

HE'S A LUNATIC.

A Farce.

IN ONE ACT.

BY
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SIX MONTHS AGO, ETC., ETC.

*The idea on which, the plot of this piece is based, is taken from
"Le Fou d'en Face."*

THOMAS HAILES LACY,
89, STRAND, LONDON.

HE'S A LUNATIC.

*First performed at the New Queen's Theatre, Long Acre,
(under the management of Mr. Alfred Wigan) October
24, 1867.*

CHARACTERS.

MARCH HARE . . (*a young artist*) . Mr. J. Clayton.
SIR GUY TROTTER, K.C.B. . . . Mr. A. Sanger.
RUGGLES . . (*a housebreaker*). . . Mr. C. Seyton.
ARABELLA HANWOOD Miss E. Turner.
HATTER . . . (*her maid*) . . . Miss F. Heath.

Modern Dresses.

Time in Performance, Forty Minutes.

HE'S A LUNATIC.

SCENE.—*Drawing-room in Mrs. Hanwood's House—handsomely furnished, &c.—small table, R., with candle, diamond bracelet, and bell on it. Drawing table, L, with drawing materials and chair at back of it. Screen at back, R. Cupboard L. 2 E. Fireplace, R. U. E. Doors, L. and . Lights down when curtain rises.*

Enter RUGGLES, feeling his way cautiously, L.

RUG. All right so far—I wish heverybody would leave their latch keys in their doors regular, it saves such a deal of trouble for us, and it's less expensive for them, 'cos they've nothin' to pay for mendin' their locks. I listened at the end of the kitching stairs, and 'eard nothin'. Either the servants is out, or else they're at supper. They're always at supper ! I never did no business in an 'ouse in the evenin' between height and twelve that they wasn't at supper! Afore height they call it tea. Let me see: mustn't lose no time. Somebody might be 'ere—I watched the missus out for the hevenin' though, (*striking a light, and lighting a candle on table, R.—at this point, enter MARCH HARE, L., softly, he gets behind the screen, and watches him*) Let's see, oh, crikey! 'ere's pickins! well, I must say the young 'oman as belongs to this 'ouse is a credit to her sect, and a blessin' to mine—who'd ha' thought of her leavin' a 'and-some bracelet on the drorin'-room table? She must a known as I was a-comin'. There's no keepin' the movements of the haristocracy secret now-a-days. In course, it won't 'urt to take this—'cos there ain't no 'arm in it. (*laughing*) John, my boy, you're a wag, you are ! you're a-gettin' on. You'd better take to writin' burlexes. (*a noise heard*) What's that ? them gorgers can'

never be a-comin' hupstairs disturbin' their digestions surely, nobody rung for 'em: leastways I didn't, and if hany-body 'ad it's halways hodds they don't come ! (*noise again*) Agin! perhaps it's a bobby! there's sure to be one at supper with the maids. I'm in for it. (*slips the bracelet into his pocket and is about to enter cupboard* L. 2. E, he takes a pot of jam from it when MARCH HARE comes front behind screen, and seizes him by the collar.)

HARE. No, you don't, amiable buccaneer, no, you don't.

RUG. Now, who the devil told you I was 'ere ? What have you got to do with this 'ouse ?

HARE. Quite as much I suspect, as the house has got to do with you. Perhaps you take me for something in your own way.

RUG. I should say you was werry much in my way. Howsomdever don't you make no row: 'cos if you do I shall knock you down.

HARE. No, you won't. I shall knock *you* down. And either way you'll be taken up—I've got a policeman ready outside.

RUG. (*in a whining tone*) Don't be too 'ard on a family man as does his little best to earn his childer's bread in a respectable way.

HARE. Of course, Let's look at your pockets, (*drawing out jam*) You've been earning your children's jam as well as their bread I perceive, (*takes out bracelet*) A diamond bracelet! sorry that I shall be under the necessity of asking for that presently.

RUG. Now look 'ere, what are you going to do to me ?

HARE. I'm going to lock you up in this cupboard—don't look astonished—you must be used to solitary confinement: and when I want you I shall let you out.

RUG. And give me hup to the bobbies ? you might as well do that at once, and have it over.

HARE. No, only do what I tell you and keep quiet in there: and I promise you you shall get away scot free.

RUG. Oh, ah, who is to make me believe that ?

HARE. Just as you like, only if you *don't* do what I tell you----(*as if going to call policeman.*)

RUG. All right, anything for a quiet life !

