

# UP AT THE HILLS.

An Original Comedy of Indian life,

IN TWO ACTS.

BY

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(Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society.)

AUTHOR OF

Babes in the Wood, The Fool's Revenge, Nine Points of the Law, The House or the  
Home? The Contested Election, An Unequal Match, Victims, Still Waters  
Run Deep, Going to the Bad, A Nice Firm, A Blighted Being, To Oblige  
Benson, A Trip to Kissengen, Diogenes and his Lantern, The  
Philosopher's Stone, The Vicar of Wakefield, To Parents  
and Guardians, Our Clerks, Little Red Riding Hood,  
Helping Hands, Prince Dorus, Payable on Demand,  
&c. &c. &c; and one of the Authors of Masks  
and Faces, Plot and Passion, Slave Life, Two  
Loves and a Life, The King's Rival,  
Retribution, &c., &c., &c.



THOMAS HAILES LACY,  
89, STRAND,

(Opposite Southampton Street, Covent Garden Market.)

LONDON.

UP AT THE HILLS.

*First performed at the Royal St. James's Theatre,  
under the Management of Mr. ALFRED WIGAN,  
on Monday, October 29th, 1860.*

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Characters.

MAJOR STONIHUEST ... .. Mr. ALFRED WIGAN.  
CAPTAIN SLACK ... .. Mr. CHARLES YOUNG.  
LIEUTENANT GREENWAY ... Mr. ASHLEY.  
DR. MACRIVETT, M.D ... .. Mr. EMERY.  
TUNSTALL (*a Calcutta Barrister*) ... Mr. DEWAR.  
NABICHULL (*a Money Lender*) ... Mr. TERRY.  
KHANSUMAH ... .. Mr. LEVER.  
DHERA SINGH (*a Kashmeree Shawl  
Merchant*) ... .. Mr.   
*Indian Servants, Khitmugars, Chuprassies, Jampaneas, &c.*  
MRS. COLONEL MC CANN ... Mrs. ALFRED WIGAN.  
MRS. EVERSLEIGH (*a Young Widow*) Miss HERBERT.  
KATIE NEIL ... .. Miss MASON.  
MARGARET LOVEL ... .. Miss NELLY MOORE.  
MONEE (*an Ayah*) ... .. Miss KATE TERRY  
MAHLEE ... .. Miss BURETTE.  
*Ayahs, &c.*

TIME.—The Present Day.

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SCENE.—AT A HILL STATION IN INDIA.

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ACT I.

**Morning Room at Mrs. Eversleigh's Bungalow.**

ACT II.

**Evening Room at Mrs. Eversleigh's Bungalow.**

## UP AT THE HILLS.



### ACT I.

SCENE FIRST.—*The Sitting Room in Mrs. Eversleigh's Bungalow. A spacious white walled room opening (in flat) to verandah by large folding French windows, furnished with green jalousies ; between the wooden pillars of the verandah are rolled-up mats of reeds, the floor is covered with fine matting, the chintz-covered couches and lounging chairs are of a light construction, cane or bamboo ; drawings here and there on the walls ; entrances to other rooms, R. and L., marked by purdahs or curtains of stuff or cotton, disposed in broad stripes of red and white, and kept stretched by laths passed across at intervals of about a foot; beyond the verandah a narrow strip of garden, bright with its growth of Himalayah rhododendrons, and shaded with clumps of deodaras and sycamore; beyond the garden, which is supposed to occupy the plateau on which the bungalow stands, are seen the vast ridges and profound valleys of the Himalayahs, and in the extreme distance, the great snowy range glittering in the sky ; as the curtain rises, the TAILOR MEN are seen at work in the verandah, sewing and embroidering Eastern muslin and other Eastern materials of female wear.*

A KHITMUGAR, with an Indian whisk made of a yok's tail, is brushing off the dust and flies from the furniture ; an AYAH is receiving some finished article of dress from one of the tailor men. MRS. EVERSLEIGH discovered in a lounging chair, R. C. ; MAHLEE approaches and offers flowers, R.

MAHLEE. (R.) Mahlee's humble offering! There is but one rose and one burra beebee!

MRS. E. (*languidly*) Tell Mogloo to put them in water Monee, take away the syringa—it overpowers me.

*Exit MAHLEE, R.*

*Enter KHANSUMAH, R. C., first opening. Exeunt AYAHS and BOY, L. C., also TAILOR.*

KHAN. (*coming forward salaaming, R.*) Will the Mem Sahib give orders for to-day's dinner?

MRS. E. Settle it yourself, Ramdeholl, and don't persecute me.

KHAN. (*producing papers*) Also, there is the account for things bought in the bazaar this month.

MRS. E. What have I to do with it? Ask Major Stonihurst to look it over—You know he always checks your account. (KHANSUMAH *salaams and retires, R. C.*) What should I do without him? Now that I am left alone in the world—enervated by this dreadful Indian climate—I feel his delicate and thoughtful kindness more and more every day. Ah! one of my tame griffs! and their dilapidated leader, Captain Slack.

*Enter GREENWAY with SLACK, L. C.*

SLACK. How do, Mrs. Eversleigh? (*feebly*) I tried to keep him away, but he would come!

GREEN. And Mrs. Eversleigh is glad to see me—don't you see she is. I say, Mrs. Eversleigh—the Major says we youngsters bore you; and that we musn't call without orders.

MRS. E. (C.) He is very kind. You *are* rather troublesome at times—you have such overpowering spirits, Mr. Greenway.

GREEN. Yes; (*seated, R.*) I'm rather a stunner—lucky I am, or I couldn't stand this country—Isn't it a deuce of a climate? Nine months vapour bath, and three months douche alternately. Here's old Slack is regularly breaking up.

MRS. E. Captain Slack does look rather exhausted.

SLACK. (*seated R. of table*) If I might trespass on your hospitality, Mrs. Eversleigh, for a peg of soda—and brandy.

MRS. E. Ask for whatever you like ! (*she calls*)  
Khansumah!

*Enter KHANSUMAH, R. C.*

Take the Sahib's commands!

(*KHANSUMAH takes orders from SLACK, apart*)

GREEN. A bottle of B. B. for me ! I'm as seedy as a P. and O. fowl this morning! I was up till gun-fire, at blind hookey. Such a wet night, and such a jolly shindy in the bazaar, coming home from the Major's Bungalow!

*Exit KHANSUMAH, R. C.*

MRS. E. YOU silly boy!—you ought to blush, instead of boasting!

GREEN. Oh, Slack does the blushing, and I do the bounce! It's the division of labour, Mrs. Eversleigh; one must divide one's labour in this infernal climate—into the smallest pieces too. Look at the niggers !—don't it take three of 'em to black a boot! I believe on parade days Slack has four khitmugars to his own cheek, to get him into his uniform. (*rises*)

SLACK. Oh! fire away, griff—when you've had as much of Indian service as I have-----

GREEN. And as much Bass and brandy pawnee, and peg—to say nothing of Mess Blackstrap, Claret, and sparkling Moselle—I shall be as ricketty, perhaps, but it will be a long time first. If it wasn't for the hills, Slack, you know you'd tumble to pieces every hot weather.

SLACK. Is it any wonder, with this climate ?

GREEN. Climate be hanged! Look at Stonihurst!—He's had eight years of Indian service over you—half of 'em up at Lahore too; and he's as fresh as a griff; and as hard as a hill pony.

SLACK. Ah, Stonihurst! He's a wonder—mind and body! There's a constitution, Mrs. Eversleigh, and there's a head ! To see him knock off his company's accounts, before he got his step—it was wonderful!

GREEN. And such a performer across country! If you could only see him out pig-sticking, Mrs. Eversleigh-----

MRS. E. I've no taste for such butchery. (*gets up*)

GREEN. Butchery ! it's beautiful. He handles his spear as gracefully as you do your fan; and then to see him

make twenty off the balls without a break—that's something like billiard playing.

(KHANSUMAH *appears in verandah with beer, and brandy, and soda water bottles, on tray*)

GREEN. But here's Slack's brandy and soda, and my double Bass. We'll have it in the verandah. I say, Mrs. Eversleigh, why am I like Lablache ? Because I'm a Basso profondo—deep in Bass !

*Exit GREENWAY, R. C.*

SLACK. I must see that griff doesn't do himself a mischief. It's astonishing how these boys wash their wits away with that pale ale.

MRS. E. Give brandy pawnee its due.

SLACK. Yes, that's very bad too; I wouldn't touch a drop if I weren't recommended to take it medicinally.

*Exit SLACK, R. C.*

*Enter MAJOR STONIHURST, L. C., by verandah, followed by SHAWL MERCHANT, who waits aside; he exchanges a salute with SLACK and GREENWAY.*

STONI. (L.) Ah, my dear Clara!

MRS. E. (R.) Good morning, Edward ! always apropos. Here are that troublesome Khansumah's accounts for you to look over.

STONI. Too happy! those fellows would eat you up alive, unprotected female as you are, if you were left to fight them single-handed. But you will be out of your mourning soon. I've brought up Dherah Singh, the Cashmere shawl merchant.

MRS. E. (*with great animation*) The shawl merchant ! Oh, delightful! after wearing nothing but greys and violets these six months, to revel in colour once more.

(*while she speaks, SHAWL MERCHANTS have opened their bales, and surrounded MRS. EVERSLEIGH with the contents, displaying them on the furniture, &c.*)

MRS. E. Oh ! what a lovely turquoise ! and what gorgeous green and gold! and this crimson ! I'm completely puzzled—an *embarras de richesses*.

STONI. You must take all three. The turquoise when you mean to melt, the green when you intend to awaken hope, and the crimson when you are resolved to subdue.

MRS. E. But I shall be ruined.

STONI. (*to MRS. EVERSLEIGH*) Leave me to settle with the fellow. You are no match for these rascals. (*to the SHAWL MERCHANTS*) Clear out ! (*they salaam and withdraw to verandah, L. C.*)

MRS. E. You are always so kind to me.

STONI. What else do I live for ?

MRS. E. (*to MONEE*) Take away the shawls, Monee.

STONI. Stop ! I must make your pretty little Monee a present. Choose something from his stock, Monee.

MONEE. Let the Sahib choose for me.

STONI. Here! this orange scarf.

MONEE. Thanks, Sahib! (*she takes the scarf, and presses it passionately to her lips unseen by MRS. EVERSLEIGH*)

STONI. (*to MRS. EVERSLEIGH*) You have your card for the bachelor's ball ?

MRS. E. Yes ; but I don't think I shall go—I'm scarcely out of my mourning yet.

STONI. That might be a reason at home; but we are not so straitlaced in India, you know. Do come—or I shall have to stay away; and as I am Chairman of the Committee-----

MRS. E. Well, if you'll decide upon my dress-----

STONI. I've been contriving one as I came along. I'll manage the details with old Madho yonder before I go.

MRS. E. I often wonder how it is you always choose so much better for me than I can for myself!

STONI. Because I consult the picture in my heart—you, the reflection in your looking-glass!

MRS. E. What should I do without you to protect me at all points ?

STONI. When will you allow me to protect you by a more authoritative title than that of friend—as your husband ?

MRS. E. Hush ! it's still too soon for that—

*Enter KHANSUMAH with, letters, R. C.*

The post dauk ! these letters are such a nuisance !

STONI. Pray don't mind me. (*seated, L.*)

MRS. E. (*opening one of the letters*) From Isabella Mac Cann.

STONI. What, the Colonel of Our's ? I didn't know you were acquaintances.

MRS. E. She writes to say she's coming to stay with me during her husband's absence on service.

STONI. Mrs. Colonel Mac is not exactly the inmate *I* should choose.

MRS. E. Oh! I like her very much. She was very kind to me when I first came out, at the time of my marriage—indeed, I believe she partly arranged it.

STONI. Was that a motive for gratitude—to have linked your fresh young heart to a worn-out mind and body of sixty-four? (*rises*)

MRS. E. Hush! he was very good to me—and it was my poor father's wish, not mine. Heaven knows I was not selfish or worldly then! But Mrs. Colonel Mac, as you call her, is so lively and agreeable!

STONI. Not to my taste. I find these barrack-bred women intolerable bores, with their mess-gossip and their regimental small talk! Then Mrs. Colonel Mac has been so long used to lead her husband by the nose, she imagines herself mistress wherever she sets her foot!

MRS. E. I'm sure I shall be very much obliged to her for taking the management of these tiresome native servants off my hands.

STONI. Am I not here to do that ?

MRS. E. But you are not in the house, you know.

STONI. Is that my fault ? But you may pay too dearly even for a lady housekeeper—it's right you should know she's a confirmed mischief maker! So be on your guard against Mrs. Colonel Mac; and above all, don't believe in the character she is likely to give you of me.

MRS. E. I should think, Edward, (*rises*) you need be under no apprehension on that point. I'm sorry she's coming, but I'm afraid it's too late to put her off—she writes from the nearest dauk-bungalow. It is a great nuisance. I was so happy—so comfortable, by myself. But while she's here, adieu to our *tete-a-tete* morning rides about the hills-----

STONI. Our long, quiet verandah evenings, with no sound but the music of your voice—the unclouded moon over our heads, and before us the majestic presence of the

mountains. Clara, it's hard to renounce all this. While she is here, I shall have to shut myself up in my bungalow, and console myself with your letters.

MRS. E. My letters !

STONI. I have every scrap you have written to me for the last two years.

