

BEHIND TIME.

A Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

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A Private Inquiry; A Gray Marc; Aurora Floyd, or The Banker's Daughter,
The Hen and Chickens; A Woman of Business; &c.

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BEHIND TIME.

*First performed at the New Theatre Royal, Adelphi,
(under the management of Mr. Benjamin Webster,)
on Tuesday, December 26th, 1865.*

Characters.

MR. JEREMIAH FLUKE (A Gentleman
behind his time) Mr. J. L. TOOLE.
CHARLES SWANKEY (the Butcher of
Oozeley-cum-Squashville) Mr. R. PHILIPS.
HORTENSIVS HUXAM (the Stationer) Mr. W. H. EBURNE.
TRIPES (the Assistant of the Butcher) . Mr. C. J. SMITH.
MATILDA JANE SWANKEY (the Wife
of the bosom of the Butcher)..... Miss A. SEAMAN.
SARAH JANE SNIVEY (the Pastrycook)... Miss GODSALL.

SCENE.—A Room in a Butcher's House in Oozeley-cum-Squashville.

Time—Present. Time of Representation—One Hour.

Costumes.

SWANKEY (a very violent, excitable, loud-talking personage).—
1st dress: Drab trousers, great coat, and billy-cock hat. *2nd dress:*
Butcher's blue frock, apron and steel, and white arm-cuffs.

FLUKE (a very nervous, modest, and retiring individual).—Drab
frock-coat, check trousers, black hat, white waistcoat, and scarlet
necktie.

HUXAM (a fussy, self-important character, speaking with great
earnestness and volubility).—Blue coat with brass buttons, white
waistcoat (both these very large and loose), shirt-frill, white hat,
and light trousers, fitting very tightly.

TRIPES.—Journeyman butcher's dress, apron, and steel.

MRS. SWANKEY.—(*intensely roma/itie, a la penny periodical*).—*1st
dress:* White body, waist belt and buckle, and coloured muslin or
cotton skirt. *2nd dress:* Skirt of different colour.

MISS SNIVEY (*practical and self-possessed*).—White body, &c.,
and a coloured skirt.

BEHIND TIME.

SCENE.—*Back Parlour of a Shop in Oozeley-cum-Squashville; door L. in flat; door, half glass, leading to shop, R. in flat; doors R. and L. at side; sideboard, R.; liqueur stand containing three bottles; a bottle of Sherry and glasses; table C. with writing materials and copy book; two chairs at table; chairs about stage; fire-place, L.*

MATILDA and SARAH discovered seated at table.

MATILDA. (R. of table, writing in copy book) Procrastination—is—the—and now I've made a great blot! Dear, dear! what a troublesome thing it is learning to write, and obliged to do it on the sly too. I think I should die with shame if Charles knew I was so ignorant. I wish they had made me do it when I was a child—it would have saved such a deal of bother.

SARAH. (L. of table) Better late than never—you are going on capitally; you'll soon have done large hand, (*sighs*) Heigho! Knowing how to write hasn't been of much advantage to me; you didn't know how, and you've been married twice—twice in four years. By the way, how did you manage? you had to sign your name.

MATIL. I made a lot of scratches, and every one put it down to nervousness; and the first time, dear, I really was nervous. (*writing*) The—thief—of—time.

SARAH. No wonder—to marry an old man, too! If I hadn't seen it, I wouldn't have believed it.

MATIL. (*writing*) Procrastination—is—the—thief—of—time—there! I've done. It was out of spite—it was to punish a man I thought had not treated me well.

SARAH. Poor Mr. Jeremiah Fluke?

MATIL. The same. We were engaged to be married—oh, ever so long—directly he had a rise of salary the ceremony was to have taken place. Well, dear, he kept me so long waiting, I fancied he was trifling with me. In an unhappy hour another proposed. Jeremiah wasn't forthcoming. I accepted, and became Mrs. Gentian, the apothecary's wife. When it was too late, Jeremiah had his rise—came down here to Oozeley, and found me another's. I need not describe his

despair; and when he left the town he could not have been more wretched than I was.

SARAH. But why? You seemed comfortable enough—and a husband's a husband after all.

MATIL. Ah, dear! Wait till you have had my experience.

SARAH. Mr. Gention always seemed to me a perfect gentleman.

MATIL. Seemed! Yes, indeed, he seemed so; but perfect he was not—far from it. I discovered his beautiful head of hair was a wig, his teeth were false, and he had a cork leg.

SARAH. Horrible!

MATIL. Oh ! the trouble that cork leg gave me ! I wonder my hair didn't turn white.

SARAH. Poor man! he is gone now, so forget and forgive.

MATIL. Oh, yes, I forgive him ; but forget him I can't. And if you had only seen him in his nightcap as I have, you'd say the same.

SARAH. Well, you have no fault to find with Mr. Swankey.

MATIL. None; he is the best of husbands! Those who do not know him might think him indifferent, but he is not so—he is a little rough at times, but he is good, kind, and all I could wish.

SARAH. What astonishes me, is that the other hasn't taken any notice of the letter.

MATIL. What other ?

SARAH. Why, Mr. Jeremiah Fluke, to be sure. The letter I wrote for you six months ago, after your year of mourning was over—he hasn't taken the slightest notice of it.

MATIL. I had forgotten all about it; however, what does it matter? I am very well off now, no thanks to Mr. Fluke, and have long ceased to regret him.

SARAH. And yet I pity the poor young man.

MATIL. (*rises*) Sarah Snivey !

SARAH. He wasn't treated well in the first instance, you must own that. (*rises*)

MATIL. I own nothing. Are you going to turn against me? I hope I haven't been warming a Pharaoh's serpent in my bosom.

SARAH. Matilda Jane!

MATIL. (R.) Sarah Snivey ! if you take such an interest in Jeremiah, you had better console him, if ever he takes the trouble to pay a second visit to Oozeley.

SARAH. I don't see why I shouldn't make Mr. Fluke as happy as you make Mr. Swankey. But, come, we needn't quarrel over such stupid nonsense.

MATIL. I don't wish to quarrel.

SARAH. And I'm sure I don't.

MATIL. (*affectionately*) Sarah Snivey!

SARAH. Matilda Jane ! (*they embrace*)

MATIL. Jeremiah is no use to me at present; in fact, if anything, he is rather in the way. I give him up to you.

SARAH. You do ?

MATIL. I do.

SARAH. The same dear, generous girl as ever! But I'm afraid I shan't be able to avail myself of your kind offer. I think of leaving Oozeley.