(*Exit into cupboard. HARE locks the door.*)

HARE. Ally, number one. Well, of all the cool things I ever did, this is the coolest. Never mind; Faint heart never won fair lady, and here I am in my adorable widow's house at last—it was by the luckiest chance in the world

that I saw that fellow sneak in here, and thanks to the door being on the latch was able to follow him. But what's to be done next ? There's no time to be lost, and I've scarcely matured my plans. Ah ! here comes somebody—*(looking off)* A woman, and therefore to be coaxed—a lady's maid, and therefore to be bribed ! Ally, number two, *(throws himself on couch at back and pretends to sleep)*

Enter HATTER, with lighted candle, R.

HATTER. Nearly nine, and missis not at home yet, and the later she is the crosser she'll be. Why, whoever's been lighting up the candle, *(seeing HARE on couch)* Good gracious, a man on the sofa and—*(coming down)*—the very same young man as has been throwing himself in missis's way whenever she goes out. What can he be doing here at this time of night ? and however did he get in ? He's a nice looking young fellow whoever he is. I shouldn't half mind winning a pair of gloves, *(going up and leaning over him.)*

HARE. Go on, my dear, don't mind me. *(HATTER gives a short sharp scream and repeats it as he attempts to speak, shaking her petticoats at him)* Now look here ! I'm a great advocate for division of labour : while you scream I shall be quiet : when you stop I'll speak. Besides, the more you scream, the more nobody'll come—we're the only people in the house, my dear—what's your name ?

HATTER. Hatter, sir. *(curtseying.)*

HARE. Ha, ha ! what an odd coincidence—let us introduce ourselves—Mrs. Hatter, Mr. March Hare—Mr. March Hare, Mrs. Hatter, *(bursts out laughing)* Don't be alarmed—I can't help laughing ; such a preposterous name—nobody can have been born with such a name, you must have got it by marriage. What's your husband ? I may say who's your Hatter ?

HATTER. *(very frightened)* I haven't got a Hatter, sir.

HARE. What ? it is your own name ? marry come up.

HATTER. I'll marry as soon as I can, sir, and where please, am I to come up to ?

HARE. Ha ! ha ! don't be absurd—I won't hurt you. The fact is, I'm in a lucid interval.

HATTER. A doosid what ?

HARE. Lucid, Hatter, lucid ! you confound your consonants. Come here and listen to me, and by way of a beginning—look here, *(putting a sovereign in her hand.)*

HATTER. I begin to think his interview is lucid.

HARE. And—yes, I will. The Duchess of Devonshire was in the habit of kissing butchers: why shouldn't I kiss a hatter? (*to her*) and take this with it. (*kisses her.*)

HATTER. (*aside*) I'm sure his interview's lucid.

HARE. Do what I ask you, and I'll double your wages.

HATTER. How are you going to manage that? You're not my missis.

HARE. No, but I mean to be: at least I mean your mistress to be mine.

HATTER. She's promised to double 'em herself if I get her a sensation.

HARE. Then get her me—I'm a sensation: and then I'll double them again! double, double! you know—no toil and very little trouble.

HATTER. Lor! what's he driving at now?

HARE. I forgot: you don't know; though attractive, Hatter, you are uneducated. I must explain myself—listen to me.

HATTER. Well, sir, if you'll only explain who you are, and what you want-----

HARE. I will, in a very few words—my surname is Hare. I was christened March, because-----

HATTER. Because you were born on the first of April!

HARE. Not at all—I was to be called Mark after my uncle, but the clergyman was deaf, and my godfather couldn't speak plain: so they made a mistake between them, and the horrible result has stuck to me through life. At last I see my way to making it useful. I am an artist by profession, nothing in practice—I adore your mistress, and she will adore me. She only knows me by sight at present, but that's enough to begin with—I have found out all about her—she's bored to death with her present life, and longs for excitement: I mean to give her plenty of it. To make love in the ordinary way would be useless, so I've hit on an original plan. I'm going out of my senses.

HATTER. Well, you won't have far to go.

HARE. I knew you'd say that—it's an old joke and not in the least applicable. I was rehearsing for your benefit just now; and flatter myself anybody might take me to be really cracked.

HATTER. Well, I think anybody might.

HARE. Help me to a charming wife, and your mistress to a good husband, and your fortune's made. You must find some opportunity to introduce my name, tell your mistress that I'm an escaped lunatic, mad for love of her,

and supposed to be hiding in the neighbourhood, then stow me away somewhere in the house, and leave the rest to me. Do you understand ?

HATTER. Not the least in the world; but never mind, as missis wants to have a sensation, and you want to make one, I can't be far wrong in serving you both and myself at the same time, *(bell heard)* There's my bell. Missis has let herself into the house, and will be upstairs in a moment. That way, sir; *(pointing R.)* you can get from there to any part of the house you like.