MRS. E. You don't mean that you have kept the earlier ones?

STONI. Did you think I could part with them ? They revealed your heart long before you dared trust it to your tongue.

MRS. E. I'm afraid I must have written very imprudently in those days. Edward, I wish you would destroy them.

STONI. Not till I hold, as husband, the hand that wrote them. But let us hope that Mrs. Colonel Mac won't stay for ever.

MRS. E. Ah ! I'm afraid she'll be very fatiguing—she has such dreadful energy!

STONI. You'll find yourself without a will of your own in a week. I quite agree with you, you can't shut your door in her face; but as soon as she's installed there's no reason why you should not set Ramdeholl to find a bungalow for her, hire her a khansumah, house, servants, and chairmen—in fact make her extremely comfortable somewhere else.

MRS. E. A capital suggestion!

STONI. Let her know you've done all this quite as a matter of course, and she *must* take the hint, I think—old campaigner as she is. But I must settle with these niggers for you, and see old Mahdo about your ball dress.

MRS. E. (*supplicatingly*) Please mayn't I know what it's to be ?

STONI. Not till it is finished. Women will make alterations for the pleasure of altering. Men carry out an idea, Mahdo! qui hi!

HEAD TAILOR MAN *salaams*—STONIHURST *goes off by verandah*, L. C.

*Enter GREENWAY and SLACK*, R. C.

MRS. E. (*aside*) How kind and thoughtful he is always.

SLACK. (*seated*) There he goes—as much at home in giving directions to your head tailor-man, as in drilling the battalion!

GREEN. Yes—it's a pleasure to drop one's money to a fellow like that; but I think he'll lose that bet he made yesterday—only think, Mrs. Eversleigh, he laid an even hundred with me that he'll ride his tit Pebbles a hundred feet down the Ghonee Cud and up again. They're laying twenty to one against his neck at the club.

MRS. E. Do you mean there's any danger in it?

SLACK. (*seated, R.*) Danger! he has a head like a chronometer, and a wrist like iron ; but I don't see how even they are to land him safe. The Cud is like the wall of a house.

GREEN. It will be an uncommonly lively thing. The event is to come off at six to-morrow morning—all the club will be there.

MRS. E. How can he be so mad ?

GREEN. If he does come to grief, there'll be a step for Slack. I'm glad old Mac Cann isn't here—he'd forbid the match. He's such an old woman ; if it wasn't for Mrs. Colonel Mac, the regiment would go to smithereens in a month. Ah—you don't know Mrs. Colonel Mac, Mrs. Eversleigh.

MRS. E. (*C.*) I do though!—and more than that, she's coming to stay with me.

GREEN. Mrs. Colonel Mac coming here, when?

MRS. E. Oh! she may arrive at any moment.

GREEN. Oh ! I'm delighted to hear it. All the fellows in Our's swear by Mrs. Colonel Mac—she's as good as a mother to us, lectures us and lends us money, and helps us out of scrapes with old Mac Cann. I'm so glad she's coming, I want her to stand my friend just now.

SLACK. (*R.*) And so do I!

GREEN. But, I say, (*to SLACK*) if she's coming we must go and brush up a little—she's a terrible martinet, you know. (*goes up, C.*)

SLACK. Will you tell her, Mrs. Eversleigh, that Captain Slack wants to see her very particularly. (*aside*) When I'm screwed up to pitch.

GREEN. (*comes down, C.*) You're sure you wouldn't like

too see Stony ride his match to-morrow morning, Mrs. Eversleigh ? I'll drive you over in my buggy.

MRS. E. Thank you, Mr. Greenway, I've no taste for seeing life risked against money—even in the name of sport.

GREEN. Oh! one must do something to give one's blood a fillip in this rascally climate—Slack has tried brandy pawnee, and I've tried blind hookey—but there's nothing like danger.

MRS. E. You're one madder than another—but Major Stonihurst ought to set you an example.

GREEN. So he does—he's the fastest man in the regiment. But come along, Slack, Mrs. Colonel Mac mustn't find us in our puggrees. Good morning, Mrs. Eversleigh!

*Exit, R. C.*

MRS. E. Good morning. (*she exchanges parting salutes with them*)

SLACK. (*across to her*) You will not forget my message to Mrs. Colonel Mac ? (*aside*) I can't get down to my bungalow without another peg.

*Enter KHANSUMAH, R. C., with tray—SLACK signs to KHANSUMAH, who gives him more brandy.*

I'll toddle after you, youngster.

*Exit GREENWAY—SLACK stays to drink under verandah—STONIHURST and MONEE appear in verandah.*

MRS. E. Why will he be so reckless ? He must not peril his life in this mad wager.

*Re-enter STONIHURST, by the verandah, L. C.*

STONI. (L.) I've settled everything with Monee and Madho—from your wreath to your shoe rose—and now, good morning, I've some orders to give my syce.

MRS. E. (R.) Edward, do you care for me ?

STONI. Care for you, Clara! Don't you know I would venture my life to save you a finger-ache ?

MRS. E. But will you refrain from venturing it to save me a heart-ache.

STONI. What do you mean ?

MRS. E. I've just heard of this frantic wager of to-morrow morning.

STONI. (*laughing*) Oh, my little equestrian performance with Pebbles down the Ghonee Cud.

MRS. E. Yes, you may make light of it, but your friends all say it is risking your life.

STONI. Nonsense, Clara; besides, it's risking my life against £200. How often have I risked it for nothing?

MRS. E. On duty, perhaps; but your life is not your own—it is your country's.

STONI. My country will find plenty ready to pay £200 for the privilege of replacing me!

MRS. E. I know your contempt of danger. But for my sake abandon this insane folly. You can surely cry off for once.

STONI. What! let those club scandal-mongers boast they've seen Stonihurst shirk! You don't know what you ask, Clara!

MRS. E. If you prefer the idle breath of their opinion to my peace of mind, Edward-----

STONI. No ! but surely you would not like to have it said I had shewn the white feather! Don't ask me, Clara; absolute as your influence is-----

MRS. E. I never tried it seriously before, and now it breaks down. I did not think you would have refused me. I know now what is the worth of the love you have professed. (*MONEE listens, R. C.*)

STONI. Never was love more sincere—more absolute ! Sooner than you should doubt it, I will make even this sacrifice ! (*MONEE expresses agitation*)

MRS. E. Oh ! Edward—I am so grateful!

STONI. Yes! I'll pay forfeit, and let the club talk. I'll tell everybody I obeyed *your* orders! Ah ! the concession may not appear a great one to *you*. You don't know what it is for a man, who has won his place by the strong hand, as I have—who is nobody the moment he ceases to be in everybody's mouth! We all hold our lives in our fists here, and he's king among us who is ready to fling his away most lightly. I'll go back to the club, and proclaim my abdication—and then, Clara, you will admit I have earned this soft, little hand at last!

MRS. E. Dear Edward ! only a few weeks' patience!

(*he kisses her hand, and exit by the verandah, L. C.—*)

MONEE *crouches behind some shrubs in the verandah as he passes*)

Yes ! the year expires next week, and then ! But I must make my arrangements to receive Isabella. What pleasure it will be to reconcile her and Edward ! He seems strongly prejudiced against her ! How differently those griffs spoke of her. But I suppose there's not room for two strong heads in one regiment, especially when one is under a bonnet.

*Exit MRS. EVERSLEIGH, R. D.*

MONEE. (*coming forward, C.*) He loves her ! all his words to me were wind. He said he loved none but Monee. Oh, what was the poor ayah that a great sahib like him should look upon her. Ah me ! the tender words, the gifts, the kisses—sweeter than honey—and now bitterer than gall. What shall I do ! what shall I do ! and my own Mem Sahib—my burra beebee—that I loved so well ! I cannot stay with her—I cannot feign—I must die—die—and leave them together ! Ah, lying tongue ! oh, double heart ! I will go to him once more—to-night—and tell him he is false—and make him mad—perhaps he will kill me—or perhaps I will kill him—oh my heart !—my heart !—my heart ! (*she covers her head with her robe and crouches in a corner rocking herself, R. U. E.*)

*Re-enter STONIHURST and SLACK, L. C.*

STONI. (L.) You understand fully ?

SLACK. (R.) I think so—I think so—I'm to let Nabichull have Greenway's I.O.U.'s for the £2,000 he lost to you last night as security, for a loan of the £1,000 you want for your settling on the Meerut meeting.

STONI. Thanks to the infernal mull you made of the waiting race.

SLACK. I couldn't help it. I told Blades to hold in the mare. I thought he would have landed her a safe winner. Don't blame me, Stonihurst, I stood in with you. I've lost as much as you have.

STONI. It's all your want of nerve. If you had only carried through that plan with young Swinton's Syce, to give his Arab a dose.

SLACK. But it would have been felony if I had been found out.

STONI. It would have been £2,000 in my pocket if you hadn't. A man has no business to go into such things—but if he does go in he should go through.

SLACK. Easy for *you*—with your constitution.

STONI. Constitution! I've available brains, because I've never muddled them, and a steady hand, because I haven't spent the best part of ten years in palsying it. Slack, you're a fool.

SLACK. As if I didn't know it. If I hadn't been a fool should I have been in your hands, bound hand and foot, as I am.

STONI. And a precious bargain I have of you. I want a partner—you are a poltroon in your cups, and a psalm-singer out of them. Slack, you disgust me.

SLACK. Then I must be fallen. Heaven help me!

STONI. But you must get this money from old Nabichull. He's here. I told him you had a cent. per cent. job for him.

SLACK. I feel for that poor silly lad too. I can't help thinking of the time when I was just such another—when first I made your acquaintance, Stonihurst.

STONI. Yes, you were much the same style of griff, but there is one difference in this lad's favour; your livery was green—his is green turned up with gold.

SLACK. There won't be much of that left if he stays long in the regiment.

STONI. All the more need to be prompt in plucking him. His family will insist on his selling out soon. But we must stick him with these I.O.U.'s at all events.

SLACK. I suppose we can't help ourselves.

STONI. On the contrary we *must* help ourselves, or be posted as defaulters, so make haste and drown your conscience for the day, Slack, it's a nuisance—and let me have the money; mind—my name mustn't appear in the affair.

SLACK. And then you will help me with my Company accounts, won't you?

STONI. What, set you square with the paymaster of her Majesty's 120th? Well I don't know—I suppose if you were not tied by this tangle, you would send in your papers.

SLACK. Before I was a week older.

STONI. Ah, so I thought. My dear Slack, we're in too many nice little things together to part company *quite yet*. But when I'm married, Clara's money will make all right, and then I will release you, and we'll both retire into the bosom of our families, and wind up a virtuous old age—cabbage-planting. Now be off and open the trenches on Nabichull. There's one comfort in the existence of such rogues, Slack: you and I are enabled to feel quite respectable characters by the side of them.

*Exit STONIHURST, L. C., not perceiving MONEE.*

SLACK. Ah! what would I give for his head, if it could go without his heart, or the stone that does duty for one. Heart he has none. I feel for that poor lad, Greenway. If I could only set myself straight with my company's accounts I would cut India and the service, and try what a new start would do for me. If Mrs. Colonel Mac would only help me. I've often thought of making a clean breast to her. But if Stony were to find it out—Gad, it gives me a shiver to think of it. Here, brown girl, (*looking round and seeing MONEE*) tell the Khansumah—(*seeing MONEE does not move*)—the lazy pig! snoring like all these niggers the moment your eye's off them. No—she's crying—what's the row, girl—(*he draws her drapery from over her face*)—Eh! it's that pretty little brown girl, who used to bring the widow's letters to Stony's bungalow. What are you crying for?

MONEE. (*passionately*) Edward Sahib! Edward Sahib! He went past—he did not look at me! Oh, my heart, my heart! he's yonder—he's going—Sahib, Sahib!

*She rushes out, L. C.*

SLACK. Another of Stony's victims! poor girl—poor girl. No it isn't for me to comfort her. But there must be a settling day for all this.

*Exit SLACK under purdah, R. C.*

MRS. COLONEL MAC CANN *heard outside, L. C.*

MRS. MAC. Now steady, you Jampanees. Don't scream, you silly girls. It's rather a sharp turn, but there's no danger.

(MRS. MAC CANN *is attended by banghy-bearers or natives carrying boxes slung to the end of bamboo poles—others carrying umbrellas, water vessels, a bird cage, and a great quantity of luggage, meat tins, &c.*)

Here, Khansumah! Khitmugars! Coolee-wallahs! carry these things to our rooms. (SERVANTS *appear and obey*) Now you, banghy-bedars, look alive, and get the traps covered. Where's my favourite chattee? (*takes umbrella*) and my mina none the worse for his climb? (*looks at bird in cage*) and my shawls? and the preserved meat? Yes, and the biscuits? all right—and the tea? (SERVANTS *exeunt, R. and L. C.*) Here it is—and my nieces. Where are my girls?

*Enter KATIE O'NIEL and MARGARET LOVEL, L. C.*

That's right. Well, my dears, here we are at last, make yourselves at home.

KATIE. But here's nobody to receive us, aunt.

MARG. And Mrs. Eversleigh doesn't expect *us*, you know, aunt.