MATIL. What for ?

SARAH. Things look so bad ; since you left the business we started together, it has been going down—down—down. Pastry seems at a discount here, and nothing ever comes into the shop but flies.

MATIL. And Mr. Huxam the stationer, he goes often enough.

SARAH. Yes, for his rent, which I have given a promissory note for. I rather like it, it's easier than paying money.

MATIL. But you *will* have to pay it. Let me lend you the sum you require.

SARAH. No, I shall run away to my aunt's in London—it'll be such fun ! I've eaten up the last jam tait this morning, and shut up the establishment.

Enter HUXAM, door R. c. in flat.

HUXAM. (*down R.*) Mrs. Swankey! Miss Snivey! quite a nice little coterie. Can I see Mr. Swankey ?

MATIL. (*C.*) Is it anything important? My husband has just gone to the bank. He was out late last night at a market dinner—very late in fact.

HUXAM. Oh, I'm shocked—positively shocked ! Oozeley is really becoming a very wicked place I believe. We shall rival the great metropolis in time, and have an act of Parliament, as they have there, to put us all to bed according to police regulations. And that reminds me of what I called about. Ladies, what do you think of our market-place ? I see—you hesitate—you mean to say, it's the finest site in Europe. I agree with you, I conscientiously believe it is the finest site in Europe. And what have we done with it? I will tell you. I was standing there not ten minutes ago, and I asked myself this question—I said, " What have we on our market-place ? " and I found myself compelled to answer, " Only a pump!"—a pump, ladies!

SARAH. (*L., aside to MATIL.*) He was right for once, wasn't he ?

HUXAM. (*crossing to c.*) A number of townsmen, whose names I will not mention, but whom, as one of them, I can describe as representing the wealth, gentility, and intelligence of the neighbourhood, have also taken this question into consideration. And it has been unanimously resolved to take away the pump and replace it by a statue, ladies, the subject to be agreed upon hereafter. Now there is one, ladies, who shall

be nameless for the present, who deserves well of his fellow citizens, whose effigy ought alone to ornament the site in question, and I have waited on your husband to secure his interest in that person's behalf. At present, I confess it with regret, if a visitor comes into the town we have nothing to show him !

SARAH. (L.) Do we *ever* have any visitors, Mr. Huxam?

HUXAM. Certainly we do; last year we had three all at once! It's true they were the victims of a railway accident, and were brought here against their wills. Still they were *visitors*, and we *may* have another railway accident. I have jotted down a few notes as they occurred to me. (*pulls out large parcel of papers*) If you will kindly place them before Mr. Swankey, I think they will give him a slight idea of my views, and I will call again to make a fuller statement.

MATIL. (*taking papers and pen and ink and copy-book off table, c.*) Certainly. Will you excuse me a moment, Mr. Huxam. *Exit, door L. C. in flat,*

HUXAM. (R.) By all means, (*abstractedly*) Yes ! It is a grand idea! a grand idea! (*turning and changing his tone suddenly*) By the way, Miss Snivey, now Mrs. Swankey has left us, I've a word or two to say to you.

SARAH. (*in an indifferent tone, L.*) Go on, what is it ?

HUXAM. (*with great severity*) I called upon you this morning about that promissory note. It's due, Miss Snivey!

SARAH. Is it ? I don't understand anything about it. (*yawns*) Shall I give you another ?

HUXAM. I called, and found the shutters up, and the words "gone out" chalked on the door.

SARAH. Well, I couldn't be in two places at once, could I?

HUXAM. You are too much out of your shop, Miss Snivey. How can you pay me my rent if you neglect your business ? I never stir out of *my* shop.

SARAH. Oh, what a story ! look at you now.

HUXAM. (*coughs*) This is an exception, and the exception proves the rule.

SARAH. Nobody ever comes near the place.

HUXAM. Some one *may* come, Miss Snivey.

SARAH. Yes, like your visitors do—by accident.

HUXAM. (*tenderly*) Miss Snivey—let me call you Sarah—I offer you the promissory note and myself with it. Sarah, take us both!

SARAH. Two disagreeable things together. Thank you for nothing.

HUXAM. Do you reject us ? Beware how you trifle with the feelings of a landlord and a lover.

SARAH. Good-bye; I've done with you in both characters.

Exit, door L. c. in flat.

HUXAM. (*knocks hat over his eyes*) You shall hear from my

solicitor! Refused, and by a chit of a girl, too. (*furiously*) Oozeley shall be told of this! (*going*) No, on second thoughts, Oozeley shall not be told of it. *Exit, door R. C. in fiat.*

Enter FLUKE, door L., with umbrella.

FLUKE. Well, here I am at last! back again in the old shop, the widowed home of Matilda Jane, shortly to become *my* widowed home. I've crept in the back way; no one's about; Matilda Jane is invisible. Well, I can wait for her—I've done nothing else for the last four years, so a few minutes can't make much difference—I am not particular to a few hours, (*looks about*) Nothing is changed; everything is where it was when I last stood here and found that Matilda Jane Brown had become Mrs. Gentian the apothecary's wife; everything—except the apothecary—he's changed—he's not in his place; he's gone to make room for a superior article, Matilda Jane's faithful Jeremiah. Here is her letter, which I found in London when I arrived there yesterday all the way from New York. Certainly it had been waiting for me six months—what of that? I've got it at last, (*reads*) "I am free—I am waiting—I am yours, Jane." Short and sweet, and to the point. And what a happy woman she will be. I don't drink, I don't smoke—(*sniffing*) It certainly seems to me as if some one had been having a pipe here. I hope Matilda Jane hasn't fallen into bad habits, or can it be a rival who *does* smoke? Horrible thought! but no, that is too absurd! And the presents I have bought her!—a four-post bedstead—that ought to touch her heart—that ought to shew Matilda Jane I've been thinking of her. A mahogany dining table, a dozen knives and forks, and a coal-scuttle. Where can she be? (*peeps in at door R. c. in flat*) Dear me! I said nothing was changed. I left this an apothecary's shop, it seems to me it has changed into a butcher's—it *is* a butcher's. I can't be deceived—there's a man hanging up a leg of mutton—a very fine leg of mutton! Matilda Jane, you and I will sit down to that leg together. I think I'll go back to the station, and see they don't break any of the furniture. In the meantime, how can I let her know I am here without showing myself to her delighted eyes—to surprise her? (*peeps in at door, R.*) No one there! there's some work on the table—her work—and for me. It looks like a shirt—a man's shirt. I feel hot all over—a man's shirt and a butcher's shop! it's certainly very odd, and there's no doubt about it, a very strong smell of tobacco—returns! *Exit, door R.*

Enter SWANKEY, door L., smoking a pipe, and MATILDA.

