

CARTE DE VISITE.

An Original Farce,
OR A
Piece of Light Photographical Writing.

IN ONE ACT.

Not from the French,

BY

MONTAGU WILLIAMS & F. C. BURNAND,

(Members of the Dramatic Authors' Society),

AUTHORS OF

" B. B.," " Isle of St. Tropez," " Turkish Bath."



THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND, LONDON.

CARTE DE VISITE.

*First performed at the Theatre Royal St. James's,
under the management of Mr. F. Matthews,
On 26th December, 1862.*

Characters.

MR. WILLIAM WINKIN..... Mr. S. JOHNSON.

ROBERT RANGER Mr. WESTERN.

MONS. RAYON DESOLEIL..... Mr. TURFORD.

MRS. WINKIN..... Miss ADELINE COTTRELL.

MRS. MONTGOMERY Miss ADA DYAS.

BETSY..... Miss NISBETT.

COSTUMES OF THE DAY.

CARTE DE VISITE.



SCENE.—*Room hung with Birdcages, birds in them; bow window thrown outfitted up as an aviary, C., at back, the brasswork of the cage unfinished—the doors open and curtains hung over them on either side, to be easily dropped by a string—a screen partially covered with pictures at L. U. E., one side uncovered with canvas; door of entrance R. C.; cupboard with key in lock, L. U. E.; door, L. ; door, R. U. E.*

MRS. WINKIN *discovered pasting photographs upon a half-finished screen, MRS. MONTGOMERY working, R., at table.*

MRS. M. My dear Mrs. Winkin, how many more pictures are you going to paste upon that screen ?

MRS. W. Oh, not half finished yet!

MRS. M. When are you going to fill up that space in the middle ?

MRS. W. That depends upon circumstances. Ever since we have been lodging in your house, and that's for the last four months, I have been entreating Mr. Winkin to have his portrait taken in a photograph, but he positively and sternly refuses; he says it's unlucky, and nothing on earth should induce him to have it done.

MRS. M. (*rises*) You surprise me, for I thought your husband in everything a perfect lamb of a man. Look at his love for birds, always surrounded by these beautiful specimens of the feathered tribe. (*goes up, L. C.*)

MRS. W. That's it, he doesn't care what money he spends on his Ava-davats and Java-sparrows. Look at the new aviary he's just been making.

MRS. M. (*at back, C.*) Yes, he really does show such good taste—but what are these curtains for?

MRS. W. To be let down at night. They work by one string, and my husband's very proud of it as his own invention.

MRS. M. (*letting down curtains*) Well, if it pleases him-----

MRS. W. Yes, he does it to gratify his own taste, not mine, for he won't accede to my most trifling request; so naughty too, when it's the fashion for every one to have a *carte de visite*, and I do like to be among the first in the fashion.

MRS. M. Oh, he's sure to give in!

MRS. W. Ah, you think so. Oh, you don't know Mr. Winkin ! There! I think I've done a good day's work. Dear me! quite a July morning, and I have nothing to walk out in but a black velvet cloak—I shall be suffocated.

MRS. M. There's no necessity for that, I shall be delighted to lend you my China crape shawl—I am not going out myself.

MRS. M. Oh, thank you! (*going up, R.*)

MRS. M. Don't mention it, I am always delighted to oblige friends—don't distress yourself about the portrait, when I see Mr. Winkin, I'll try what *my* influence can do.

Exit, door R. C. in flat.

(MRS. WINKIN *as she rises puts her little hat and jacket on back of chair behind screen, where she has been sitting*)

MRS. W. Her influence indeed! I like that—a pretty remark for one's landlady. If I didn't know that Trotty actually worships the ground on which I walk I should be jealous—but she's a widow, and that's quite enough for me. I'm much obliged to her for the advice about the photograph, but I've got a little plan of my own. There's a new foreign artist settled at the corner of the square, and he tells me he can take my husband's likeness without his being aware of it. Now I must slip down this morning to his studio, and arrange how the affair is to be done.

(*cries heard without*—"Hollo ! there he goes !—have you got him ?—put a bit of salt on his tail! ")

Good gracious me! what is all that noise about ? (*going to window*) What a crowd ! Why it's my Trotty running round the square with one slipper on and no hat. I do believe it's that horrid paroquet loose again. (*shouts without*, "Yah!")

WINKIN. (*without*) Well, he hasn't hurt you! Go along, all of you, or I'll send for a policeman.

Enter WINKIN, R. C., at back, in great disorder.

MRS. W. My Trotty, what's the matter?