MRS. Mc C. (R.) Oh I told her I should bring a great deal of luggage, and she'll excuse a couple of nieces thrown in. That's nothing in India. It will give her lazy wretches of servants something to do. (*looking about her*) A comfortable room enough, but the matting wants looking after, and the jillmills will be none the worse for a coat of paint—and these shrubs come too near the verandah. They'll harbour insects in the hot weather. However, I'll soon set all that to rights. Well, what will you take, girls—tea—beer—or soda-water—or will you wait for tiffin?

KATIE. I'd rather wait for the mistress of the house.

MARG. Won't she be offended at our making so free.

MRS. Mc C. Oh, the more I take on my shoulders the less she'll have on her's, and the more she'll thank me.

*Enter MRS. EVERSLEIGH, R. D.*

My dear Clara.

MRS. E. Dear Mrs. Mac Cann, I'm so glad to see you.

MRS. Mc. C. Thank you—thank you—I've brought

you a brace of Miss Newcome's—my nieces, Katie Neil and Margaret Lovel. (*passes MRS. EVERSLEIGH to L.*) They arrived at Calcutta on consignment to me just as I was starting, so as I had no eligible chaperon to turn them over to, I was forced to bring 'em along with me. After all, Clara, they're likely to do better up here at the Hills, than at the Station.

MRS. E. (*aside to her*) Don't make the poor girls uncomfortable.

MRS. Mc C. Oh, bless you, they don't understand me any more than if I was talking Tarmul, do you, dears ? Katie is simplicity itself in a riding habit, and Patty is innocence in a mushroom hat. Let your people show the girls to their rooms, Clara, and help them to get their things in order. By the way, how many ayahs have you?

MRS. E. Four, I believe, besides Monee. (*clapping her hands to summon them*)

MRS. Mc C. Oh ! I'm glad you've still got that pretty creature. But it is at least two too many. I must look into your household arrangements as soon as I've shaken down. I've no doubt I can cut your bills down from three to four hundred rupees a month, at least. These Hill Khansumahs are *such* rogues.

*Enter AYAHs.*

KATIE. Aunt! we don't want the black women to wait on us.

MARG. I never had a maid in my life ! I shouldn't know what to do with one !

MRS. Mc C. Oh, you'll soon learn out here! Now run away, girls, and make yourselves presentable.

*Exeunt KATIE, MARGARET and AYAHs, L. D.*  
And how have my boys been behaving?

MRS. E. Your boys?

MRS. Mc C. I mean the officers of ours who were on leave up here—Greenway at least—as for poor Slack, I don't expect to hear much good of him; and as for Stonihurst, I won't believe any good I hear of *him*.

MRS. E. I hope this visit will change your opinion of the Major.

MRS. Mc C. I hope it may; but I should be very much surprised if it should.

MRS. E. Here comes your friend Greenway to speak for himself. While you entertain him, I'll go and see your nieces have everything they want.

*Exit* MRS. EVERSLEIGH, L. D.

*Enter* GREENWAY, *more carefully dressed than before*, L. C.

GREEN. Here she is ! Well Mrs. Colonel Mac ?

MRS. M. (C., *to* GREENWAY) Glad to see you so rosy, my dear boy; you're looking a stone heavier for the Hills. (*shakes hands with him*)

GREEN. It's all the pleasure of seeing you. And how's the Colonel?

MRS. Mc C. In capital preservation. He'll be here soon to settle with the Major about the command of the regiment in his absence. This expedition may shorten your leave. Not that there seems much the matter with *you*, Greenway.

GREEN. Isn't there though? I'm very weak indeed. I was bled tremendously last night.

MRS. Mc C. Bled ? I'll be bound it was by that old-fashioned Sangrado, Me Rivet.

GREEN. No it wasn't, it was by that very expert practitioner, Stonihurst; and in the region of the pocket.

MRS. Mc C. What, Harry? playing again ?

GREEN. Oh, Mrs. Mac, don't scold me, please—a fellow must have some excitement you know, and I've such a weakness for blind-hookey. But this time it's really serious.

MRS. Mc C. How much have you lost?

GREEN. I'm rather hazy about the whole affair. I gave I.O.U.'s. I am afraid it was more than £1,000, nearer two, I fancy.

MRS. Mc C. Rupees, I hope ?

GREEN. No, pounds sterling. Now don't put on your lecturing face, please. I've been lecturing myself all the morning, but without the least effect. But do stand my friend once more with the governor and with the Colonel.

MRS. Mc C. My dear boy, this is the second time. You promised me you'd never touch a card again.

GREEN. And I never did, at the Station, but somehow, here, at the Hills, everybody punts more or less—I suppose it's something in the air—they say it's relaxing at first—and then I was so sprung.

MRS. Mc C. Who played ?

GREEN. Only our fellows, Callow and I, and the Major and Slack. The governor will insist on my selling out. Now do get the Colonel to say a good word for me and I will never—never-----

MRS. Mc C. You had better make no more promises. You were tipsy, you say ?

GREEN. Obfuscated, decidedly; mind, I don't say there was anything unfair, Stonihurst is incapable of that.

MRS. Mc C. Of course! Of course! I suppose this has drained you?

GREEN. No ! I have just drawn the Major of a couple of ponies, half forfeit on a break-neck match he made last night. Mrs. Eversleigh has ordered him to cry off, it seems ; she can turn him round her finger, you know.

MRS. Mc C. I was not aware he knew her.

GREEN. Oh yes! they're quite thick, in fact they're giving long odds at the Club that he'll marry her before her year's mourning is out.

MRS. Mc C. Indeed?

GREEN. I believe it's as good as settled. The Commissioner left her very well off, you know. And then I hear at the Club from some of the fellows in his old regiment there was a good deal of talk about Mrs. Eversleigh and Stonihurst—even in old Eversleigh's time, before the Major joined our's.

MRS. Mc C. Ah! Well Harry, I'll think over your scrape, and see what I can do.

GREEN. That's a dear, kind soul! if you had been here it wouldn't have happened. You keep a fellow straight somehow.

MRS. Mc C. I must introduce you to my nieces—two dear good girls. If they don't bind you over to good behaviour I'm afraid all my scolding will be of little use.

*Enter KATIE and MARGARET, L. D.*

Miss Katie Neil—Miss Margaret Lovel—Mr. Green-

way, of our's, my loves. You'll find Katie knows the points of a horse almost as well as you do yourself—Margaret is fresh from her papa's parsonage, and ought to be able to give you a better lecture than I can.

GREEN. Come along Miss Neil, I'll show you everything from the verandah, the race course, and the tennis court, and the mall, and the ball room, and the club, and our bungalow, and there's a church too, Miss Lovel, and old Ram Bux's shop, where you can buy anything from a bottle of mixed pickles to a perambulator.

*Exit KATIE, MARGARET and GREENWAY, by verandah, L. C.*

MRS. MC C. Either of the girls might do worse. Greenway will come into a fine property—and he's a good lad at bottom, though his wild oats have taken a good deal of sowing. This is a heavy crop he has just told me of. So! Stonihurst is at his old tricks. He's the black sheep of the regiment, and such a clever unscrupulous fellow too! He bewitches the youngsters. They adore him while he devours them—So, he's trying to hook poor Clara into the bargain. Hem—I've not come a day too soon. I must see whether I can't outflank him at the Hills, as I've managed to do more than once at the Station. (*she goes up to verandah*)

*Enter SLACK with NABICHULL—SLACK, not seeing MRS. MAC CANN, who listens on seeing them.*

SLACK (L.) So you won't let me have the money.

NABI. (C.) The sahib understands business, I must first see if sahib Greenway owns his signature—then, if he is of age, and if it's all right—

SLACK. You will fork out? (*they come down*)

NABI. I'll see about it, sahib, but it's a large sum—I must beat the Bazaar for it. Nabichull is very poor, but he has friends—friends who will help him. Krishna be good to them for it. (*as NABICHULL goes up to verandah he meets MRS. MAC.*) The mem sahib, Mac Cann. (*salaams*)

MRS. MAC. (*coming down, C.*) Well, Nabichull, you didn't know I was here?

NABI. Nabichull is the mem sahib's slave.

MRS. MAC. Oh, I'm sure he is—(*aside*) an old rogue !  
Ah Captain ! *Exit* NABICHULL, C. L.

SLACK. My dear Mrs. Colonel Mac. (*shakes her warmly by the hands*)

MRS. Mc C. Your hand shakes sadly still, Slack—  
The Hills have not set you up yet.

SLACK. No, I'm afraid I'm past the Hills, and past the doctors—My poor head—it gets worse and worse. But I'm glad you've come: while you are here I've something to hold on to, that keeps me straighter than brandy-pawnee.

MRS. Mc C. Ah, if you would but forswear that poison.

SLACK. Don't ask me: if it has made me what I am, it helps me to shut my eyes now and then to the wreck it has made—Give up brandy-pawnee ! You don't know the horrors it saves me from—without it how should I face my difficulties—that Meerut matter hanging over us—my Company's accounts unsettled!

Mrs. Mc C. I feared as much, from what the Colonel told me.

SLACK. There's £300 wrong somehow, I can't tell how the money has gone; I only know I haven't taken any of it, but I'm in such a muddle ! It's gone, and I shall be broke: dishonoured: unless you can help me—Won't you?

MRS. Mc C. Sit down, Slack. (*he sits*)

SLACK. If I might ask for some brandy-pawnee—I can't go into the figures without it. It steadies me.

MRS. Mc C. We must try if I can't replace brandy-pawnee for once. I'll help you on one condition. (*seated, R.*) That you state—in writing—without any reservation, all that happened at Major Stonihurst's bungalow last night, when young Greenway was fleeced at cards.

SLACK. Oh, we played fair, we did, upon my honor.

MRS. Mc C. Of course—only *he* was tipsy, and the Major was sober: he lost a large sum, and the Major won it. And you've been trying to negotiate Greenway's I.O.U's with that old rogue Nabichull. You see, I'm tolerably well informed. Has Nabichull got those I.O.U's?

SLACK. Yes, but don't tell Stonihurst I 'peached.

Mr. Mc C. I'll Nabichull to let me have them.

SLACK. But if the Major asks me for them.

Mrs. Mc C. Refer him to me—and now go into the library and write me out the statement. That done, I'll see your accounts set straight, or at least the deficit made up, and then you must send in your papers. I'll take care there's no difficulty about *them*.

SLACK. I felt it was cruel to bleed the poor lad, I did indeed, but I didn't see how to prevent it, and I durstn't send in my papers, till my accounts were straight. I won't try to thank you—what are the thanks of a poor useless broken-down creature like me !

MRS. Mc C. Yes; one way you *can* thank me, Slack.

SLACK. Pray tell me how ?

MRS. Mc C. By giving up this miserable habit of drinking.

SLACK. I'll try—yes, I'll try. But you don't know what a grip the devil has. But thanks to you I can look the future in the face now without the prospect of dishonour, and I can do something to make restitution too. I've a conscience, Mrs. Mac, though you mayn't think so. It don't prevent my doing wrong, but it makes me very uncomfortable. Heaven bless you.

*Exit SLACK, L. D.*

MRS. Mc C. Another victim to what is called the climate of India—that very convenient word which includes hot tiffins, heavy dinners, snipe-shooting, bad hours and brandy-pawnee ! If the climate of India knew how many sins and how many deaths it is made to answer for! This confession of Slack's and these I.O.U.'s may enable me to save this poor boy at all events from the Major's clutches. Then I must see what I can do to rescue Clara!

DR. Mc RIVETT. (*heard without*) Here, you Syce! mind my buggy—this way, Tunstall.

MRS. Mc C. (R.) My old friend, Mc Rivett!

*Enter Mc RIVET and TUNSTALL, L. C.*

Well Doctor.

Mc RIV. (C.) Mrs. Colonel Mac ! Who'd ha' thought

o' seein' you! Mrs. Colonel Mac Cann, my distinguished frien' Mr. Tunstall, of the Calcutta bar, come up to the Hills to get the cobwebs out o' his brains, the rupees out o' his pockets, and the carbonic acid gas o' the Supreme Court out o' his system.

MRS. Mc C. (R.) And quite right too, Mr. Tunstall. Mountain air is the only medicine I believe in, as the doctor knows.

Mc RIV. Yes, you are an awfu' infidel. (*to TUSSTALL*) The woman does na' believe even in calomel. But what brings you up here ?

MRS. Mc C. The Colonel has volunteered for this Khoond affair, and I've come to stay with my friend, Mrs. Eversleigh, while he's gathering laurels. I tell him they don't do well with a cotton nightcap.

Mc RIV. I've brought Tunstall up to present him to Mrs. Eversleigh. She's our reigning beauty, ye ken. There's sae many red coats buz, buzzing about her, I thought a black one might be a kind o' relief.

TUNST. (L.) I tell the Doctor he's wrong, Mrs. Mac Cann. We who don't belong to the service are little better than pariahs off our own walks, so I've come up to be duly snubbed by your Queen of Beauty and pooh-pooed by her military train.

MRS. Mc C. Here she comes.

*Enter MRS EVERSLEIGH, L. D.*

TUNST. (*aside with a start of surprise.*) Clara Cranstoun!

Mc RIV. Allow me to present my frien' Tunstall, the last arrival from Calcutta.

MRS. E. Mr. Tunstall! (*with emotion, recognizing him*)

Mc RIV. Eh ! what's this ?

TUNST. (*embarrassed*) I was not prepared to find an old friend in Mrs. Eversleigh.

MRS. E. Mr. Tunstall, it's a long time since we met.