ARABELLA. *(calling without, L.)* Hatter!

HARE. All right, remember your instructions, *(aside)* The train's laid, and I only want an opportunity to set fire to it.
(Exit R. HATTER arranges candles.)

Enter ARABELLA, L.

ARAB. Hatter! oh, there you are, why didn't you come down ?

HATTER. I beg your pardon, mim, I didn't hear you come in, or expect you so early.

ARAB. Of course you didn't. What do you stand there staring for ? ain't you going to take off my cloak ?

HATTER. Lor, mim, what's the matter ?

ARAB. Nothing—everything—I'm bored to [death, *(sitting in arm-chair.)*

HATTER. *(R. C.)* Bored ! young, rich, pretty, and your own mistress.

ARAB. That's just it, I hate being my own mistress, there's nothing in the world so wretched as a widow—Hatter, take my advice and never be a widow.

HATTER. Lor', mim, if a husband does take to dying, one can always marry again, you know.

ARAB. Prevention is better than cure. Besides, don't be too sure that you can.

HATTER. I'm sure, mim, that *you've* had plenty of chances.

ARAB. Yes. and what chances ! Every old bore in the world thinks he may make up to a widow. There's that old Sir Guy Trotter, I really believe I shall end by being worried into accepting him.

HATTER. And be worse off than you were before.

ARAB. Impossible—oh, for a sensation! I want a sensation—a new one—Hatter, find me a sensation, and I've often told you, I'll double your wages.

HATTER. Try travelling—go to Brighton.

ARAB. But the first part of the idea is good. Suppose we, by way of a novelty, take the next boat for the Sandwich Islands.

HATTER. Good gracious, mim! think of the savage fashions in dress!

ARAB. Ah, I see, you're afraid of catching cold.

HATTER. No, I'm not; but where would be my perquisites? you wouldn't have a gown to give your maid.

ARAB. You should have my cast off beads, (*noise in street*) What's that? Perhaps a sensation! go and find out. (*exit HATTER, L.—at table R.*) Do what I will, I can't help thinking of that young man whom I have met more than once in my walks lately, a neighbour apparently, whose eyes seem to tell me.—What a fool I am, what have I to do with his eyes, or his nose either? a man whose very name and address I don't know.

Re-enter HATTER, L.

HATTER. Oh, mim! such a business.

ARAB. A sensation? Thank goodness, go on.

HATTER. You've heard of the mad young gentleman who lives next door, Mr. March Hare?

ARAB. A mad young gentleman, next door—never.

HATTER. Lor', I thought everybody had. (*aside*) That's a good one. Well, he's got away from his keeper, and out of the house, and they're hunting for him everywhere. You know, mim, he's a lunatic, a downright lunatic.

ARAB. Good gracious! suppose he should get in here, and conceal himself in my room! I might wake in the night and hear the clanking of chains under my bed, and only be rescued by the early dustman, like a woman I once read about. Her hair turned white from terror; I shouldn't much like that.

HATTER. It would have one advantage, mim; white hair takes the golden dye beautiful.

ARAB. (*sitting at R. table*) But is this man dangerous, Hatter?

HATTER. Don't know, mim, but on and off I should think. (*aside*) Can't say fairer than that, as I don't know what his style's to be. (*aloud*) And they do say he's crazed for love of you. (*aside*) I'm going it.

ARAB. For love of me! what nonsense! I never saw him in my life that I know of—and lovers are always depressing. I want somebody to amuse me, to make me laugh, I've forgotten the very sound of my own laugh. Is

there no way of love-making but sighs, and groans, and turning up one's eyes like a duck in a thunderstorm ? "I worship the very ground you tread upon." " Never have I felt for woman what I feel for you." Bah ! if I was a man I'd say " Bosh! "

HATTER. Try the last new novel, mim. I made bold to look at it just now, and it seems very amusing. The hero has three wives, each of whom has another husband; the other husbands turn out to be the brothers of the first wife, and murder her to conceal it, and-----

ARAB. Very amusing, thank you—you may go now, Hatter.

HATTER. Yes, mim. (*aside*) Well, of all the queertempers.

ARAB. Why doesn't my young neighbour find some means to get introduced to me ? Of course he can't speak without an introduction, if he did I should be forced to snub him—stupid people we English are to be sure. I wonder whether there's a line worth reading in this novel. (*taking up a book*) "Sisters they were, you could tell at the first glance—but oh ! how different! Semolina was as fair as the lily—Tapioca as dark as night—let us say a night illumined-----" (*throwing down book*) What abominable nonsense.

Re-enter HATTER, L.

