. (*severely*) You will make her more vain than she is already.

RAN. (R.) Do not be angry. Come, they are awaiting breakfast.

MIL. I shall be so happy! I'll make it strike all the hours—all the half hours, all the quarters, and all the minutes, till they shall say to me—"Milly, Milly, you are going mad!" (*in great ecstasy*)

RAH. Your arm, Milly, (*crossing to her*)

MIL. (*eagerly*) Oh yes! But I will not go before my father.

JAC. And I will not go before Mr. Randolph.

RAN. Why, then, there is but one way to settle it. (*places MILLY'S arm and JACOB'S within his own*) We'll go together.

Exeunt, laughing, R.D.

CAL. (*stands in centre of stage, watching them*) Certainly a most ridiculous bridegroom, but not yet a contemptible husband!

Exit R.D.

Enter MR. BUSCOYNE and PEG, C. from L.

BUS. Tell Mr. Randolph I wish to speak with him.

PEG. Very well, Sir.

Exit R.D.

BUS. (*reading letter*) On the verge of bankruptcy! The house on whose stability I would have staked my existence, cannot hold out any longer. What is to be done?

Enter RANDOLPH R.D.

RAN. What has happened, Sir?

BUS. (*passing the letter to RANDOLPH*) I have a communication relative to the house of Herries and Morrison, which gives *me* some uneasiness.

RAN. The York people, who are so deeply indebted to you?

BUS. I do not like to close the credit of honest people whose rain my mistrust might hasten. Besides, If things are as bad as I am wished to believe, all the caution in the world would now be un-availing.

Enter JULIA and MRS. BUSCOYNE, R.D.

JUL. (R.C.) Come, papa, we've been looking for you. There's nothing settled yet. We've been talking and talking, but to no purpose. I am sure I'll have no such fuss when I am about to be married.

MRS. B. (R.) You ought to have known that Jacob will not settle anything without your father.

JUL. They are coming here, and looking as grave as a coroner's jury.

Enter JACOB, MILDRED, and CALEB, R.D.

BUS. Well, Jacob, is there anything that should delay the happiness of the young people?

JAC. (R.) Nothing. It is for you to fix the day, Sir,

MIL. (R., *aside, and despondingly*) To fix the day!

BUS. (L.C.) This is the third of the month. What do you say to the sixth?

JAC. The sixth be it, Sir. (*aside*) I shall so glad to get it over!

MIL. (*starting*) No, not the sixth—that is Friday. Friday is a bad, unlucky day! (*firmly*) I will not be married on a Friday!

BUS. Then let it be Sunday—that will be in five days.

MIL. (*aside*) Five days!—so soon!

JAC. Sunday is a nice, quiet day to be married; and there will be no business to interrupt us.

CAL. (L., *Who has been intently watching MILDRED*) But why such haste? It is displeasing to Mildred.

JAC. (*anxiously*) Caleb, you do not understand a young woman's feelings.

BUS. (L.C.) Jacob is right; and that the young people may sooner come to an understanding, let us leave them to themselves. Depend upon it, they will get on much better without us.

JUL. (*taking BUSCOYNE'S arm*) Dear, good papa! You always know how best to please us.

All except CALEB, MILDRED, and RANDOLPH, retire C. and R.

RAN. Make up your mind, Milly. I long to see you in your wedding-dress, (*suddenly changes his manner, as if struck by MILDRED'S grief. He looks sternly at CALEB, who has been watching him, and who returns a look of defiance—then sorrowfully kisses MILDRED'S hand*) and exits C. and L.—MILDRED turns, watches him off)

CAL. Mildred!

MIL. (*starts*)

CAL. Why do you start at the sound of my voice? You need not fear me.

MIL. Fear you, Caleb? Nor do I.

CAL. Morose, unfeeling as I may be to my fellow man, in your presence I am a different being,—everything then seems bright and genial to my heart! But listen to me, Mildred, before it is too late. Were I devoid of principle, I should be silent—conceal my wishes until the law compelled you to obey them.

MIL. What are those wishes, Caleb?

CAL. As soon as the ceremony is over, we must leave this house, and for ever!

MIL. (*with great emotion*) Leave this house, Caleb? Leave—separate me from my father? (*recoils from him*)

JACOB, MR. BUSCOYNE, and JULIA, approach from C. from R.

BUS. (*aside to JACOB*) They do not seem to understand each other yet.

JAC. Come, Milly—come, Caleb—have you settled it?

MIL. (*firmly, and after a struggle*) Father, I cannot marry Caleb!

JAC. (*surprised*) Not marry him?

MIL. Do not reproach me, father. Caleb is frank, and so am I—

JAC. Explain this mystery.

CAL. Before Mr. Buscoyne I cannot.

BUS. Well, if I must go——(*going*)

MIL. (*detaining him*) No, Sir—Caleb will tell you what he has already told me.