TUNST. So long that it is almost a pity to renew our intercourse. We can never be to each other as strangers—still less as intimates.

MRS. E. Mr. Tunstall and I knew each other in England, Doctor, very intimately—almost as boy and girl.

Mc RIV. Ah ! (MRS. MAC CANN *and* Mc RIVETT *retire up*)

TUNST. I was aware you had come to India. I heard you were married. I did not ask your husband's name, I am sorry now I did not. Good morning, Mrs. Eversleigh.

Mc RIV. Hoot, hoot, Mrs. Eversleigh ! you're no gaun to let the man run awa' that gait like a scaudit colly. Mrs. Colonel Mac, you and me'll just hae a twa-handed crack, and leave them to anastomose a bit.

MRS. Mc C. So they are old friends, Doctor; was ever anything so fortunate ? (MRS. COLONEL MAC CANN *and* DOCTOR Mc RIVETT *retire up* C.)

TUNST. (L. ) You will readily believe, Mrs Eversleigh, I did not seek this meeting.

MRS. E. (R.) But if we do not seek, there is no reason why we should shun each other. We are wiser than when we parted eight years ago.

TUNST. Yes; we ought to have learnt to wear our masks by this time. And after all, why look back with pain on the past ? It was all for the best. Had our boy and girl love gone on, you would never have drawn a great prize in the Indian marriage lottery, and I should not have made a fortune and lost a constitution in Calcutta.

MRS. E. I hope your life has been happier than mine.

TUNST. Happier! Have we not both been eminently successful? Happiness was our dream as boy and girl—we know *now* that the thing to look for is solid pudding. You attained that philosophy before I did—it is seldom reached at eighteen by a woman.

MRS. E. I was very weak and very helpless, and my father's will had always been law to me—but I was not fickle or worldly—I suffered very deeply from our separation—I should suffer still more if I thought you were expressing your real feelings—But I see you are speaking out of the bitterness of your heart, that you wish to make *me* feel now some of the pain I caused *you* long ago.

TUNST. Forgive me—I am talking foolishly as well as cruelly—it is little use either blaming or regretting. Dr. McRivett tells me you have lost your husband.

MRS. E. Eleven months ago.

TUNST. Then your tie to India is severed?

MRS. E. Yes—I am only waiting for the cold weather, and a little more strength to leave the country—oh, how eagerly!

TUNST. I am glad of that—there will be less danger in recalling old recollections together—I am frightfully home-sick. To retrace with you our Derbyshire village life will work in me either a cure or a-----

MRS. E. It shall be a cure—we must prescribe for each other.

*They go off by verandah L. C.*

DR. MAC RIVETT *and* MRS. COLONEL MAC CANN *come down.*

MAC RIV. Now Mrs. Eversleigh's is one of the cases of the mischief this infernal India is working in a hunder' English hearts and homes—if it hadn't been for India she and Tunstall would have been a sonsy London couple by this time—he pocketin' his fees and she rearing her weans under their vine and fig-tree about Russell Square.

MRS. Mc C. (R.) Don't be unfair, Doctor—young girls married rich old men, and barristers mortgaged their constitutions for fees before India was invented.

MAC RIV. And sae there was gold found before we lighted on the diggin's. Now, Mrs. Mac, ye're nae the woman to dispose o' yon two young nieces o' yours to the highest bidder, if it was no' for the facilities afforded by the Calcutta market.

MRS. MAC C. But do me the justice to say that whenever I put out my advertisement of "Wanted a Husband" I always wind up "Fortune not so much an object as a comfortable home."

MAC RIV. Hoot, hoot, Mrs. Mac, I'm ashamed o' ye—I tell ye India plays mair havoc in hames and hearts than it does with lives and livers. (*KATIE and MARGARET come down with GREENWAY, R. C.*) Take my advice, young ladies, and gang yer ways to auld England again as fast as ye can.

GREEN. (R.) Oh, don't—I've cut out a week's engagement for the ladies.

KATIE (R.) Yes aunt—we're to ride to the Black Cud, and to climb up the Monkey's Back, and to pic-nic at the

something temple, and to go a fishing in the thingumbob river—the long names bother me altogether.

MARG. (R.) And Mr. Greenway has promised to show us where the loveliest rhododendrons grow wild, aunt.

MAC RIV. (L.) Puir things, puir things! Mrs. Mac, I never see symptoms of marriage in India, Mrs. Mac, but the awfu' sequel rise up to my mind's eye, separations of parents and children, partings o' husband and wife—Deil hae me, Mrs. Mac, but making a marriage in India is just an awful responsibility.

MRS. MAC C. Never mind the Doctor, my dears, he's the monkey who lost his tail. Of all the desperate girls that have sailed up the Hooghly, none was ever desperate enough to take him.

MAC RIV. A' scandal—a' scandal, and disappointment, young ladies—your aunt and me cam' oot in the same ship. How many years ago was that, Mrs. Mac?

MRS. MAC C. For shame, Doctor!

MAC RIV. And if Saunders Mac Rivett, assistant surgeon, had proposed then to Bella Sharp, spinster-----

MRS. MAC C. He'd have received an answer that would have cured him of proposing for the rest of his life. But you mustn't listen to any more of his abominable libels on India. Go, my dear boy, and shew these young ladies the garden, and the compound, and the stables.

MARG. Oh ! the garden—that will be delightful.

KATIE. Oh yes, and the stables, the stables !

*Enter STONIHURST, L. C. bowing to them.*

STONI. (L. C.) (*to MRS. COLONEL MAC*) My dear Mrs. Mac Cann—this is indeed an agreeable surprise.

MRS. MAC C. You didn't expect to see me, Major.

STONI. I was looking forward to that pleasure, but not so soon.

MRS. MAC C. My nieces—Miss Neil—Miss Lovell—Major Stonihurst.

STONI. (*bowing*) We should have felt more gratitude to your aunt, young ladies, than we can readily express, had she come alone, but when she brings two such additions to our society besides herself-----

MRS. Mc C. They're very much obliged to you, Major—now run away, girls.

*Exit* KATIE, MARGARET *and* GREENWAY, L. C.

MAC RIV. You two'll have your regimental business to settle. *(aside)* That Margaret's a bonnie little thing—I'll join Tunstall and Mrs. Eversleigh.

*Exit* MAC RIVETT *by verandah*, L. C.

STONI. (L.) Tunstall!

MRS. Mc C. (R.) A very old friend of Mrs. Eversleigh—a new arrival-----

STONI. Ah, an Indian acquaintance-----

MRS. Mc C. No, an English one-----

STONI. Ah, she will be very glad of anything that recalls England. She is so anxious to get back, and no wonder now she's free. We shall not stay here another cold weather.

MRS. Mc C. We?

STONI. I thought you must have heard of it already—I am engaged to Mrs. Eversleigh.

MRS. Mc C. Indeed.

STONI. You don't wish us joy! *(seated)*

MRS. Mc C. I'm so selfish, I can't bear to think of the regiment losing you.

STONI. Thank you—talking of the regiment, I hope the Colonel is well.

MRS. Mc C. Quite, thank you, he is on his way to join us. He means to transfer the command to you during his absence on this expedition against the Khoonds. He is fortunate in having such a substitute.

STONI. Always kind—Mrs. Eversleigh ought to thank the Khoonds for procuring her the pleasure of your society.

MRS. Mc C. Yes, at her age, and in her position, she requires a friend of her own sex. These Hill stations are so apt to make free with our reputations—we cannot be too guarded.

STONI. And you are like Caesar's wife—above suspicion.

MRS. Mc C. Oh, Major, my reputation is old enough, and ugly enough to take care of itself.

STONI. Mrs. Eversleigh has been hard at work in your cause already.

MRS. Mc C. Indeed!

STONI. Yes, her Khansumah is looking out for a bungalow for you, and I have been seeing after your servants.

MRS. Mc. C. You are extremely obliging, but it won't be necessary—I mean to stop here. (*seated*)

STONI. The house is so small, you'll be so crowded, especially with your charming nieces. What a pleasure it is to see their charming innocent faces. There's nothing has so much attraction for me as freshness.

MRS. Mc C. Ah, so it has for the mosquitos. That accounts for your preference for Griffs, like Greenway, they bleed so much more freely.

STONI. It is a kindness to give them a lesson occasionally.

MRS. Mc. C. Then I'm sure they owe you a great deal; there's Clara, you see (MRS. EVERSLEIGH *and* TUNSTALL *appear in earnest conversation*) quite absorbed in old English recollections.

STONI. (*aside—watching them*) So ! This must be looked to. (*to* MRS. MAC) Do you know anything of Mrs. Eversleigh's former relations with Mr. Tunstall ?

Mrs. Mc C. An early flame, I suspect. Poor thing! she has heavy arrears of happiness due to her.

STONI. Which, I hope to make up, I don't mean to leave the duty to another, however old a friend he may be.

MRS. Mc C. Clara is still a widow, you know; she may yet change her mind.

STONI. If you can induce her. Come, Mrs. Mac Cann, enough of this silly *carte and tierce*, let us take the buttons off our foils.

MRS. Mc C. Certainly, if you prefer it.

STONI. We are old enemies.

MRS. Mc. C. Old acquaintances, at least.

STONI. You mean that to know is to hate me.

MRS. Mc C. Hate is hardly the word, but if you will have me speak plain English-----

STONI. Pray do ; I prefer it infinitely to the colourless jargon that passes for it in good society.

MRS. Mc C. How can I look with anything but—dislike-----

STONI. Don't mince matters, you would like a stronger word.

MRS. Mc C. Perhaps distrust would be better, but disgust is better still—on one who perverts great gifts of mind and body to mislead, injure, ruin the young men who are proud to follow his example.

STONI. You exaggerate my influence. Give old Nick more credit, and me less.

MRS. Mc C. Think of your life, since you joined my husband's regiment, of the young hearts in which you have sown the seeds of vice, the consciences you have drugged with excess, the fair hopes your influence has blighted, the grey heads at home on which you have brought suffering and sorrow.

STONI. And if I have done all this, who is to blame for it ? I only mete out the measure meted out to *me* ; my heart was guileless once, my aims as high, my promise as fair as that of the most hopeful boy in India, and what did that avail me ! Who spared my inexperience ? Who respected my innocence ? I was ridiculed, perverted, pigeoned! and then I swore to pay back the world in its own base coin. I have done it. Once for all, you mean to spoil my game here.

MRS. Mc C. Well, if I can, I do.

STONI. You are too late—I'm master of the position already.

MRS. Mc C. Don't be too sure of that.

STONI. My influence over Mrs. Eversleigh is absolute.

MRS. Mc C. You're not married *yet*.

STONI. I have put her on her guard. She is prepared to attribute any caution you may give her against me to your jealous prejudice.

MRS. Mc C. I suppose she is accessible to proof. If I can unmask you as a man of desperate fortunes, a profligate-----

STONI. Go on.

MRS. Mc C. A gambler—whose best resource is the spoiling of inexperienced boys—one whom it rests with me to bring to a court of inquiry.

STONI. You underrate my caution—Malignity is not proof.

MRS. Mc C. Her friend is a barrister—he can appreciate my *proofs*, if *she* cannot.

STONI. Have a care. I am armed against the worst you can do. You value Mrs. Everleigh's good name, I presume ?

MRS. Mc C. As dearly as my own.

STONI. I hold that which can blast it.

MRS. Mc C. You! Can she have been so imprudent as to have put herself in your power ?

STONI. She did so, before she had the advantage of your protection. Now, mark me—dare to breathe one word against me, to take one step in furtherance of this new old friend's interests to the prejudice of mine, and I place in his hands evidence that will leave her reputation blighted beyond redemption. You know me—and you know whether, when I threaten, I threaten idly.

MRS. Mc C. And this is the woman you pretended to love !

STONI. The woman I do love as well as I can love anything. But my interest is at stake here as well as my affections. I might trample down the one, but I can't sacrifice the other, so beware !

MRS. Mc C. Then this is a declaration of war.

STONI. It is, but with every attention to good breeding. While we are cutting each other's throats, there's no reason anybody else should suspect we're not on the best terms in the world.

MRS. Mc C. As you please. The English and French were very polite to each other at Fontenoy, but I never heard they fought the worse for it.

STONI. On the contrary. Small swords would not be nearly so deadly if they were not so highly polished. So, au revoir, and war to the death. (*bows politely and exit, L. C.*)

MRS. Mc C. So, the trenches are opened! Stonihurst is an adversary worth checkmating.

*Enter MONEE, L. C.*

Ah, my pretty little Monee ! (MONEE *kneels to* MRS. MAC CANN *and clings round her knees weeping*) Why, what's the matter?

MONEE. Let me wait on you, mem sahib. I dare not be near *her* now.

MRS. Mc C. What, Monee, quarrel with so kind a mistress ?

MONEE. No, not quarrel; but *he* loves her. It makes me mad—bad thoughts come to Monee at night as the burra bee-*bee* lies asleep.

MRS. MC C. What's this? Jealous of her mistress! Ah! if it *should* be—do you mean the Major, Monee?

MONEE. Yes, yes; there is no word—no look for Monee now—oh, take me away—take me where I shall never see him.

MRS. MC C. Poor girl! How long have you known him, Monee?

MONEE. Long, long—many moons—I never counted them. I was so happy. I used to carry the mem sahib's letters to his bungalow—he told me he wrote them that I might bring him the answers.

MRS. MC C. When was this?