ARAB. What's the matter now ?

HATTER. Sir Guy Trotter wishes to know if you'll see him.

ARAB. What a distraction! Yes, show him up, Hatter. (*exit HATTER, L.*) In a weak moment I told the old gentleman that he might look in in the evening on the chance of finding me. Well, he's a shade better than Tapioca and Semolina anyhow.

HARE. (*without, L.*) After you, sir.

SIR GUY. (*without, L.*) No sir, you first.

HARE. (*without*) How can I go first, after you?

ARAB. Somebody else with him! and a strange voice ! who can it be ?

SIR. GUY. (*without*) I couldn't think of it.

HARE. (*without*) I didn't ask you to think—I never supposed you could.

Enter SIR GUY TROTTER and MARCH HARE—SIR GUY shakes hands with ARABELLA.

ARAB. (R., *aside, starting*) My unknown admirer! he's a friend of Sir Guy's then.

SIR GUY. (C. *aside*) Who can this person be ? Never met him here before.

ARAB. }
and } Why { doesn't he } introduce him ?
SIR GUY. } { doesn't she }

ARAB. Delighted, Sir Guy, that you've taken me at my word; won't you sit down ? and you too, Mr.----- (*looking at TROTTER.*)

SIR GUY. Mr.----- ? (*looking at ARABELLA.*)

HARE. (L.) Quite so—with pleasure, (*all sit—aside*) She's delicious ! (*silence for some time, each looking at the others as if expecting one of them to speak.*)

ARAB. (R.) Any news stirring, Sir Guy ?

SIR GUY. (C.) None, Mrs. Hanwood, none.

HARE. None at all—very true, Trotter, very true.

SIR GUY. (*aside*) Calls me Trotter ! damn his impudence.

ARAB. (*aside*) Calls him Trotter ! evidently an intimate friend, (*aloud*) No change in the weather, Mr.----- (*as before.*)

TROT. Mr.----- (*as before.*)

HARE. Alluding to me ? none at all! no change in the weather, or the parks—wooden boards still up. (*turns the chair over and sits upon the two back legs*) Excuse my way of sitting down, it's a receipt I have for warm weather, to prevent a rush of blood to the legs of the chair, (*sits*) Comfortable, very! (*pause*) That's very clever of you, Trotter, (*nudging him.*)

SIR G. Extraordinary person! (*aloud*) Clever of me, sir ? I said nothing.

HARE. Well, that's the cleverest thing you can do. (*ARABELLA laughs aside*) I've made her laugh ! that's the first step won.

ARAB. Haven't you anything to tell me then, Sir Guy ?

HARE. Guy, do say something—you're not expected to be always clever. (*ARABELLA laughs again.*)

SIR GUY. (*aside to ARABELLA*) I have endless things to say but how can I say them with this brute in the room ?

ARAB. (*aside to him*) That's your own fault for-----

HARE. (*rising and getting R. of TROTTER*) One moment. (*takes candle and gives it to ARABELLA, takes one himself and very ceremoniously makes a pass at TROTTER'S nose*) There was a fly on your nose, it might have become a wasp—it's a peculiarity with noses of that sort—which luckily are rare : beautiful creature, (*touching TROTTER under chin*) Don't mind me, go on, it's only my way.

SIR GUY. (*aside*) A highly improper friend for Mrs. Hanwood, I'll take no notice of him. (*aloud*) I heard such a good thing this morning.

HARE. Don't repeat it then, you're sure to spoil it. (*ARABELLA laughs again.*)

SIR GUY. (*angrily*) Sir, who the devil—Do you know who you are speaking to, sir ? Do you know that I have served my country with distinction, sir ? that I've been ennobled by my sovereign, sir ? that I'm a Knight of the Bath, sir.

HARE. A Knight of Bath, are you ? Hadn't you better go there ?

ARAB. (*aside—laughing*) Dear me, what a singular man! but decidedly amusing, (*to TROTTER*) Who-----

SIR GUY. (*at the same moment to ARABELLA*) Who-----

HARE. (*coming between them*) Sorry to part you ! sorry to trample on your Trotter, beautiful creature ! but needs must when the snow drives—I am irresistibly impelled to offer you the October number of Bradshaw as a curiosity !

ARAB. Good gracious, sir, why ?

HARE. (*takes her down mysteriously to R. corner*) Hush! it's a secret entrusted to me by the company ! the Brighton night express will for the future start at 11.65 a.m. (*goes up towards mantel-piece R., imitating a steam engine, ARABELLA and TROTTER looking at him with astonishment—he stops opposite a clock on the chimney-piece and bursts out laughing.*)

ARAB. }
and } Good gracious !
SIR GUY. }

HARE. (*laughing*) This is the first time in my life I ever saw a mad clock.