WINK. Matter! I've been up a tree—over the chimney pots—down a ladder—scaled a wall tastefully ornamented with glass bottles. By the way, I don't know whether you ever went over a wall tastefully orna-----

MRS. W. Never mind that. (L.)

WINK. (R.) But I do mind that, it was painful in the extreme, and all this for the sake of the hireling Elizabeth

MRS. W. Elizabeth!

WINK. Yes, much as it will go to my heart to deprive her of the sum of nine pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence

per annum, tea and sugar included, I must insist upon Mrs. Montgomery giving her warning.

MRS. W. Oh, she's very honest, and if she's a little stupid-----

WINK. Little stupid! she's a big stupid—a perfect idiot! This is the third time this week she's let that paroquet out of the cage—my beautiful female paroquet. She flew out of the window just as her cage was being cleaned by Elizabeth. I jumped forward and tried to seize her by the tail.

MRS. W. What, Elizabeth!

WINK. No, no, the paroquet. I've got her back again now; however, after this, I'm determined to send her away.

MRS. W. The paroquet ?

WINK. No, no, Elizabeth! Now if you'd only look after the birds a little, instead of attending to that rubbish, and oblige your Trotty.

MRS. W. And if you'd only think a little less of your rubbish, and oblige your Lotty.

WINK. Rubbish! look at their rich plumage, observe their variegated tails. (*points to cages—goes up, R.*)

MRS. W. Well, examine the noble countenances. (*goes up, L.*) remark the distinguished heads, heads, sir, heads! (*points to photographs on screen*)

WINK. Tails, ma'am, tails!

MRS. W. Well, Mr. Winkin, as you seem to set no value on my company, you may quarrel with yourself—I shall go out.

WINK. And I shall stop at home.

MRS. W. Very well, sir ! (*aside*) Exactly what I wanted.

Exit, door L.

WINK. Confound the photography, my wife's a perfect lunatic on the subject. I hate being done in any way, and especially in one of those cadaverous-looking pictures. We're always having a row about it. By the way, I'm rather glad she's gone off in a huff this morning, as I shall now be able to solve the mystery of that mysterious individual who, for the last three days, has haunted the exterior of this house. (*goes to window*) Ah ! there he is again, this time in a pork-pie hat. What can the eccentric individual want ? (*throws up window*) He can't be the groundsel and chickweed for the birds, he hasn't got a basket. (*shaking his head*) Go away, whatever you've got to sell, we don't want any ! He didn't hear me, he's lighting a cigar—now he's looking up at the top window of the house—now he's putting his hands to his heart; perhaps he's got a pain in the chest. Hollo ! he's looking up again and kissing the tips of his fingers. He can't be saluting the chimney-pots. I won't see any more. (*pulls down blind*) A horrible suspicion seizes me. Lotty! my Lotty!—

her sudden change of temper—her going out alone—can it be that *she* is the object of those exaggerated demonstrations ? It may be. Oh ! what a fool I've been, it's all that paroquet! Ah ! while I have been looking after the comfort of my birds I've forgotten the peaceful security of my own nest.

Enter MRS. MONTGOMERY *with shawl*, R. *door in flat—she locks it.*

MRS. M. Here's the shawl! Oh, I beg your pardon, Mr. Winkin.

WINK. Don't mention it. (*aside*) She's a sensible woman, I'll ask her advice ! (*to her*) Mrs. Montgomery ? (*advances R.*)

MRS. M. (L.) Yes, sir !

WINK. Well, you're a lady, for whose opinion I have great respect: as the poet says-----

"There's not much flummery
In Mrs. Montgomery."

But that's neither here nor there, what I was going to say, was-----

Enter MRS. WINKIN, L., *dressed for walking, except shawl.*

MRS. W. (*aside*) Together!

WINK. I've a horrible suspicion on my mind, which has flashed upon me like-----

MRS. W. (*down C.*) Winkin!

WINK. My love, I was merely speaking about a light on the staircase; by the way, Mrs. Montgomery, I wish you *would* put a light there, for it really is so dark.

MRS. M. I'll see to it. I've brought the shawl. (*puts it on* MRS. W.)

MRS. W. This is charming—now I shall go out.

WINK. (*aside*) Not without me, no, no ! (*loud*) What, leave your Trotty ?