SWANK. (R. C.) Well, that job's jobbed! The money's stowed away, and the pig's getting on beautifully. That pig's a perfect picture.

MATIL. (L. C.) I shall get jealous of that pig. You admire that nasty thing, I think, more than you do me.

SWANK. Now don't be jealous of it—love me love my pig.

MATIL. (*aside*) Well, it can't last for ever, that's one comfort! It must burst before long. Have you anything to do in the shop Charles ?

SWANK. Not very much; but I'll just go and change my things. What are you going to do ?

MATIL. Look up the washing and see to your buttons, sir.

Exit, door L. in flat.

SWANK. Buttons ! there's a good deal in that. What should we do without them ? (*calls*) Tripes ! Tripes !

Enter TRIPES, door R. C. in flat, with a leg of mutton.

TRIPES. (R.) Sir!

SWANK. (L.) What's that ?

TRIPES. Leg of mutton for Miss Mivins.

SWANK. (*in melancholy tone*) This here cattle plague is a bad job, Tripes!

TRIPES. Is it, sir ?

SWANK. Something must be done, Tripes.

TRIPES. By all means, sir.

SWANK. And somebody, (*grins*) Hey, Tripes!

TRIPES. Certainly, sir.

SWANK. Then put a penny a pound on all round. If the plague's bad for the cattle, it's a plaguey good spec for us butchers !

Exit, door in flat L. c.

TRIPES. Ha ! he's the man for my money, twice as good as my old master, the apothecary. He taught me to cut my first beef-steak, and beneath this waistcoat beats a heart-----

VOICE. (*outside door R. C. in flat, in a shrill tone*) Shop!

TRIPES. Coming !

Exit door R. C. in flat.

Re-enter FLUKE, R.

FLUKE. It wasn't a shirt after all. I was ashamed of myself after I looked at the garment—but it wasn't a shirt. I've stuck the letter on the table, with four red wafers—she's sure to see it when she comes in. And now for the railway station.

Re-enter MATILDA JANE, door L. C. in flat.

Matilda Jane!

MATIL. (L.) Can I believe my eyes ! Jeremiah !

FLUKE. (*runs towards her, she eludes him, and gets to R.*) The same ! Constant as ever! and your's to command !

MATIL. (R.) What do you want here ?

FLUKE. (L.) That's a cool remark to make to your future husband!

MATIL. But I have one already!

FLUKE. What! Is the apothecary re-animated? Is there a second edition of him?

MATIL. No!

FLUKE. (*faintly*) You don't mean to say you've got a fresh one?

MATIL. I do! You're behind time as usual!

FLUKE. (*stupidified*) Oh! Matilda Jane!

MATIL. (R.) I have been married five months. Why didn't you come before?

FLUKE. (L., *half-crying*) Because I was in the Southern States of America.

MATIL. Why, what on earth took you there?

FLUKE. (*half crying all through speech*) The will of a defunct relative—a distant relation, several thousand miles removed—who had left me all his property, the chief portion being of a most peculiar description—a plantation, niggers, and cotton bales to any amount, as I was informed. Of course I went to look after it, and if I was long away I couldn't help it. The plantation I found; but several interesting battles having been fought all over it, it wasn't in the best state of repair—the cotton I found wasn't there at all, some kind friends having burnt it—they called them patriots, but as it was my property and not theirs, I called them something else, and got into trouble in consequence, six months' solitary confinement by the Northerners, in something they called a casemate. When I got out I found all my niggers organized into a black regiment by some other kind friend, so I gave them their liberty—which by the way they had taken already—and they made me their colonel, at least every body called me "colonel," which I imagine is the American method of giving one a commission. In order to escape which I ran away further South, and there they called me an abolitionist, and many other nasty names too numerous to mention, and as a reward for having given my niggers their liberty, the Southerners tarred and feathered me and rode me upon a rail, until I fell in with the Northerners again, who taking me for a rebel general in full uniform, put me in another casemate, where I stopped for a considerable period, in fact until I had moulted.

MATIL. Poor Jeremiah! Then you have returned as badly off as ever?

FLUKE. Not much! My respective relative had also "struck oil," and when I came out of my second incarceration, I found myself in as full feather as when I went in. But objecting to pass so many of my leisure hours in casemates, I sold off everything and came back with twenty thousand pounds. But misfortune followed me. Upon my arrival at Liverpool I was taken for a Fenian, and almost committed for trial; and now I

have found my Matilda Jane married again, and she is lost to me for ever a second time!

MATIL. I pity you, Jeremiah! but it can't be helped, (*seizing his arm*) Jeremiah! do you value your life?

FLUKE. I do! although I have no one to share my sorrows with—excepting a cousin, a butcher, who wouldn't mingle his tears with mine, because he hasn't any to spare. I am alone in the world.

MATIL. Then depart at once! My husband is jealous to a frightful extent, and if he finds *you* here, the shop will swim in gore!—gore!

FLUKE. Then that decides me! I'll be a *goer* before he comes. Matilda Jane, farewell; if in the columns of the daily press you read of some fearful suicide of any young man for any young woman-----

MATIL. Yes, speak on!

FLUKE. It won't be me, that's all!

Enter SWANKEY, L. door in flat, in 2nd dress.

MATIL. Too late! too late! My husband is upon us! His eye is upon you!

FLUKE, (*crossing to R.*) What shall I do. I'm on the horns of a dilemma, and can't get off!

SWANKEY. Hallo! a man with my wife!

MATIL. (L.) My dear, this is-----

SWANKEY. (C.) Why, dash my pips! If it isn't that fool of a Jeremiah!

FLUKE, (*aside*) He's guessed my name the first time.

MATIL. What! you know him then?

SWANKEY. Don't I! This is my cousin.

MATIL. (*aside*) His cousin!

FLUKE, (*aside*) And she's married the butcher! I mustn't let him see my emotion, (*in a sepulchral tone*) Ha! ha! ha! How are you!

SWANK. Hearty! I'm sorry I can't say the same of you! What do you think of the missus here? Aint she first-rate? Go and kiss her.

FLUKE. (R.) I—I—I don't like to, that is—you know—in public.