ARAB. (R.) What do you mean, Mr.-----

HARE. (R. c.) I mean that your clock is very mad, look at it, it maintains that it's nine o'clock in the morning, when it happens to be nine at night. Think of the consequences, you'd be having your breakfast just before going to bed ; this cannot possibly be allowed, (*turning the hands round violently.*)

ARAB. What are you doing ?

HARE. Doing ? justice! (*the clock makes a great noise and finally a snap is heard. HARE laughs*) Bet you five to one I've broken the mainspring, (*opens clock and looks*) I knew it. (*comes down c. to TROTTER*) Trotter, I've won my bet and will trouble you to pay up. We didn't specify the

coin, so we'll say one five pound note! (TROTTER *turns away angrily.*)

ARAB. (*angrily*) But, Sir, is it your habit to come into people's houses uninvited, and break the mainsprings of their clocks?

HARE. You've hit it. It is my habit, and why not? I've broken many better clocks than that in my time and nobody ever objected before. If I break them, I can afford to pay for them; or, if I can't, Trotter can.

SIR GUY. Sir, you're an impertinent rascal, and I wonder at Mrs. Hanwood having such friends.

HARK. (*aside*) Now it's coming!

ARAB. A friend of *mine!* Why, Sir Guy, *you* brought him here.

SIR GUY. (C, X'S *to* ARABELLA.) I? I never saw him in my life till I met him on the staircase just now; did I, sir?

HARE. (L.) Never! That was your loss, not mine.

ARAB. (R.) Who, and what are you then, sir?

SIR GUY. (C.) What's your name, you rascal?

HARE. (L.) Be composed, fair lady; take it coolly, Guy! You want to know my name? I will tell you, negatively. My name is *not* Norval: my father does *not* live upon the Grampian Hills, and has nothing to feed his flocks with, if he had. *any.* (*takes stage L.*)

ARAB. What on earth do you mean?

HARE. I mean that my name is Lucia di Lammermoor—I should say, March Hare, (*advances, ARABELLA screams and throws herself into TROTTER'S arms.*)

SIR GUY. Mrs. Hanwood! Arabella, what on earth's the matter! (*places her in chair R.*)

ARAB. It's the madman who lives next door.

SIR GUY. A madman! (HARE *makes faces at him behind ARABELLA'S back, and repeats them when she does not see him; putting on a quiet manner whenever she does*) Oh, lord! oh, lord! police! where are they? Dr. Forbes Winslow! where is he? I'll go at once and fetch him. (*going L.*)

ARAB. And leave me alone with a lunatic, Sir Guy.

SIR GUY. Alone, never! (HARE *makes faces*) King for the servants.

ARAB. They've all gone out, except my maid.

SIR GUY. Then I'll go and fetch them. I've a horror of madmen, a hereditary horror, my father had it, my grandfather had it—a most extraordinary thing. They have

just the same effect on me as black beetles! the sight of them makes me ill. (*exit TROTTER, L., HARK sits L.*)

ARAB. Left alone with him! (*pause, she looks at HARE*) He looks very quiet, I believe I could manage him. A madman! no wonder that his face attracted me. Anyhow, he's not such a bore as the rest of the world! I wanted a sensation and I've got one!

HARE. (*rises*) Now he's gone, we can be comfortable. (*placing a chair close to him, she draws back, he taps the chair impatiently, she sits down, looking at him*) Good fellow, but a little—(*touches his forehead*) You understand, and as stupid as an owl. All I want to say would be Hebrew to him, while to you—but I forgot—excuse me. (*takes off his coat.*)

ARAB. What are you going to do now? (*aside*) Not smother me with his coat I hope, (*goes to corner of table, R.*)

HARE. You look surprised. The fact is, that I make it a rule never to wear my coat in the presence of ladies! Out of doors, I take off my hat to them; indoors, I take off my coat to them. They like these little tokens of respect, you know, and I've always kept the habit.

ARAB. Taken it off, you mean, (*sitting R. of R. table.*)

HARE. (*laughing and sitting L. of it. table*) Capital! excellent! If there is one thing I appreciate more than another it is wit—I adore wits (*counting on his fingers*) George Selwyn was a wit; Sidney Smith was a wit; Darby Griffiths is a wit—so am I—so are you—great wits jump, (*jumping up and down as he sits on the chair*) But woman's wit is the best of all.

" Wit from woman's lovely lips
Doth the sternest heart eclipse."

Refer to Shakespeare and you will not find those lines, because they happen to be my own.