MRS. W. Why, I thought you said-----

WINK. (*aside to her*) Don't begin the row again. (*loud*) I'm coming with you! (*taking coat and hat from pegs, and putting them on.*)

MRS. W. And so you shall, if you'll promise never to scold your Lotty. (*aside*) I'd better not leave him here. (*loud*) Thank you for the shawl, come along. *Exit* R. C. *door in flat.*

WINK. Where have I put my gloves? (*aside*) I'll have another look out of the window—he's gone ! (*going, returns, loud*) When I come back, I will a tale unfold.

MRS. W. (*without*) Trotty!

WINK. Coming, my dear, coming! mum. (*makes sign of silence—exit, R. C.*)

MRS. M. Oh, they are a funny couple; I'm dying with curiosity to know what it all means. (*looking at them as they*

go) My shawl really does look very well; heigho ! it reminds me of happier days. Poor Robert! it was a present of his. *Present!* when I think of the past, the happy *past*.

Enter BETSY with cage, R. C. door in flat.

BETSY. Please, mum, I've finished all Mr. Winkin's birds; I've sanded the piper, watered the bullfinch, and given two lumps of sugar to the Jarvey's sparrow.

MRS. M. You've fed the other birds? Mr. Winkin's very particular about his Avadavats.

BETSY. Yes 'm, I've see'd to the have-a-new-hats. (*hangs up cage*)

MRS. M. (*going up, R.*) That's right, Betsy; I'm going down stairs to see about dinner. If anybody comes about the second floor apartments, you know about the terms.

BETSY. Yes 'm.

MRS. M. To think that I should be reduced to let lodgings; when I think of the happy past. *Exit R. door.*

BETSY. Nothing but work from morning to night, (*sits*) Here's my only comfort. (*takes out book*) Zadkiel, the Somno-Visitatos, or the Dreamer's Pocket Companion. I had such a horrid dream last night, I dreamt that I saw the mangled corpse of poor young Jeremy Tibbins, my young man, who's gone to the "Dickens" to Australia. Now to see what it means. "Blood,"—Oh crikey ! "About the time for Aquarius is cross to Orion"—poor fellow ! Orion ; let me see, I knew a policeman of that name—no, he was O'Brian. "Then if Jew Peter enters the upper house"-----

Enter RANGER at back, R.C.

RANGER. (*aside*) The door open, and Lodgings to Let in the window—the very thing; some one at last, now to make the enquiry. (*taps her on the shoulder*)

BETSY. (*starts*) Oh don't, don't!

RANGER. What's the matter ?

BETSY. I thought you was Tibbins.

RANGER. (*aside*) This is the moment for which I've sighed. To be under the same roof, to breathe the same air, after wandering under the burning sun of Africa, and through the trackless deserts of Arabia, how sweet it is to find-----

BETSY. Apartments to let, yes, sir! second floor thirty shillings a week, and done for in the general way.

RANGER. Ah! you have lodgers here already.

BETSY. Yes, sir!

RANGER. A lady ?

BETSY. Yes, sir, leastways it's a couple as has this apartment.

RANGER. Ah, a couple! with her sister, and Miss May fair, also.

BETSY. Don't know, sir.

RANGER. Don't know ! I mean the lady who lodges here.

BETSY. She's Mrs. Winkin, she's just gone out along o' Mr. Winkin.

RANGER. Winkin ! a horrible suspicion seizes me, ten years absence and Mariana false ! but no, it cannot be; there's another lady in this house !

BETSY. Yes, sir.

RANGER. Oh, it is, it is! and she is-----

BETSY. Mrs. Montgomery.

RANGER. Oh, it isn't, it isn't; but I'll be satisfied! (*looks from window*) Ah! that must be she, leaning on a man's arm, her back turned this way, and on it the identical shawl I sent her from China, eight years ago. (*seizes BETSY by the wrist and drags her to window*) Who is that ?

BETSY. That! oh, that's Mrs. Winkin as I was telling you of, she's along o' Mr. Winkin.

RANGER. Along o' Mr. Winkin ! then it's all over. Is this the end of all my dreams ?

BETSY. This '11 tell you, sir, was it a coffin or spiders ?

RANGER. I have it. (*looking at table, R.*) Whereas an envelope? here's half-a-crown, fetch me an envelope.

BETSY. Yes, sir.

RANGER. I'll plant the dagger of remorse in her heart; and as for the husband I wouldn't be in his shoes.

BETSY. (*going off reading*) When the constellation Bootes—
Exit, R. C. door in flat.