SWANK. (C.) Oh, there's no nonsense about her; she don't mind it, bless you.

FLUKE. I'll do it some other time.

SWANK. I tell you, you shall do it now! You don't know what's good for you!

MATIL. (L.) But Charles dear! Really-----

SWANK. Dash my pips! do as you are bid (*he catches them by the nape of their necks, and makes them kiss; they do so with a very bad grace*) There! So you heard I was married, eh?

FLUKE. (R.) Yes, quite by accident. I—I was very glad of it; but I—I didn't believe it, to tell you the truth.

SWANK. (C.) And so you came to see for yourself? You did quite right. And now we've got you, we'll keep you—we'll give you a bed, Jerry.

FLUKE. (*aside*) And my four-poster's no use.

MATIL. (L.) But, Charles, don't you think---- ?

SWANK. No, I don't! Let my cousin—the only relation I have—go to an hotel! Not if I know it. He shall sleep here.

MATIL. Very well, love; I'll go and see after the room myself.

SWANK. That's right. I say, Jerry, I ought to be a happy man; I've a snug business, a nice little wife, and a pig that must take a prize at the next " agricultural." What more can a man want? (*goes to sideboard, R.*)

FLUKE. (C.) Oh, nothing—nothing at all.

MATIL. (L., *aside to FLUKE*) Fly! go! never let me see you more, or tremble for the consequences! *Exit, doorl., c. in flat.*

FLUKE. (*aside*) And this is all I get for my pains—four-post bedstead, mahogany dining table, knives, and coal-scuttle—we must all fly or tremble for the consequences.

SWANK. (*brings liqueur-frame, bottle of Sherry, and two glasses to table, c.*) Now then, Jerry, (*slaps him on shoulder, he starts, &c.*) what's it to be? say the word.

FLUKE. (L. *of table*) Nothing—nothing at all; a cup of tea or a basin of gruel.

SWANK. (R. *of table*) Rubbish! here's brandy, gin, and whiskey—say which, or have a taste of all three.

FLUKE. I couldn't do it—the least thing upsets me. I'm in delicate health—no kind of spirit can tempt me, for I'm out of sorts.

SWANK. Well, here's some sherry wine. Dash my pips! you'll have some sherry wine?

FLUKE. I'll dash your pips with pleasure if you'll show me how, but not a drop of sherry wine.

SWANK. (R. *of table*) I see how it is, Master Jerry; you're jealous of me, and you want to have a row.

FLUKE. I don't want to have a row.

SWANK. Oh, yes, you do!

FLUKE. (*bawling*) No I don't!

SWANK. Then, you'll have some sherry wine, (*they sit—SWANKEY pours out wine*) I hate to be crossed; and if I'm crossed—why, then I'm a rum customer. Give me my own way, and everybody else may do as they please. Nothing fairer than that.

FLUKE. (L. *of table*) I've heard many people make the same remark. It's an amiable weakness.

SWANK. And if there's an amiable man in the world, I'm that man. (*fiercely*) And if anybody says I ain't, they lie. (*knocks table with fist, which makes FLUKE'S wine, go the wrong way—FLUKE coughs, &c.*) What's the matter? Dash my pips! Don't you like sherry wine, now you've got it?

FLUKE. It's beautiful! only, it's the way I always drink.

SWANK. Well! I should call it the wrong way.

FLUKE. Some people do—but they are prejudiced.

SWANK. Another glass?

FLUKE. No—no more.

SWANK. Do you want to have a row?

FLUKE. No, I don't want to have a row.

SWANK. (*pours out*) I say, I found this in the old one's cellar.

FLUKE. What old one?

SWANK. My old woman's first venture.

FLUKE. And what sort of old one was the first venture? Did you know the first venture? Were you personally acquainted with the first venture?

SWANK. No, I only got acquainted with his wine bins. But I should say he was a jolly old cock, and here's his health. (*drinks*)

FLUKE. (*aside*) And *his* cellar ought to have been *my* cellar—*his* widow, *my* widow, (*laughs in sepulchral tone*) Ha! ha! ha! (*stops suddenly*)

SWANK. Anything wrong, Jerry?

FLUKE. Nothing—a passing spasm—which I ascribe to hereditary corns. Let me be calm! Charles! how was it you came to marry the jolly old cock's wine bin?

SWANK. His wine bin?

FLUKE. I mean, *my* widow.

SWANK. *Your* widow?

FLUKE. Did I say *my* widow? Another passing spasm—I mean *your* widow.

SWANK. *My* widow?

FLUKE. (*mysteriously*) *The* widow! What was left of the first venture?

SWANK. Oh! it was a sharp piece of work; you see, this was how it happened. I'm in the Oozeley Volunteers—they made me a lieutenant because one day I told them a bit of my mind. Says I, "it's all very well you ordering me about here, there, and everywhere. They may do it, as likes it," says I; "but," says I—"I won't be ordered about by anybody." "Then," says one, mighty sharp, "if you won't obey orders what's to be done?" "Well," says I, "although I won't have nobody commanding me, I don't mind commanding anybody else."

FLUKE. I've heard many people make the same remark before, It's another amiable weakness.

SWANK. Isn't it?—"Discipline," says he—"That be blowed," said I. And so they made me an officer. Well, we had a field day, and all the county turned out to have a look at us, and we skirmished and so on until we came to the canal, when all of a sudden half a dozen people on the banks went in plump, and my company pulled them out. It was all prizes and no blanks, I can tell you.

FLUKE. And you drew the widow?

SWANK. I did, and the next day I went to see how she was, and she called me her preserver. One thing led to another, and I gave her a kiss.

FLUKE. (*laughs in sepulchral manner*) Ha! ha! ha! a spasm! don't mind me.

SWANK. And then she gave me a clout on the head.

FLUKE. (*very cheerful*) Did it hurt!

SWANK. It made my ears ring for a good hour afterwards!

FLUKE. (*aside*) Why, oh why, didn't she knock his ugly head off? If he had kissed me I'd have done it.

SWANK. Then I kissed her again, and then she blushed, and said, " don't." Upon which I kissed her a third time, and then she said nothing at all.

FLUKE. (*aside*) Perfidious woman! Falsehood, your name is Matilda Jane! She made noise enough when I used to kiss her.

SWANK. A month afterwards we were married, and now you know how it all came about. The best of the joke was, that she had been waiting for some half-baked sort of chap—under a sort of promise she had made him—ever so long, but he never turned up. However, it's no use now.