JAC. Oh dear! oh dear!--what is the matter?

CAL. On the day I marry Mildred Anstead, I renounce your service, Sir.

MIL. You hear,—he would tear me from my father—from the playmates of my infancy—the home where I have been so happy, so very happy!

Exit MRS, BUSCOYNE, JULIA, and MILDRED, R.D.

BUS. Tell me why you desire to leave my house—why entertain a repugnance to the services I could render you.

CAL. Sir, were I to remain single, nowhere could I be more happy than with you, But I have reasons—weighty reasons—for my determination.

Exit L. D.

BUS. (*to JACOB*) Do you know Caleb's reason for leaving me ?

JAC. No.

BUS. And you have never thought it worth inquiring into ?

JAC. (*embarrassed*) Caleb is headstrong, and in love ; and If it is his wish, I will not thwart him.

BUS. You treat this separation very lightly. Jacob, I suspect——

JAC. (*with increased uneasiness*) Suspect what, Sir—there is nothing to suspect.

BUS. I suspect that Cableb is jealous.

JAC. Jealous of whom. What has he said!

BUS. He has said nothing; but I have understood every thing. For my sake would you sacrifice your own child.

JAC. Oh dear—oh dear—I do not understand you, Sir.

BUS. Your daughter's claims on your affection are sacred—imperative! Her happiness ought to be a consideration far superior to any interest you may feel for me.

JAC. Well, well, what would you say ?

BUS. Nothing to you, for you have kept that from me which it was your duty to have made known. I shall speak to——

JAC. (*earnestly*) Not to Milly, I beseech you, Sir.

BUS. It is my son, I shall interrogate.

JAC. Your son! No, no, you must not tell him for untold gold.

BUS. Tell him what?

JAC. (*very excited*) That—that, which you think ?

BUS. What do I think.

JAC. That Caleb is jealous ! Do not mention it to Master Randolph.

BUS. Does *he* suspect it.

JAC. (*off his guard*) No, no, I took care of that. The moment I discovered it myself I prevented their meeting.

BUS. What are you talking about ?

JAC. Talking about? Caleb's jealousy—it is not Master Randolph's fault.

BUS. One word, and to the point. Has my son given Mildred cause to believe that he regards her other than a sister.

JAC. I am sure he never has.

BUS. (*after a pause*) Send Randolph to me.

JAC. (*imploringly*) What will you do, Sir?

BUS. You shall see.

JAC. Dear, good master, don't put anything into the poor boy's head, or we shall have two fires to quench instead of one.

Exit C. and L.

BUS. The old man's fidelity to me shall not be turned against himself. I must, however, be cautious, or I may throw light upon a picture which, for the happiness of all, had been be veiled for ever.

EXIT R.

Enter POLLY, followed by TOBIAS, L.C.

POL. (R.) It is no use, Mr. Tobias—I'll never listen to your deceitful tongue again! You couldn't keep yourself quiet even for half-an-hour, but must flirt with that ugly wretch, Sally Pots!

TOB. (L.) Listen to me, Polly Dodds, nor doubt my veracity.

POL. Voracity, you mean!

TOB. I did meet the handmaiden, Sally Pots, close to the summer-house, laden with turnips and potatoes, which did seem to bear heavily on her tender frame.

POL. Tender? She has the frame of a dragoon!

TOB. Verily, the meeting was purely accidental.

POL. Did you put your arm round her thick, ugly waist by accident? Answer me that!

TOB. The reason I did pass my arm round the maiden's waist, was a sudden weakness that came over me.

POL. And pray, Mr. Dove, was it by accident or the weakness that came over you that made you *kiss* Sally Pots—the squinting cat!

TOB. Does the maiden *squint*? Verily that escaped my scrutiny,

POL. Oh, then you *did* look? I shall wish you good day, Mr. Dove. I thought in choosing a plain man like you I should be able to keep you to myself.

TOB. And so thou shalt, Polly! If thou wilt but hear me, I will convince thee of my innocence. Where was I?

POL. Indulging in your weakness.

TOB. Sally spake, and said "how doth the lovely maiden, Polly Dodds! Dost thou love that virtuous damsel, Tobias?" Spake she. Yes, verily, spake I—hum!

POL. Dont stand toeing and heeling them, but make haste and come to the end.

TOB. She did farther say, "I can tell thee a secret, friend Tobias—maiden, Polly Dodds, doth love thee dearly,"

POL. She said that did she?

TOB. Verily, and my heart leaped in my bosom, and jumped to my lips; and my lips, despite my virtuous scruples, did thank her with an old fashioned salute, called a kiss, as a reward for the intelligence and happiness she had given me—hum!

POL. I don't know whether I ought to *believe* this story, Tobias.

TOB. I will give thee a proof of my sincerity.

POL. How?

TOB. By making thee bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh—in other words, I will endow thee with my name, and all that I can call mine own.

DUET—TOBIAS *and* POLLY.