RANGER. Oh, Mariana Mayfair! have I returned for this ? Two days after my landing we met in the street, she wore that shawl. I was about to rush to her when love whispered that a sudden surprise might be dangerous, I restrained myself, and thinking to bring about the meeting in the most delicate manner possible, I first traced her house, and then watched the house for three days before I could summon up courage to leave this diminutive copy of myself, the once-loved original, (*produces a carte de visite*) with which I thought to prepare her for my arrival. (*sits at table, R.*) But I will write to her and show that I at least am still unchanged. " Dearest, yet how can I call you dearest now ; but I will, though another has obtained your hand, I am sure I still retain your heart. I have heard of the loathsome being, we will meet again, and then—Bob. P. S.—Whatever you may be, there is still the Bob, unchanged." That'll do I think.

Enter BETSY, R. C. at back.

BETSY. Missus was out, so I stepped round the corner, and bought an antelope.

RANGER. (*sealing it up*) And there's the *carte de visite*. Now to retire, soothe my excited feelings, and then return to see her—see her once again? (*runs out R. C. door in flat*)

BETSY. Take care o' the staircase, it's very dark. I'll go and ask missus to let me out for half an hour.

WINK. (*without*) Mind where you're going, sir!

BETSY. There's Mr. Winkin's voice. I'll go out, and with this half-a-crown I'll buy up all the back numbers of the Dreamer's Companion. *Exit, R. C. door in flat.*

WINK. (*without*) It was not an accident, sir.

Enter MR. WINKIN at back, R. C.

I really must get Mrs. Montgomery to light that staircase. I wonder who that was ; I couldn't see him, probably some one come to look after the lodgings upstairs. Remarkably uncivil, he began by nearly kicking me from the top of the stairs to the bottom, and when I remonstrated, he replied by referring me to the lower regions—not the ground floor, considerably lower. What a fool I was to suspect my Lotty. I hinted, gently hinted on the road that there was a change in her manner towards her Trotty; she answered with a gentle smile, " Trotty, pooh!" it was unanswerable; what could I say to pooh, pooh? and all the answer I can make is-----(*seeing carte, which is p. upright on table*) What the devil's this?—another of those confounded likenesses—what a diabolical countenance ! Why, it's a correct likeness of the ruffian who's been hanging about the house for the last three days! And a note addressed to Mrs. Winkin ! Trotty, Trotty ! this is your " pooh ! " It strikes me it's very far removed from pooh ! 'Gad, I'll open it! Gracious powers, what's this?—"Dearest;" no mistake about it, it's distinctly addressed to Mrs. Winkin. She's the " dearest!" " Dearest, but how can I call you dearest now ?" Ah, that's the question! " But I will!" That the answer. " But, though another has obtained your hand!" I suppose I'm another. " Yet I am sure I alone retain your heart!" Horrible assurance! " I've heard of the loathsome being. No, no, no, this won't do; we'll meet again, and then—Bob !" Why should they bob when they meet again? " P. S ! " Oh, he hasn't done yet! Go it Bob—keep it up, Robert! " Whatever you may be, there is still a Bob unchanged !" A bob unchanged ! well, if that's all he's got to offer, it's about the meanest affair I ever heard of. Oh, Lotty, Lotty ! But I'll take change out of the bob, he shan't remain unchanged very much longer. I'll rush out and manfully meet the disturber of my peace, face to face, and when he's not looking I'll give him such a stinger in the back—and then if he returns the blow,

I'll give him—yes, I'll give him in charge ! (*puts on hat*) Now for the scene of carnage !

Enter MRS. MONTGOMERY, R. C, *door in flat.*

MRS. M. Dear me, Mr. Winkin, where are you going in that excited manner?

WINK. To take the change out of a bob !

MRS. M. What do you mean ?

WINK. I don't know! I've a great respect for your opinion whenever you agree with me. Now, tell me calmly and dispassionately—am I loathsome?

MRS. M. Mr. Winkin ! (*turning, L.*)

WINK. Thank ye—don't turn away. Do I look the sort of person to run away from ?—do you look upon me as a species of gorilla, or a garotter ? Don't say no if you mean yes!

MRS. M. How can you ask such a question ?

WINK. Because my feelings have been outraged—because look at that, addressed to my wife ? (*gives letter*)

MRS. M. Ha ! I fancy I know this hand!

WINK. Yes, it's given to another!

MRS. M. "Bob!" Strange!

WINK. I should rather say it was, he's been hanging about here for the last three days. I saw him kissing his hand to my wife—what do you think of that ? You see his letter—what do you think of that?—and there's his hideous physiognomy—what do you think of that ? (*gives portrait*)

MRS. M. That, ha ! (*screams and faints in his arms*)

WINK. I say, don't do that. Mrs. Flummery Montgomery, rouse yourself, you're heavy ! (*puts her on L. side*)

MRS. M. Oh, Mr. Winkin, it's more than I can bear.