FLUKE. (*aside*) Why have I turned up? Certainly it's no matter now whether I turn up or turn down, and I might as well turn up as not.

SWANK. I say, Jerry, didn't I manage it capitally, eh? No time lost. Wouldn't you have done the same?

FLUKE. Certainly not; especially after the clout of the head.

SWANK. (*rising*) Then, you're a *hass*, Jerry!

FLUKE. A *hass*, *ham* I? I mean, am I-----

SWANK. That's the word. But dash my pips, if I haven't got to cut a shoulder, and I've only just remembered it. I shan't be long; don't spare the the sherry wine, Jerry. I say, old boy, you're not the lad for the lasses—not, by no means. I must teach you a thing or two, myself. *Exit, door R. in flat.*

FLUKE. (*sits L. of table*) So I'm a *hass!* perhaps I am; I begin to think I'm something out of the common. What's to be done? Let me have some more sherry wine, which ought to have been mine. My cup of misery is full; let me drain it to the dregs, by all means! (*drinks*) Sherry and bitters for one! I don't know whether I've eaten anything that's disagreed with me, or whether it's the peculiar position I find

myself in, or whether it's something else, or nothing in particular. But I feel all my milk of human kindness turned into the curds and whey of the most sanguinary animosity to the whole of my species. Four years ago, I flew to my beloved on the top of a stage coach—to find her married to somebody else, a first venture—a jolly old cock ! What could I do ? Nothing—and I did it! I waited for the jolly old cock dropping off his perch. In the course of revolving years, he dropped ; again I flew to my beloved, this time by the Parliamentary train, when I find my beloved has taken a second venture—another sort of bird altogether ! It's no use waiting for *him* to drop off, because, in the natural course of things, we shall both drop off about the same time. Now, if one nobleman takes another nobleman's girl away from him, and cuts him out, the other nobleman ought to cut him off. I think, under all circumstances, I ought to poison Swankey—(*drinks*) set fire to the shop—(*drinks*) and run away with Matilda Jane ! (*drinks—cries*) But no, I will be magnanimous ! I will not poison Swankey—I will not set fire to the shop, those innocent legs of mutton have done me no harm ; but I must run away with Matilda Jane, (*drinks out of bottle*) He has shown me the way to do it, and he has shown me my way is *not* the way to do it ; so I will merely observe—dash my pips! dash his pips ! dash everybody's pips!

Enter TRIPES, door R, C, in flat.

TRIPES. (R.) Some one in master's room ! Hallo! why if it isn't Mr. Fluke.

FLUKE. Ha ! a myrmidon ! (*seizes him*) Are you a spirit of health, or are you a goblin damned ?

TRIPES. (*frightened*) I—I—I don't know. I'm Tripes?

FLUKE. Yes; I do remember an apothecary!

TRIPES. Mrs. Swankey's first husband's assistant.

FLUKE. And now you are Mrs. Swankey's second husband's assistant ?

TRIPES. I are.

FLUKE. He are! Still in the killing line, too! How would you like to be Mrs. Swankey's third husband's assistant?

TRIPES. I don't know. She hasn't got a third husband yet, that I knows of.

FLUKE. But she might have; only there's an impediment. You understand ?

TRIPES. What impediment ?

FLUKE. Her second husband's alive. All alive, oh !

TRIPES. So he is ; so he is.

FLUKE. Tripes! you are my friend. Will you do me a trifling favour ? and your image shall live in a grateful breast, until that breast attains a green old age.

TRIPES. Certainly. What is it ?

FLUKE. Will you kindly poison Swankey ? I don't want to do it myself, for family reasons; he's my cousin, and it wouldn't look well; but *you* needn't have any compunctions—he isn't *your* cousin. If you poison Swankey, Matilda Jane can take a third husband, and you will be the third husband's assistant.

TRIPES. (*releasing himself*) No, sir; you must do your own trifles yourself. I like master; and I won't be a goblin damned nor a spirit of health, neither, if I can help it. He taught me to cut my first beefsteak; and beneath this waistcoat beats a heart-----

FLUKE. (L.) Enough; I was joking. I did it to try you. If you *had* poisoned Swankey he wouldn't have liked it; he would never have forgiven you ; neither should I have forgiven you ; neither would Mrs. Swankey have forgiven you. Not a word of this conversation; because my motives may not be understood by everybody.

TRIPES. Not a word.

FLUKE. (*gets umbrella from table*) Swear it—on this umbrella ! (*holds it up*)

BOTH. We swear!

FLUKE. Ha! A thought! If I don't go back to the station, they'll bring down the four-post bedstead, the mahogany dining table, the dozen table knives, and the coal scuttle—and I've a dim idea they would be out of place here, especially the four-post bedstead. I'll have them all put back on the truck, and then fly back to London with the lot—not forgetting Matilda Jane! Oh—Matilda Jane—Matilda Jane! You are more trouble to me than all my luggage. *Exit, door R. of c. in flat.*

TRIPES. Yes, it's all very well for them as lives in gilded halls, and has their pills silvered—but beneath this waistcoat beats a heart-----

Enter SWANKEY, R. door—with letter, red wafers stuck on at each corner.

SWANK. (*walking about*) Dash my pips ! but here's a pretty pennyworth to lay my hands on. I go into the parlour to find a bit of paper to ticket the shoulder of mutton with, and this is the first thing I grab hold of—stuck on the table. I'll have the rights of this ?

TRIPES. (*aside, L.*) Master's terribly put out. Oh, Lord ! I remember now—I've never taken Miss Mivins's leg home. (*sneaks up to door, R. of c. in flat*)

SWANK. (*seizes him*) Scoundrel !

TRIPES. Yes, sir!

SWANK. Who stuck it on the table?

TRIPES. I don't know, sir—I left it hanging.