ARAB. Well, I don't think much of them.

HARE. Ah, but you should hear the whole of the poem!—would you like to hear the whole of the poem? (*producing manuscript.*)

ARAB. Thank you, another time, (*aside*) What a remarkably unpleasant phase of lunacy.

HARE. Well, you shall, another time, several other times; for I intend to devote my life to you. (*she draws back*) Oh, don't thank me. I can't help it! hince first I saw your bewitching face. I have become another creature—till then, I was a votary of dangerous sports—I loved to

beard the fiery pheasant in his den—to track the wily partridge athwart the toothsome turnip! The morning before I beheld you, I had a terrific encounter with a snipe in the Essex marshes, and got the worst of it! since that day I snope no more! (*passionately*) My dreams—my thoughts—my whole existence—have been absorbed in you.

ARAB. (*aside*) Poor fellow! what a pleasant voice he has. And there is a good deal of method in his madness.

HARE. (*half hearing*) Methodist, beautiful being? not at all. I am Church of England, very Church of England, and my habits are like clock-work.

ARAB. (*aside*) When the mainspring's broken.

HARE. Let us change the subject. I like your drawing-room, it's in very good taste—so, no doubt, is your bedroom—you have a bedroom?

ARAB. Sir!

HARE. You needn't answer; of course you have a bedroom! If you hadn't, you could have no bed, if you had no bed you couldn't sleep! and without sleep you would die! You are not dead, therefore you sleep—it follows that you own a bed—consequently you have a bed-room—Q. E. D.—is it not so?

ARAB. I can't deny the fact.

HARE. And lined with blue? don't say it's lined with green, or if it is, line it again for my sake.

ARAB. (*aside*) This is becoming rather unpleasant.

HARE. Arabella-----

ARAB. How do you know my Christian name?

HARE. You can't have forgotten that I was your god-father? Arabella, do you know what it is to love?

ARAB. Well, I-----

HARE. I do. I have loved much in my time, and often—your time is yet to come, and I will be your teacher—say, divine emanation, when shall I lead you to the altar—name the day.

ARAB. (*rises—aside*) I wonder if severity would do! (*aloud*) You're very presuming, sir; I shall do nothing of the kind.

HARE. (*impatiently*) But you must! don't let us have any more bother about it, but name the day.

ARAB. (*aside*) Oh, severity won't do, I must humour him. (*aloud*) Well, we'll say this day six months.

HARE. We will: lunar months and we'll date from last August year. The time is therefore near at hand.

ARAB. It must be very near indeed.

HARE. The nearer the better. But do not fear that I shall leave you in the interval—I am an artist, and shall devote the time to featuring those lovely limbs.

ARAB. Sir!

HARE. I mean limning those lovely features—I shall carry your heart by storm—why shouldn't I begin at once? (*jumping up*) Light of my eyes—idol of my soul, (*kneeling*.)

ARAB. (*aside*) He frightens me, but I rather like it.

HARE. Do you mean to become my wife at once, or don't you?

ARAB. (*aside*) Oh, he's becoming violent! I shall never be able to keep him in order till Sir Guy brings help, (*x's to R.*) I must get away if I can. (*backs gently towards the door, R.*)

HARE. (*following her up*) Once more, will you be mine? Will you marry me? Now or never! Now?

ARAB. No.

HARE. Never?

ARAB. Never! (*goes quickly through door R. and slams door in his face, then locking it from the other side.*)

HARE. (*quietly*) Bet two to one you do. Warm work, very, (*taking up coat and putting it on again*) I wonder if I went too far? I did go a considerable distance, certainly. But they like it, they like it! Won't marry me, won't she? well, as I mean to marry her it comes to much the same thing in the end. Locked me in, haven't you? lock away. The authorities will be here directly to take me up. It's rather fun acting the madman, (*noise in cupboard*) Hallo! my friend in the cupboard! if the door's thin he must have been edified, (*opening cupboard door*) How are you getting on, brigand!

RUG. Well, its a tight-fit—can't you let me come out a bit and stretch myself?

HARE. Not for the world—you'll be stretched in a way you won't like some day if you go on like this. (*RUGGLES bursts out laughing*) What are you laughing at?

RUG. I say, you ain't cracked enough to split on me, are you? Lord! lord! yours *is* a little game. I've been nearly splittin' on myself, and splittin' myself, too; a laughin' at your goins on just now.

HARE. Appreciative brigand! this is very gratifying—lie down till you're wanted.

RUG. All right, I'm fly!

HARE. (*locking him in*) I dare say you wish you were

flown. By Jove, here are the authorities—no, it's my little friend with the hopeless appellation. (HATTER *puts her head in at door, L.*) Well, my child, what's the news?