WINK. More than you can bear; egad, it's more than I can. Get up, do.

MRS. M. That picture. O, you've broken my heart!

WINK. You've very nearly broken my arm.

MRS. M. (*aside*) Robert returned! and false! (*aloud*) Oh, Mr. Winkin, pity me! When I think on the happy past-----

WINK. I'll pity you with the greatest possible pleasure.—What you've got to do with it, I haven't the slightest idea.

MRS. M. Listen. Once upon a time-----

WINK. Eh!

MRS. M. In the early days of my youth.

WINK. Don't trouble your memory, my dear madam.

MRS. M. Before I was what I am—it will not be difficult for you to imagine that I am not what I was—you follow me?

WINK. So far perfectly.

MRS. M. Ten years ago I lost my heart.

WINK. You seem to do remarkably well without it.

MRS. M. (*pointing to portrait*) 'Twas he who robbed me.

WINK. What! Rob bobbed you? I mean Bob robbed you ?
The villain!

MRS. M. He stole my affections—I loved him—my family-----

WINK. Your family! what, a little Montgomery ?

MRS. M. No, my papa and mamma wouldn't hear of the match, and tore us asunder. He went to China.

WINK. Did he? I wish to heaven he'd stayed there.

MRS. M. And now the false one has returned, and dared to pay his addresses to-----

WINK. My wife. It's atrocious. But stop, though the perjured Bob may have an affection for Mrs. Winkin, it doesn't follow that Mrs. Winkin should have a partiality for the perjured Bob.

MRS. M. Yes, but where there's a handsome man in the case----

WINK. I am quite aware that I have got the advantage there.

MRS. M. But if you want proof, place this picture on the table, keep your eyes open, and shut-----

WINK. (*shutting his eyes*) What good'll that do ?

MRS. M. Shut yourself up where you can witness the conduct of your wife when she sees this picture. After that you'll know the worst.

WINK. That's a cheerful prospect.

MRS. M. At any rate, you will be satisfied.

WINK. It won't take much to do that. I'm naturally of a very contented disposition.

MRS. M. Here's Mrs. Winkin coming up the street—conceal yourself.

WINK. Where?

MRS. M. This screen.

WINK. (*rushing behind*) Yes.

MRS. M. No, she's always pasting there—this cupboard.

WINK. (*rushing to door*) Yes.

MRS. M. No, it's locked. I have it, the chimney. (*side, L.*)

WINK. I can't stand that.

MRS. M. Well, then, in here. (*opening ottoman*)

WINK. In there ! but I say----- (*knock*)

MRS. M. She's coming—in, in! (*he gets in*) Painful as it must be for you to stoop to such an action-----

WINK. (*in ottoman*) It is, remarkably painful.

MRS. M. Yet in this case you must stretch a point.

WINK. Stretch! in this case I shall have to double myself up like a doormouse.

MRS. M. Hush, it is. (*shuts lid violently*) No, it isn't. (*his head reappears*)

WINK. I say!

MRS. M. Yes, it is. (*shuts lid suddenly*) No, it isn't. (*his head appears*)

WINK. I say, make up your mind one way or the other, it does hurt confoundedly. (*rubbing his head*)

MRS. M. She comes at last, be still as a mouse, don't breathe!

Exit mysteriously, R. C. door in flat.

WINK. That last piece of advice was perfectly unnecessary, as I can't get a breath of air. (*disappears*)

Enter MRS. WINKIN.

MRS. W. I've settled everything to my satisfaction, and left a note for the French artist, Monsieur Rayon Dusobil, the photographer! he'll be here directly, and as my husband's generally out at this time, we shall be able to settle about his portrait without his knowing anything at all about it. (*crosses up to table, R.*)

WINK. (*looking out, aside*) What did she say about his coming directly?

MRS. W. (*taking off gloves and putting them on table*) I wish my husband hadn't such an objection to— (*seeing portrait* Eh, Bob!

WINK. (*aside*) That's cool! it is Bob, no doubt about it.

MRS. W. Dear, dear, Robert! quite unchanged. (*kisses portrait*) He was always my favourite out the whole lot.