SWANK. Hanging! Where?
 TRIPES. On a hook, sir.
 SWANK. I tell you, I found it stuck on the table with four wafers.
 TRIPES. I never heard of such a thing. Who could have done it?
 SWANK. Dash my pips! that's what I ask you.
 TRIPES. I'd better go and take it up, sir.
 SWANK. I've done it—I've got it.
 TRIPES. Where?
 SWANK. In my hand, fool!
 TRIPES. What, Miss Mivins's leg, sir?
 SWANK. Miss Mivins's leg! I'll leg you! (*threatens him*)
 TRIPES. Oh! I thought you meant the mutton, sir? (*runs to door R. c. in flat, and puts his head in to answer SWANKEY*)
 SWANK. Mutton! Who put this paper on my table?
 TRIPES. I see now, sir, you found that on the table, sir?
 SWANK. Yes.
 TRIPES. Stuck on with four wafers, sir?
 SWANK. Yes.
 TRIPES. You didn't mean the mutton, sir?
 SWANK. No, dash my pips, no!
 TRIPES. You meant the letter, sir?
 SWANK. Yes. Who put it there?
 TRIPES. Don't know, sir? (*shuts door quickly and locks it*)
 SWANK. (*rushes door, shakes it*) Open the door, you villain! Dash my pips; but I'll make you remember the day of the week. Tripes! Tripes!
 TRIPES. (*pops out his head at door, R.*) Sir?
 SWANK. (*turning round*) Who came here this morning?
 TRIPES. The turncock, sir, two little boys for a pennyworth of bits, Miss Mivins-----
 SWANK. If you mention Miss Mivins again, I'll break your neck.
 TRIPES. Miss Mivins! Beg pardon, sir, the stationer at the corner-----
 SWANK. Huxam!
 TRIPES. Yes, sir. He asked after you, sir. Went into the parlour, sir, and just then Miss Mivins-----
 SWANK. I'll Mivins you. (*rushes at door R. ; TRIPES shuts it; they pull one against the other, at last TRIPES lets go; SWANKEY nearly tumbles, then rushes off R, after TRIPES*)

Door R. C. in flat, is unlocked—Enter FLUKE.

FLUKE. It's all right now; I was just in time, as usual, to be too late—to find they had started—the four-poster is wandering over the face of the earth, I suppose, for it wasn't at the station. It isn't here, and nobody can tell me where it is. I asked an

intelligent countryman, and he offered to fight me on the spot, upon which I conclude four-post bedsteads are unpopular in this district, (a *struggle heard at door, R. of C. in flat.*—TRIPES *tumbles on, and rushes off, door R.*)

Enter SWANKEY, door R. c. in flat, and runs against FLUKE, who has gone up to see what is the matter.

SWANK. Oh! it's you, is it ?

FLUKE. I believe I may safely say, it is.

SWANK. You've come just in the nick of time.

FLUKE. Then it will be the first time in my life; so I doubt it.

SWANK. (*shows letter*) Look at this.

FLUKE. I do; it's a letter.

SWANK. Take it and read it.

FLUKE. What for?

SWANK. Do you want to have a row?

FLUKE. Certainly not.

SWANK. Then take it, and read it.

FLUKE. (*takes letter—aside*) Why, it's *my* letter; from *my* widow; that is to say, *his* widow.

SWANK. (R.) I found this stuck on my table.

FLUKE. (*aside, L.1*) And I forgot all about it. What's to be done now ? This is worse than the four-poster !

SWANK. With four red wafers. But I know who did it.

FLUKE. You don't say so? Who? who? who?

SWANK. You mean, who is it ? I'll chop him into joints! Dash my pips if I don't, (*snatches back letter*)

FLUKE. (*aside*) I shall be jointed. I wish I had poisoned him ; first impressions are everything.

SWANK. (*rolls up his sleeves*) This is that Huxam's handiwork ; but he shall smart for it!

FLUKE. Oh! it's Huxam, is it ? I shouldn't be at all surprised. What are you going to do?

SWANK. Give him a good hiding.

FLUKE. Suppose he denies it ?

SWANK. Oh, he's sure to do that.

FLUKE. Yes ; I'm certain he's sure to deny it.

SWANK. You shall come with me. You shall give him a good hiding, too.

FLUKE. Not if I know it.

SWANK. Do you refuse ?

FLUKE. Most emphatically!

SWANK. Then, you want to have a row ?

FLUKE. No, I don't—I don't want to have a row. I'll go with you.

SWANK. Doesn't your blood boil at such an insult to your cousin's wife ?

FLUKE. Not much!

SWANK. It doesn't! Then, you want to have a row ?

FLUKE. I don't want to have a row. My blood boils—98 in the shade.

SWANK. On second thoughts, you had better stop here.

FLUKE. No—I'll go with you.

SWANK. I say, you shall stop here.

FLUKE. And I say, I'll go with you.

SWANK. Then, you want to have a row ?

FLUKE, (*bawling*) No, I don't want to have a row!

SWANK. (*pushing FLUKE away*) Then, stay where you are, until I come back. *Exit, door R. c. in flat.*

FLUKE. What am I to do ? Unless he knocks out Huxam's brains at once—which I hope he may do, and that will rid me of both of them, and Matilda Jane will be a widow again, in due course of law—there's sure to be an explanation, and then I shall be jointed—double-jointed, perhaps. I wish I had never come here at all—I wish I had forgotten Matilda Jane. I feel awfully thirsty. Ha ! some sherry wine ! (*takes up bottle*) It's all gone—too late again, even for sherry wine. Let me try brandy, (*pours out, drinks, and coughs*) It takes away my breath—I can't quench my thirst with brandy—I hate Matilda Jane! *Curses* on Matilda Jane—*curses* on the jolly old cock, the first venture—*curses* on the second venture—*carse* everybody ! And now, I think, I'll run away, (*going, L.*)

Enter MATILDA JANE, door L. c. in flat.

MATIL. You here still ?

FLUKE. I wish I could say I wasn't.

MATIL. I see ! You would dare everything for my sake !

FLUKE. Not much!

MATIL. I pity you, Jeremiah, but I am another's.

FLUKE. (R.) Yes, two others'.

MATIL. (L.) Fly! and, far away in the depths of some howling wilderness, be happy.

FLUKE. Yes, Matilda Jane—and we will share that howling wilderness together !

MATIL. Never! I prefer my husband's humble roof to all the glittering gems you would roll at my feet.

FLUKE. Matilda jane, I simply say, revenge ! ha, ha! I have been sacrificed twice, because I came too late, this time I intend to betoo soon. You must away with me; the four-post bedstead, the mahogany dining table, the dozen knives, and the coal scuttle, by the next train to New Zealand; where, amidst brutal and ignorant savages, I offer you a contented heart, and a peaceful home.

MATIL. (*changing her tone, which has hitherto been mock heroic*) I should like to catch myself at it.

FLUKE. You must! you shall! you will! your husband knows all! He knows how deeply we have loved, although, certainly at an inconvenient distance ; but we *have* loved-----

MATIL. Rubbish!