HATTER. I say, are you married yet ?

HARE. Well, not quite, but we are getting on.

HATTER. Because you'd better make haste about it. Old Sir Guy's coming upstairs with two men to take you up.

HARE. Is he ? I can't afford to be caught yet—let me see.

SIR GUY. (*without*) This way, keep close to me.

HATTER. There he is ! I've an idea. Come behind this screen for a moment, and I'll tell you what you must do. (*retires behind screen.*)

Enter SIR GUY TROTTER, with cloak, L.

SIR GUY. Where is the insane youth ? I can't see him anywhere, (*places cloak on arm-chair*) Surely he can't have made away with everybody in the establishment, beginning with himself, (*turning and speaking to men outside*) Stand close you two, when you catch him, gag him at once—throw this big cloak over him, and carry him straight away to the station-house without uncovering his head. He might bite you. Oh, lord, oh, lord, I thought I heard him. (HATTER *steals from behind screen and touches him on the shoulder*) Oh, good gracious, what's that ? he's going to murder the lot of us. (*he turns, she beckons him towards the door and he follows. HARE comes softly from behind screen, and just as he reaches the door, snatches the cloak, and throws it over his head, then pushes him out with HATTER'S help, concealing himself from the men, as they show themselves at the door—the two men enter.*)

HATTER. (*very loud*) Here he is! I've got him. (*putting him*) Here he is gentlemen, (*speaking to men*) cover him up and gag him tight—off with him now. (TROTTER *is carried off. HARE and HATTER burst out laughing.*)

HARE. Hatter, you're an angel, and I don't mind if I kiss you again, (*kisses her*) Footsteps on that side ! it must be your mistress. Now make yourself scarce, and leave me to arrange matters.

HATTER. I say, you know you may be getting me into an awful scrape all this time.

HARE. Not I—I'll take care of you.

HATTER. Are you sure you're not crazy after all ?

HARE. Quite sure—do you want proof positive ? (*giving her more money.*)

HATTER. All right, his interview's as lucid as ever, (*exit L. HARE retires behind screen.*)

Enter ARABELLA, R.

ARAB. (*goes to drawing table*) He's gone then! they've secured him again. Poor young fellow ! he certainly gave me plenty of excitement; but a little of that sort of excitement goes a very long way. Strange being! he didn't look the least mad ! his eyes were as steady as mine and as bright. Oh, dear! now for the old life and the old boredom again. He interested me, poor fellow, (*sits at R. table, and begins drawing. HARE comes from, behind screen, and steals behind her.*)

HARE. (*aside*) She's divine! But I'm not going to be such a fool as to tell her so—like the rest, that I may be kicked out like the rest, (*aloud*) Brava ! brava!

ARAB. (*starting up*) Good gracious! escaped! (*drops pencil.*)

HARE. Go on, go on, I could watch you for ever.

ARAB. (*drawing—aside*) I'm sure I hope you won't. How quiet his manner has become, perhaps I may be able to reach the bell. (*HARE walks quietly to the doors, locks them, and puts the keys in his pocket*) What are you doing, sir?

HARE. As you see, locking the doors—you did it yourself just now.

ARAB. Unlock those doors !

HARE. What a simpleton you'd think me if I did.

ARAB. (*aside*) There's something in that.

HARE. (*placing two chairs*) Sit here, I have something to say.

ARAB. (*L., aside*) I'd better obey him. Alone again, and locked up, and the oddest part of it is, that I decidedly like it. (*she sits L, he sits on the floor at her feet*) What are you going to do now ?

HARE. I'm going to kiss your foot.

ARAB. (*aside*) Thinks I'm the Pope, (*aloud*) No, indeed I can't allow it.

HARE. Then give me your hand, (*he takes it*) What a little piece of perfection, (*she tries to withdraw it*) You shall have it again, when you give me your foot, (*he kisses her hand repeatedly*) I can't keep this up any longer, (*rises and speaks earnestly with entire change of manner*) Arabella, in sober earnest, I love you. (*she starts*) I have loved you from the first moment I saw you—I took lodgings next

door to be near you—I know your character by heart—your longing for distraction and excitement—my feigned madness has given you both; forgive me if I have used means not perhaps sanctioned by the strict laws of etiquette.

ARAB. Are you not mad at all, then ?

HARE. Not as you thought me ; but it is scarcely a pretence to say that I *am* mad, with love for you.

ARAB. You have played upon my feelings shamefully—have stolen my pity, my interest, my—my-----

HARE. Go on.