TOB. Pretty Polly, wilt thou? eh?

Hum, hum, hum!

Marry, I'll content thee—yea!

Hum, hum, hum!

(•) The music of the duet is composed by Mr. Barnard, Musical Director at the Olympic Theatre, of whom it may be obtained.

Whilt thou be my wedded wife ?
I will cleave to thee through life—
Fighting for kisses, all our strife—Hum, hum, hum!

POL. Tell me, if I wed with thee—
Sly old Dove !
Wilt thou, Toby, be to me

A constant love?
Wilt thou do as husbands ought,
Nor in a summer-house be caught?
Or thou'lt be put on commons short,
Toby Dove!

TOB. Polly Dodds, I tell thee true—
True, true, true!
We'll do nought all day but coo-

Coo, coo, coo!

POL. Time for all things, Sir, I say—
Work you must throughout the day.

TOB, But at night like lambkins play—
Coo, coo, coo!

Enter JACOB C. from L.—POLLY screams, and runs off R.

That's a tone of ecstasy—

Coo, coo, coo !

*he turns to kiss POLLY, and discovers JACOB in her place ;
then folds his hands, and acclaims—" Hum !"*

JAC. " Coo, coo, coo !" I tell you what, my pretty turtle dove—
if you coo about the house in this way, you will have to seek another
nest.

TOB. Friend Jacob, I was but making a tender of myself to the
maiden, Polly Dodds.

JAC. Be good enough now to tender your services in the counting-
house, and copy the letters that are lying on my desk. Master Ran-
dolph is to start for London in half-an-hour, and I have yet to pre-
pare his letters of credit.

TOB. Yea, verily, I will—hum!

Exit c. and L.

JAC. Thank heaven! I shall be rid of one trouble, at last.

Enter JULIA and MILDRED, R.D.

JUL. Oh, Mr. Jacob, Mildred is so unhappy!

JAC. (*angrily, aside to MILDRED*) You have told them what I
forbade you?

MIL. I have told nothing.

JUL. Why, you are scolding instead of consoling her, Mr. Jacob!

JAC. Pardon me—I have no time to attend to her caprices, (*aside to MILDRED, as he passed to door*) Be careful !

Exit R.D.

JUL. Mildred, ought I to admire or condemn this submission—this weakness ?

MIL. Oh! if you knew——

JUL. If you do not love Caleb, you ought not to marry him. You have no right to sacrifice an honest man. Such a marriage would be misery—despair—perhaps guilt !

MIL. (*shuddering*) Guilt ?

JUL. Mildred, you do not love the man you are about to wed, but another!

MIL. Another ? You frighten me!

JUL. Better be frightened into the truth before marriage than after.

MIL. It is my father's will.

JUL. Fifty fathers shouldn't make me marry the man I didn't love!

Enter MR. BUSCOYNE, MRS. BUSCOYNE, and RANDOLPH in a travelling dress, R.D.

MIL. B. (*speaking as she enters*) Going?—and before Mildred's wedding?

BUS. (R.) Business of the greatest importance calls him hence. The honour of our house is concerned.

JUL. (R.C.) My brother leaving us?

MIL. (*stands as if petrified, and seems to gasp for breath*)

RAN. (R.) Yes, Julia, I am going. My father needs *my* services, and I ought not to regret the opportunity which makes me useful to him.

JUL. You will soon return?

RAN. In two months.

MIL. (*aside, as if unconsciously*) Two months!

Enter JACOB, followed by a SERVANT carrying a portmanteau, C. from L.

JAC. Everything is ready, Master Randolph. The coach is at the door—the horses put to; and if you don't make haste, they will take cold.

RAN. Father, adieu!

BUS. If you find things at York as I have reason to fear, dispatch an express forthwith.

RAN. (*crossing to them as he speaks*) Mother— One kiss, Julia, (*approaches MILDRED, who stands as if unconscious of all around her*) Milly, have you nothing to say to me? (*takes her hand*) You will be a wife when I return.

MIL. (*aside, convulsively*) We shall never meet again !

RAN, Dear Mildred, speak to me—me, your brother! Smile on me, or I shall want courage to part with those I love so dearly!

MIL. (*smiles*)

JAC. (*very fidgetty*) Come, Master Randolph—the poor horses are getting cold.

RAN. (*not heeding JACOB*) That's right, Milly! Think of your wedding-dress—of your watch—of your brother, Randolph—and smile—laugh!

MIL. (*wildly*) Bear Randolph, I will! Julia will tell you how I look—at the altar,—and you will laugh—ha, ha, ha !

RAN. Bless you, Mildred—bless you (*he kisses her hand, then rushes to the back of the stage—JACOB drags him off*)

MIL. (*laughing hysterically*) Ha, ha, ha! My wedding-dress! Ha, ha! A winding-sheet! (*she looks round*) Gone! Randolph—dear Randolph!—come back—but for a moment—and I will confess—Gone!—gone for ever ! (*falls fainting*)

JUL. I was not deceived ! She loves my brother !