MONEE. Long ago, before the burrah sahib Eversleigh died.

MRS. MC C. In her husband's lifetime—ha! The arms he threatened to use against her good name—should they be those very letters! Did you take many letters, Monee?

MONEE. Many, many, every day. I was so glad to take them, for I saw *him*.

MRS. MC C. Did he keep them?

MONEE. Yes, in a steel casket. I used to put them there when he was absent. It is full of them. He used to laugh at the mem sahib for writing so much.

MRS. MC C. Do you know where the casket is now, Monee?

MONEE. Always at his bungalow—he never parts with it.

MRS. MC C. Could Monee get it for the mem sahib?

MONEE. Why Monee get it?

MRS. MC C. Because I am sorry for Monee—I want to bring back her peace. There is a charm in those letters—if Monee gets it, her pain will go.

MONEE. Monee's love is her pain; she does not wish to lose it.

MRS. MC C. But what if his love for the burra bee-*bee* go too with those letters?

MONEE. Then Monee take them if they kill her for it.

MRS. MC C. (*aside*) Now is the time, while he is here. Monee, bring me that casket—no one must see you bring it me, or the spell will be broken.

MONEE. Monee will take care. Oh! may Krishma bless the mem sahib for this ! Monee will creep through the compound like a snake. She'll be back before the shadows of the verandah pillars are there. (*points, and exit rapidly*).

MRS. Mc C. So, once disarmed of these look to yourself, Major Stonihurst.

*Enter SLACK, giving her folded paper, L. D.*

SLACK. Here is the statement—the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It will compromise both of us. But it was *Stonihurst's* plan to rook the poor lad; we made him drink on purpose. Mind, you'll bear me harmless from *him*, and you will help me out of the hole with my accounts.

MRS. Mc C. Trust me for that. Here, (*writes at table*) shew this to Nabichull, he'll advance on it the £300 you want to set you square.

SLACK. Out of my misery at last. If ever I fall again let me sink without a helping hand. Ah! you don't know all you've done for me ! To set me straight with the world was much; but to set me straight with myself was a greater kindness still. *Exit, R. C.*

*Re-enter STONIHURST, L. C., TUNSTALL and MRS. EVERSLEIGH, L. D., TUNSTALL accosts MRS. COLONEL MAC CANN.*

MRS. E. (*to STONIHURST*) You'll make a friend of Mr. Tunstall, Edward, for my sake.

STONI. Is he not an old friend of your's, Clara? Surely that is a sufficient passport to my regard.

MRS. E. Promise me you won't be jealous.

STONI. (*smiling*) Jealous !

MRS. E. That is noble! that is like yourself.

STONI. My dear Mr. Tunstall if you have not joined the Club, will you allow me the pleasure of proposing you.

TUNST. Thank you: with pleasure. (*MRS. EVERSLEIGH joins TUNSTALL*)

STONI. (*aside to MRS. MAC*) You see we are on the best terms.

MRS. Mc C. So are we.

STONI. I'm too strong for you, you had better give up the contest.

MRS. Mc C. Not yet.

*Enter MONEE—her drapery drawn over her face so that STONIHURST does not recognize her—with a box wrapped in a shawl which she gives to MRS. MAC CANN.*

STONI. You've no artillery.

MRS. Mc C. (*taking the box from MONEE*) Suppose I take your's.

*Enter KHANSUMAH, R. C.*

KHAN. Tiffin is ready.

MRS. Mc C. (*coolly*) Come, Doctor, come girls, tiffin.

*Enter KATIE, MARGARET, DR. Mc RIVETT, and GREENWAY, L. C.*

MRS. E. You'll join us, Mr. Tunstall. (*taking his arm*)

STONI. (*to MRS. Mc C.*) May I have the honor of taking you in ?

MRS. E. (*turning round to STONIHURST*) I'm glad to see you two getting on so well together—would you believe it, Isabella, he fancies you're a sworn enemy of his.

MRS. Mc C. (*taking his arm*) Does this look like it?

STONI. We are learning to know each other better.

MRS. Mc C. And we find we both improve on acquaintance.

*As the couples group to go in to Tiffin*

ACT DROP DESCENDS.

**An interval of a few Days between the Acts.**

## ACT II.

SCENE.—*Mrs. Eversleigh's Boudoir, with doors as before, opening to the verandah, and opening R. and L., with muslin curtains ; that on the left leading to inner rooms, that on the right leading to Mr. G.'s bedroom ; the room should be prettily furnished with a tastefully-arranged toilet-table, draperies (muslin lined with pink) to the doors as well as the entrances of the rooms, R. and L., lounging chairs, couches, &c., covered to match the draperies ; a handsome Japan or Indian cabinet.*

KATIE NEIL and MARGARET LOVELL discovered each in a lounging chair—one with a book and the other with her work

KATIE ted R. nodding over her book, lets it drop) Margaret, darling ! I've dropped my book; pick it for me.

MARG. (*seated, L.*) How can you be so lazy, Katie ? Call Mahlee, she'll pick it up for me. (KATIE claps her hands.)

*Enter MAHLEE, L. door.*

KATIE. Pick up my book. (MAHLEE *does so*)

MARG. And fetch me my scissors, Mahlee.

MAHLEE *fetches scissors R. table—Exit, R. door.*

MARG. Are you going to walk, Katie ?

KATIE. It's too hot. Isn't it the day the Doctor said he'd take you to see the Native Girls' School ?

MARG. Yes. I hoped I might do a little teaching among the poor heathen children ! but I don't feel as if I could manage it.

KATIE. Why should you trouble yourself? Mr. Greenway says white ladies in India mustn't do anything but give orders, or the natives will look down on them.

MARG. But it's our duty to teach them, poor things, and set them an example of industry and independence, you know. The Doctor seemed so pleased when I said I'd take a class; and he's going to give me lessons in botany, Katie. He knows such a great deal about everything.

KATIE. Except a horse, my dear. I asked him what he thought of the points of the Arab Mr. Greenway's breaking for me, and he said he wasn't a veterinary surgeon.

MARG. How do you like Mr. Greenway ie ?

KATIE. Oh, better and better ; such a beautiful seat he has ! I haven't seen a better mounted man on the Mall since we came.

*Enter GREENWAY, L. C.*

GREEN. (R.) Good evening, ladies.

KATIE. Good evening.

MARG. Good evening.

GREEN. I hope you enjoyed the band last night, Miss Neil?

KATIE. Oh ! it was charming.

GREEN. I want you to come and look at the grey Arab; my Syce has brought him into the compound. He canters beautifully already. He'll make a perfect ladies' horse. Look ! isn't he a beauty?

KATIE. (*jumping up and running to the door and into the verandah, C.*) Ah ! there's a forehand; and he carries his tail like a comet! Trot him my man ; now, put him at the bar—easy, man, easy! don't rush the horse ; over he goes like a bird! Oh ! I must try him!

MARG. Shall I call Mahlee to put on your skirt ?

KATIE. Oh, bother Mahlee, and the skirt too. The cloth'll do beautifully. *Exit, R. C.*

GREEN. Now that's what I call something like a girl. Let me put you up, Miss Neil. *Exit, R. C.*

MARG. Oh! where does Katie get her spirits, I wonder ?

*Enter DOCTOR Mc RIVETT, L. C. by verandah, furling his chattie, or white Indian umbrella.*

Mc RIV. (R). Ah! I am glad to see you—douce and quiet over your work, Miss Lovell, as a lassie should be—no' like yon mad cousin o' yours, tearing round the compound wi' that daft lad Greenway ahint her, skirling like a pair o' sky-rockets. Ye'll be for the schule this fine cool mornin' ?

MARG. Cool?

Mc RIV. Only eighty degrees in the shade ; so pit on yer bonnet; the puir brown bairns, they wanna ken what to mak' o' a visit from the mem sahib. The leddies here find 'ither use for their time; dozin', and dressin', and flirtin' is enough for them.

MARG. I'm afraid you'll think me as bad as the rest. Doctor. I really don't feel up to the school, this morning.

Mc RIV. You, too, Miss Margaret! Od, I thocht I *had* found a lassie at last wi' some smeddum in her, and some sense that she was sent into the world for better things than pittin' claes on and aff.

MARG. Oh, but the heat, Doctor!

Mc RIV. Heat! hoot, hoot. Dinna I tell ye it's a fine braw mornin'.

MARG. I feel every movement an effort in this dreadful climate.

Mc RIV. Aye, pit it on the climate, like the lave of them. When auld Nick wanted an excuse for laziness and selfishness, and sinfulness, he invented the climate. But ye've better stuff in ordinary, Miss Lovell, than these feckless Anglo-Indian mem sahibs, or I hae nae skill in physiognomy; and ye've nae been long enough here to have forgotten there's such a thing as duty in the world, even with the thermometer at eighty.

MARG. You are right, Doctor. (*rises, places scissors on R. table*) I will make an effort, and I'll not call Mahlee; I'll run with my own legs, and put on my own bonnet with my own hands!

Mc RIV. That's a brave bonnie lassie!

*Exit MARGARET, L. door.*

Eh, sirs! to think o' a man at a time o'life fashing himsel' about a bit lassie o' nineteen! It's nae use, Saunders Mc Rivit, ye've put your grizzled auld pow under the slipper at last. It's a sair come down; Mrs. Colonel Mac will have a hair in my neck when she finds oot!

*Re-enter MARGARET, L. D., with her bonnet.*

MARG. Now, then. I am quite ready.

Mc RIV. Bless your bright face! it's like a gliff o' auld lang syne. It minds me o' the blue bells and the heather! Come; my chattie will shelter us both brawly if ye'll cling close. (*opens his umbrella*) It wadna' do to scorch your bonnie English roses, ye ken, Miss Margaret. (*they go up to verandah, R. D., he tenderly sheltering her under his umbrella; they meet MRS. COLONEL MAC, R. D., as they are about to pass out*)

MARG. Auntie, I'm going to the school with the Doctor.

MRS. Mc C. I'm glad to hear you're bound on such a very proper errand. My dear Doctor, you'll take great care of her?

Mc RIV. 'Deed, and I will, Mrs. Mac—mair than yon lad Greenway's takin' o' Miss Katie—look at them.

MRS. Mc C. No fear. Katie knows what she's about

with her Arab, as well as her admirer. She'll not let either take any liberties, I'll answer for it.

*Exit* DOCTOR Mc RIVETT *and* MARGARET, L. C.—MRS. Mc CANN *takes out of her pocket the box given her by* MONEE *in Act I.*

Who would think of the mischief that lies hid in these tiny walls of steel—a woman's unguarded letters! I shan't feel safe till they are destroyed. Oh, if Monee had found the key when she carried off the box ! It defies fire and force alike. Here comes Clara. (*puts box in pocket*)

*Enter* MRS. EVERSLEIGH *and* TUNSTALL *from verandah*, L. C.

MRS. E. (L.) He will go, Isabella—though we haven't exhausted our chapter of Derbyshire recollections; they do expand so by talking about.

TUNST. If I obeyed my inclinations I should remain; but I must get back to advise in the cases which have followed me even up to the Hills—and (*sighs*) you forget, that after each of our imaginary journeys home, I've to get back all the way to India alone. *Exit*, L. C.

MRS. E. Poor Tunstall!

MRS. Mc C. Say poor Clara, when you're about it.

MRS. E. I was thinking of his loneliness.

MRS. Mc C. And what a pity it was you couldn't find a companion to cheer it.

MRS. E. Where shall I find a woman worthy of him?

MRS. Mc C. Why should you go from home ?

MRS. E. Isabella, you forget Major Stonihurst. We are as good as engaged.

MRS. Mc C. Say as *bad* as engaged, my dear.

MRS. E. I forgot your prejudice against him—I had hoped it was removed.

MRS. Mc C. It is. 'Till this visit I admit I was prejudiced—now I am convinced.

MRS. E. Of what?

MRS. Mc C. That he is a man to whom no self-respecting woman should entrust her heart, or her fortune.

MRS. E. Ah ! he warned me against you.

MRS. Mc C. Then I'm only returning the compliment.

MRS. E. What have you to allege against him ? Is he not brave ?

MRS. Mc C. As an old robber knight.

MRS. E. Accomplished?

MRS. Mc C. As the serpent that tempted Eve.

MRS. E. A born captain and master, wherever men are met together.

MRS. Mc C. So was Lucifer — but now for the per contra. Imprimis—he is a gambler.

MRS. E. The consequence of idleness and ennui—nine tenths of our officers in India play.

MRS. Mc C. Granted. But let us hope not even the other tenth conspire to rob in playing.

MRS. E. What do you mean?

MRS. Mc C. Read this paper—it contains the confession of Major Stonihurst's accomplice in a regular scheme to intoxicate and plunder at cards, young Greenway. Here are the lad's I.O.U.'s for the money he lost to Stonihurst.

MRS. E. Is it possible ? But who knows if this accomplice's confession can be trusted!

MRS. Mc C. We won't trust it, till corroborated by the Major's own acts. I do not say he does not feel a strong passion for you; but I do say, that it is less potent than his desire for your fortune.

MRS. E. What more have you to bring against him?

MRS. Mc C. He is a profligate. You wonder at the change in your pretty young Monee—her shrinking from you—the mistress whom she used almost to worship. Monee loves Stonihurst.

MRS. E. I will not believe it.