WINK. (*aside*) The lot! What depravity! (*shuts lid*)

MRS. W. He must have returned—he's been here. I, who thought he was lost. What a weight this has taken off my mind. (*sinks on ottoman*) He's sure to come here soon—how delightful! But in the meantime I must not forget Monsieur de Dusobil (*rising*) and our little plot. As for poor dear Bob, he shall take my husband by surprise! *Unlocks and exit L. door.*

WINK. (*rising, wiping his face and gasping for breath*) Phew! I thought she'd never get up. What did she say about plot and Bob taking me by surprise? I fear some horrible treachery—a lot of 'em too! I won't stay here any longer! (*gets one leg out. Knock*)

BETSY. (*without*) This way, sir!

WINK. (*pauses*) Now who on earth's that?

Enter RAYON DESOLEIL, R. C. WINKIN disappears into ottoman.

MONS. R. Merci!—Vere is de lady?

WINK. (*re-appearing, aside*) It isn't Bob—it must be one of the "lot." (*disappears*)

MONS. R. No one here! I shall sit. (*sits on ottoman*) Piff! how it makes hot! What a comfortable seat!

Enter MRS. WINKIN.

MRS. W. I am sorry I have kept you waiting.

MONS. R. (*jumping up and bowing*) No ! do not mention it! I wait for your commands. Je suis votre serviteur.

WINK. (*aside*) A foreigner ! What did he say about a vote ?

MRS. W. Now, Monsieur Desoleil, you understand my husband's objection, and comprehend the plot ?

MONS. R. Parfaitement! As to your husband, you may consider it done !

MRS. W. At present I am glad to say he's out.

WINK. (*aside*) I wish he was.

MRS. W. I think I shall merely want his head.

WINK. (*aside*) Good heavens !

MONS. R. Dat is simple, but you had better take it all.

WINK. (*aside*) Grasping scoundrel!

MONS. R. It shall suit de carte so much better.

WINK. (*aside*) The cart!—That's for my body !

MRS. W. Of course, when everything is ready you can take it off at once.

MONS. R. In a second! He shall know nothing about it. But I must get him to stand still, and then take him unawares.

WINK. (*aside*) Cool-blooded ruffian !

MONS. R. Den as to the size ?

MRS. W. Oh, about an ordinary cut—the usual thing.

MONS. R. Bien ! dere is plenty of time—we merely want a little preparation to make it sharp.

WINK. (*aside*) The butcher!

MRS. W. Then as to the terms?

MONS. R. We shall not quarrel about the price.

WINK. (*aside*) Generous assassin !

MRS. W. You're very good.

MONS. R. I hope to do many more for you, madam, in de course of time. (*goes up R.*) I cannot stay now, my hands are so full of business. Au revoir! *Exit, R. C.*

MRS. W. There, that's settled; and as Bob'll probably be here to dinner, I'd better step down and order a few things extra—and, dear me, I quite forgot to tell Monsieur Rayon that I want twelve of mine struck off at once. *Exit, R. C.*

WINK. (*coming gradually out of ottoman*) Cut off my head when he catches me unawares, and carry away my body in a cart—there never was such a wholesale assassin! He's not particular as to terms, and hopes to do a great many more for her. Viper! the best thing I can do is at once to inform the superintendent of police. Where's my umbrella ? I won't go out unprotected. Oh, I left it here ! *Exit into room, L.*

Enter RANGER, hurriedly, door R. C. flat.

RANGER. Yes, I will see her and insist upon an explanation.

B

Re-enter WINKIN, L.

WINK. Now for the police ! Hollo! it's Bob !

RANGER. (*aside*) It's the husband. (*loud*) Sir!

WINK. Don't be violent!

RANGER. I am perfectly aware you don't know me.

WINK. But I do—I may say I have that pleasure. You wrote this. (*shows letter*)

RANGER. I did, I own it, concealment's useless—I'll be honest with you.

WINK. Don't trouble yourself.

RANGER. The fact is I love your wife.

WINK. I know it.

RANGER. And you married her!

WINK. I was totally ignorant of the circumstance, but I know it now.

RANGER. And you'll resign your claim ?

WINK. My good Bob, I've no hostility to you, you're perfectly welcome—take her, take her with pleasure.

RANGER. I'll not hear of it, I know a fairer way. For five years I've travelled—the greater part of that time I spent among the Abracachootos. I was always a wanderer.

WINK. Yes, I see you are.

RANGER. Dear me, where was I ?

WINK. Among the Abra-ca-cuckoos.

RANGER. Ah! Well, it's their custom when there's any difference about a squaw-----

WINK. I beg your pardon—a-----

RANGER. (*loud*) Squaw !

WINK. Well, don't bawl so.

RANGER. Where was I ?