PICTURE. END OF ACT THE FIRST

ACT II.

SCENE—*Drawing Room.—Doors R. and L.—Centre opening looking into a Conservatory—Tables, chairs, pedestals and statues—Chandeliers and candelabras lighted—Conservatory illuminated with coloured lamps, as for a fete.*

Enter POLLY DODDS, smartly dressed, L.D., followed by PEG, who is also dressed for the occasion.

PEG. Oh, Polly!—is it true?—is it all settled? Are you to be married, as well as Miss Mildred?

POL. Mr. Peg, with the help of a parson and a little bit of gold, I hope to become a respectable matron to-morrow.

PEG. They say marriage works wonders,—so I suppose you'll quake when you become Mrs. Dove.

POL. No—I shall leave that to Tobias.

PEG. I'd rather marry a Tinker than a Quaker. He'll lock up all your finery.

POL. But I've an instrument that'll pick the lock; and that no no husband can deprive me of.

PEG. Indeed ! Some new invention?

POL. Oh, no, a *very* old one—has stood the test of time, never gets rusty, and is always ready when wanted.

PEG. What a treasure. I should like to have a duplicate.

POL. You'll have one some day.

PEG. Shall I. La, what is it?

POL. A woman's tongue!—that beats all the machinery in the world.

Enter TOBIAS, L.D.

TOB. Polly Dodds, it is not meet that thou should'st hold converse with friend Peg, unless in the presence of thy intended—hum!

POL. I am not married yet, and you have no right to control me. Don't presume too much, Sir, or near as the ceremony is, you may have to seek another mate.

TOB. I desire not to vex thee, and I will not presume until the parson hath given me permission.

PEG. YOU must get Polly's permission before you get the parson's.

TOB. Verily, my Polly is not a saint—hum!

POL. No, but she's a woman and isn't to be hammed into anything she doesn't like.

TOB. Verily, hum!

POL. Don't stand there humming like an old bee.

TOB. Thou has't likened me unto a worthy insect, and I am not displeased. Verily, the resemblance is striking; for he, like me, fixes on the fairest flower, and straightway gathers up its sweetness.

POL. Now, that is a compliment!

TOB. Truly, the similitude may be carried *farther*—(*looking at PEG*)—for, in humble imitation of that little architect, when I am vexed I put forth my sting.

POL. Well, now I'm going.

TOB. Tarry, maiden—I would converse with thee alone.

POL. Oh, nonsense, you'll have enough, of me by-and-bye.

Pas. Too much, perhaps, eh, Mr. Tobias? (*crosses to L.*) Well, I won't disturb you; but, mind, Polly, you have promised to dance

with me.

Exit. L.D.

Enter MR. BUSCOYNE and JULIA, R.D.

BUS. Tobias! What is your business here?

TOB. Verily, I come to ask thy assistance in a matter which concerneth myself and the maiden, Polly Dodds. The spirit waxeth warm within me, and I would become a martyr. I mean a married man.

BUS. How can I assist you?

TOB. Thou did'st consent to my espousal of thy handmaiden.

BUS. Certainly, if she is willing.

TOB. I did sound her inclination before I popped the question.

JUL. But what does Polly say?

POL. If it pleases master and mistress I have no objection.

BUS. Have you consulted your mistress.

TOB. I did first consult her, but thought it meet to ask thy consent likewise.

BUS. Well Polly shall not come to you empty handed.

POL. Oh, Sir, you are too good to me.

TOB. Not at all, Polly, for thou art a precious damsel, and our master's just ways do rejoice my heart exceedingly.

Exit POLLY and TOBIAS, L.D.

JUL. Father, what are we to do with Mildred? Her melancholy is truly pitiable. If I felt, as I fear she feels, would you force such a marriage upon me—my brother—

BUS. (*quickly*) What of him?

JUL. You understand me, father—it was you who sent him away.

BUS. Be careful, Julia, what you think, and more so of what you say.

JUL. If it should so happen that Randolph loved Mildred would that love be a crime in your eyes.

BUS. In the sight of heaven, Julia, there are no disproportioned marriages. Through life her father has been my friend, counsellor, brother! There can be no distinction between his child and mine.

JUL. Then, I have not misjudged you.

BUS. Randolph is young, giddy, and without reflection. Love is a passion which he has not yet experienced.

JUL. He has greatly changed since Mildred's marriage has been proposed, and, I am sure, has earnestly longed for the opportunity of declaring his love for her.

Enter JACOB, L.D., with a Letter.

JAC. Pardon me for disturbing you, but this letter, which I have just discovered on my desk, seems to be of consequence.

JUL. Read it father, while I seek Mildred.

Exit R.D.

BUS. (*opening the Letter*) Jacob, is every thing prepared for tomorrow.