FLUKE. This morning when I rushed into the house, in all the innocent gaiety of a young and trusting bosom, you had just stepped out—unsuspecting I walked into the next room, and saw your work upon the table; I thought I would surprise my Matilda Jane, and convey in a delicate and playful manner the fact of my arrival in her widowed home, so I seized four-post bedsteads—I mean four red wafers, and stuck your letter on the table, open. Your husband, your second venture, found it, that's all—and read it.

MATIL. (*crossing to R.*) Oh, you great silly, stupid, donkey ! I wish it had stuck to your nose for ever and a day. A nice time I shall have of it with Charles.

FLUKE. And a nice time *I* shall have of it with Charles. I shall be jointed, that is if I stop here—if *we* stop here. But Matilda Jane loves her Jeremiah, and will fly with him.

MATIL. I don't love you a tiny-tiny-tiny-bit!

FLUKE. Let us away to the Southern Pole ; take what's in the till, the key of the cellar, and all the choppers !

MATIL. Jeremiah, what's come to you ? (*sees bottle on table*) Oh, he's been drinking, (*puts bottle and glasses back on side-board*)

FLUKE. I've got a cart-load of furniture cruising about somewhere. Take as many legs of mutton as you can conveniently carry, and let us fly.

MATIL. Don't be a fool!

FLUKE. Do you refuse to follow your Jeremiah ?

MATH.. Most certainly I do.

FLUKE. (*seizes her hand*) Then, dash my pips !-----

MATIL. Jeremiah!

FLUKE. Do you want to have a row ?

MATIL. I'll call out if you don't keep quiet.

FLUKE. You will ? Then, (*kisses her*) there!

MATIL. (*boxes his ear*) And, there!

FLUKE. (*aside*) He was quite right! It *does* hurt. Let me see ; I've got to give her two more, (*rushes after MATILDA*)

MATIL. (*runs round back of table to L. side*) Jeremiah ! be quiet.

FLUKE. Never !

MATIL. Oh, the little monster! he's quite beside himself. (*as he runs after her she upsets the chairs to hinder him*)

FLUKE. Your fate is bound up with mine, Matilda Jane !

Yield, or perish in the attempt! Oh, my shins! Matilda Jane, will you yield? (*she upsets table*)

SWANK. (*without, R. C. door, in flat*) Dash my pips!

MATIL. My husband's voice! (*she runs out at door, L. C. in flat, as SWANKEY enters by door, R. c. in flat—FLUKE catches hold of the skirt of her dress, and holds it—she locks the door, leaving part of skirt of dress visible to audience—FLUKE falls down, still holding dress*)

SWANK. What are you up to? Who was that popped through the door?

FLUKE. (*on his knees at door*) Save me! and I'll confess all!

SWANK. She's caught, whoever it is. (*pushes FLUKE away, and seizes hold of dress—shakes door*) Open the door! Dash my pips! open the door! No answer. Tripes! Tripes!

FLUKE. (R) Cousin Charles, by the memories of our early childhood, distrust appearances! Remember the sports of our youth, and let me explain!

SWANK. (*down L.*) We'll explain matters presently; and I've just given Huxam a black eye.

FLUKE. (*affectionately*) My best, my earliest friend! the companion of-----

SWANK. (*shaking him off*) Get out! Tripes! Tripes!!

Enter TRIPES, door R. of c. in flat.

TRIPES. Here I am, master. Miss Mivins' leg-----

SWANK. (*kicks him*) That for Miss Mivins. Bring me the large chopper! *Exit TRIPES, door R. C. in flat.*

FLUKE. Spare me—spare me! I shall be jointed alive, (*tries to get out door R. of c. in flat*)

SWANK. (*brings him back*) No, you don't; if it is as I suspect, I won't give you a good hiding like I did Huxam.

FLUKE. You won't?—then bless you. Again I recognize my early friend—the companion of-----

Enter TRIPES, with chopper—SWANKEY takes it from him—TRIPES picks up chairs, crosses C.

SWANK. No, it shall be kidneys for two—I mean pistols—pistols!

FLUKE. I prefer kidneys.

SWANK. (*going to door, takes hold of the dress*) Now we'll see who it is that plays at hide and seek with Charles Swankey!

FLUKE. (R.—*falls into chair*) Jointed! kidneys! pistols! I'm done.

SWANK. (*prizing open door with chopper*) Once—twice—will you open the door? No: then three times and away. (*door opens—SWANKEY pulls out the dress and discovers SARAH*)

SNIVEY *instead of MATILDA—she having changed skirts*) Sarah Snivey!

FLUKE. *(starting up)* Snivey for ever! three cheers for Sarah—hooray!

TRIPES. Hooray! hooray! hooray! *Exit door, R. C. in flat, taking the chopper.*

Enter MATILDA, door, L., in a different skirt.

MATIL Charles dear! what a noise you are making. What's the matter?

SWANK. My wife!

SARAH. *(to SWANKEY, who still has hold of the dress)* Mr. Swankey! when you have quite done with my dress, perhaps you will tell me.

FLUKE. Hooray! now I feel better.

SWANK. *(C.)* Then it was *you* I saw here with Jeremiah?

SARAH. *(L. C.)* Who else could it have been?

SWANK. Then dash my pips—why did you run away?

SARAH. Can you ask?

FLUKE. *(R.)* Can you ask? I would have run away, too, only you stopped me. *(aside)* Sarah's an uncommonly nice girl!

SWANK. *(suspiciously)* Making love, I suppose, eh? Well, you needn't have thrown all the chairs about.

FLUKE. *(mysteriously)* I had a motive—besides, I tried your plan—the clout of the head. Oh! I got it—you were quite right.

SWANK. And I suppose you got the rest too, eh?

FLUKE. Well, not exactly—no; you came in and stopped it, you see.

SWANK. *(with a sneer)* Well, I'm sorry I spoiled sport.

FLUKE. Don't mention it. *(aside)* It'll be a precious long time before I try any little games of that sort again.

SWANK. *(crossing to L. C.)* Mrs. Swankey!

MATIL. *(L.)* My dear?

SWANK. *(showing letter)* What does this letter mean, ma'am, signed "Jane"—"I am free—I am waiting—I am yours?"

FLUKE. *(aside, R.)* That letter's a nuisance—I wish it was dead—a dead letter, in fact.

MATIL. *(L.)* It meant—that is—it was-----

FLUKE. *(R.)* I don't know anything about it, but I'll undertake to swear that it wasn't.