MRS. Mc C. Ask the poor girl herself—or rather do not ask her—watch her while the Major is in her sight—you will need no other proof.

MRS. E. And I am bound to this man!

MRS. Mc C. Not yet, happily.

MRS. E. The whole Station looks upon our marriage as a settled thing.

MRS. Mc C. It will not be the first time that the whole Station has jumped to a false conclusion.

MRS. E. What am I to do ?

MRS. Mc C. Throw him over—boldly and decisively. If he asks you why, tell him what I have told you, and dare him to disprove. Meantime, think on what I have

told you—be on your guard—commit yourself to no further promise—put him to what test you please—and remember, if he threaten, you have two friends not easily frightened—John Tunstall, Barrister, and Colonel Isabella Mc Cann. *Exit, R. door.*

MRS. E. (*pressing her hands to her temples*) Can all this be true ? Is this a dream ? I will *not* believe it—easy to say I will not; but I cannot sweep her words from my mind. I can never again feel the faith I felt yesterday. Oh, that I had never known him!—that I had never loved him !—or, having loved, that I had never doubted! What shall I do ?—what shall I do ? Hark ! his voice ! (*she runs to the verandah*) He comes this way. I cannot face him now. Heaven give me strength and guidance against the moment when I *must* meet him !

*Exit, L. door.*

*Enter STONIHURST with a letter.*

STONI. (L. C.) Clara not here! just as well—I must re-arrange my plan of campaign. This letter from Mrs. Mac Cann's worse half—who takes rank and pay as Colonel of the 120th, while his wife *does* the duties—is an arrow from *her* quiver—who can have split to her?

*Enter SLACK also with a letter, L. C.*

SLACK. (R., *in agitation*) Well met, Stonihurst, I heard you were here—I've just had a letter from the Colonel.

STONI. (*coolly, L.*) So have I.

SLACK. But mine contains what should be very awkward news for some people.

STONI. So does mine.

SLACK. He has heard of these I. O. U.'s of Greenway's—he says he means to insist on the lad's demanding a court of inquiry.

STONI. Exactly what he tells me.

SLACK. Have you considered the consequences of an inquiry ?

STONI. The certain cashiering of Edward Stonihurst, major, and Thomas Slack, captain.

SLACK. And you can contemplate these consequences as calmly and as coolly-----

STONI. I have yet to learn that flurry is the best way of meeting danger.

SLACK. What do you mean to do ?

STONI. Put my ball in baulk by blocking this inquiry.

SLACK. You'll confess.

STONI. Confess! my poor Slack, you've not had your proper allowance of peg this morning—time enough to confess when you are found out. The Colonel only knows the pigeon has been plucked; he's in the dark as to the poulterers—I'll point out to him the scandal an inquiry will bring on the regiment, and suggest how it may be rendered unnecessary by inducing the rooks to disgorge their plunder.

SLACK. You'll return Greenway's I.O.U.'s ?

STONI. AS I can't keep 'em. Burking this inquiry is worth more than £2,000 to *us*.

SLACK. To *us* ?—to *you*.

STONI. We are Siamese twins—hurt one—the other must feel it.

SLACK. I don't know that—I'm not quite so sensitive as I was.

STONI. I'm glad of that; you wanted casehardening—and now I look at you, you are amazingly improved—eye clear, comparatively—hand steady, all but—by Jove, you're a new man!

SLACK. I am a new man—at least I'm in progress of repair—half of me is new, and the other half is in course of renewal. I'm going to send in my papers.

STONI. Your papers! but how about your Company accounts ?

SLACK. (*proudly*) I've sent them to the paymaster, balanced.

STONI. No wonder you're elated—balancing is a feat so much out of your line; I thought you were £300 short.

SLACK. So I was, but a friend has dubbed up—and I'm a free man.

STONI. Give me back those I.O.U.'s of Greenway's.

SLACK. I haven't got them.

STONI. Where are they ?

SLACK. I handed them over to Nabichull as you told me.

STONI. You must get them back for me at once.

SLACK. Get 'em yourself.

STONI. Slack, you're drunk!

SLACK. No, that's just it—I'm sober.

STONI. Ah, I meant you were not yourself—it comes to the same thing; now don't wax fat and kick, my dear Slack, in this unfamiliar consciousness of sobriety—but go, like a good fellow, and do what you are bid.

SLACK. I don't intend to do your bidding any longer, Stonihurst; if you want your I.O.U.'s, get your I.O.U.'s—I'm tired of playing the monkey to your hot chesnuts.

STONI. So this explains the Colonel's letter. Slack, you've peached to Mrs. Colonel Mac about this affair of Greenway's.

SLACK. Eh-----I----- peached?

STONI. This £300 is the price of your treachery.

SLACK. Don't bully; I won't stand bullying—I'm not your slave now.

STONI. No; you've changed your situation for an advance of wages.

SLACK. Come, Major Stonihurst—I'll thank you to remember I'm an officer and a gentleman.

STONI. How can I be expected to remember it, my good fellow, after I've used you so long as a tool and a turnspit? You're quite right to send in your papers; Her Majesty's livery is the only one you are not worthy of wearing.

SLACK. And was I worthier to wear it when I was your creature—alternately your decoy and your victim. Aye, look down on me in the pride of your stony heart. I am prouder of *my* weakness, than of *your* strength. Conscience may have made me a coward, but you are not more a man for wanting it. *Exit, L. C.*

STONI. Bravo, Mrs. Colonel Mac; I must admit you play your game well. Nothing like buying up a traitor. Luckily I have discovered the purchase in time. I must return the I.O.U.'s; but, then, how to raise the thousand pounds I want for the Meerut settling? If I don't pay up, I shall be posted as a defaulter. Here's a dilemma! Cashiering on the one hand, levanting on the other—I'm between the devil and the deep sea, with a vengeance! Well, I've been in scrapes as bad,

and brought a whole skin out of them. I must drive matters to an issue with Clara. Her fortune will make everything square. This woman little knows the absoluteness of my influence over her yielding nature. Here she comes, now for my coup d'état !

*Enter MRS. EVERSLEIGH, door, L.*

STONI. (R.) I'm lucky, my dear Clara, in finding you alone at last. Mr. Tunstall has been such a constant visitor of late.

MRS. E. (L.) Surely you would not grudge me the recollections of old times—the society of an old friend ?

STONI. I've no quarrel with the old times; a more jealous lover might, perhaps, object to the old friend, when he comes in the shape of a smooth-spoken lawyer; but I'm not disposed to be jealous.

MRS. E. (*ironically*) Thank you—you are very kind. Then I may see my old playmate now and then?

STONI. As often as you please, after we are married. My dear Clara, I've done suit and service this many a weary month; will you not give me my reward at last ? Let us fix the day.

MRS. E. Before my year's mourning has expired! Do not press it, Edward.

STONI. Clara, if your love were like mine, you would not allow an empty form to stand between us and happiness. I have only listened to my heart.

MRS. E. Are you quite sure of that ?

STONI. What do you mean, Clara ? Is it possible you can doubt the disinterestedness of my attachment ?

MRS. E. Edward, were I poor, as I am rich, would you be as eager for this marriage ?

STONI. There is suspicion in your very question. I guess who has prompted it. I warned you against this woman; you see suspicion of me has followed her into your house—into your heart. I have not deserved this, Clara. (*turns as if to hide emotion*) But from the moment that confidence is at an end, it is idle to talk of love. This is no longer a place for me! (*he turns as if to go*)

MRS. E. Stay, Edward; do not leave me.

STONI. Clara, I am not disposed to play the tyrant, and

even if I were disposed, I have no right. But I cannot condescend to clear myself of such suspicions as you have hinted. It is enough for me to know their source. Either this Tunstall is kept at a becoming distance, and that woman leaves the house, or I never set foot in it again.

MRS. E. A generous nature should not be so quick to take offence. Whatever Mrs. Mc Cann may have said against you, it is in your own power to disprove.

STONI. Disprove ! Am I on trial then ? Is your new friend, Mr. Tunstall, to sit in judgment on me ? How do I know the judge may not be interested in the result of the case.

MRS. E. I can listen to no imputation on Mr. Tunstall, even from *you*, Edward.

STONI. Forgive me, Clara; make some allowance for the susceptibility of ardent love—leave no room for the hideous working of jealousy—of doubt in *me* and suspicion in yourself. I love you truly—passionately. Be my wife at once !

MRS. E. On one condition-----

STONI. I will have no conditions; consider well if it is you or I who should impose them.

MRS. E. What do you mean?

STONI. Your love, Clara, is not a thing of yesterday. It dates back for years—to a time when you were still the wife of another. It has been recorded, not in words that can be unsaid as easily as spoken, but in written pages—pages that have been my comfort and solace, 'till now, but which, at need, may be my weapons for self-defence and justification.

MRS. E. You would not use my letters against me ?

STONI. And why not ? You have suspicions that dishonour *me*—you are giving way to them. I have what the world calls proofs, that discredit you, and I will use them if you will not be my wife. Do you think I will sit by in silence, to see you become the wife of another. I will give you time to consider well. Fling aside these doubts, and be my wife at once; or act upon them and take the consequences of throwing Edward Stonihurst over, for John Tunstall.

*Exit, L. C.*

MRS. E. This threat from him ! Become his wife from

fear, or see my letters made food for public comment—every equivocal word in them wrested to my shame!—my brain swims! What shall I do?

*Enter* MRS. Mc CANN, R.

Isabella! he has threatened me!

MRS. Mc C. I have overheard all, Clara. Now judge him by your own reason—your own sense of what is due from man to woman. You have put your good name in this man's power.

MRS. E. I was only imprudent.

MRS. Mc C. *Only* imprudent! And he asks you to choose between marriage with him and exposure. Would one who really loved you have offered such an alternative? Setting love aside, would a generous man have stooped to such a weapon? Can you conceive Tunstall using it?

MRS. E. No, no. But what is to be done?

MRS. Mc C. If he repeats his threat defy him to produce the letters: this may drive him to show his hand; at least it will teach him you are not so easily terrified as he imagines.

DR. Mc RIV. (*outside*) Then I'll join the leddies.

MRS. Mc C. Hark! The Doctor. His keen eye will detect your agitation. Go to your room; bathe your eyes; there, courage!

MRS. E. How thankful I am that you are with me now!

*Exit, L. door.*

*Enter* DR. Mc RIVETT, L. C.

Mc RIV. Ah! Mrs. Mac, well met.

MRS. Mc C. (L.) Why, Doctor, you look as if you had slipped ten years off your shoulders!

Mc RIV. 'Deed ha'e I. Thank your bonnie Margaret for it. She's doon at the schule. I tell you it was the pleasantest sicht I've seen since I clapped eyes on my brevet o' Superintendent-General of Hospitals. The bonnie English lassie, wi' her fair face and gentle voice, and a' the brown bairnies clinging about her, wonderin' if it was na' their ain Krishna come down amang them on a mission o' mercy.

MRS. Mc C. It must have been very pretty indeed; but I want you to do me a favour; my dear old husband is as brave as a lion; but he's too old for Hill service. I want you to certify to the fact, and further to certify that Stonihurst is quite fit for duty.

Mc RIV. But certificates canna' be  en at wull, ye ken. I maun ha'e data (*pronounce "dāwta."*)

MRS. Mc C. Ah, you know well enough, you doctors can always find reasons, or make them. Then, besides that, I want you to frighten Mrs. Eversleigh from the Hills and back to Calcutta at once, en route for England.

Mc RIV. 'Deed and I'll do that, for she's not quite tough enough for India; and ther'll be Tunstall to escort her down to the coast. It'll be a chance for him, puir lad.

MRS. Mc C. Only manage all this, Doctor, and I don't know what I won't do for you. I'll even pretend to be ill myself and call *you* in to prescribe for me.

Mc RIV. That's a strong temptation; but ye might find a stronger. Ca' me in to prescribe for your bonny niece.

MRS. Mc C. Pooh ! she doesn't want the doctor.

Mc RIV. Na ! but perhaps the doctor wants her ! Aye, you may stare ; it's a fac', Saunders Mac Rivit has caught the epidemic at last; and it's like the measles, the mair dangerous the aulder the patient,

MRS. Mc C. What does Margaret say ?

Mc RIV. I've nae asked her. But ye ken my position, Mrs. Mac; I've earned my retiring pension ; I've saved half a lac to boot. I'm no jest a young man; but I've a constitution like bent leather; and as for my principles—

MRS. Mc C. I know they're as stout as your constitution. If Margaret consents, so do I.

Mc RIV. And the lassie's parents ?

MRS. Mc C. Oh, I never allow girls to be consigned to me without *carte blanche* as to all future arrangements. If I'm satisfied, that's sufficient.

Mc RIV. I'll awa' down to see her up frae' the schule. Odd ! she'll ha'e me for her scholar the noo—my education has been sair negleckit. I learned the verb " amo," I love, in Adam's Latin Grammar, at Aberdeen High Skule; but I'm thinking Miss Margaret'll no' be satisfied with my auld fashioned parsing o't. *Exit, L. C.*

MRS. Mc C. So Margaret has brought down her man before Katie. I've observed the quiet girls generally do kill soonest. I must think for Clara, now. Shall I tell her these letters are in *my* hands ? It would relieve her anxiety; but it would spare her the lesson she sadly wants. Yes, it's decidedly for her good to sit on thorns a little longer. But that's no reason I should sit on thorns beside her, as I shall, till these letters are destroyed. I must find the means of opening this troublesome casket. If Monee can't steal the key she might steal the impression of it. Yes, I'll try it (*goes up stage*) Monee! Yonder she crouches, poor girl. I'll borrow an inch of this wax taper. (*cuts off piece of taper that stands on table*)

*Enter* MONEE, L. C.