JAC. Every thing! At nine, precisely, we go to church!

BUS. You seem to be very impatient, Jacob.

JAC. I own I am so, but then Caleb is so anxious.

BUS. That young man is too impetuous.

JAC. Impetuous or not, there is no drawing back, Sir.

BUS. But, Jacob, if this marriage should prove an unhappy one?

JAC. It sha'n't! I have confidence in my daughter—in Caleb—in myself—and, above all, in heaven! When I married her mother, she did not love me much. I was old, austere, unbending, as Caleb now is,—yet she died blessing me. But will you not read the letter? It may be of consequence. "Immediate" is on the outside.

BUS. (*opens the letter*) From my son! (*reads*) "Hurries and Morrison have failed!"

JAC. Failed?

BUS. I expected it.

JAC. And you are bound for six thousand pounds! In a moment you may be called upon to pay it.

BUS. Who brought this letter ?

JAC. I don't know—I found it on my desk.

BUS, It mast have been placed there by my son's messenger.

JAC. Shall I seek him ?

BUS. Do, and bring hint to my room.

Exit R.D.

JAC. Where can this man have got to ?

Enter CALEB, in a state of great excitement, L.D.

—Caleb, have you seen him ?

CAL. Have not you?

JAC. No. Where is he?

CAL. (*fiercely*) That is what I desire to know. Where is he hidden ?

JAC. Hidden? In the stable or kitchen, perhaps. I shouldn't be surprised if he was in the larder.

CAL. This is trifling, Sir, Randolph Buscoyne will be found neither in the stable nor the kitchen.

JAC. Who spoke of Randolph?

CAL. I!

JAC. Well?

CAL. Nay, it is you who must explain.

JAC. (*fidgetty*) Caleb, where is Master Randolph's messenger?

CAL. (*ironically*) Messenger?

JAC. Yes - messenger. Our master wishes to see him. Do you understand ?

CAL. Mr. Anstead, this assumed temper cannot impose upon me !

JAC. Temper? What is it you mean ?

CAL. I mean that a man, mysteriously enveloped in cloak and hat, has been seen in the garden. That man Is no stranger to the house.

JAC. You alarm me !—perhaps a thief!

CAL. Thief? Yes,—for he would steal a jewel so dear to me, that I would sacrifice my life to preserve it!

JAC. Tell me at once—what is it your fear?

CAL. (*contemptuously*) Fear ?

JAC. Well, then, what do you suspect?

CAL. Everything ! Jacob Anstead, I have been deceived ! You found me contented with my humble lot, happy in my industry, ignorant of love, dreaming not of it, until you placed a tempter in my path who lured me to her toils. *Why* give your daughter to me ? *Why* in such haste to conclude our marriage ? *Why* suffer Mildred to receive a portion from Mr. Buscoyne. *Why* did Randolph leave this house the moment my suspicions were known, and why does he return to it in secresy and disguise ?

JAC. (*after a struggle*) Caleb, I give you my daughter because I wish Her to wed an honest man. Mr, BUBCOYNE portions her because he regards me. This vexes you, so much the better. I like your independent spirit. The money shall be returned, (*aside*) Just now it may be useful.

CAL. Relieve me from the obligation. I care not what becomes of it.

JAC. Master Randolph, witnessing your absurd jealousy, he followed the impulse of his noble nature, and departed from his father's house?

CAL. (*sneeringly*) Departed ! Where is he now ? Is it the impulse of a noble nature to return like a thief in the night, and steal into that father's house.

JAC. If he has returned, which I do not believe, depend upon it he has a sufficient motive for his concealment.

CAL. No doubt. Were he to abduct your daughter before your very eyes, you would scarcely believe those eyes, such confidence do you place in his noble nature.

JAC. Silence, madman ! If you do not respect the man whose bread you eat, have some feeling for the poor girl ?

CAL. Your confidence in the young gentleman may close my lips, but not my eyes.

JAC. What care I what you do with your eyes. I will go and find this messenger, and, if I can, convince you of your folly. (*going*)

CAL. I will accompany you.

JAC. (*passionately*) Go to the De——Caleb, it's a pity your temper isn't as soft as your head!

Exit L.H.

CAL. If that man is not himself a dupe, he has more cunning than I give him credit for. Mildred! There are moments when I hate the name—hate her, and wish to wed her only that I may have the right to make her suffer ! I will not marry her! Why should there be two victims ? It may be that I am wrong—that my diseased imagination conjures up these dreadful thoughts. I cannot—I will not give her up!

Exit L.H.

Enter POLLY DODDS, from R.D., supposed to lead to JULIA'S apartment,

POL. I have arranged all the bridal clothes. What a love Miss Mildred will look ! I don't think I shall be amiss. I should so like to put my things on now and keep them on all night!

Enter RANDOLPH, disguised in a cloak and slouched hat, front garden L.C.