Enter HUXAM, door R. c. in flat, with a black eye.

SWANK. *(seeing him)* Let everyone hold their respective jaws, or I'll make 'em—that's all.

FLUKE. Quite enough, too.

HUXAM. (*down R.*) Mr. Swankey, sir. Much as I respect you, sir, as a fellow-townsmen, and proprietor of the establishment where I purchase my daily bread; still, I have felt it my duty to call upon you for the purpose of bringing under your notice the remarkable change in my personal appearance. I could forget and forgive any little outbreak upon your part, had that outbreak been directed elsewhere—had you assaulted anybody else, I should have said nothing—but, you have given me a black eye, sir. A man ought to be safe behind his counter—it is a sacred spot, sir, which you have outraged, as well as my organ of vision.

SWANK. What do you want ? Ain't you satisfied ?

HUXAM. (R.) No, sir—I am not satisfied.

FLUKE. (R. C.) Then, he wants to have a row.

SWANK. (L. C.) If you ain't satisfied, I'll soon make you so. Dash my pips! (*they hold him back*)

HUXAM. Stop, Mr. Swankey! In one sense, I *am* satisfied—I apologize, (*crosses to R. C.*) Let us shake hands. And, now, my dear sir, may I ask the reason of your (*coughs*) little playfulness to-day with regard to your humble servant.

SWANK. (L. C.) You called here this morning ?

HUXAM. I did ; I left something for you, as well.

SWANK. Isn't this it ? (*shows letter*)

MATIL. (L., *aside*) What explanation can I give him?

FLUKE, (*aside, R.*) After all, there's no address; and I can always swear it isn't mine. Matilda Jane can shift for herself. I'm tired of her: I prefer Sarah Snivey.

HUXAM. (*who has been looking at letter*) No; this was not what I left for you. Stop a bit! (*takes out promissory note, and compares the two*) I think I know the writing, too. Yes ; it is the same!

SWANK. What's the same ?

HUXAM. Look here! "I promise to pay," &c. &c, "Signed Sarah Jane Snivey ;" and " I am waiting," &c. &c, " Signed Jane."

SWANK. (*looking at papers*) So they are ! Both alike !

SARAH. (*aside, L. c.*) And now to fib a little.

SWANK. Then is your name Jane, too, as well as my wife's ?

MATIL. (L.) Yes; we are both Janes.

SARAH. Both of us.

FLUKE. (*crossing to SARAH, L. C.*) " My Jane, my Jane, my pretty Jane, The bloom is on the rye." (*to HUXAM*) And, Mr. Huxam, the bloom is on your eye, too.

SWANK. (C.) Then who was this written to ?

SARAH. To Mr. Jeremiah Fluke.

FLUKE. (L. C.) Sarah Snivey !

MATILDA. (L., *pinching his arm*) Do, for goodness sake, hold your tongue.

SARAH. And it referred to the death of my poor uncle, who was always opposed to our marriage.

FLUKE. (*crying*) And so, uncle is dead! Let me wipe away a tear to his memory. He was my true friend—he was always opposed to my marriage.

MATIL. (L.) And when Sarah found herself free to choose for herself----

FLUKE. She wrote and told me I was the object of her affections, (*aside*) Isn't Swankey a fool? Swankey's the *hass*, at present.

SWANK. And now there can be no opposition, of course?

FLUKE. None at all ! Uncle being removed, the *piece de resistance*, as they say abroad—we come in for our deserts.

SWANK. (C, *pushing SARAH towards FLUKE*) Then you can get married at once.

SARAH. At once!

FLUKE. This haste is indecent! Uncle has not been dead long enough—only a few minutes—I mean months. We all feel his loss ; he was so very much opposed to everything and everybody.

SWANK. Do you refuse ?

FLUKE. I don't refuse, only-----

SWANK. (*crossing to FLUKE*) Then, you want to have a row?

FLUKE. By no means, (*aside*) It's because I don't want a row, I don't want to get married.

MATIL. (*aside to FLUKE*) Marry her, or you are lost.

FLUKE. (*going*) I'll go back to London first, and let you know in the course of the ensuing Autumn-----

SWANK. (*pulls him back to R. c.*) Then, you *will* have a row?

FLUKE. No, I'll be married. After all, Sarah Jane is an uncommon nice girl, and if somebody doesn't marry me, it seems I never shall marry myself.

Enter TRIPES, door R. C. in flat.

TRIPES. Please, sir, here's a cart-load of furniture.

FLUKE. It's mine—it's all right! A mahogany dining table, a dozen knives, and a coal scuttle—by the by, that four-post bedstead *will* come in useful, after all.

HUXAM. And so my black eye was for nothing ?

SWANK. (*in a surly tone*) You see it was a mistake—everyone makes mistakes some time or other.

HUXAM. (R.) Yes; but everyone don't get black eyes. The packet I left for you was about our statue.

SWANK, (C.) What statue?

HUXAM. To put up in the market-place instead of the pump.

We are all resolved to have the statue, but we are not agreed upon the subject yet. I propose myself.

SWANK. *You!* What have you done to serve your country?

HUXAM. Nothing, but I *may* do something.

SWANK. I propose my prize pig, and if anyone disagrees with me-----

FLUKE. Then he wants to have a row!

HUXAM. Certainly not!

ALL. Certainly not.

HUXAM. I withdraw! The prize pig will do admirably, and shall live in story and in our local guide-book, published by me at one-and-six, to the end of time.

MATIL. Charles dear, there's one thing I never told you, and which I had better confess at once.

SWANK. What is it?

MATIL. I was never taught to write—I can't, but Sarah is teaching me.

SWANK. Don't know how to write! Dash my pips! That was the only thing that I was uncomfortable about. There—(*kisses her*)—there's the reward of merit!

FLUKE. The reward of merit for *not* knowing how to write. Here's the reward of merit for you, (*kisses SARAH*) And now, ladies and gentlemen, it only remains for me to add a parting word. You have all heard my misfortunes to night, and I hope they have not been too much for you. I've been here, there, and everywhere, and have found myself nowhere with regard to Matilda Jane, but certainly somewhere with regard to Sarah Snivey. I think I have got out of it pretty well under all circumstances; and if you, ladies and gentlemen, only think so too, why then, although I shall always continue, every night until further notice, to be too late, I shall also never have to regret being "Behind Time."

SARAH. FLUKE.

HUXAM.

SWANKEY.

TRIPES.

MATILDA.

R.

L.

Curtain.