ARAB. I shall do nothing of the kind—if you are a gentleman you will leave me.

HARE. Do you really mean it ?

ARAB. Of course I do. (x 's to R.)

HARE. I'm sorry for it, because, as I've tried gentle means in vain, you'll force me to use violence, (*suddenly opening the door and showing RUGGLES, who sneaks into the room*) Wanderer of the night, come out of that.

ARAB. (*screaming*) Ah ! who's this ? another madman, or another lover, or both, or what—and I who wanted sensations!

RUG. Don't kick up a row, m'm, I only wants any little knick-knacks and articles of wirtue that may be about, not includin' yourself.

ARAB. (*throwing herself into HARE'S arms*) Don't leave me—don't leave me—get rid of that man and I'll never let you go again.

HARE. (*soothingly*) I knew you wouldn't, (*to RUGGLES*) Complacent footpad, depart in peace! (*as RUGGLES is sneaking off, HARE stops him and points to his pocket*) Stop! I'll trouble you for that bracelet. (*RUGGLES gives it him*) Thank you; you may keep the jam.

ARAB. But surely you don't mean to let him escape altogether ?

HARE. Yes, I do. I'll tell you why another time. He won't come here again.

RUG. (L.) Not if he knows it, which he do know it. Sir, I'm werry much obleeged to you—you've be'aved 'ansom by me, and any time you comes down Newin'ton Cosvay vay, and will enquire for Mr. John Ruggles, me and my missus will be werry pleased to see you. There's mostly a cold sole and a inion, and a little winegar on table at half arter nine: and what's enough for two's enough for three.

Hany bobby will direck you; Hi'm well known to the police.

ARAB. Much use they seem to make of their knowledge!

RUG. And if either you or the lady would like to go the rounds any hevenin' and see the thieves diggin's, I shall be proud to do chipperoun. Here's wishin' you luck, and your senses back ag'in. (*aside*) Lodges next door, does he ? Blest if I don't do the civil thing, and leave my card en him afore he gets back ! (*Exit* RUGGLES, L. D. 2 E.

ARAB. (*looking at* HARE) You seem on very good terms, you two; I believe that this was a concerted plan, and that you brought him into the house.

HARE. No, on my honour ; but you must allow that it's just as well for you that I found out that he *was* here.

ARAB. But how *did* you find it out ?

HARE. By a lucky accident—I think you can understand my scheme pretty well ?

ARAB. I think I can; I don't know how I can ever forgive you.

HARE. Take a long time about it, and let me wait here till you do ; Arabella, can't you see the real love that is hidden under all this mummery ? I've stolen your pity and interest, you say; well, let me add a third theft to the list, and say you love me.

ARAB. A man to whom I never spoke before this evening.

HARE. Well, we can make up for that by talking for the rest of our lives, you know. The sooner you get a protector the better. Won't you accept me ?

ARAB. How can I ?

HARE. By saying "yes."

ARAB. But how can I say yes ?

HARE. By accepting me !

ARAB. Provoking man! (*yielding*)

Enter HATTER, L. D.

HATTER. Oh, I beg your pardon!

HARE. And well you may. Hatter, you're decidedly in the way.

HATTER. But you must hear the news—all the news. In the first place, (*talking very quickly*) they've just let poor Sir Guy go, after keeping him locked up for ever so long, foaming and raving till he was nearly mad, and the more he raved, the madder they thought him, and in the next—

HARE. Take your breath, child.

HATTER. Thank you sir. In the next place a thief has

got into the first floor lodger's room next door, and carried off every blessed thing he could lay his hands on. He was seen going out of this house and into that, but they haven't been able to catch him.

HARE. Out of this house ! Why it's our friend! By Jove that's the very best thing I ever heard in my life. I noticed that he had the bump of gratitude strongly developed. Cruel woman !—I have lost my little all in your service. There's only one way in which you can make up for it. Will you ?

ARAB. (*giving her hand*) Well! I'll see about it.

HATTER. Then perhaps you ain't going to be a widow any longer ma'am.

ARAB. It looks possible, and it's only a charity to take care of him ! for after all, say what he will, it's perfectly obvious that he's a lunatic.

HARE. What! am I crazed indeed, such pranks to play ; (*coming forward*) Good Dr. Public, that's for you to say;

Tell me I do not read upon your face
Sentence of condemnation on my case :
Before 'tis passed, my malady to treat,
Let me advise you try the old receipt.
The power to charm a lunatic doth lie,
They say, within the circle of the eye.
I shall be *charmed*, if you will treat me thus :
So, gentle Public, keep your eye on us !

R.] ARABELLA. HARE. HATTER. [L.

CURTAIN.