POL. (*dropping on her knees*) Oh, dear, good Mr. Robber, don't do me a mischief I'm going to be married to-morrow !

RAN. Silence!

POL. Think of my poor bereaved husband!

RAN. Silence, I say!

POL. And be murdered ? Not while I can scream !

She is about to scream, when RANDOLPH places his hand on her mouth, and, after a slight struggle, she faints in his arms.

24 THE MASTER PASSION.

RAN. Polly, do you not know me? She has fainted. Unfortunate !

Enter TOBIAS, L.H.--he stares with astonishment.

RAN. Toby, you have come most opportunely.

TOB. Thou hast the advantage of me, friend, and seem to be taking it, too—thou hast the maiden in thy arm? that I do love!

RAN. Take her. (*puts POLLY across to TOBIAS*) Let me escape before I am discovered. (*he exits at the garden door, L.C.*)

POL. (*recovering*) Oh, where am I?

TOB. In the arms of thy faithful Dove.

POL. Where is he?

TOB. Dost thou mean the cloaked stranger whom I caught hugging thee like a great bear ?

POL. Have I been dreaming?

TOB. Verily, my eyes were opened to the uttermost extent of their lids. It is to be hoped, damsel, that thy dreams are not always accompanied by that black-muzzled nightmare.

POL. I do believe it was the ghost of Master Randolph;—something has surely happened to him. So let me go and tell Miss Julia.

TOB. Polly Dodds, I will hie me with thee, nor be separated again until the parson doth make us one.

POL. Toby Dove, do you think I'll have you tied to my apron strings like a great Tantiny pig ?

POL. (*threatening*) Only wait till we're married!

EXIT R.D.

TOB. Discreet counsel, which I will follow, verily--hum !

Exit L.C.

Enter CALEB, L.D.

CAL. He is not to be found. Could I have been mistaken ? (*he lays his hand on the handle of the door a. leading to JULIA'S apartment as she enters R.D.*)

JUL. Caleb Thomas, on what pretence were you entering my apartment ?

CAL. Your pardon, Madam. I came to seek Jacob Anstead.

JUL. Seek him, then, where he is to be found! You could not suppose him to be in my chamber.

CALEB appears desirous to peep into the room, but JULIA shuts the door and stands against it.

—There lies your way, Sir ! (*pointing to L.H.D.*)—

CAL. I will not again intrude, Madam, (*bows, and exit L.*)

JUL. I trust not. A prying, insolent (*she approaches the conservatory*) A man cloaked! This, then, is he whom Polly suspects to be —

Enter RANDOLPH from the conservatory, L.C.—he throws off his cloak.

JUL. My brother!

RAN. Yes, sister, 'tis I indeed.

JUL. Tell me, quickly, what is the matter?

RAN. Don't alarm yourself—there is not much the matter. My father wished me to obtain intelligence respecting a house at York. Do you know whether he has received a letter I placed in Mr. Jacob's desk!

JUL. He has. But why write—why not have seen him ?

RAN. Because—because I wish to see him alone, and I could not do that until the family had retired to rest. I cannot even gain my own room, so close is Caleb on my heels.

JUL. Brother, you are wrong to secrete yourself in this way—a discovery might cause more misery than could ever be repaired.

RAN. Surely Caleb cannot now be jealous of his—his—sister, this marriage is it over.

JUL. Mildred's marriage ?

RAN. Julia, if I was ever dear to you, tell me—Mildred's marriage—

JUL. Takes place to-morrow morning.

RAN. With her consent ?

JUL. With her consent.

RAN. Will she be happy ?

JUL. Who can answer for her future?

RAN. True—what know I of my own—what knew I till it was too late, that I loved one who had plighted her vows to another.

JUL. Ah, brother. When we love truly we ask no questions of the future, but love, because we love. Come, think no more of Mildred; do not compromise the happiness of others, but depart with the same secrecy that brought you hither, and let no one be the wiser for your visit,

RAN. Perhaps you are right. Some one is coming.

JUL. Retire into my room. You know not the mischief your presence would occasion,

RAN. Let me see you again, if only for a moment

JUL. Yes, yes, but go now. (*she forces him off, R.D.*)

Enter MR. BUSCOYNE, R. 1. E.--JACOB, L.D.

BUS. (*aside to JACOB.*) Hare you discovered this man.

JAC. No.

BUS. Randolph must have directed him to leave the letter and return immediately.

Enter Mrs. BUSCOYNE, JULIA, and MILDRED, L.D.

MRS. B. Julia, we have brought Mildred to pass the night with you, she is so low-spirited. Come Milly, to-morrow will be a happy day, and if poor Randolph were but here—

MIL. (L.) Madam, do not remind me of to-morrow.

BUS. (R.) Come, come, Milly, you think too deeply.

JAC. (R.C.) Think, she doesn't know what she thinks.

BUS. Jacob, you are too severe.

MIL. (*appears sinking*)

BUS. The poor girl is ill.