WINK. With a squaw.

RANGER. That's wife in English. Well, the claims to her hand are decided by the lady's choice. Let your wife choose between us—if she takes you, well and good; if she takes me, well and good again. It's much better than fighting.

WINK. Oh, no doubt about it !

RANGER. Still, if you prefer-----

WINK. No, no, not in the least—I'll go and fetch her at once. (*aside*) If he does take her, he doesn't know what's in store for him with the lot. *Exit R. C. door in flat.*

RANGER. How will she ever be able to look me in the face ? The husband seems a quiet and sensible man enough. Ha! the rustle of a dress.

Enter MRS. MONTGOMERY, R. C.

MRS. M. Well, Mr. Winkin—Ah ! Robert.

RANGER. Mariana!

MRS. M. Robert, can you call me by that name ?

RANGER. No, but I can call you by another which will bring a blush to your cheek—Mrs. Winkin.

MRS. M. Winkin! I'm not Mrs. Winkin.

RANGER. Not Mrs. W. ? Perhaps you'll tell me you did not wear my shawl this morning.

MRS. M. Certainly not, I lent it to Mrs. Winkin.

RANGER. Then I have been deceived: but you live here ?

MRS. M. I do.

RANGER. Then you have changed your name?

MRS. M. From Mariana Mayfair to Mrs. Montgomery, but not by marriage, soon after you left.

RANGER. Five years ago.

MRS. M. Being in reduced circumstances, I was forced to take in lodgers, and in order to protect myself, and not disgrace the name of Mayfair, I adopted that of Mrs. Montgomery. Can you blame me ?

RANGER. Can I blame you ? nonsense!

MRS. M. But that portrait, and the letter?

RANGER. Were meant for you. From the window I saw the right shawl, but on the wrong back.

MRS. M. Forgive my suspicion. (*embrace*) Oh, Robert, when I think of the happy past-----

RANGER. Nothing to the blissful future. But stay, (*crosses up, R.*) I've made a fellow creature miserable, I disturbed the domestic peace of the unfortunate Winkins; I'll go and find him at once. One more embrace—oh, Mariana.

Exit, R. C. door in flat.

MRS. M. Oh, how happy I feel! to think that he is still true. As he says, I need not think of the past now, but only of the time when I shall again change my name and become a, Ranger.

Enter WINKIN, R. C. door in flat.

WINK. I can't see my wife; and the most extraordinary thing is, that I saw Bob going up towards one end of the street as I was coming in at the other. Ah, Mrs. Montgomery, you've seen the worthy Robert ?

MRS. M. Yes, Mr. Winkin, he's just gone to find you. Oh, all your suspicions are unfounded, Robert is my Robert; he came here to see me—that letter was meant for me, he mistook Mrs. Winkin for me, and thence the unpleasantness. What do you say now ?

WINK. I am not in the habit of expressing myself coarsely, but emphatically I say—Walker. (*crosses R.*)

MRS. M. But I answer you, the proof is as easy as possible.

WINK. (*at window*) It is ; there he is at the top of the street.

MRS. M. A lady approaches him.

WINK. My wife.

MRS. M. It is—they embrace.

WINK. They are laughing and talking.

MRS. M. They are walking this way, arm-in-arm. O, the perfidious wretch !

WINK. Now then, as you said before, keep your eye open.

MRS. M. But they won't come here. (*knock*)

WINK. Here they come; step behind here; convince yourself, and then swoop down upon them like a hawk. (*they retire behind screen*)

Enter MRS. WINKIN *and* RANGER, R. C.

MRS. W. My dear—dear Robert !

WINK. (*aside to* MR. M.) I told you so!

MRS. W. I never expected to see your dear, darling face again !

MRS. M. (*aside, pinching* WINKIN) The hussey!

WINK. (*aside to her*) Don't—I shall scream !

RANGER. To think my little Charlotte, whom I left only twenty, should have grown so pretty. I heard the rest of the family-----

MRS. W. You and I are the only ones left now!

WINK. (*aside*) Stop a minute!—I'm not dead yet!

MRS. W. And I'm sure my husband will be so delighted to see you—my dear pet brother !

WINK. (*appearing on chair, head above screen*) Brother!

RANGER. And so you, my dear sister, are married ?

MRS. M. (*appearing on chair, head above screen*) Sister!

RANGER. By the way, I must apologise to your husband for the trouble I have given him.

MRS. W. O yes, you told me as we were coming; it's a capital joke, and will serve him right for his jealousy.

RANGER. Jealous! But you are very happy in your married life?