MRS. Mc C. Monee is a good girl: she has brought the casket; but that is not enough. I must burn the letters, or the spell will not be broken. Cannot Monee find the key?

MONEE. I told the mem sahib—he carries it always on his chain—here ! (*points to her breast*)

MRS. Mc C. But at night ?

MONEE It is under his pillow. There are the watchmen about his verandah.

MRS. Mc C. If Monee cannot get the key, cannot she get an impression of it ? Look, here is a piece of soft wax. (*shows it*) Monee will wait in the verandah. When the sahib Stonihurst comes, she must watch her opportunity, and then press this wax against the key—she understands.

MONEE. Yes, yes—anything to kill his love for the burra bee-bee. Give Monee the wax—she will watch—she will do as the mem sahib bids her. *Exit*, L. C.

MRS. Mc C. Meanwhile, I must put the casket in a safe place. I dread every moment Stonihurst may find it is gone. I know he will stick at nothing to recover it.

(*calls* CLARA, L.)

*Enter* MRS. EVERSLEIGH, L. *door*.

What is the safest lock-up place in the bungalow ?

MRS. E. You know how little we trust such fastenings

in India—but this cabinet has a strong and intricate lock. I keep my jewels in it.

MRS. Mc C. I've a box here which I wish to deposit in safety—the contents are very valuable. May I lock it up in your cabinet?

MRS. E. Certainly—here's the key. *(takes the key, and opens cabinet—MRS. Mc CANN shews casket—MRS. EVERSLEIGH starts at the sight of it)*

MRS. E. Let me look at that casket. Yes—it's the same, or a counterpart, of one I brought out with me—it was Tunstall's first and last present. I lost it two years ago. Where did you get it?

MRS. Mc C. From Monee.

MRS. E. Monee ! She was not in my service when I lost it; besides, the girl is as honest as the day.

MRS. Mc C. Did you know Stonihurst at the time you missed it ?

MRS. E. Yes — I remember he used to admire the casket: and asked me for it. He must have stolen it in a jest, and given it to Monee since. *(she locks casket in cabinet, and puts the key in her pocket—MONEE in verandah suddenly springs up, and utters a short cry; then stands gazing eagerly)*

MRS. E. What is the matter with Monee ?—Look at her.

MRS. Mc C. Stonihurst is in sight—I'm certain of it. Clara, will you be guided by me?—watch his meeting with Monee, from behind the purdah. In your present relations with him, you have the fullest right to use all weapons—open or concealed.

MRS. E. I will watch. *(they retire behind purdah, L.)*

*Enter STONIHURST, L. C.—he looks round him.*

STONI. Clara not here ? Monee!

*(she springs forward at his call, and throws herself passionately into his arms)*

MONEE. (L.) Sahib, sahib ! *(she sobs on his bosom)*

STONI. *(compassionately)* Poor girl ! poor girl ! Hush, hush!—Monee, be calm. The mem sahib must not see this. Tell her I am here—that I must speak with her.

MONEE. No, no; do not send Monee to her—let Monee stay here on your breast.

*(while clinging on his breast, MONEE takes an impression of the key which hangs from his watchguard with a piece of soft wax which she has concealed in her mouth)*

STONI. *(kissing her brow)* When was Monee disobedient?

MONEE. Monee will go. The burra bee-bee will be here directly.

*Exit, L. C.*

STONI. The game grows critical. I must oust this woman, or she will oust me. I have left time for my threat to work. Clara is timid. She values the world's opinion. Poor thing, she will not brave it.

*Enter MRS. EVERSLEIGH, R.*

Clara, have you well considered your decision ?

MRS. E. I am unwilling to suppose you ungenerous. Come, confess that that threat was only meant to alarm me. You have destroyed those letters ?

STONI. Do not buoy yourself up with that hope. I told you before—I tell you still—I have kept every word you ever wrote to me.

MRS. E. With a view to turn them to this use?

STONI. No—for love of her who wrote them—but if this love be at an end, though they may be useless for my consolation, they will serve my just revenge. You still doubt. What if I show you these glowing mementos of happiness—these terrible witnesses against you?

MRS. E. I will believe in their existence when I see them.

STONI. You shall soon be satisfied; they are at my bungalow. You shall have the fullest opportunity of verifying them—in my hands.

*Exit, L. C.*

*Enter Mrs. MAC CANN, R.*

MRS. Mc C. Now, Clara, do you doubt what I told you of Monee ?

MRS. E. I can doubt no longer—but these letters ? he speaks so confidently.

MRS. Mc C. Remember your own words, " I will believe in their existence when I see them."

MRS. E. O, Isabella, if you knew what it is to be suspended thus between lingering love, and rising abhorrence! I cannot encounter these dumb witnesses of my early folly.

MRS. Mc C. Then leave me to receive him. Fear nothing, your secret is safe in my hands. There—compose yourself.

MRS. E. Oh, but for your support, what would become of me in this terrible struggle. *Exit L.—a cry without.*

MRS. Mc C. What's that?

*Enter GREENWAY, supporting KATIE, R. C.*

MRS. Mc C. Katie, an accident !

GREEN. I couldn't prevent her! It wasn't my fault! I told her he wasn't up to timber, she would put him at it, and he came over a cropper. I don't think he touched her. I picked her up—is anything broken ?

MRS. Mc C. I don't think so, send a Khitmagar for Mac Rivett. *(GREENWAY runs up to verandah)*

MRS. Mc C. Do you feel any pain, Katie, can you move?

KATIE. Yes, I can—bother that cloth! It caught his off fore leg as he rose at the gate ; it wasn't Mr. Greenway's fault, he told me the horse couldn't do it.

*Re-enter GREENWAY, C.*

GREEN. Here's the Doctor coming up the compound with Miss Lovell. How is she ? Is he hurt serious ?

MRS. Mc C. I hope not—oh, you unlucky griff, you're always in some scrape.

*Enter DR. Mc RIVETT and MARGARET, L. C.*

MARG. *(running up to KATIE)* Oh, Aunt! oh, Katie, what's the matter? *(Mc RIVETT quietly examines KATIE.)*

MRS. Mc C. *(to MARGARET)* Don't be foolish, my dear. Now, Doctor, what's the matter with her?

Mc RIV. A slight contusion of the right temporal bone, but clear of the artery—but there's no external harm, at all events, perhaps you had better get her to bed for a little-----

KATIE. I shall be all right directly. Don't be frightened, Auntie—don't look so white, Mr. Greenway, I've been

spilt before, worse than this, and never ailed anything after it.

GREEN. I say, Mrs. Mac, aint she a good plucked 'un ? Bless her heart. If I don't welt that clumsy brute for this.

MRS. Mc C. (*to MARGARET*) Go in with her, my dear. Doctor, you'd better stay till she's quite herself again.

KATIE. I am myself already, but I'll be good, and lie down, Auntie, if you want me. Good bye, Mr. Greenway, I'm sorry I was spilt, and you there to see it.

Mc RIV. You'll jest hauld your tongue, and gang your ways.

KATIE. I'm going—only, Doctor, don't give me any physic, there's a dear! *Exit KATIE and MARGARET, L.*

Mc RIV. (*across to MRS. Mc C.*) She's consented, bless her bonnie face—as for you (*to GREENWAY*) you young ne'er-do-well, wait till the next time I've the dosin' o' you! *Exit, L.*

GREEN. Please don't scold me, Mrs. Colonel Mac, and please when Miss Neil's better, may I propose to her? I'm a soldier, and a horseyman—think what a wife she'd make for a fellow in either line of business !

MRS. Mc C. You propose to Katie indeed, and with I.O.U.'s for £2,000 hanging over your head! Wait till they're paid, and then we'll talk about a wife for you.

GREEN. Confound that blind hookey! As if it wasn't enough to lose my money at it—I'm to lose a wife into the bargain ! and such a trump of a girl too ! I say, Mrs. Mac, I may come back and see her when she's all right ? I won't go—I'll smoke a cheroot under the verandah. (*aside*) If I mustn't welt the horse, I can swear at the syce, to relieve my feelings. *Exit, C. R.*

MRS. Mc C. Now for the decisive charge of my Waterloo! I've not felt so like being nervous since the first time Hector went into action.

*Re-enter MONEE, C. L.*

MONEE. The key. (*gives it*)

MRS. Mc C. At last! Thanks, Monee !

MONEE. But you are killing her love ?

MRS. Mc C. It's dying by inches, Monee—to-night will see the end of it.

MONEE. Oh, joy. Then Monee will live again.

*Exit, C. L.*

MRS. Mc C. There's not a moment to be lost in destroying these letters; so now to get out the box. Oh, where's my head? Clara has the key of the cabinet. *Exit, L. D.*

*Enter STONIHURST by verandah, C. L.*

STONI. The casket is gone from my bungalow—it was there last week; my servants deny all knowledge of its disappearance. The watchmen declare no strangers have been seen about the place. This is not the work of a chance thief—who, who can have done this! Who but this infernal sleepless enemy—this bold player who has pitted her wits against mine! Thus far she has made the highest score—but the game is not over yet. Yet how or why can she have got possession of the casket? Clara may have told her of the use I intended to make of the letters, but she did not know I had the casket, still less that it contained them. Hark! her footstep—let me try an ambuscade. (*he retires to verandah*)

*Re-enter MRS. COLONEL Mc CANN with the key of the cabinet—she opens it and takes out the box.*

MRS. Mc C. (R.) Now, Major Stonihurst, you may surrender at discretion.

STONI. (L., *coming down*) Not yet! As I suspected—you are the thief!

MRS. Mc C. The thief! where are the stolen goods, pray?

STONI. In your hands.

MRS. Mc C. Oh—this casket?

STONI. Yes; stolen by you from my bungalow last week.

MRS. Mc C. Pardon me, stolen by you from Mrs. Eversleigh's bungalow two years ago.

STONI. It was a gift—or if not, a theft which love prompted and which love will excuse. Give it back.

MRS. Mc C. No. (*she rapidly replaces it in the cabinet and re-locks the door*) If you please, we will refer the point of law as to property in the casket to Mr. Tunstall—here he comes.

*Enter TUNSTALL, L. C.*

TUNST. (L.) Good evening, Major—good evening, Mrs. Mc Cann—I've despatched my papers and have hurried back for another excursion to Derbyshire with Mrs. Eversleigh.

MRS. Mc C. You will find Mrs. Eversleigh in the drawing-room—will you oblige me by giving her this key, and beg her to take particular care of it (*gives TUNSTALL key of cabinet*)

STONI. A pleasant journey to Derbyshire, Tunstall. (*aside*) Curse him! *Exit TUNSTALL, L.*  
You know what that casket contains ?

MRS. Mc C. (C.) Clara's love-letters to you.

STONI. (R.) You know the use I'm prepared to make of them.

MRS. Mc C. An unfair and unmanly one. You hope by help of them to frighten her into marriage. Happily the box and its contents are in my possession.

STONI. Yes! but not the key which gives access to them. Here it is—it never quits this chain.

MRS. Mc C. Ah ! caskets may be opened without keys.

STONI. You will find this one difficult to open by any means within your reach. I warn you, by fair means or by foul I mean to recover that casket, and when I do, I will place it instantly in the hands of Mr. Tunstall.

MRS. Mc C. We shall see.

STONI. (*with a sudden change of tone*) Mrs. Mac Cann, I admire you immensely.

MRS. Mc C. Thank you.

STONI. I was never so well matched in my life!

MRS. Mc C. You flatter me.

STONI. Come—if heads like ours were allies instead of enemies, we might do a great deal.

MRS. Mc C. I prefer hunting single.

STONI. I presume we are both too clear-headed, and too superior to humbug to pretend to purely disinterested motives—I love Clara, as I told you, and within the limits of my nature, genuinely and passionately. But I don't mean to say that even my passion would make me so eager for this marriage were she not rich, as well as

beautiful. You, I take it, know the value of a rich and fashionable friend, as well as I do the advantage of a wealthy wife. You think by ousting me to establish yourself firmly as amie de la maison here, which, with Clara's hatred of trouble, means much the same thing as mistress of the house. Come, what terms will induce you to a compromise—to act as energetically in my cause as you have acted against me ?

MRS. Mc C. I'm delighted at your frankness, it is so refreshing. I will be as frank. I *do* know the advantages of a wealthy well-established fashionable friend, as well as you do those of a rich wife. I like to know where my luxurious room is always ready, and my knife and fork laid at a well-appointed table. But, I would sooner lie on straw, and eat rice for the rest of my life, than have spoken as you spoke just now, and yet, dare to call myself a gentleman! I defy your efforts—be they by force or fraud—and I repel your offers of compromise with the scorn that becomes a woman, and that woman the wife of a man who wears with honor the uniform which you disgrace.