MRS. B. Rest will restore her. Retire to your chamber Milly, and sleep soundly, like a good girl.

MIL. Madam. (*they are going*) Father, I wish to speak with you—alone.

MRS. B. (*crosses to R.*) Come Julia—Mildred will follow you,
Exeunt MRS. BUSCOYNE and JULIA R.D., MR. BUSCOYNE
 R. 1 E.

MIL. (*kneeling L.*) Father !

JAC. (R.) Dear, dear, what does all this ceremony mean ?

MIL. Will you not bless me, father ?

JAC. (*pettishly*) Did I say I wouldn't?

MIL. Father! dear father——

JAC. Milly, Milly, your conduct is intolerable.

MIL. Do not reproach me, father.

JAC. (*much moved, embracing her*) Reproach you ? Bless you, my child—bless you! I love you dearly, Milly—very dearly! (*aside*) Master, you know not what I suffer; but it is my duty. (*going, but looks round at MILDRED, who stands with her eyes fixed on the ground*) I must speak to her.

MIL. (*starting*) Father!

JAC. Have you courage. Mildred, to bear what I may say ?

MIL. Yes.

JAC. You *must* marry Caleb !

MIL. (*despondingly*) It is your *command*, and I obey, (*rises*)

JAC. It is not my *command* to sacrifice my child ! but duty demands it. Listen to me. There are reasons—Caleb is jealous of you—believes you love where you ought *not* to love.

MIL. (*roused*) Does he dare?

JAC. There are those who share his suspicions, and would say, you have dared to cast your eyes on your mothers son.

MIL. In pity, spare me.

JAC. These reports may reach Master Randolph.

MIL. (*wildly*) Father! Do you wish to drive me mad !

JAC. (*alarmed*) Milly?

MIL. Leave me, and believe that I have courage to act as become your daughter. Father, I will not bring shame on your white hairs. No, you shall see that I have courage.

JAC. (*aside*) She frightens me.

Enter JULIA R.D., *who gazes earnestly at MILDRED, then at* JACOB.

JUL. Mildred—dear Mildred—Is it your wish to kill your daughter.

JAC. Kill my child! My darling Milly—the light of my old age. Milly, Milly, speak to me. (*MILDRED appears to be perfectly unconscious of what is passing around her*)

JAC. Leave her to me. (*she leads JACOB to L. D.; as he goes off, his eyes are turned imploringly on MILDRED. RANDOLPH appears at the R. D. from whence JULIA had entered*)

RAN. (*at back R.*) Speak to her, sister.

JUL. (L.) This is cruel, cruel work! Mildred, dear Mildred! Do you not know me? (*takes her hand*)

MIL. (*recovering*) What is the matter?

JUL. Nothing, dear Milly. You were thinking——

MIL. Thinking—thinking——

JUL. Of Caleb.

MIL. Of Caleb. Oh, yes.

JUL. You love him, Mildred?

MIL. (*shuddering*) Love him!

JUL. You fear, but do not love him.

MIL. Who says I do not love him. They speak falsely, Miss Buscoyne. (*she bursts into tears*)

RAN. (*approaching her*) Mildred.

MIL. (*with astonishment, but with forced coolness of manner*) Mr. Randolph, this is a happiness I did not expect, that you should come to witness my marriage is an honour—I am—and ought to be—proud of.

RAN. That marriage shall not take place. You do not love Caleb, and shall not marry him.

MIL. How know you, sir, that I do not love Caleb? I thank you for the interest you take in my welfare, but henceforth decline your interference.

JUL. Why continue false to yourself, Mildred, when a moment's sincerity may remove this wretchedness?

MIL. (*in an altered tone, and with wildness of manner*) False to myself! Ha, ha, ha! All is false! Father, friends, the world! All are false, and why should I escape.

RAN. Mildred, this is folly. Open your heart to us; am I not your brother, Julia, your sister. We are resolute to serve you—to save you from this marriage, if you will only confide in our love.

MIL. Leave me, sir, I need neither your counsel nor your service. You think of me, but as the childish companion of your boyish days and ridicule, laugh at my folly, (*crosses to R.*)

RAN. No, Mildred, I do not laugh. My heart bleeds for you. I would sacrifice *my* best hopes to secure your happiness.

MIL. Mildred Anstead requires no sacrifice at the hands of her master's son! My lot is of my own choosing. I love Caleb, and will marry him in spite of you! (*very haughtily*)

Exit R.D.

RAN. Follow her, sister; do not for a moment leave her.

JUL. Brother, forget what I have said, and depart at once.

RAN. Abandon her, now—now that I feel she loves me? Never, sister—never!

JUL. Hush! Caleb is coming! There will be mischief—I'll seek my father.

Exit R.D.

Enter CALEB, C, from L.