MRS. W. O yes, we never had a word until this morning. I own I was a little suspicious ! You see, our landlady, Mrs. Montgomery-----

RANGER. Mrs. Montgomery?

MRS. W. Somehow he's very fond of consulting her, and lately, I never popped in suddenly but they were always together!

(*WINKIN and* MRS. MONTGOMERY *are seen trying to leave the room, cautiously, on opposite sides of the screen—*

MRS. MONTGOMERY finds the door locked—WINKIN is

making for door, R. C., when a movement on the part of

RANGER sends him back, and they are obliged to return)

RANGER. Well, sister, to tell you the truth, I've a secret to

communicate to you. Your Mrs. Montgomery is no other than my old flame, Mariana Mayfair, of whom you heard so much five years ago.

MRS. W. Indeed !

RANGER. And what's more, I intend to make her Mrs. Ranger, but if I had the slightest suspicion-----

(MRS. MONTGOMERY and WINKIN try to escape by L. U. E. cupboard, door locked—WINKIN going to it and MRS. MONTGOMERY pushing him away from it)

MRS. W. O, there's no fear of anything. By the way, before my husband comes back, I'll show you over the garden. Where's my hat?—O, I know, I left it behind the screen—I'll get it!

RANGER. (*stopping her as she turns*) My dear Lotty, not one word to your husband about Mrs. Montgomery, as I expect our meeting may be rather unpleasant. Fancy his considering me as the disturber of his domestic happiness.

MRS. W. (*going to screen*) Oh, trust me, I won't say a word, and I hope to see you excellent friends. Oh, here's my hat.

(*during the above WINKIN and MRS. M. have gone into the aviary and drawn the curtains*)

RANGER. I'm quite ready. (*goes up R.*)

MRS. W. Oh, Robert, I've got to ask you something. Use all your influence with my husband to get him to have his portrait taken ; I want his carte de visite like yours.

RANGER. I'll try and persuade him, he seems to be so good-natured that he'd give in to anything.

MRS. M. Oh, but he's only got one hobby—birds. You've no notion of the number of pets we have ; he's lately built such a magnificent aviary, here it is—only the curtains are down; they go up with one pull of the string, the effect is exquisite, such a beautiful place, and he intends it for his love-birds. Look. (*pulls string, curtains are drawn aside and discover WINKIN and MRS. MONTGOMERY, R.*) Mr. Winkin!

RANGER. (R.) Mariana.

BOTH. The love-birds !

WINK. (*stepping out*) Stop ! I know what you are going to say. I own for once in my life appearances are against me ; but listen! We've all been victims of circumstances! I was jealous of my Lotty; it's all that infernal likeness ! I own it with due submission. *She* was jealous of her Bob; *she* owns with due submission, and so we combined metaphorically, and condescended to eaves-dropping. I own it—she owns it—hence the consequences ! But you can't doubt your Trotty!

MRS. M. Or your Mariana, Robert! (*they embrace*)

WINK. (*about to embrace MRS. WINKIN*) Stop! I want to ask you-----

Enter RAYON DESOLEIL, R. C.

MONS. R. O, my dear madam, it was no use, he pass my my window, but he would not stop still! I cannot take your husband's head.

WINK. Who is this distinguished foreigner ?

MRS. W. Monsieur R. Desoleil, the photographic artist, who was to have taken your portrait, without your knowing it.

(introduces him)

WINK. Oh then, the head which would be taken away in the cart-----

MONS. R. Oui, oui, de carte de visite.

WINK. O what a fool I've been! Lotty, if you'll forgive me I'll do anything.

MRS. W. Then have your portrait taken !

WINK. By Monsieur, certainly! Robert, we'll be taken in a group. Here's a picture. *(embracing his wife)*

Mrs. W. We shall be able to follow the fashions—to leave our cartes de visite when we call upon our friends !

WINK. Call upon our friends!—allow me to do that.

RANGER. Mariana ! we'll be married at once !

Enter BETSY, R. C.

BETSY. A wedding ! Didn't I tumble up stairs last night ?

A tumble up the stairs well foretells,
You'll shortly hear the marriage bells.

WINK. I think of having several photographs—one every night till further notice, and put it in our album. Mrs. Winkin keeps one of these, as everybody does, and if the speaking likeness suits your book, why, look in another evening, and then by a very simple but novel process, you may sit for our Carte de Visite!

ROBERT. MRS. MONGOMERY. WINKIN. MRS. WINKIN. BETSY.
R. C. L.

Curtain.