*Exit, L.*

STONI. Oh, that there were but something here—man or beast—that I might vent my fury on! First to recover these letters! They must still be there—the lock is cunning—the key has never left me. This cabinet may easily be broken open. Monee can easily get rid of the watchmen for me to-night—it will not be the first time. Poor girl! how her true love stands out in the light of her mistress's fickle, feeble flame! Curse the heartless coquette! Because her eyes are blue, her skin white, I must turn from my poor Monee's dusk beauty, and fling her love aside like an emptied flask. (MONEE *creeps down from verandah, and listens with passionate eagerness*) And all because Anglo-Indian rules of caste are stern against the union of the conqueror and the conquered! Why should I stoop to these trammels?—I have laughed at stronger ones. I have defied convention—broken the pale of morals ; not always stopped before the banner of law ; and shall this frail reed-fence of caste stop me ? No, I will gratify love and vengeance at once. I will proclaim the dark girl my wife, and make this haughty white-

skinned lady creep and quail in the glare of her own shame ! What matter that the letters were only the utterances of imprudence ? They read like the shamelessness of guilt. Yes, Monee, you have deserved this reward for your long and humble devotion—you shall have it.

(MONEE, *who has crept down, leaps into his arms*)

MONEE. The charm works—Monee lives again.

STONI. Yes, Monee, we will still be happy. Listen ! I will be here after nightfall—see the watchmen withdrawn from the verandah. Your mistress sleeps in that room. (*points, L.*)

MONEE. Yes.

STONI. Let her smell this—she will sleep. (*gives MONEE a phial*) It will do her no harm, and now farewell till we meet, never to part again.

*He kisses her passionately, and exits, L. C.*

MONEE. The spell, the spell! His love for her is killed—his heart has come back to his Monee. (*she weeps convulsively*)

*Enter MRS. COLONEL Mc CANN and Mc RIVETT, L.*

MRS. Mc C. What's this ? (*finds phial*) Poison!

Mc RIV. (*smelling at phial*) Na, na, catch these brown heathens at suicide—they leave that to their Christian masters. This is a sleeping mixture I made for Stonihurst. It's na to drink, but to smell—there's chloroform in it, with a when 'ither ingredients.

MONEE. (*throwing herself on her knees, and kissing MRS. MAC CANN'S knees passionately*) Krishna bless you!—the spell is broken—he loves Monee once more—he is to come to her to-night!

MRS. Mc C. What's this for, Monee ? (*shewing phial*)

MONEE. He told Monee to give it the burra bee-bee : it will make her sleep. Monee can love the burra bee-bee again now. *Exit R. door.*

(*night has fallen—loud thunder and storms of rain heard outside with lightning*)

*Enter KHANSUMAH, R. door with lights, and exit R. door.*

Mc RIV. Hech, sirs, here's a fearfu' night.

MRS. Mc C. It will be impossible for any of you to ge



back to your bungalows, through this—you had better all sleep here.

Mc RIV. Aweel, Tunstall will hae na objection, and I'm no disposed to say " no " myself. I'll hae a game of chess with my May Margaret, and take a wheen lessons in the verb " amo."  
*Exit, L. door.*

GREENWAY *puts in his head through verandah door, C.*

GREEN. I say, Mrs. Mac, may I come in ? I've smoked all my cheroots, and I've sworn out all my Hindostanee at the syce, and I do so want to see Katie.

MRS. Mc. C. Well, you may come in if you'll promise to be very good and quiet.

GREEN. Oh, I'll be as tame as a mouse.

MRS. Mc. C. Then go in; you'll find Katie up, and none the worse for her " purl," as you call it in your mess slang.  
*Exit GREENWAY, L. door.*

This reconciliation with Monee—this night-visit—the sleeping-draught!—put this and that together. Yes, I see it all. He means to force the cabinet and possess himself of these letters! (*claps her hands*)

*Enter MAHLEE R. door.*

A pan of charcoal from the kitchen. *Exit MAHLEE, R.*  
So, by your leave. (*unlocks cabinet*)

*Enter MAHLEE, with pan of charcoal, R. door.*

MAHLEE. What missie want fire for, I wonder.

*Exit MAHLEE, R. door.*—MRS. Mc CANN *takes out casket.*

MRS. Mc. C. Now if Monee's key will but work. (*she tries it*) No—yes ! (*opens casket and takes out packet of letters*) Shall I peep? It's a strong temptation ; but curiosity is not a woman's failing, whatever the men may say. There! (*she puts letters on brazier and sees them burn*) Fly up in smoke—light vows—rash promises — fond confessions! And now what is left of so much past imprudence—of so much present danger? A wavering film that I scatter into nothingness with a breath—so! (*she puffs*) If the Major does get possession of the casket it would be a pity he should find it empty. Here is Slack's confession, and

here Greenway's I.O.U.'s (*she puts papers in box which she locks, and replaces it in cabinet, which she locks also; then claps her hands*)

*Enter MAHLEE and takes pan off—Enter MONEE, L. door.*

MONEE. The burra bee-bee is retiring for the night; must Monee give her this ? (*shews phial*)

MRS. Mc CANN. Yes. (*sees flowers on toilet table*) Here, conceal it among these flowers, and take care she smells them.

*Enter MRS. EVERSLEIGH, L. door.*

MRS. E. Well, Isabella, have you seen him ?

MRS. Mc C. Yes; you may sleep in peace; he will never produce your letters.

MRS. E. And I have to thank you for this.

MRS. Mc C. Yes; without affectation I may say you *have*—nobody but me.

MRS. E. I could not have slept with that sword suspended over my head.

MRS. Mc C. A sword of your own forging, too—they are always the sharpest; and now, good night.

MRS. E. Good night

MRS. Mc C. (*taking up her hair*) I don't wonder the flies are caught in this golden web ! Poor Tunstall ! Is he to be the next eaten, you insatiable little spider ?

MRS. E. Oh! Isabella! do not laugh at his deep and true affection. He has cherished it all along—the more that it was without hope.

MRS. Mc C. Ah, that's the way with the men. Good night.

*Exit MRS. Mc CANN, R. door.*

MRS. E. Give me that book, Monee. (MONEE *fetches book*) Why, what has changed you ? You look like my own pretty, gentle Monee, again.

MONEE. Because Monee is happy; she can love her burra bee-bee, now. (*she kneels and kisses her hand*) Here are some flowers, that sahib Tunstall brought the burra bee-bee. (*gives flowers*)

MRS. E. Ah! (*she smells flowers*) What a peculiar odour. (*she falls asleep*)

*Re-enter* MRS. COLONEL Mc CANN, R. door.

MRS. Mc C. The phial has done its work! (*she beckons on MAHLEE and two AYAHs from R. door*) Now to receive the last fire from the enemy. (*they carry off* MRS. EVERSLEIGH, R. door) Hark! a cautious step in the verandah! Now, Major, prepare for a surprise!

(*she enters* MRS. EVERSLEIGH'S bed room, L. door—*thunder and lightning*)

*Enter* STONIHURST, from the verandah, C.—*he carries a small crowbar in his hand, and throws off a dripping waterproof cloak and cap.*

STONI. Here's a night; but it fits my purpose. (*goes to bed room, R., enters and listens*) I watched her leave the drawing room! Yes! Mc Rivett's phial, too, has served its turn. Now to regain the casket. (*he applies his crowbar*) The door of the cabinet yields! I must have a natural turn for burglary—open! (*he takes out the casket*) The casket!—all secure—the lock has not been tampered with. Now to awaken her! (*he approaches the bed room entrance, box in hand—the curtains are drawn asunder—*MRS. Mc CANN *steps forward between them, L. door*) You!

MRS. Mc C. Good evening, Major Stonihurst, I congratulate you on your management of a jemmy. There was a great cracksman spoiled when you joined the army.

STONI. They laugh best who laugh last. Who's is the casket now?

MRS. Mc C. Yours I admit, by right of burglary; you must own my plan was neater. I didn't stoop to a jemmy.

STONI. Where is Clara?

MRS. Mc C. In my room.

STONI. May I ask the reason of this change of quarters.

MRS. Mc C. Yes—I suspected you would break in, and I didn't wish her to be alarmed.

STONI. And had you no fears for yourself?

MRS. Mc C. Oh, dear, no! I've strong nerves—a clear conscience—and an excellent revolver—so I am armed at once against your bluster, your exposure, and your violence.

STONI. Bring Clara here.

MRS. Mc C. For what purpose ?

STONI. That I may satisfy her I am still in possession of her letters.

MRS. Mc C. I think it would be a pity to break her first sleep.

STONI. Then, if you will not, I will. I must place her own letters before her eyes. I know she has ceased to love me, for she has ceased to trust. I would not have her now, were she to crawl on her knees. But I will have her at my feet suing for mercy, that I may have the pleasure of rejecting her prayer.

MRS. Mc C. Hadn't you better wait till to-morrow. This melo-dramatic performance can come off quite as well by daylight.

STONI. And so give you time for some new counter-manœuvre ? No; I will see her to-night. If you will not bring her to me, I will go to her. You dare not prevent me!

MRS. Mc C. Dare not ?

STONI. No !—Regard for your own immaculate reputation will deter you.

MRS. Mc C. As to my fears of alarming the house, be this my answer! (*she shouts*) Help ! Mc Rivett! Mrs. Eversleigh !

STONI. Silence, you mad woman ! Nay, then—the consequences be on your own head and Clara's.

*Enter* MRS. EVERSLEIGH, R. D., DR. Mc RIVETT, TUNSTALL, GREENWAY, KATIE, and MARGARET, followed by MONEE.

Mc RIV. What's a' this clam-jamphry ?

MARG. Aunt !

TUNST. What's the meaning of these cries ?

GREEN. Don't be afraid, Katie, cling to me.

MRS. Mc C. Only a burglarious entrance into the bungalow, by Major Stonihurst; I always knew he was a man of very varied accomplishments, but I was not aware till to-night, that they included housebreaking.

Mc RIV. Hech, sirs; but this is a queer world we live in! Explain, Major.

STONI. I came here to recover this casket—stolen from my bungalow, by this lady's contrivance.

TUNST. That casket ? One moment—yes—it is my present to Clara, Mrs. Eversleigh, long, long ago.

STONI. I know nothing of its early history: all I know is, it has been mine for two years. The best proof of that will be found in its contents, and in my possession of the key. It is here. Shall I open it, Mrs. Eversleigh ?

MRS. E. How am I interested in the question ?

STONI. One word. (*aside to her*) It contains your letters!

MRS. Mc C. (*aside to CLARA*) Be firm, it is too late now, let him do his worst.

STONI. Well, shall I open it? Silence gives consent. Tunstall, I entrust the papers in this casket to your perusal—your private perusal, if you please—you will then return them to me, for such use as I think proper to make of them. (*he hands the key to TUNSTALL*) (*aside to MRS. MAC*) Who wins now?

MRS. Mc C. I do.

TUNST. (*taking paper from casket*) What is this? (*reads*) " Full statement of Thomas Slack, of what occurred at Major Stonihurst's bungalow, on the night of the 4th of August," and these ? I.O.U's to a large amount, addressed to Major Stonihurst—signed Frederick Greenway! (STONIHURST *stands confounded*)

MRS. Mc C. Be good enough to hand them over to Major Stonihurst, for such use as he thinks proper to make of them. (*the rest whisper*)

STONI. (*aside to MRS. MAC*) I'm at your mercy!

MRS. Mc C. I will use my victory magnanimously (*aloud to all*) I see now the motive of the Major's burglary—he wanted a coup-de-theatre, to introduce to all the parties concerned this avowal of his share in Greenway's losses, and the reparation he is ready to make for it. Those are Greenway's I.O.U.s.

STONI. Which, I thus publicly restore to the very green young gentleman who gave them. (*across, L.*) I hope this lesson will not be thrown away (MRS. Mc CANN *gives him a look*) on any of us. (*aside to MRS. MAC*) You have conquered me twice over. (*aloud*) I have more surprises for you. Dr. Mc Rivett, having certified that Colonel Mc Cann is

unfit for this expedition against the Khoords, as the officer next in command, I have volunteered for it—but, before I go, I invite all here to my marriage-----

ALL. Your marriage!

Mc RIV. With our fair friend here, of course.

STONI. No, my dear Doctor, Mrs. Eversleigh is going to change her name, but for that of Tunstall—not Stonihurst.

Mc RIV. Then who is the happy woman?

STONI. One not quite so fair, though neither less faithful nor less fond—she is here (*he takes MONEE by the hand and brings her forward*)

ALL. Monee!

Mc RIV. Man ! this is the best thing I ever heard o' ye yet.

GREEN. (*aside to KATIE*) Marry a nigger! only think, Katie!

KATIE. And why shouldn't a dark horse come in a winner? (*GREENWAY and KATIE cross behind to R. C.*)

MRS. Mc C. Stonihurst, this redeems much—the rest I leave to time and conscience. For your Meerut settling you may look to me.

STONI. I go on a desperate service. If I never return (*to MRS. Mc C.*) *you will take care of her.* If I do come back I trust it may be with a name that may wipe out something of the stain that now lies dark upon me. Henceforth my lot lies here.

MRS. Mc C. And yours, you happy folks, at home! The sooner you're there the better! For whatever the fresh breezes of the Himalayahs may do for Indian constitutions, it's clear to me that the moral atmosphere of dear old England is far more conducive to health and married happiness than the air " UP AT THE HILLS."

GREENWAY *and* KATIE, R. C.—MRS. MAC CANN,  
R. C. STONIHURST *and* MONEE, C. TUNSTALL. *and*  
MRS. EVERSLEIGH, R. DOCTOR MAC RIVETT, *and*  
MARGARET, L. C.

Curtain.