CAL. I was not mistaken, (*goes to bell-rope c, which he pulls*)

violently) This bell communicates with Mr. Anstead's office—I have summoned him, Sir, that he may learn why I refuse to become his son.

RAN. Do you dare outrage my family with your base suspicions? By what right are you in this apartment?

CAL. (*bitterly*) By the right of a ridiculous bridegroom, Mr. Randolph, though not yet a contemptible husband. Since you entered this house, I have been an active observer of your movements.

RAN. I was not aware of so amiable a surveillance under my father's roof, but since you have thought proper to become a spy on my actions, I will teach you a lesson will last you your life. First, as appearances are against me, I will obtain an interview with my father, of which you shall be a witness.

CAL. Sir, I know the respect due to myself, and I command you to remain here, that your father, and Jacob Anstead, may note your presence so near to Mildred's chamber.

RAN. (*threatening*) Villain! Dare to cast a slur on her?

Enter MR. and MRS. BUSCOYNE R. 1 E., and JACOB L.D.

BUS.(R.) Caleb!

JAC. Master Randolph!

CAL. What I have to say, a father's ear alone should listen to—that father, is Jacob Anstead.

JAC. (L.) Is it of Mildred you would speak!

CAL. It is.

JAC. Then say on, you can have nothing to say of my child that the world may not hear—speak—I have no secrets from my master's family.

BUS. Why are you here Randolph, when you should be in London?

CAL. (*after a pause*) His silence is more eloquent than words, and conveys all that I would say.

RAN. (*aside*) Monster!

JAC. (*much excited*) Let him say on.

BUS. Shame, Caleb, shame! Your wicked jealousy and passion blind you. My son has brought me important intelligence—that is his purpose here, and should you doubt his honour?

CAL. Honour! Ha, ha, ha! Those who prate most of honour are most ignorant of its dictates.

MRS.B. You accuse my son wrongfully. He is here to see his sister, and knew not that Mildred was with her.

RAN. Mother, I cannot lie. I have seen Mildred—have spoken with her!

MRS. B. But in your sister's presence?

JAC. (*passionately*) Answer, Sir.

Enter JULIA and MILDRED R.D.

MRS. B. (R., *to CALEB*) There—I was sure of it—my daughter is with her.

CAL. (C.) A convenient screen, no doubt, Madam, but I cannot be deceived; Mr. Anstead, I feel for you, but more for her--faithless, though but in thought, Mildred cannot be my wife—you will not regret our separation—for so intense is my love, so strong my jealousy, I feel that she would have died beneath my hand, did I for a moment doubt her faith!

BUS. (*crossing to c.*) Caleb, we must part—that is now unavoidable. However wrongly you have acted, I would fain hope you have been influenced only by a strict, though mistaken sense of honour—if I can serve you

CAL. (*haughtily*) Sir, my only ambition, is to free myself from your family.

Exit L.D.

BUS. Proud and contemptuous to the last. Randolph, you have acted wrongly—it is the first grief you have caused me, but I trust it will be the last.

JAC. (*with great emotion*) Come, Mildred, we will depart far, far from hence, where we may hide our shame and die—die blessing our master, and praying for strength to pardon his son!

RAN. (*coming down L.H., and interposing*) Jacob, you wrong her, my own sisteris not more free from stain than Mildred.

Anstead. I own I was wrong in avoiding the explanation you demanded, but grant me your forgiveness with your daughter's hand——

JAC. You—you—marry my daughter? No, I will not consent!

MIL. Nor I, father. My pride is great as yours.

RAN. I swear to you, Mildred—to you, her father—that I love Mildred Anstead tenderly, seriously, and for life!

BUS. That is right, my son! Consult your own heart—obey the dictates of honour—and you have my consent to marry Milly to-morrow!

JAC. Your son marry my daughter?

BUS., Do you consent?

JAC. Consent?

MRS. B. Yes, you must, for they love each other.

MIL. (*embracing JACOB*) My father!

JAC. Poor Milly, how nearly were you becoming a sacrifice!

BUS. Yes, Jacob, and through your own mistaken sense of duty. Mildred, will you consent to wed my son?

MIL. Consent? Oh, Sir, that is a poor word to express my happiness! But do not reflect upon my father—his motive was honourable, and I would have patiently borne my lot rather than suffer a doubt of his integrity.

RAN. Come, dear Mildred, chase from your mind all sombre thoughts.

MIL. (*crosses to c.*) So many wonderful events have succeeded each other, I can scarcely believe in their reality. Father, teach me how to show my gratitude.

JAC. Teach you how to love your husband—eh, Milly? Ha, ha, ha!

30 THE MASTER PASSION.

MIL. No, father; love cannot be taught—owns no compulsion, but springs spontaneously, and flourishes most when most unseen—subdues the mightiest—glorifies the lowliest—and reigns supreme—sole Master-Passion of the Universe!

JULIA. MRS. B. JACOB. MILDRED. RANDOL MR. B.

R.

L.

Curtain.